From Protest to Party
The Transformation of Anti-Communist Opposition
Movements in East-Central Europe

by

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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

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Abstract

Viable and stable political parties are a key element for the establishment of healthy democracies in post-authoritarian countries. In that sense, the study of why some countries have greater difficulties than others in this regard is an important gauge of the quality of democracy in various polities. My paper is based on a comparison of these issues in Poland and Hungary. Why did some of the anti-communist opposition movements spend years going through repeated rounds of fragmentation producing weak parties, while others were able to produce relatively stable parties early on in the transition to party-based competition? While the literature tends to attribute such differences to electoral systems or social cleavages, this paper argues that the historical regime divide between the former communist party and the former anti-communist opposition as well as the extent to which the ex-communist party was able to compete in the new system had a crucial impact on this question. The deeper the regime divide, the more difficult it proved for the anti-communist opposition movements to produce stable parties if the communist party was able to become an effective player in the new democratic system. The effect of the regime divide is also dependent to a
certain extent on the competitive dynamics of the post-communist party systems. The impact of the regime divide on party stability is reduced if the former communists are unable to become major challengers for power in the new system.
Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The founding elections of a new democracy often pit some kind of anti-authoritarian opposition movement against the remnants of the former authoritarian regime. Such founding elections tend to have the character of a referendum on the authoritarian regime, a situation in which opposition movements perform well simply by demonstrating their anti-regime credentials and promising democratic reforms.

Subsequent elections, however, tend to be more complex and require a different approach. History has shown that some former opposition movements are good at adapting themselves to the specific rigors electoral politics. Others, like the revolutionaries of old, end up being “eaten” by the very transition they helped set in motion. The failure of such pro-democracy movements is significant because it could open up opportunities for members of the former regime to succeed or for democracy itself to be questioned. Even short of such extreme consequences, the disappearance or fragmentation of such movements also has potentially serious implications for the nature of a country’s political party system, the kinds of parties featured in it, and the quality of democratic representation. Since such movements tend to dominate the political landscape when they come to power amid the collapse or transition of the previous regime, their specific fates have a large impact on the future structure of the party system and the very patterns of democracy in such countries. The strategies, decisions, successes, and mistakes of the movement’s leaders will play no small role in determining whether the future of democracy in that country will feature stable or chaotic parties, a highly polarized or tightly connected party system, parties that base their decisions on clear policy preferences or parties that endlessly peddle in the sins of the past regime.

What, then, are the factors that enable some former opposition movements to become viable political parties, while others fail to do so? One of the best regions in the world for beginning to answer this question is post-communist East-Central Europe. Many of the countries of this region had significant pro-democracy movements that came to power at almost exactly the same moment in history.
Yet, although they share a comparable starting point, the former anti-communist opposition movements of East-Central Europe have had markedly different fates in terms the extent to which they were able to create stable political parties in the new democracies they helped to bring about. In some countries of the region, more than 15 years after the collapse of the communist regime, the offspring of the original anti-communist movements that swept to power in 1989 have managed to establish strong and viable parties. In other countries, they remain fragmented and organizationally weak.

The difference is even more striking if we look more closely at some of the cases in the region. Why did Poland’s Solidarity movement, which was a strong and large anti-communist movement with relatively deep roots in society, end up failing to produce even one stable and successful political party that would have staying power over the course of the post-communist phase? In the early 1990s, various observers felt that the successors to the Polish anti-communist opposition had certain advantages over other such movements in the region despite the infighting and early break-up of Solidarity in 1990. The Solidarity movement had deep roots in the country’s civil society, a large number of members, and a tradition of mass-level participation. These are certainly factors that have been traditionally associated with the development of political parties. But instead of breaking up into a set of stable political parties, as some in Solidarity hoped would happen, the movement gave way to a fragmented collection of parties and proto-parties that have formed, re-shaped, merged and split several times over since the 1990s. While there were occasional periods of uneasy cooperation, full unification or even stability was never quite achieved. In 2001, the Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) alliance, a large conglomerate of disparate groupings, was swept from power and out of parliament. Similarly, the Freedom Union (UW), one of the more long-lasting formations to emerge from the anti-communist opposition, also did not win enough votes to secure representation in parliament. In their place, new parties emerged into prominence: the Civic Platform (PO), the Law and Justice party (PiS), and on the far-right, the League of Polish Families (LPR).

Other countries, by contrast, have seen at least some factions of their former opposition movements establish relatively deep roots in society despite early signs of weakness. How did the small, divided, and isolated anti-communist opposition groups of Hungary manage to produce three parties that remained fixtures of their country’s politics for several years after 1989 – one of which remains the dominant party in the country to this day?

Indeed, the most stable country in the region during the 1990s and into the 2000s, in terms of both electoral volatility and political party institutionalization, had without a doubt been Hungary. Three parties emerged from the anti-communist opposition in that country: the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) and the Young Democrats (Fidesz). Those same three parties remained key players for some 20 years, and one of them continues to dominate Hungarian politics today. The early polarization of the Hungarian anti-communist opposition into a set of separate and distinct parties meant that the country’s party system did not go through the same kind of convulsive fragmentation that beset both the Czech and Polish opposition movements after 1989. Nevertheless, all three of them did experience rifts in the early 1990s as they tried to define their organizations and ideological profiles. As the years went by, MDF’s prominent role on the centre-right was gradually taken over by Fidesz. Today, the country’s political party system is polarized between a national conservative camp led by Fidesz and a social liberal camp led by the ex-communist Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), which was supported by the SZDSZ until the late 2000s.

This dissertation examines the divergent trajectories of the anti-communist opposition movements in these two countries as they attempted to transform themselves into political parties after 1989. It will seek to explain the causes for the wide differences in fragmentation and instability among the different anti-communist opposition groups of those countries.

What might those causes be? Scholars have traditionally pointed to the importance of electoral institutions or underlying cleavages in determining the degree of fragmentation in party systems.² But electoral institutions in new democracies tend to be

² Maurice Duverger, Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State (London: Methuen, 1954); Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and
endogenous to the political transition itself. It may in any case take several rounds of
elections for the proto-parties and movements of new democracies to understand and
adjust to the specific incentives embedded in particular electoral rules. Similarly,
decades of communist rule in the region meant that whatever cleavages existed in the
early to mid-1990s were not very strong. In general, the major theoretical approaches to
party fragmentation in the literature on political parties have not been easy to apply to
post-communist countries.

In light of these shortcomings, scholars working on post-authoritarian transitions
have sought to explain the degree of party fragmentation in East-Central Europe by
focusing on particular aspects of the transition or the electorate, such as ideological
concentration among voters or the timing and sequencing of various aspects of the
transition. Such explanations run the risk of privileging certain aspects of the transition
itself at the expense of other deeper causal forces located in the communist era or
misreading the particularities of the post-communist region.

Other scholars have focused more squarely on East-Central Europe by stressing
the particularities of individual parties or the specific roles of individual politicians in
determining the degree of fragmentation or consolidation of party systems in the different
countries. Much has been made, for example, of the influence of particular politicians
such as Lech Wałęsa and Viktor Orbán in determining the kinds of parties that exist in
their countries. Such accounts, with their focus on the idiosyncratic details of

Voter Alignments,” in Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds., Party Systems and Voter
3 Herbert Kitschelt, Zdenka Mansfeldová, Radoslaw Markowski and Gábor Toka, Post-Communist Party
Systems: Competition, Representation and Inter-party Cooperation (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1999); Jon Elster, Claus Offe and Ulrich K. Preuss, Institutional Design in Post-Communist
4 Kay Lawson, “Cleavages, Parties, and Voters,” in Kay Lawson, Andrea Römmele and Georgi
Karasimeonov, eds., Cleavages, Parties, and Voters: Studies from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary,
Political Studies, 10 (2001), 1237-1263.
7 There are numerous academic and journalistic accounts that emphasize the roles of particular politicians
in the development of political parties in East-Central Europe. For an account that focuses on Lech
Wałęsa’s influence on post-Solidarity party institutionalization, see Jerzy Wiatr, “Executive-Legislative
Institutional Design in New Democracies (Boulder: Westview, 1996), 103-115; for an account emphasizing
the role of Václav Klaus in the division of Civic Forum and the Czech transition in general, see Steven
developments in each country, are certainly valuable in tracing the specific course of events. Nevertheless, by tightly focusing on the minutiae of politics and personalities, they tend to overlook broader impersonal forces that may be at work in all of the countries.

More recent scholarship on the region has started to move toward more systematically comparative approaches for studying the parties that emerged from the former opposition movements of the region. Some scholars have focused on particular ideological groups of parties, such as the centre-right, which include post-opposition parties. This approach has yielded insights into how certain kinds of post-opposition parties forge a cohesive set of policy preferences in the circumstances of transition politics. Nevertheless, by carving out an ideologically defined set of post-opposition parties from the broader group of successors to the anti-communist opposition movements, they run two risks. First, such a strategy may obscure the crucial common historical legacy of all post-opposition parties in a given country and in so doing misplace the causal mechanisms at work in the formation of those parties. Second, they may miss the interactions among the post-opposition parties that play a critical role in their development of such parties once they are involved in the democratic game.

Some studies tend to stress the importance of specific elite strategies in some combination with critical junctures during the transition for determining the stability of political parties and party systems in the region. Certainly, in the post-communist environment, where parties are institutionally weak and have only begun to build linkages to voters, particular political strategies matter. This, however, is only part of the story. Politicians adopt particular strategies for specific reasons and under particular constraints. What are the constraints that define the kinds of strategies politicians can adopt? And are there similar, comparable kinds of constraints operating in all post-communist countries of the region? The answers to these questions would reveal if a

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general explanation can be developed for the differences in the fates of the former anti-communist opposition movements of East-Central Europe.

**Regime divide: The impact of history**

This dissertation will attempt to develop such an explanation by examining the historical trajectories of the anti-communist opposition movements and how those histories have interacted with the dynamics of party competition since the early 1990s. The former anti-communist opposition movements of East-Central Europe shared a common history of dissent against Soviet-style regimes in their countries. This legacy of opposition has given rise to a regime divide in these countries that separates the former communist parties from the parties that emerged from the anti-communist opposition movements. The more antagonistic the relations between the opposition and the regime under communism before 1989, the deeper the regime divide between their respective successor parties in the post-communist phase. Conversely, if a communist regime adopted a policy of strategic co-optation mixed with milder forms of repression for dealing with its opponents, it may have had less antagonistic relations with the opposition, leading to a shallow regime divide between the successors of the communist party and the opposition.

The relevance of the regime divide for party fragmentation lies in the kinds of coalitions it forces (or enables) parties to embrace. Research has shown that deep regime divides can distort political party competition by preventing any coalitions from forming between the former opposition parties and the former communist parties, even if the latter have transformed themselves into moderate and pro-reform parties. Conversely, a shallow regime divide may enable party leaders to make more policy-based coalition choices.

A deep regime divide will undermine the cohesion of the former opposition parties precisely because it takes precedence over all other substantive divides in the newly emerging political party system of a post-communist country. This has particularly

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powerful effects on the ideologically heterogeneous anti-communist opposition movements. All over East-Central Europe, the anti-communist opposition movements tended to be umbrella coalitions of activists with widely divergent political views and values. These groups tended to include conservatives, Christian democrats, free-market liberals, social liberal, and social democrats, which were united only in their opposition to the communist regime. Once that regime collapsed, their reason for staying united disappeared as well.\textsuperscript{12}

But a deep regime divide between the new parties emerging from the former opposition on one side, and the former communist party on the other, could undermine the cohesion of the post-opposition parties if it forces them to form ideologically incompatible coalitions with each other that entail major policy compromises or reversals. Such compromises will foment intra-party disputes, factionalization, and division in these new parties. Rather than engage in such compromises, some members and factions will choose to “exit” their parties to form new parties or coalitions.\textsuperscript{13}

The situation is substantially different in countries with shallow regime divides. Even in such countries, though, the former opposition parties will also initially fall apart into diverse successor parties with differing ideological profiles. But since the regime divide is shallow, at least some parties of the former opposition will have the option of joining the ex-communist party in more policy-based coalitions that do not require excessive programmatic compromises. This will allow the parties to avoid major policy compromises and reversals, thereby encouraging their further stabilization and institutionalization.

The fundamental cause of the problem is that the regime divide cuts across other competitive divides in the newly forming political party systems of the region, and, if it is deep enough, has the potential of distorting party competition. The impact of the divide on the post-opposition parties is at its most powerful in the early stages of the transition,

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{12} For discussions of the process by which these umbrella oppositions movements fall apart, see Adam Przeworski, Democracy and the Market (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 88-89; Attila Ágh, Emerging Democracies in East Central Europe and the Balkans (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1998), 37.
\textsuperscript{13} This logic is based on Hirschman’s famed “exit,” “voice” and “loyalty” model for understanding consumer and voter behavior. Albert O. Hirschman, Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations and states (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).
\end{footnotesize}
when those parties are weakly institutionalized. In that sense, it undermines their early efforts at institutionalization.

But the effect of a deep regime divide can be aggravated and prolonged by the competitive dynamics of the party system and particularly by the ability of the former communist party to become a competitive player in the electoral game. The more popular the former communist party becomes, the more it will force any parties emerging from the opposition to continue to work together, no matter how diverse their policy preferences may be. And in turn, the more the post-opposition forces are compelled to work together, the more they will be racked by inter- and intra-party disputes that will undermine the creation of stable political parties.

Conversely, an unpopular post-communist party will reduce the impact of the regime divide by creating more political space for the establishment of distinct post-opposition parties. A weak post-communist party with few seats in parliament can easily be ignored and isolated, leaving the other parties ample political space to form policy-based and cohesive governing coalitions. This, in turn, will create better conditions for the establishment of stable parties.

In that sense, the impact of the regime divide varies not only in accordance with the nature of the relations between the communist regime and its opponents, but becomes more or less pronounced in conjunction with the competitive dynamics of the party system. The degree of popularity of the reformed post-communist party at any particular juncture determines how much pressure is placed on the diverse parties of the former opposition movement to cooperate.

Both the nature of the regime divide and the competitive dynamics of the party system are important because they affect coalition politics. By forcing post-opposition parties into governing coalitions that are heterogeneous in policy preferences, they undermine the stability of these newly formed and weakly institutionalized parties. It is the programmatic compromises that politicians are forced to adopt in such coalitions that encourages factionalization and fragmentation.

This dynamic underscores the contrasting pressures experienced by parties when they are in government as opposed to when they are in opposition. In government, parties must commit to programmatic compromises with coalition partners and defend policy
proposals that may conflict with their preferences. In opposition, by contrast, parties are engaged in criticizing government proposals but need not commit to the implementation of detailed counter-proposals.

In that sense, the observable implications of the regime divide will be evident when sets of post-opposition parties with diverse policy preferences are in government together. In countries with a deep regime divide, such coalitions will be marked by significant internal divisions over specific policies. Those disputes should cause at least some legislators from the governing parties to “cross the floor” and join other parties or leave to create their own parties. This dynamic should also be evident in higher levels of electoral volatility caused by the formation of new parties for periods during which ideologically diverse sets of post-opposition parties are in governing coalitions together. In contrast, countries with a shallow regime divide will see more policy-based governing coalitions, involving alliances of post-communist and post-opposition parties or more ideologically cohesive subsets of post-opposition parties. This will lead to greater party stability, lower levels of party switching, and less electoral volatility caused by the appearance of new parties.

Assumptions of the model
The model presented here assumes that specific competitive divides which lead to diverse policy preferences among different parties are significant in structuring political party systems in East-Central Europe. At the same time, though, this study will show that a deep regime divide can interfere with attempts by post-opposition politicians to pursue their policy goals. A deep regime divide, in other words, is sometimes even stronger than other divides.

Nevertheless, this does not render the other significant competitive divides insignificant. Contrary to early assessments of East-Central Europe that tended to depict the region’s political parties as entirely lacking clear-cut programmatic preferences, more recent scholarship has found relatively strong and well-structured dimensions of competition in these countries.¹⁴ This is why parties with disparate policy preferences that are forced to work together in coalitions because of the regime divide face intractable

disputes that tend to undermine the stability of such coalitions as well as the stability of the parties themselves.

Like Western democracies, post-communist systems have been found to exhibit at least two central dimensions of competition. First, parties compete against each other across an economic-distributive divide that can be described as delineating their positions with respect to the degree of their support for state involvement in the economy. Second, parties are separated according to a cultural divide that pits proponents of traditional values against those who tend to support more libertarian or individualist values.\(^{15}\)

Both the regime divide and the other divides are significant because the parties need to establish clear competitive profiles for themselves. Scholars have noted that political parties and even individual politicians need to establish reputations and credibility.\(^{16}\) This involves adopting a consistent profile of policy preferences that the party or politician is committed to implement upon taking office. Politicians need such a profile to fulfill their primary goals, whether those involve the pursuit of votes, office, policy or some combination of those three. In East-Central Europe, this need to establish reputations and credibility was all the more powerful immediately after the transition to democracy in the early 1990s because the electorates were unfamiliar with the numerous new parties that took shape at that time. And, as Grzymala-Busse has pointed out, the only basis that voters had for assessing the new parties was how their leaders behaved under communism.\(^{17}\) This is one of the reasons for the strength of the regime divide between former opponents and former proponents of communism.

But this only captures one aspect of the regime divide. Certainly, the origins of the divide lie in the conflict between the former anti-communist opposition and the communist regime, but this does not go far enough in explaining its continued presence.

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\(^{15}\) A large body of research has identified one or both of these divides as significant in East-Central Europe. See in particular, Kitschelt et al. *Post-Communist Party Systems*, 223-261. There is also a third potential divide that tends to appear in those post-communist countries which became independent states after having separated from a larger communist-era state formation and/or have politically significant ethnic minorities. This divide separates parties on the basis of their stances and roles in the process of gaining independence and/or their attitudes toward significant ethnic minorities. See, for example, Kevin Deegan-Krause, “Slovakia,” in Sten Berglund, Joakim Ekman and Frank H. Aarebrot, eds., *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe, Second Edition* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2004), 255-288.


\(^{17}\) Gryzmala-Busse, “Coalition Formation.”
and even strength in shaping party politics almost two decades after the end of communism. One of the reasons the divide persists can be attributed to the issue of decommunization. Broadly, the term “decommunization,” as used here, refers to the removal of former communist functionaries from public life, state offices and institutions as well as from important positions in the economy and media.\textsuperscript{18} This issue reflects debates about the extent to which state institutions in the new democracies of East-Central Europe should be purged of representatives of the former regime. The ongoing strength of such debates, and the availability of the issue for use in political competition, has served to fortify the regime divide over time.

Thus post-communist party systems tend to exhibit a complex assortment of two or three strongly competitive dimensions: an economic-distributive divide, a cultural divide, and a regime divide.\textsuperscript{19} The regime divide, as used here, refers to the competitive dimension pitting the successors of the former communist parties against the rest of the political parties, especially the successors of the former anti-communist opposition movements.\textsuperscript{20} These divides often cut across each other and presented the new political parties of the region with a dilemma. They had to choose, relatively early on, where to place their parties along these dimensions and which divide to prioritize in their efforts to establish governing coalitions with other parties. The more they prioritized the regime divide over the others, the more they were bound to either sacrifice substantive aspects of their program in terms of economic and socio-cultural questions or enter into fractious conflicts with other parties over those questions. The only way to resolve this dilemma was to overcome the regime divide and bring it into line with the other dominant dimensions of competition. This dissertation will seek to explain why this was possible in some cases but not in others.

\textbf{Contributions to the literature}

This model adds to theories about the regime divide in post-communist countries and demonstrates how this characteristic of party competition in such countries can provide

\textsuperscript{19} In some cases, a fourth divide might be present: the national divide. See Deegan-Krause, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{20} Grzymala-Busse, “Coalition Formation and the Regime Divide.”
an explanation for differences in party fragmentation across certain types of East-Central European democracies. As noted above, numerous studies have identified the division between successors to the former communist parties and the former anti-communist opposition as a significant dimension of party competition in East-Central European countries.21 Various scholars have demonstrated the impact of this division on coalition politics, showing that the divide is the best predictor for the make-up of governing coalitions across the region because the successors to the former opposition will tend to avoid setting up common governments with the former communist parties. They will do so even at the cost joining coalitions with other parties that hold sharply divergent policy preferences.22 This much the literature has demonstrated.

What has not been systematically explored is the impact of the political dynamics created by the regime divide on the consolidation of viable parties and party systems across the region. The model presented here fills this gap. In doing so, it also helps to illuminate the manner in which the divisions bequeathed to the new democracies of the region as a historical legacy of authoritarian regimes can continue to shape and define party-based competition for years, and perhaps even decades, after the demise of the regime. More narrowly, the model illustrates how the regime divide creates certain constraints that have a discernible impact on the kinds of parties that emerge out of the former anti-communist opposition and the role they will play in the development of post-communist party systems.

The second contribution of this model is offered to the literature on coalition politics. Traditionally, this literature has sought to explain what kinds of governing coalitions are favoured by political parties and why. In that sense, the emphasis has been

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21 This has been characterized variously as a division separating electorates, parties, or both, and has been referred to as a “regime divide,” “cleavage” or “dimension of competition.” See, for some examples, Kitschelt, Mansfeldová, Markowski, and Toka, Post-Communist Party Systems; Grzymala-Busse, “Coalition Formation and the Regime Divide”; and Druckman and Roberts, “Communist Successor Parties,” who characterize it as a regime divide between parties. See also Aleks Szczerbiak, “Patterns of Party Politics in Post-1989 Poland,” in Susanne Jungerstam-Mulders, ed., Post-Communist EU Member-States, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 91-123, who, following work by Krzysztof Jasiewicz and Mirosława Grabowska, sees it as a reflection of “attitudes to the communist past” and combines it with other socio-cultural attitudes in a historical-cultural dimension of competition among parties.

22 Grzymala-Busse “Coalition Formation and the Regime Divide”; Druckman and Roberts, “Communist Successor Parties.”
on explaining coalitions. To that end, the literature has tended to treat political parties as unitary actors. On the rare occasions when scholars have loosened this assumption to examine intra-party politics, they have done so as a means of exploring how divisions within a party impact upon the formation of coalitions. The model presented here will reverse this emphasis and focus on the impact that coalitions have on intra-party politics. In order to do this, the assumption that parties are unitary actors must be relaxed. This line of inquiry, then, has the potential to generate new understanding for the impact of governing coalitions as independent variables on the institutionalization of parties in new democracies.

Third, the model also contributes to the growing literature on party switching, which examines the motivations for and consequences of legislators’ decisions to change party allegiances between elections. This literature has helped scholars to move beyond the traditionally static view of party systems. Instead, new models based on examinations of individual politicians and their motivations have led to characterizations of party systems as dynamic and evolving strategic environments. Naturally, such models of party systems are only possible if the view of political parties as unitary actors is loosened or abandoned in favour of an analytical lens that focuses on the interactions of party leader, legislators, and members. In general, this literature assumes individual political actors to be motivated by a desire to secure votes or offices in politics as a means of either implementing particular policies or as a means of satisfying career or material objectives. It characterizes decisions on the part of individual legislators to switch their party allegiances as a result of calculations that take into account a variety of factors including the strategic interactions between the legislator and the party leader, the structure of

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legislative party system, the preferences of voters, and the institutional rules of the
game.\textsuperscript{27} 

The literature on party switching by legislators stands as a challenge to the traditional view of this phenomenon as merely an indicator of instability or weak institutionalization in a party system. Nevertheless, the connection between weakly institutionalized party systems and party switching remains underexplored. Party switching, as Heller and Mershon emphasize, can be treated as an outcome of a weakly institutionalized party system or as a factor that undermines such institutionalization.\textsuperscript{28} The model presented in this dissertation adds to this literature by demonstrating how particular aspects of party competition in newly democratized countries have the potential to encourage party switching, and thereby seriously undermine the establishment of stable and institutionalized parties.

The cases
This study focuses on the parties that emerged from the former anti-communist opposition movements in Poland and Hungary. The aim is to trace the fates of those parties in order to explain why some of them managed to establish themselves as stable players in the game of electoral politics while others failed to do so.

These two cases of post-opposition parties vary significantly in terms of the outcome of interest in this study: fragmentation. Poland’s post-opposition parties have gone through several rounds of repeated fragmentation through the 1990s before settling down in the 2000s, while the Hungarian parties were consistently stable through the 1990s and 2000s.

At the same time, the two countries share many similarities in terms of potential independent variables but vary in one respect significant for this study. Both countries saw their communist regimes come to an abrupt end in 1989-1990 and the rise to power of significant anti-communist opposition networks. This combination of factors is certainly not typical of the universe of cases in post-communist Eastern Europe. In many countries of the former Soviet bloc, the former communists potentates managed to hold

\textsuperscript{27} Heller and Mershon, “Switch or Stick?”

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, p. 5.
on to power by transforming themselves into re-born but not necessarily pro-democratic standard-bearers of national aspirations. Thus, if a united and effective set of post-opposition parties had the potential to emerge anywhere in the region, it had to be in Poland and Hungary. This is particularly true of Poland, where the opposition was large, influential, and deeply rooted in society. But while the Polish opposition was obviously more powerful and significant than its counterparts in Hungary, both countries exhibited opposition groups that had built up years of experience in organizing networks of activists. In addition, the Polish and Hungarian opposition groups shared the advantages that came with a clear end to the communist regime, including immediate access to office and the initial elimination of the former communists as an effective political opponent. In other countries of the region, the opposition was either too weakly organized or the transition from communism did not involve the complete removal from power of the old communist party.

But the nature of the relations between the communist regime and the opposition in each country, and the regime divide that emerged as a result, vary significantly. The Polish regime sought accommodations with the opposition but fiercely cracked down on the opposition in 1981, producing a relatively deep regime divide; the Hungarian party-state used a mix of relatively mild forms of repression and co-optation to deal with its opposition, leading to a relatively shallow divide.

As should be evident, the central independent variable and the dependent variable of this study are ordinal, rather than nominal, in nature. They seek to determine whether more or less of an independent variable led to a higher or lower score on the dependent variable. Typically used in mid-level qualitative comparisons, this kind of variable lends itself to more nuanced treatments of causation.

Finally, it should be noted that the two cases also vary in terms of other factors that might be relevant for determining the level of fragmentation among the post-opposition parties. First, the electoral systems of the countries vary: Poland adopted a version of proportional representation, while Hungary uses a mixed-member system. Second, while Hungary is a classic parliamentary system, Poland initially had a rather strong presidency but shifted closer to the parliamentary system in the second half of the 1990s. These differences generate specific (albeit conflicting, when taken together as a
whole) theoretical expectations about the nature of the political party system one might expect in each country. The presence of these differences, then, will enable this study to take into consideration other potential independent variables and compare their impact to that of the regime divide.

In addition to these two cases, this study will conclude with a brief look at the implications of this model for other post-communist countries, taking the Czech Republic and Slovakia as representative examples. These countries vary from the two central cases in this study in terms of the strength of their post-communist parties, the presence of a significant nation-building divide at least in the initial stages of the post-communist era and the presence of a politically significant minority population.

Methodologically, then, this study is a mid-level comparison of a handful of cases. Falling between studies focusing on the analysis of a single case or the comparison of a large number of cases, the mid-level comparison has specific advantages and disadvantages. In terms of disadvantages, such a comparison inevitably sacrifices some of the empirical detail that characterizes the single-case approach, while losing the ability to make strong correlations between explanatory and dependent variables that is characteristic of large quantitative studies.

On the other hand, a mid-level comparison has certain key advantages. It enables the researcher to closely examine causal mechanisms in an explicitly comparative context. In that sense, such studies are not merely attempting to associate a specific score on an independent variable with a causal outcome. Instead, the task is to connect one or more independent variables with causal outcomes by identifying the mechanism that links the purported cause to the outcome. Put differently, the project is interested in looking at explanatory factors that are nestled at a substantial historical distance from the dependent variables, perhaps up to 30 or 40 years back. Thus the specific mechanisms that link the explanatory variables to each other and to the dependent variable will have to be uncovered. In this case, the task is to explain why the history of relations between the communist regime and the anti-communist opposition affected the ability of the former opposition to create viable parties after the regime had ended.

This study divides the process whereby the former anti-communist movements transformed themselves into political parties into phases, using narrative analysis to
capture the specific trajectories of the movements in each country through those stages. The phases will be determined according to critical junctures when opposition elites would be faced with the option of exiting their party or remaining within it. Since the communist regimes collapsed at around the same time in all four cases, these phases will roughly correspond in time across all of the cases. At each critical juncture, the key leadership elites are identified, the options facing them are outlined, and the incentives attached to each option are detailed. A careful analysis of their decisions will follow to determine if their chosen courses of action match the expectations of the model.

A variety of evidence has been used to support the central hypothesis of the model: political party documents (including party policy papers, party congress transcripts, campaign documents, and internal party news bulletins), parliamentary documents and data (including data on the voting patterns and party faction and committee memberships of individual legislators as well as transcripts of parliamentary debates), interviews with key political figures and political analysts in both countries, journalistic reports, and secondary historical accounts. In addition, I have constructed graphs representing the positions of the region’s significant political parties on various policy dimensions using data from the Manifesto Research Group (which I also compared to other similar data compiled by other scholars); created a database of all legislators who changed parties, created new parties, or left parliament entirely in each country for every year between 1990 and 2010 (using data from the national parliaments); and calculated electoral volatility in each country between each national election over the same time period.

**Lay-out of the dissertation**

In Chapter 2, I examine state repression of opposition in the communist regimes of Poland and Hungary as well as the historical origins of the anti-communist opposition movements in order to determine the roots of the regime divide in each country. In Chapter 3, I examine the initial break-up of the umbrella opposition movements that came to power in 1989-1990 and demonstrate how policy based differences played a role in those break-ups. In Chapter 4, I combine and present statistics on electoral volatility and party switching to demonstrate how the regime divide and competitive dynamics of
the party systems in each country led to specific patterns of fragmentation and/or cohesion among the parties. In Chapter 5, I discuss how the leaders of the successor parties to the former opposition movements made strategic choices about coalition partners and how those choices affected the ability of those parties to remain cohesive. Those choices led to divergent outcomes in the 1990s, with some of the post-opposition parties consolidating and institutionalizing while others continually shattered and fell apart. In Chapter 6, I demonstrate how a change in the fortunes of the Polish post-communist party effectively reduced the significance of the regime divide in that country and enabled the post-opposition parties of that country to finally coalesce along the lines of their Hungarian counterparties. In Chapter 7, I conclude with a brief consideration of the model’s scope conditions and show how the model contributes to the scholarly literatures on democratic consolidation, coalition formation, and party switching.
Chapter 2

The origins of the regime divide

One of the enduring legacies of the former communist regimes in East-Central Europe is the regime divide. This divide separating the successors of the former communist parties from the former activists of the anti-communist opposition initially appeared everywhere across East-Central Europe as a competitive dimension in the politics of post-communist countries. While this dimension is in that sense a generic product of the clash between communist regimes and their domestic opponents, the particular depth of the divide and the dynamics it created for party-based competition after the fall of the regimes are rooted in the specific nature of communist rule in each East-Central European country. The particularities of communist rule in each country were determined by their diverse pre-communist histories as well as the crises that confronted those regimes between the 1940s and 1980s.29 These factors, in turn, affected the relationship between each communist regime and its domestic anti-communist opposition, which itself constituted the primary determinant of the regime divide of the post-communist era.

One influential typology of East-Central European communist regimes focuses on the pre-war history of the region. In this typology, developed by Kitschelt and his colleagues, the extent to which a country had developed a modern state bureaucracy and the domestic balance of power between communist and non-communist political forces before the Second World War had a strong influence on the nature of the communist regime that emerged after the war.30 “Bureaucratic-authoritarian” communist regimes emerged in countries, such as Czechoslovakia, with strong pre-war state bureaucracies and powerful communist movements. This kind of regime leads to a deep regime divide between the successors to the communist party and opposition movements.31 “National-accommodative” regimes, such as those of Poland and Hungary, emerged in countries with later development of state bureaucracy and weaker pre-war communist parties. Such regimes were never as sure of their control over society and often had to resort to the co-optation of the opposition as opposed to direct repression. Countries in this category are

30 Kitschelt et al., Post-Communist Party Systems.
31 Kitschelt et al., Post-Communist Party Systems, 24-27
likely to have a shallower regime divide between the post-communist and post-opposition parties.  

But Kitschelt also acknowledges the potentially disruptive effects of “episodic” breakdowns in the less repressive stance of the national-accommodative regimes. A major, violent crackdown on the opposition, such as the imposition of martial law in Poland in 1981, can have a devastating impact on efforts at a more cooperative approach later on. It is possible that the impact of such a crackdown will fade with time, but the more recently it happened, the more intensely the impact will still be felt. Ferocious crackdowns on the opposition are likely to increase the antagonism between the regime and its opponents, and thus contribute to a deepening of the regime divide, even in countries that have a “national-accommodative” form of communism.  

For the purposes of analyzing the roots and nature of the regime divide in each country, the significance of such regime crises is not merely a matter of how proximate in time they occur to the final breakdown of communist rule in 1989, but also on the players involved in the crisis. Like the regimes themselves, opposition to communist rule also underwent different developmental phases between the late 1940s and the late 1980s. Not only did new generations of activists emerge over the course of those four decades, but the structures, goals, and strategic environments of those opposition movements changed significantly. The early phase of opposition to the actual imposition of communist rule involved national movements of resistance encompassing pre-communist era political party activists, church-based opponents, and other resisters, but this form of resistance was dispersed by the nascent communist regimes of the region rather quickly. A new form of dissent emerged in the 1950s and 1960s as independent and party-based Marxist intellectuals engaged in revisionist critiques of Soviet-style socialism. This form of dissent was dealt a crushing blow by the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, which

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35 The virtue of selecting two “national-accommodative” types of communist regimes to examine in this study is that any such differences in the regime divide will be brought into relief. Given that national-accommodative regimes shared various historical, socioeconomic and institutional characteristics, the impact of any differences in political repression on the regime divide will stand out more clearly. Put differently, the selection of two communist cases enables us to control for certain variables, an effect that is further enhanced by narrowing that selection to two cases of one specific type of communist regime.
brought the Prague Spring version of reform communism to an end. Finally, in the 1970s and 1980s, a new form of dissent based on the defense of fundamental human rights and the creation of civil society networks emerged across the region. These were the groups that would give birth to the opposition movements that were to sweep to power in 1989 and 1990 in Poland and Hungary. It is these groups that were later to confront the former communists across the gulf of a regime divide formed in a new era of party-based competition.36

There were connections, of course, both in terms of people and ideas, between the three eras of opposition to communist rule in East-Central Europe, particularly between those of the revisionist dissident groups of the 1960s and the civil society networks and movements of the 1970s and 1980s.37 But the structures of the opposition that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s were new in organizational terms as well as in the manner in which they opposed the regimes. These new dissident groups formed in the 1970s and 1980s, bringing together some older generations of dissidents together with a newer generation.38 Moreover, the groups of this era went on to form the nuclei of the umbrella opposition movements that swept to power after 1989. It is these dissidents’ particular experience of communism in the 1970s and 1980s that influenced their strategic considerations after party-based competition after 1989. The activists and dissidents of those decades are, in that sense, the carriers of this particular legacy of the communist era, which was to shape the nature of the regime divide after 1989. For these reasons, any examination of the regime divide between the post-communist and post-opposition forces

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37 See, for example, Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence.*

38 In Poland, these movements included, among others, the Workers’ Defense Committee (KOR), formed after the suppression of workers protests in 1976, as well as, of course, the Solidarity trade union movement formed in 1980. In Czechoslovakia, the most prominent group of this era was Charter 77, formed in 1977. In Hungary, the democratic opposition circle of dissenters gradually took shape in the 1970s and 1980s with the establishment of SZETA in 1979 and the launch of the Beszélő journal in 1981, while the populist group of writers also developed stronger organizational links in the 1980s.
of the 1990s and 2000s must therefore begin with an examination of the relationship between the communist regime and the opposition groups of the 1970s and 1980s.

During the last two decades of communist rule in East-Central Europe, opposition groups across the region were subjected to a variety of repressive measures aimed at eliminating or, at the very least, restricting and hampering their activities. But while the regimes of Poland and Hungary each used repression against their respective domestic opposition groups, the quality and degree of repression varied between the countries and over time. In Poland, state repression of opposition activities eased in the late 1970s and gave way in 1980 and 1981 to the emergence of the Solidarity movement. The burst of independent activity across society that accompanied the rise of Solidarity was interrupted by the imposition of martial law at the end of 1981. Those repressive tactics gradually eased again toward the close of the 1980s. In Hungary, the regime employed a mix of repression and selective co-optation to handle opposition groups, and the extent of repression tended to increase and decrease at various junctures during the 1970s and 1980s, although it was generally looser and more ambiguous than in other countries of East-Central Europe. Moreover, in the late 1980s, the ruling party made a distinction between opposition groups, subjecting some of them to repressive measures while maintaining various contacts with others, particularly in the latter half of the 1980s.39

39 While the regime in Poland also sought to divide the opposition through such distinctions, the practice was employed far more extensively in Hungary. Falk, Dilemmas of Dissidence, 150; Rudolf L. Tokes, Hungary’s Negotiated Revolution, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 205; Grzymala-Busse, Redeeming the Communist Past, 55-56. For more details on the particular forms of opposition control employed by the Kádár regime in Hungary, see Padraic Kenney, A Carnival of Revolution, 97-102. See also, Grzegorz Ekiert, The State against Society: Political Crises and Their Aftermath in East Central Europe (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Judt “The Dilemmas of Dissent.”
Figure 2.1 – Government Respect for Physical Integrity and Civil Liberties (‘81-89)

Note: This graph was compiled from data contained in the Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Dataset. The CIRI data contain a number of measures for state violations of human rights. The index above was developed specifically for this study. It selectively uses some of the indicators available in the CIRI dataset to create an index that would capture as closely as possible the degree of state repression of activities relevant for political opposition to the regime. These indicators covered instances of political imprisonment, torture, disappearances, and extrajudicial murder, as well as the state’s respect for freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of movement. A score of 0 on the index indicates frequent violations of rights on the part of the government and virtually no respect for freedoms. A score of 14 indicates no reported instances of rights violations in these seven categories and full respect for freedoms. See http://www.nsd.uib.no/microdataguide/set.html?id=3&sub=1.

Data from a number of different indicators for state repression tend to confirm this analysis of the differing approaches to dissent by the communist regimes of Poland and Hungary. Across a variety of indices of state repression, Hungary tends to be less repressive than Poland. The Polish case is less consistent and, depending on the index and the time span, tends to fluctuate between degrees of repression. Moreover, on some
indices, Poland even shows up as more repressive with regards to certain activities and less repressive with regard to others (see Table 2.1). The ambiguous results of the data with respect to Poland reflect the changing tactics of the Polish regime over the course of the 1980s, varying from considerable but uneasy tolerance of the opposition (such as during the emergence of Solidarity in 1980-81 and then again in the second half of the 1980s) to harsh repression (such as during and immediately after the martial law period). In Table 2.1, for instance, Poland’s relatively large score on “empowerment rights,” which includes freedom of religion, indicates how the regime was forced to acknowledge the role of the Catholic Church in society.

**Table 2.1 – Respect for rights (average scores for the years 1981-1989)**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Poland</th>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Integrity Index (0-8)</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empowerment Rights Index (0-10)</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect for Physical Integrity and Civil Liberties (0-14)</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Cingranelli-Richards Human Rights Dataset. The Physical Integrity index is an aggregate of indicators for instances of torture, extrajudicial killing, political imprisonment and disappearance. A score of 0 indicates no respect for physical integrity, while a score of 8 indicates full respect for physical integrity. The empowerment rights index is an aggregate of indicators for freedom of speech, freedom of movement, workers’ rights, political participation, and freedom of religion. It ranges from 0, indicating no respect for such rights, to 10 full respect for such rights.*

Such indices serve only as general indicators of trends in the two countries, capturing some of the differences in the approaches of the regimes toward their respective domestic oppositions in the 1970s and 1980s. The indicators fit with numerous qualitative studies that have found substantive differences between the two countries in terms of their approach to dissent and opposition. The regimes also varied in this regard over time between the 1940s and 1980s, but this study will focus on the substantive differences between them during the last two decades of communist rule.
The next section surveys the history of late communism in Poland and Hungary as a means of illustrating in some detail the manner in which the regime in each country handled the emergence of opposition.

**Poland**

*The Polish regime in the 1970s and 1980s*

For much of its existence, Poland’s communist regime was involved in a complex relationship with its domestic opponents, and its approach varied from direct repression to co-optation and even, on occasion, to accommodation. While the regime fiercely cracked down on demonstrations and protests on numerous occasions, it also sought to come to terms with various segments of society as a means of dampening grievances.

Communist rule in Poland was marked by relatively frequent crises and protests. Worker protests and strikes in 1956, 1970 and 1976 touched off major crises for the Polish regime and they were fiercely repressed. In the former two cases, they also led to changes in the leadership of the party itself.

In 1956, the regime harshly suppressed a workers’ strike in the western city of Poznań, which had been called to protest the raising of production targets and declining living standards. But after widespread expressions of public support for the strikers, a new leader, Władysław Gomulka, was installed at the head of the PZPR with the promise of a new era of reform and openness. But the reforms proved half-hearted and were eventually rolled back. Similarly, in 1970, after the regime announced sharp food price increases, workers at the Gdańsk shipyard went on strike. The army moved in to quell the workers and after several days of pitched battle in the streets of the coastal city, some 45 workers were dead. In response, the PZPR sacked Gomulka and replaced him with a new putative reformer, Edward Gierek, who managed to bring an end to the worker unrest in Gdańsk as well as Szczecin only after agreeing to rescind the price hikes and promising to introduce a new era of openness and reform.

Gierek did manage to preside over several years of calm, primarily by launching a new policy that emphasized the production and import of consumer products. But the policy, which was bankrolled in part by loans from Western creditors, ran into difficulties in the second half of the 1970s, as Poland’s external debt ballooned. Once again, in 1976,
the party decided to raise prices, and once again the move touched off worker protests, including particularly violent clashes with security forces in Ursus and Radom. Thousands of workers were fired, and some 2,500 were detained by police.40

Following the 1976 events, a number of opposition groups emerged and the Polish samizdat press grew exponentially. The Gierek regime responded to this outburst of opposition with arrests and harassment of the activists. But it did not engage in a more thorough crackdown on the new oppositional movements. This approach toward the opposition came to be known as “repressive tolerance” and it seemed to mirror the Kádár regime’s tactics. The reasons for this have been generally attributed to the Gierek regime’s need to secure support outside and inside of Poland for its policies of securing public acquiescence to PZPR rule through a focus on economic growth. For this policy, the regime needed to remain on good terms with Western creditors by demonstrating a modicum of support for human rights.41 In addition, by the late 1970s, with the installment of the Polish-born Pope John Paul II in the Vatican, the Catholic Church had become increasingly involved in providing a form of protection and even support to the opposition. The Gierek regime could ill afford a confrontation with the one institution that remained widely respected in Poland.42

Despite the regime’s best efforts, however, the economic situation of the country continued to deteriorate and debts to Western creditors continued to pile up. In an effort to stabilize the situation, the regime raised prices on a number of consumer items in 1980. This led to a chain reaction of worker strikes around the country, culminating in the dramatic worker stoppages at the shipyards in Gdańsk and Szczecin, and the formation of the Solidarity trade union movement. The creation of Solidarity in the summer of 1980 marked the beginning of a 16-month period during which the regime was forced to engage in a kind of cat-and-mouse game with a separate and independent movement. While the regime essentially tolerated the creation of Solidarity, as well as other affiliated independent unions and organizations, it also attempted to delay the implementation of agreements with Solidarity and engaged in harassment and intimidation of union

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40 Paczkowski, *The Spring Will Be Ours*, 379.
organizers. This cat-and-mouse game took place even as divisions opened up within the ruling PZPR. Many rank-and-file members of the party joined Solidarity, hoping to use union membership to voice criticism of the state of the country. Others formed “horizontal” party organizations that operated outside of the PZPR’s hierarchical structure. At the same time, hardliners within the party organized their own ancillary organizations and called for a crackdown on the “anti-social elements” behind Solidarity. The rise to prominence of General Wojciech Jaruzelski and his allies within the PZPR signaled an attempt to bring order to the party, and later, as it turned out, to society.

When the regime finally cracked down on Solidarity in December 1981, it used a massive mobilization of force. Under Jaruzelski, who had assumed the posts of prime minister and PZPR leader earlier in the year, a Council of National Salvation was formed to impose martial law on the country. Thousands of Solidarity leaders and activists were arrested or interned, internal and external communications were cut off, many workplaces were placed under direct military control, and a curfew was established. The worker strikes and demonstrations that sprang up to protest the imposition of martial law were put down violently by the regime’s ZOMO riot police, and the initial resistance to the crackdown was crushed by the end of December 1981.

Demonstrations continued intermittently in 1982 and 1983, and the regime continued to detain activists, arresting thousands more people during this period and sentencing some more than 2,500 to prison. Over the next few years, the regime engaged in a Janus-faced policy of intermittent mass arrests of activists followed by amnesties for many of them. But this policy failed to completely squelch Solidarity, and the movement survived underground led by several prominent activists who spent years evading arrest.

Moreover, as the 1980s continued, the regime’s position was increasingly undermined by two factors beyond the control of the opposition. In the first place, Poland’s economic situation, which had stabilized somewhat in the aftermath of the crackdown, was beginning to fall back into the familiar structural problems marked by shortages. The country was increasingly indebted to Western creditors and under pressure from Western governments to implement reforms and declare an amnesty for all imprisoned Solidarity activists. At the same time, the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev to the leadership of the Soviet Union in 1985 signaled a new approach from Moscow.
Gorbachev’s twin policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* suggested that a similar route might be attempted in Warsaw.

It was under these conditions that the regime attempted to deal with the country’s deteriorating economy through a series of reforms coupled with efforts to secure legitimacy for them. Thus in 1986, a final and general amnesty was declared for Solidarity activists, in part as a means of placating Western governments. The Jaruzelski regime hoped to draw some elements of the opposition as well as representatives of the Catholic Church into formal talks on reforms as a means of spreading responsibility for the deepening economic crisis, but the main Solidarity leadership was initially cool to these overtures.

An attempt by the regime to gain support for a new set of economic reforms through a referendum in November 1987 failed to gain the necessary 50 per cent turnout due in part to Solidarity’s counter-campaign calling on people to stay at home. Then, in 1988, the government’s move to raise food prices brought on a new wave of strikes. By the summer, with the regime unwilling to crack down on the resurgent Solidarity one more time, a new round of talks were opened up with Solidarity representatives.

In the end, then, the regime’s fierce crackdown on Solidarity failed to completely destroy the opposition and its efforts at creating a general societal consensus for necessary economic reforms failed to generate support or address the country’s structural socioeconomic problems. These failures eventually forced the regime to come to terms with the opposition.

*The Polish opposition in the 1970s and 1980s*43

The story of Poland’s anti-communist opposition is dominated by the phenomenon of Solidarity in the late communist conditions of the 1980s. But the roots of Solidarity dig deeply into the 1970s and beyond. As noted in the previous section, Poland’s post-war history was marked by repeated clashes between protesters and the regime.

Some of the most spectacular clashes involved workers protesting the regime’s economic policies, particularly those that occurred in 1956 and 1970. Another strand of opposition in Poland before the 1970s had been based around Catholic groups, such as ZNAK, that pushed the regime for recognition of their religious autonomy.

Meanwhile, much of the intellectual criticism of the regime before the 1970s came from reform Marxists who critiqued it for failing to live up to the true promise of socialism. This brand of opposition was particularly strong in the 1950s and 1960s. In the latter decade, as in other communist countries, university students added a New Left flavor to the opposition. This group led the student protests in 1968 that were crushed by a militia crackdown and vilified in a vicious propaganda campaign laced with anti-Semitism.

Prior to the 1970s, these various strands of opposition to the regime—the workers, the reform communist intelligentsia, and the Catholic groups—tended to operate in isolation from one another, both theoretically and practically. Each group had its own separate demands on the regime and each adopted different strategies for fulfilling those demands.

Beginning in the early 1970s and increasingly throughout the decade, connections were formed between the left-leaning secular opposition and the Catholic groups. The two currents of opposition started to engage in an exchange of views and a discussion of strategies in the samizdat press as well as in exile journals and the Catholic press.44

A second important step in the consolidation of opposition currents was the establishment of the Workers’ Defense Committee (KOR) in the aftermath of the 1976 crackdown on the worker protests in Ursus and Radom. Founded by a group of left-liberal and Catholic intellectuals, KOR’s central aim was to provide legal aid and financial support for the persecuted workers and their families, as well as to bring public attention to their plight. Beyond this immediate goal, however, KOR represented a qualitative change in the opposition. It was open as opposed to clandestine about its membership, its goals, and its methods. Furthermore, rather than an explicitly political approach, KOR stressed the issue of human rights and the fact that the regime was not

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respecting its international obligations to respect those rights. Nevertheless, as an independent organization that was bringing attention to the excesses of the regime, KOR played an inherently political role.

The establishment of KOR led to a veritable explosion of new independent groups and movements in Poland. In 1977, a group of intellectuals formed the Movement in Defense of Human and Civil Rights (ROPCiO), which emphasized a more national and Christian-democratic approach than KOR. ROPCiO eventually broke up, leading to the creation of new independent groups, including the Young Poland Movement and the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN). The KPN also represented something of a new departure for the Polish opposition, as it was the first such group to declare itself to be a political party.45

Meanwhile, the underground or samizdat press grew exponentially in the late 1970s. KOR made further efforts at a rapprochement with the worker groups by launching in 1977 a new samizdat bi-weekly called Robotnik (The Worker) aimed at a working class readership. Numerous other publications, pamphlets, flyers, and books rolled off the samizdat press in those years, adding to the dialogue and debate among opposition groups.

In the midst of this oppositional ferment, an event took place in the Vatican that would touch off a burst of social consciousness and pride among Poles: Karol Wojtyła, the archbishop of Kraków, became the new pope in 1978. The following year, the Polish pope returned to his homeland for a visit that saw millions of Poles come out to greet the man many regarded as their true, spiritual leader, vested with far greater authority and legitimacy than the country’s communist rulers. The PZPR, for its part, had been unwilling to stand in the way of Pope John Paul II’s visit to Poland. Instead, it attempted to downplay the visit, limiting television coverage of it and adopting a hands-off approach to the logistical organization of the pope’s movements around the country. The fact that the visit was carried off in an organized and peaceful manner was widely seen as a result of the ability of alternative groups in the country to organize on their own. The overwhelming message of the event was to underline the regime’s eroding legitimacy.

45 Paczkowski, *The Spring Will Be Ours*, 382.
while at the same time giving strength and confidence to the growing Polish opposition movement.

The formation of Solidarity was sparked by the regime’s decision in 1980 to raise food prices. As in 1976, this move touched off a wave of strikes that eventually engulfed the whole country, including all major cities, the iron and steel workers of the Katowice region, the miners of southern Poland, and, crucially, the Gdańsk shipyards. Supported by opposition advisers from KOR, who travelled to Gdańsk from Warsaw, and led by the electrician Lech Wałęsa, the workers of Gdańsk quickly became the heart of a series of inter-factory strike committees linked across the country. After a tense series of negotiations with Wałęsa and his advisers, the regime eventually acquiesced to the strikers’ central demand for an independent trade union.

In the aftermath of this landmark agreement, new committee organizations sprang up around the Gdańsk committee. In mid-September, delegates from several of the new committees gathered in Gdańsk for a meeting to discuss organizational issues. The meeting led to the formal establishment of Solidarity as a trade union led by a National Coordinating Commission (KKP) that later elected Wałęsa as its chairman. But although Solidarity rapidly adopted this unifying structure, it remained a highly decentralized organization with factory commissions as the basic unit of the union.

Over the course of the second half of 1980 and throughout 1981, Solidarity continued to develop organizationally. Its membership reached a staggering 10 million by the fall of 1981, amounting to more than one quarter of the population of Poland. But as it grew in size and influence, Solidarity was inevitably confronted with questions of internal organization, leadership, and relations with the regime. Although the overriding and central division in society continued to pit Solidarity and its supporters against the regime and its backers, rifts also appeared within the trade union.

There were disputes over tactics and strategies, as well as over the degree of internal decentralization that was appropriate for Solidarity. More than any other opposition movement in the region, Solidarity had stepped into the political arena. It could no longer assert itself as an apolitical organization or a practitioner of what the East-Central European dissident intellectuals of this era had come to describe as “anti-
politics.” It was no longer a matter of creating an alternative civil society beyond the confines of the party-state. After forcing the regime to recognize its right to exist, the Solidarity trade union had become a political player in Poland. It was involved in negotiations with the regime over a range of issues while at the same time representing a large swathe of Poland’s workers.

Wałęsa and his supporters felt that the best way of handling these tasks was to streamline the leadership. To that end, they created an executive committee that met more frequently than the union’s national commission. Others accused Wałęsa’s committee of undemocratically overriding the will of the national commission.

But the divisions in Solidarity were not merely organizational in nature. Wałęsa was increasingly criticized by some of the more radical members of the national commission for his reluctance to adopt a more confrontational approach with the regime. This division over tactics was aggravated by the regime’s reluctance to fulfill agreements with the union as well as the thinly veiled threats represented by Soviet and Polish military maneuvers both within the country and across the Polish-Soviet border. The more the regime stalled on implementing the Gdańsk agreement, the bolder some members of Solidarity became in their demands for economic and political reforms.

The range of opinions on such political and economic issues was richly diverse, including nationalist tendencies, radical trade unionism, advocacy of workers’ self-management, and support for Christian democracy. These opinions came out during Solidarity’s tempestuous first national congress in September. The program adopted at the end of the congress reflects this internal ideological diversity.

Following the Solidarity congress and as the fall of 1981 wore on, the situation seemed to deteriorate. The regime continued to stall on implementing the agreements with Solidarity, and wildcat strikes were occurring in different places around the country. Even the Solidarity leadership acknowledged at the end of October that the strikes were “spontaneous and unorganized.”

The imposition of martial law in December 1981 sent Solidarity into disarray. After a period of protests and strikes, the remnants of the union that had not been arrested

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46 For an incisive analysis of this dilemma, see Tony Judt, “The Dilemmas of Dissidence,” 195-199.
47 Paczkowski, The Spring Will Be Ours, 425.
48 Ibid 441.
were forced underground. Protests and strikes continued in 1982 and 1983, but these eventually dwindled away. The regime’s imposition of martial law touched off a debate within Solidarity over how the movement should react to its new circumstances. Once again, there were organizational and tactical divisions within the movement. In terms of the organizational structure of Solidarity, activists were divided between proponents of a strongly centralized structure that would be effective in carrying out decisions in the shadows of the underground and those who advocated the establishment of a loose and non-hierarchical network. The resolution to this debate saw the establishment of both an Interim Coordinating Commission (TKK) as a formal and symbolic sort of central leadership of the movement and a highly decentralized series of regional bodies.

The debate also featured disagreements over tactics in the underground. The depth of the bitterness created by the imposition of martial law was evident in the radical solutions advocated by some activists, such as Jacek Kuroń, Zbigniew Romaszewski, and Maciek Poleski, who called for various forms of active resistance, ranging from a general strike to the “use of force.” Others, however, felt that a long-term “positional struggle” was the best way forward, involving the painstaking reconstruction of an independent civil society from the underground through the establishment of groups and organizations and underground publishing activity. For its part, the Catholic Church adopted a cautious approach, calling for a compromise solution between Solidarity and the regime. In the end, the route of long-term, underground activity and samizdat publishing was adopted, in part because of the sheer difficulty of organizing a general strike under the conditions of martial law.

But not all of Solidarity’s activists were content with the resolution to these internal debates after martial law. Some broke off from the main body of the movement, and created their own groups, such as Fighting Solidarity, one of the more radical offshoots established in Warsaw. Others tended to disagree with the direction of the TKK, and sought to carve out greater autonomy within the broader Solidarity movement. Meanwhile, the KPN, which had been pulverized by the regime’s crackdown and the

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imprisonment of most of its activists, re-emerged later as an independent movement.

The situation changed after the final round of amnesties had released all of Solidarity’s leaders in 1986. The union began the work of re-constructing itself. Wałęsa organized a group of advisers consisting of prominent opposition activists. This move touched off a wave of efforts on the part of underground regional Solidarity groups and factory-level cells to establish their own local committees.51 Divisions remained between the main body activists who supported Wałęsa and the TKK on the one hand, and those who were unhappy with his leadership on the other. Some of this latter group started to organize their own separate bodies. But by October 1987, Wałęsa was firmly at the head of Solidarity’s newly re-established national executive commission.

At the same time, the slowly widening latitude for opposition activity in the late 1980s had opened up a space for a wide variety of opposition groups to emerge, including the student-led Freedom and Peace movement, the unorthodox Orange Alternative movement, and a growing variety of other Church-based and secular groups.

The PZPR was at a crossroads. The economy was deteriorating rapidly amid pressure from Western creditors. The opposition, seizing the opportunity presented by a loosening of the restrictions on its activity, was re-emerging and diversifying.

As for Solidarity, it was clearly not at the same level of strength it had achieved in 1981, when it counted some 10 million members. But the re-emergence of the banned trade union as a national force under Wałęsa’s leadership, as well as at the regional level with the establishment of local committees, was undeniable.

It seemed increasingly evident that the PZPR leadership would either have to risk a dramatic re-enactment of its violent showdown with Solidarity and the striking workers or else come to terms with the movement and agree to a common course of economic and political reform. The strikes against price rises that had spread across the country in 1988 finally provided the impetus for serious negotiations between the regime and Solidarity. After the Solidarity leadership managed to get most of the strikers back on the job, the talks, which were encouraged and mediated by church officials, began on an informal basis and eventually a more formal series of exchanges beginning in September. The formal Roundtable negotiations took place between February and April and a final deal

51 Paczkowski, *The Spring Will Be Ours*, 486-487.
was reached on 4 April. The agreement provided for partially free elections to the Sejm and fully free elections to a newly created Senate. Solidarity, which was formally re-legalized in mid-April, set up a series of Citizens’ Committees across the country to run the elections and select candidates who were endorsed by Wałęsa.

The campaign was framed by the Roundtable agreement as “non-confrontational.” In the end, though, it turned into a referendum on communism. The opposition framed its campaign around the idea that the elections, although only partially free, represented an opportunity for the public to exert some influence on the political process in the country.

On election day, Solidarity’s victory was massive. The movement won 160 of the 161 Sejm seats it was permitted to contest and 92 of the 100 Senate seats in the first round. In the subsequent round, Solidarity also took the remaining Sejm seat and seven of the remaining eight Senate seats. Even more embarrassing for the ruling party, only three of the candidates running for the seats reserved for the regime’s parties won their seats in the first round. This allowed the Solidarity citizens’ committees to exert influence on the second round of the elections by endorsing more reform-minded candidates from the PZPR and its allied parties.

After a summer of tense negotiations, a Solidarity-led coalition government was set up. Led by Solidarity adviser Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the cabinet included ministers from Solidarity, the PZPR, and the regime’s two satellite parties, the Union of Peasants and the Democratic Party.

**Hungary**

_The Hungarian regime in the 1970s and 1980s_

The pivotal year for the Hungarian communist regime was 1956, when a Soviet military intervention crushed an attempted revolt against the regime led by former communist leader Imre Nagy. The far-reaching revolt, which lasted only a few days in October and November, even led to the dissolution of the communist party and the secret police. But just as quickly as it had been launched, the revolution was crushed amid several days of street fighting in Budapest and elsewhere that led to the deaths of some 4,000 Hungarians and close to 700 Soviet military personnel. In the aftermath of the intervention, a new Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party (MSZMP) was established with János Kádár at its
head. In the course of establishing his control over the party and country, Kádár managed to eliminate both the reformist elements that had spearheaded the revolution and the Stalinist conservative elements that had controlled the party before Nagy. The repression of the crushed revolt was fierce, with some 35,000 Hungarians arrested for their roles in the revolution and 22,000 of them sentenced to prison and a between 280 and 300 executed.52

By the early 1960s, after a few years of harsh repression and reprisals against those involved in the revolt, Kádár’s regime had begun to settle into a substantively less repressive approach toward its critics. The reasons for this change in approach have been variously attributed to factional struggles within the party, the influence of the international context and the Soviet leadership, or to a combination of factors including the relationship between the party-state and Hungarian society. Whatever the reason for it, from the 1960s onward, the Hungarian regime adopted a more relaxed stance toward non-party intellectuals as well as to certain kinds of independent thought.

Although the regime still resorted to repressive measures against dissidents, these were generally less harsh than in other communist bloc countries and were mixed with efforts at co-optation. The Hungarian communist regime also cultivated contacts with various non-party intellectuals. These contacts increased dramatically by the end of the 1980s, even leading to a form of open cooperation between the MSZMP’s reform wing and one part of the opposition. Hungary’s particular approach toward opposition is evident in the indices on state repression is consistently among the least repressive communist regimes in the region. The regime’s approach between the late 1950s right up to its demise in 1989 has been described as one of “strategic retreat” from the “politically, economically and ideologically untenable original Stalinist positions.”53 In this vein, Kádár made his well-known offer of a compromise to non-party intellectuals in the early 1960s, declaring that “he who is not against us is with us.”54 What followed was an attempt to manage non-party intellectuals who might be critical of the regime by either

52 Ekiert, The State Against Society, 23.
54 The oft-cited Kádár bargain is discussed in many places. See, for example, Tony Judt, “The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe,” East European Politics and Societies, 2 (2), March 1988, 229.
co-opting them or marginalizing them. As long as they did not broach certain topics, such as the 1956 crisis or the country’s allegiance to the Soviet Union, the intellectuals were granted a certain degree of maneuverability. To this end, the regime maintained various forms of contact with its non-party members of the intelligentsia. These policies, along with the regime’s attempts at limited liberalization within the confines of a centrally planned economy, made the Hungarian communist system stand out from other Soviet bloc regimes.

This is not to say that the Hungarian communists allowed their critics free reign. The implicit threat of repression was always present, and the regime could and did take action against certain dissidents and activists. Moreover, repressive measures tended to wax and wane over the course of the three decades after the 1956 crisis. In the early 1970s, for example, the Hungarian communists tightened the screws on dissent in response to pressure from Leonid Brezhnev’s regime in Moscow. This period saw numerous critical intellectuals lose their positions in the public sector. Another period of tougher actions against dissent came in the early 1980s, when police broke up some samizdat printing houses and subjected some dissidents to physical attacks. In general, though, the repressive measures over the course of the 1970s and 1980s tended to be less harsh than those employed by the neighboring Czechoslovak communists. The practice of staging show trials and issuing prison sentences for dissidents, for instance, was ended in Hungary by the 1960s and 1970s.

Various observers have suggested that the opposition in Hungary was able to make use of this complex “dialectic between repression and tolerance” employed by the ruling MSZMP. At the same time, though, the relatively larger space within which they were allowed to maneuver created its own specific difficulties for Hungarian opposition groups. Opposition groups in Hungary were faced with the question of whether it was better to engage the regime as a political opposition or maintain a critical distance from it.

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57 Falk, The Dilemmas of Dissent.
and focus their efforts on fostering an alternative civil society.\footnote{Judt, “The Dilemmas of Dissidence,” 197-198.} This dilemma was dealt with in different ways by different groups of Hungarian non-party intellectuals. Whereas some groups sought to use the regime’s relative tolerance to press their demands from within the system, others remained outside of it. These different attitudes also reflected different treatment from the regime. Hungarian opposition intellectual life was historically divided between two central groups: a national populist group based outside of the capital in the provincial towns of Hungary and an urban group based in Budapest. By the 1980s, the regime maintained active contacts with the former group.

\textit{The Hungarian opposition in the 1970s and 1980s}

The diverse origins of the various opposition movements which took part in the negotiations to end the Hungarian communist regime in 1989 can be traced back to at least the 1970s or even 1960s. Two major and distinct strands of opposition activity contributed to the creation of the key movements of the late 1980s: the national-populist group and the more urban and secular group known as the “democratic opposition.”\footnote{This account of Hungary’s opposition and the transition of 1989 was influenced by a set of interviews with former opposition activists conducted in Hungary in 2005 and 2006 as well as secondary historical accounts. The interviews are listed in the appendix. The secondary historical sources include Rudolf L. Tokes, \textit{Hungary’s Negotiated Revolution}; Máté Szabó, “Hungary,” in Pollack and Wielgohs, eds., \textit{Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe}; András Bozóki, \textit{The Roundtable Talks of 1989: The Genesis of Hungarian Democracy} (Budapest: The Central European University Press, 2002).}

The national or populist strand of the opposition was developed by a collection of writers and historians who saw themselves as carrying on the literary and intellectual tradition of Hungary’s so-called \textit{nepi} writers of the 1930s. The \textit{nepi} group, which loosely translates as “national” or “patriotic,” was focused on capturing and recording the indigenous folk culture of Hungary, especially in the villages, and promoting it as a cultural alternative to the influences of modernity at the beginning of the 20th century. A collection of writers and sociologists, these activists sought to defend and develop a uniquely Hungarian approach to modernization as a means of raising the living standards and cultural life of the country’s rural areas especially. They tended to be ambivalent about the other ideologies then sweeping across Europe, whether it was fascism, communism, or liberalism. Instead, the populist writers sought to carve out a “third way”
between the leftist and rightist extremes of their era, although they did not always hold the representatives of those extremes at arm’s length.

After the Second World War and the subsequent establishment of the communist regime, the national-populist group was forced to adopt a stance on the regime. Some joined the Communist Party while others joined the National Peasant Party (until the latter was dissolved by the rise of Stalinist communism in Hungary). In 1956, many key *nepi* writers stood on the side of the Hungarian uprising against Soviet hegemony, and some were imprisoned when the uprising was crushed by Soviet tanks.

By the beginning of the 1960s, with the Kádár regime easing the post-1956 repression, the national-populist intellectuals were prepared to establish a *modus vivendi* with the communists, and in particular with the regime’s cultural czar György Aczél. In a more or less unwritten agreement, the populists essentially agreed to avoid openly criticizing Hungary’s relationship with the Soviet Union and the events of 1956 in exchange for the regime’s permission to engage in some literary activities with little or no interference from the Kádár regime. Nevertheless, many of the key figures of the nationalist-popular tradition, while permitted to work in their own areas, continued to toil in low-ranking positions.

In contrast to the populist group, the collection of dissidents who formed the democratic opposition in the 1970s and 1980s, were more openly critical of the regime. In some broad sense, they were the heirs to Hungary’s so-called urbanist intellectuals of the inter-war years, a pro-Western group that stood in opposition to the populist tradition. The urbanists espoused Western ideas about universalism and liberalism.

After World War II, and in particular from the 1960s onward, the tradition of the urbanists was carried on by a group of Marxist intellectuals. Many of them emerged as philosophers and sociologists from the Budapest School of the Marxist philosopher György Lukacs, who had served in Imre Nagy’s ill-fated revolutionary government of 1956. But while their intellectual origins could be traced to the revisionist Marxism of the 1960s, the leading figures of the urbanist opposition gradually moved during the 1970s to a defense of liberalism, human rights, and democratic values. This was the foundation of the dissident group that became known as the democratic opposition.
The democratic opposition engaged in open dissent against the regime, publishing various treatises, critiques, and journals in the underground samizdat press that attacked the Kádáríst form of communism. They also organized petitions in support of dissidents in neighboring communist countries. As a result, they were also more harshly treated by the regime.

The regime’s decision to open up the electoral process for parliament to multi-candidate contests in 1985 provided an early opening for independent candidates and some members of the opposition. While the regime kept the process under control and ensured that all active communist politicians were elected, the procedural rules enabled candidates to be nominated from the floor during nomination meetings. This was exploited by members of the opposition to get their own candidates nominated, in particular Gáspár Miklós Tamás and Lazslo Rajk. In the end, though, no members of the opposition made it on the ballot, as communist officials were able to block them. But the nominations held at least some significance in and of themselves. Once a candidate was nominated, they were formally safe from legal sanctions during the meeting, enabling members of the opposition to engage in debates with party members and the public during the meetings. Moreover, while none of the active members of the opposition managed to get past the nomination stage, several other independent, non-communist candidates were nominated. Opportunities for increasingly open dissent and opposition grew steadily in the 1980s, drawing an increasing number of people into oppositional activities related to the environment, the peace movement, civil rights, and various other issues.62

Along with this increased activity, by the late 1980s the Hungarian opposition started to crystallize into more coherent organizational forms. As noted above, the Hungarian opposition was split between populist and urbanist camps. Still, there were various personal contacts between members of the different groups, and in the mid-1980s, serious efforts were launched to form a common front. The most significant attempt took place in June 1985 at a meeting in the town of Monor, which brought together a few dozen members of the democratic opposition and the populists to discuss

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62 For an account of the increasing diversity of Hungary’s oppositional politics in this period, see Padraic Kenney, A Carnival of Revolution.
various issues of common concern. At the meeting, both sides were critical of the regime, but differences remained over the meaning and significance of various issues. The populist writers tended to emphasize their concern for the plight of Hungarian minorities living under the communist regimes of Romania and Czechoslovakia as well as the moral and cultural decline of Hungarian society itself. The democratic opposition, by contrast, tended to view the issue of Hungarian minorities within the broader context of human rights in general and respect for the rule of law.63

In 1987, the democratic opposition produced and distributed in the samizdat publication _Beszélő_ a document entitled the Social Contract. The document contained a detailed compendium of criticisms of regime policies and proposals for the future direction of the country. Members of the national-popular group argued that the document represented an attempt by the Budapest-based dissidents to seize control of the overall opposition movement to the regime. The democratic opposition group rejected these criticisms as unfounded.

By the fall of 1987, then, relations between the two main strands of the Hungarian opposition had soured once again. Although individual members of the two groups were to cooperate in some ways afterward and the two groups would also work together in 1989 and 1990 to negotiate an end to the regime and facilitate the transition, they never again came close to forming a joint organizational front. Efforts to stage a second joint meeting of the two strands of opposition were underway in 1987, but the second joint meeting never took place amid mutual recriminations related to disagreements over tactics and philosophies. From that point on, the two groups developed separately. Fundamentally, the key difference between the two groups at this stage reflected the populists’ desire to use a moderate approach in calling for changes to the regime and to cultivate ties to the reformist wing of the ruling MSZMP as opposed to the democratic opposition’s more radically anti-communist stance.

Both groups, however, aspired to lead the formation of public forums for discussing the country’s pressing economic and political problems. To that end, the national-populist group founded the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) at a meeting in

63 For accounts of the meeting, see Tokes, Hungary’s Negotiated Revolution, 190-191; Szabó, “Hungary,” 64-65.
the town of Lakitelek in the fall of 1987, with the acquiescence and support of the
reformist wing of the MSZMP. A few months later, in the spring of 1988, the democratic
opposition established a Network of Free Initiatives, which was aimed at facilitating open
debate and discussion on public issues as well as coordinating the disparate activities of
the country’s burgeoning independent associational life. That same spring, a group of law
students and recent graduates of the István Bibó residential college formed the Alliance
of Young Democrats (Fidesz) with the aim of providing a non-communist alternative to
the officially sanctioned youth organization. The years 1988 and 1989 saw the formation
of numerous independent associations and groups in reflection of the regime’s ever
loosening restrictions on public space. Unions, professional associations, and revivals of
pre- and post-war political parties surfaced in this period.

The regime attempted to differentiate between these different independent groups,
offering to conduct bilateral discussions with some, such as the MDF, and declaring
others to be enemies, such as SZDSZ and Fidesz. But in response to these tactics, the
various opposition movements moved to coordinate their activities and strategies in a
joint Opposition Roundtable (EKA). By the spring and summer of 1989, the various
independent movements were in agreement that they would present a united front in talks
with the communists, even while maintaining their separate organizations. The
Roundtable Talks lasted from June to October 1988, and they led to agreement on fully
free and fair elections that were held the next year.

Before that could happen, however, the fractious Hungarian opposition split
again, this time over the question of the presidency. The SZDSZ and Fidesz argued in
favour of delaying presidential elections until after the parliamentary vote, while MDF
and the MSZMP supported early presidential elections. The issue was resolved in a
referendum in which the public supported the SZDSZ and Fidesz position. The division
of the opposition over this question and their separate referendum campaigns presaged
the electoral contest in Hungary, which saw the opposition groups engage in heated
attacks on each other as well as on the communists.64

64 The decision by SZDSZ and Fidesz not to sign the final agreement and to push for a referendum on the
question of the timing of the presidential elections will be dealt with in greater detail in the subsequent
chapter.
Conclusions

The anti-communist opposition movements of the 1970s and 1980s in Poland and Hungary faced differing sets of constraints and opportunities. These differences resulted in part from the specific mix of tactics used by the communist regime in each country in confronting its domestic opponents. The relationship between the regime and the opposition, in turn, coloured the particular manner in which the transition to democracy occurred in each country.

In Hungary, the regime maintained a mixed approach to the repression of opposition during the 1970s and 1980s. The regime could and did resort to direct police harassment against opposition groups, but in general, independent intellectuals had greater room to critique social conditions Hungary than elsewhere in the Soviet bloc. Moreover, conditions for opposition became even less restrictive as the second half of the 1980s progressed, leading to the creation of various opposition organizations and parties. The regime used differing approaches toward these groups, encouraging the development of some of them while regarding others as enemies. But the strategic efforts of these various opposition groups to create a united front in favour of change, along with the deteriorating economic conditions, eventually compelled the regime to enter direct negotiations with all opposition groups. These talks led to agreement on a detailed blueprint for transition that included a full and complete transition to party-based competition. The efforts of the communist party during this period, particularly those of its reformist wing, narrowed the gap between it and the opposition groups.

In Poland, the communist regime also used a mix of repression and tolerance vis-à-vis the opposition in the 1970s. It was in the relatively tolerant period of the late 1970s that numerous opposition groups appeared in Poland. The appearance of Solidarity in 1980, which owed much to the various forms of intellectual and working class organizing in the late 1970s, changed the dynamic in Poland. The 16 months of Solidarity’s existence saw an unprecedented degree of oppositional organization and activity for communist East-Central Europe. The regime’s decision to abruptly and harshly suppress the movement at the end 1981 marked a major watershed in the division between the state and society. Nevertheless, the state was not able to completely eliminate Solidarity, leading to stalemate between the two sides. Faced with major economic challenges as
well as the continued existence of the most powerful opposition movement in East-Central Europe, the regime was compelled in the late 1980s to sit down for negotiations with its opponents. The negotiated nature of the transition owed much to the fact that Poland was the first country in the region to embark this path. As a result, the geopolitical situation, particularly with regard to potential Soviet reaction, was uncertain. For both sides, the roundtable talks were a necessity created by the disastrous economic situation and the perceived stalemate between a powerful opposition and party-state. It was not a sign of historic reconciliation. Moreover, the negotiated nature of the transition made the participants in those negotiations on the opposition side vulnerable to criticisms that they had given away too much. This was an argument that was used very effectively by other segments of the opposition after 1989. The reason for its effectiveness lies in the depth of distrust between the opposition as a whole and the regime caused by the memory of the imposition of martial law.

Therefore, the nature of the relationship between the regime in each country and its domestic opposition varied significantly, from the mixed and relatively lenient approach of Hungary to a mixed approach in Poland that was, however, punctuated by the traumatic experience of martial law and its aftermath. These historical differences, which were directly experienced by the leading members of the opposition in each country, were carried over into the new era of party-based competition.
Chapter 3 – Staking out positions

Much has been written about the early years of the transition from communism in Central Europe. For the purposes of this study, it is important to return to those chaotic early years of the post-communist era in order to view the rise to power of the anti-communist umbrella movements and their subsequent unravelling amid disputes over crystallizing policy preferences. This chapter will re-evaluate the early attempts of the anti-communist movements to form viable and cohesive political parties in their efforts to win at the game of political party competition. A re-visiting of this era of the early 1990s, as viewed through the lens of these policy disputes and the problem of creating a political party – of cohesion, in other words – will reveal how the process of working within ideologically diverse contexts undermined political party cohesion. The solution to this problem was for the anti-communist liberals and conservatives to definitively part ways and seek other partners with whom to govern. Subsequent chapters will demonstrate that the only way to do this was to overcome the regime divide.

Under the communist regime and right up through the negotiations to bring about the transition to democracy, the divisions within the anti-communist opposition movements tended to have the character of strategic debates. Different activists within the movement advocated different strategies for opposing and eventually bringing about the end of the regime. The underlying ideological diversity within the movements tended to be less visible, although there was a general awareness of such divisions among the activists themselves.

The founding elections and the arrival in power of the opposition signalled a major change in circumstances. Opposition activists, now involved in a nascent form of democratic politics, had to alter their behaviour. If the party of the ancien régime had been defeated, the erstwhile “opposition” activists now found themselves in a drastically different role. The major tasks of transforming the economic, political, and legal spheres of the country lay ahead. But first, there was the issue of dividing up the spoils of victory in the form of government posts and, through them, influence over key areas of the transition as well as over the country’s political scene. In a sense, then, having disposed
of the primary enemy, the opposition activists now faced each other as competitors.\textsuperscript{65} This dynamic was accentuated all the more if the former ruling party was in disarray and therefore viewed as non-threatening.

The disputes within the opposition camp would be fueled by the ambitions of different politicians in terms of both policy and office goals. Those goals could be expected to intersect in some cases as politicians sought important executive or legislative offices for their own sake and/or for the sake of improving their chances of seeing their policy preferences implemented. For the purposes of the overall cohesiveness of the movements, the underlying motivation for the disputes is less relevant than the fact that these struggles among erstwhile allies in the opposition movements placed deep strains on the unity of those movements.

Policy disputes flowed from the changing circumstances of the movement as it assumed control of the government. If the former anti-communist opposition was composed of a diverse group of activists with varied ideological leanings, it was inevitable that they would have varied attitudes toward the various policy questions confronting their country. Disputes could be expected to emerge over various policy issues that had the tendency to divide the movement into different camps.\textsuperscript{66} This is not to say that widespread agreement did not exist in many basic areas, such as the overall direction of the transition to a Western-style liberal democracy. But within this broad framework, differences started to emerge over specific policy questions.

These differences can be grouped into three central dimensions of policy competition: an economic-distributive dimension, a socio-cultural dimension, and a dimension capturing the attitude toward dealing with the country’s communist past. The first two of these dimensions represent the classic Euclidean division of the policy space widely used in the literature and which scholars have found to be relevant to the post-communist societies of East-Central Europe as well.\textsuperscript{67} The specific dynamics of the post-


\textsuperscript{66} This dynamic is discussed in Ágh, \textit{Emerging Democracies}, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{67} See, for example, Kitschelt, Mansfedlova, Markowski and Toka, 62-7, where, in addition, to the three divides I focus on here, the authors also discuss potential national-cosmopolitan divides and ethnic divides in East-Central European polities. Similar dimensions of competition, under different names and sometimes characterized as more durable and akin to cleavages, have been applied to post-communist East-Central Europe by a variety of scholars, including Kenneth Benoit and Michael Laver, \textit{Party Policy in Modern}
communist transition could be expected to give rise to economic-distributive concerns in particular, as the government began the process of transforming the economy, involving the liberalization of prices and the reallocation of resources. In addition, socio-cultural concerns, including particular issues related to religion, which were long suppressed under the former communist regime, emerged as significant aspects of the post-communist political space. Finally, the recent history of the countries, as well as the origins of some of the most important parties in either the former anti-communist opposition or the communist regime, were likely to create specific competitive dimension involving attitudes toward the former regime.68

Aside from their own potential policy-based preferences or ideological leanings, the former opposition activists of the region had a pragmatic reason for wanting to distinguish themselves from each other along one or more of these competitive dimensions. The finite number of leadership and government positions inevitably led to competition for those positions among aspiring leaders in the former opposition movement. While this competition may in some cases have had more to do with personal power struggles than with ideological differences, the broader political context in any case provided these activists-turned-politicians with a means of framing their struggle in terms of loftier, policy-based goals. The transformation of personal power struggles for the spoils of office into policy-based competition also enabled the actors involved in these disputes to appeal for support from the broader public.

At least some of the movement leaders involved in the first post-communist government and occupied with the myriad tasks of systemic transformation had their eyes on the next set of elections.69 This means they had to position themselves to secure public support in advance of those elections. And the economic and social difficulties associated with the systemic transformation of formerly communist countries provided them with a

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69 Politicians may have differing time horizons, but in general, most political party leaders tend to look forward to the next set of elections, see Wolfgang C. Müller and K. Strøm, Policy, Office, or Votes? (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10-11, 21, and 25.
means of doing so. As these controversies emerged over specific government policies and the necessary changes required to transform the economy, different political leaders perceived opportunities to distinguish themselves from each other by criticizing government policies, suggesting alternatives, or comparing their own capabilities in particular policy areas to other incumbent politicians. The more they framed their appeals around issues and competitive dimensions that could potentially secure support in the broader public, the more likely they were to be successful in forming a new political base for themselves separate from the original movement.

Both the policy-seeking and office-seeking reasons for internal disputes in the original opposition movements presented activist leaders with the same dilemma. They led to a struggle for control of the overall movement, or at least of a substantial portion of the movement. The political infighting involved attempts to secure key organizational positions within the movement or within the governing structures of the country, including the cabinet and parliament. The fight could pit members of the movement leadership who were catapulted into key offices as a result of the regime change against those leading activists who did not manage to secure such offices. It could also pit different members of the opposition-led government against each other. It often involved a struggle over the movement’s leadership and rank-and-file membership as well as disputes over the historical role of the movement, its structure and ideology, even its very ethos.

However these struggles within the movement emerged, their resolution forced the movement’s leading members to decide in advance of the second set of elections whether to remain loyal to the movement despite these disputes or exit from it and form their own organization.⁷⁰

Hirschman has taught us that the effective use of the exit option depends on its feasibility. Movement activists who decided to exit were taking a major risk. At this stage of the East-Central European transition, however, it was often a risk worth taking. For one, the opposition movements that came to power in 1989 had weak structures with limited organizational connections to members and electorates. In other words, voters and

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rank-and-file members of the movement were, to some extent at least, potentially “available” to political entrepreneurs with the ability to galvanize them. At the same time, the leading figures of the movement often benefited from their reputations as prominent members of the anti-communist opposition, from key positions in state institutions with access to resources, from the intense media coverage of their every move or from some combination of these advantages.

In that sense, leading activists within the former anti-communist opposition movements that came to power in 1989-1990 had many incentives to break off from the original movement and compete with each other along one or more of the competitive dimensions outlined above. This held true all the more so as long as the former communist party was weak and in disarray following the collapse of the previous regime. For even as the economic and socio-cultural competitive dimensions began to separate out the different strands of the former opposition, the regime divide continued to separate the former communists from the former oppositionists. But with the post-communist party severely weakened by the collapse of the former party-state, the various strands of the opposition could afford to abandon their former sense of unity. Indeed, it was widely believed at the beginning of the 1990s that the former communist parties were doomed to extinction as discredited purveyors of a dead-end ideology. The relatively weak support those parties managed to garner in the first free and fair elections, and the concentration of that support among pensioners, seemed to confirm the general impression that it was only a matter of time before the former communists would fade away completely. In its place, many observers expected the former opposition movements to eventually divide into parties representing the classic “left” and “right” dimensions of the political spectrum.

Thus with broad policy-based or office-seeking incentives to break up the movements, and in the perceived absence or severe weakness of their previous communist enemies, the new leaders of East-Central Europe tore their own organizations into a myriad of pieces during the first months and years after their rise to power.

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The following section examines this process of fragmentation in each country with the aim of demonstrating how the emerging conflicts within the triumphant opposition movements in each country played themselves out in the organizational choices and strategies of the movement leaders. These choices had important implications for the structuring of the political party system in each country.

This section will also consider alternative explanations, such as institutional or idiosyncratic approaches to explaining the relative fragmentation of the post-opposition parties in the two countries.

The fight for office
Soon after the establishment of the Mazowiecki government, a debate opened up within Solidarity regarding the future organization of the union. By this point, the Solidarity banner had stretched to encompass various fields of activity within different institutions and sectors of society. It had its representatives in government and parliament, in the civic committees that had organized the election campaign, in the media, and, naturally, in the plants and mines where the union was active. The broad sweep of Solidarity’s divergent activities created different nodes of leadership and influence, which, while initially not in direct conflict with each other, contained the seeds of future power struggles that would eventually rip the movement apart.

There was the actual Solidarity trade union, which was based on plant-level organizations that were linked to regional bodies and ultimately to the national executive commission based in Gdańsk. With the internationally renowned Lech Wałęsa at its head, the union was still seen as a key focal point for Solidarity. But with 2 million members in mid-1989, it was significantly reduced in terms of the size of its membership from its peak in 1981. Moreover, the union’s membership levels essentially stagnated after the Solidarity-led government came to power.72

Alongside the union, there were the Citizens’ Committees (KOs) based in communities across the country that had run the election campaign of April-June 1989.

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Thrown together within just a few weeks during the run up to the June 1989 elections, the committees were still loose and decentralized. While the KOs were technically led by Wałęsa’s National Citizens’ Committee, they were also tied to the parliamentary club (OKP) led by Bronisław Geremek. The OKP, in turn, served initially as the main source of legislative support for the Mazowiecki government.

Solidarity was also a popular movement of liberation that had brought an end to the communist domination of Poland. This was often referred to as the “ethos” of Solidarity, a vision of the movement that saw it as representing the people of Poland in the face of the foreign-backed communist power. For the time being, this was what held the disparate segments of Solidarity together.

But, while completely dominant at this stage, Solidarity was not the only actor on the ex-opposition stage at this point. There were other opposition groups, including the various offshoots of Solidarity, such as Solidarity 80, as well as completely separate organizations, such as Leszek Moczulski’s Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN). New parties and groups were also forming both within and alongside Solidarity. Some of the founders of these groups, such as the Christian National Union (ZChN) and the Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD), ran in the elections under the banner of Solidarity.

These organizational and institutional divisions within Solidarity between the trade union, the OKP, the KO grassroots, and the Mazowiecki cabinet were accompanied by underlying ideological divisions. The latter were less apparent at the time because of the predominant pro-market stance of many leading figures in the Mazowiecki government, the OKP, and the trade union.

The cracks did not take long to become evident. By the end of 1989 and the beginning of 1990, events would occur in and around Poland that would lead to the aggravation of Solidarity’s simmering internal problems. First, the collapse of communist regimes around the region and the installment of non-communist governments and presidents in those countries suddenly made Poland, with its contract Sejm and

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75 Ost, *The Defeat of Solidarity*. 
communist president, seem behind the curve of events rather than at the forefront. Second, the dissolution of the PZPR in January 1990, and its replacement with two new formations, the Social Democracy of Poland (SdRP) and the Polish Social Democratic Union (PUS) changed the political landscape inside the country. These events, coming in rapid succession within a few months, seemed to some observers to invalidate the Polish Roundtable agreements or at least render them out of step with the turning tide of history.

It was in this context, in early 1990, that Wałęsa and others started to push for reopening the question of the presidency, and to propose the legendary Solidarity leader as a candidate for the office. Faced with the Mazowiecki camp’s preference for a continuation of Poland’s gradual transition to democracy, Wałęsa and his backers grew impatient. Bitter disputes erupted between Wałęsa and Mazowiecki supporters over the reform process, the issue of the presidency, and the future of the Solidarity movement itself. Mazowiecki and his backers wanted to maintain the movement as a united group representing the “Solidarity ethos,” while Wałęsa’s supporters argued for a pluralization of the political scene. Also, Wałęsa and his supporters criticized the government’s approach to the transformation of Poland, arguing for “acceleration” in the face of growing popular discontent with the country’s difficult economic conditions. Wałęsa himself, as well as some of his backers, were explicit about the need to channel the discontent and frustrations of the public into support for their own political agenda in part as a means of preventing others, such as the former communist All-Poland Association of Trade Unions (OPZZ), from doing so.

Eventually, Solidarity cracked under the pressure of these disputes and broke up into several disparate groups. A group backing Wałęsa, and led by the twin brothers Jarosław and Lech Kaczyński, formed the Centre Accord (PC) movement. Mazowiecki’s backers formed the Civic Movement for Democratic Action (ROAD). Other new formations that emerged from under the Solidarity mantle included the Liberal

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Democratic Congress (KLD), the Solidarity Peasant Party (PSL-S), the Christian Democratic Labor Party (ChDSP), and the Christian National Union (ZChN).  

While the Solidarity movement actually shattered into numerous different groups, the division came to be personified by Wałęsa and Mazowiecki. After Jaruzelski was convinced to step aside and allow for a presidential election, both Wałęsa and Mazowiecki launched their own bids for the office. The two campaigns divided the successor organizations of Solidarity, with Wałęsa securing the broad backing of the Solidarity trade union movement, the liberal KLD, Christian Democratic ZChN, the peasant grouping PSL-S, and the PC of the Kaczyński brothers, while Mazowiecki received the backing of ROAD and yet another smaller formation. Mazowiecki’s failure to advance to the second round of the election triggered the collapse of his government.

Even greater fragmentation occurred in the lead up to the 1991 parliamentary elections as more splinter groups emerged from the wreckage of Solidarity and numerous new proto-parties and amorphous groupings were formed. By the time of the fall 1991 vote, dozens of new groups had formed to run in the elections, with many running in only one or two districts. In the end, a total of 29 electoral committees gained parliamentary representation, aided by a proportional electoral system with virtually no threshold. But not all the fragmentation can be blamed on the electoral rules.

By this time, despite the tremendous organizational diversity in the Sejm, the Polish political party system started to assume at least the outlines of standard competitive dimensions. Many of the existing parties and proto-parties could be grouped into “party families” based on their electoral programs and the policies they supported in parliament. There were secular-liberal, Christian-national, and social-democratic groups of parties. The secular-liberals included the pro-market KLD and Mazowiecki’s UD. The latter, however, was among the looser formations in ideological terms, grouping together market-liberals, social-liberals, and even some moderate Christian Democrats. Second, the Christian-national or conservative grouping included the PC, ZChN, and a range of

79 Ibid, 476-477.
80 Ibid, 480-481.
other small Christian Democratic groups. Finally, the social democrats included the Union of Labor (UP), a small leftist group consisting of some former communists and members of Solidarity, as well as the Democratic Left Alliance SLD, a coalition that included the main successor to the former PZPR and the communist-era trade unions.82 There was also a peasant-based grouping, represented mainly by the Polish Peasant Party (PSL), a successor to one of the fellow-traveler parties of the former communist regime, and some Solidarity peasant-based groupings.83

As these different party groupings struggled for influence and votes, three different coalition governments came and went between 1990 and 1993. First, following Wałęsa’s victory in the 1990 presidential vote, a coalition of liberal and Christian-national parties came to power under the KLD’s Jan Krzysztof Bielecki. This government lasted until the fall 1991 parliamentary elections. Throughout this period, and despite the tumult around the fragmentation of Solidarity and the formation of various parties and proto-parties, a pattern of party competition started to develop along the three competitive dimensions of the economy, socio-cultural issues, and decommunization.

1989-1991 – Lines of Division

Economic-distributive dimension

During the early 1990s, the economic-distributive divide was defined to a great extent by the positions of parties and political actors with respect to the “shock therapy” plan associated in Poland with Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz. The Balcerowicz plan, as it was also known, was a package of macroeconomic stabilization measures approved by the Sejm in the dying days of 1989. Entering into effect on 1 January 1990, the plan was aimed at bringing inflation under control and achieving macroeconomic stability. It included hard budget constraints for state finances, measures to enable state-owned companies to declare bankruptcy, a law permitting foreign investment, a fixed currency

82 Kitschelt, Mansfeldová, Markowski and Toka, Post-Communist Party Systems, 111-115.
exchange rate, and a special surtax, popularly known as the *popiwek*, on wage increases in state-owned firms.\(^8^4\)

While the Balcerowicz plan received wide political support initially as a necessary set of measures to stabilize Poland’s collapsing economy, it soon caused major rifts on the political scene. The plan was successful in terms of reining in inflation, but the monetary restrictions came in the context of a deep recession and drop in living standards. Social unrest in the form of strikes and worker demonstrations swept across the country in the spring and summer of 1990, and these quickly became part of the political struggle in Warsaw.

Wałęsa, in particular, was adept at integrating the social unrest into his critique of the Mazowiecki government and his calls for the “acceleration” of reforms. He expressed sympathy for workers on strike. In May 1990, for instance, when railway workers went on a hunger strike at Ślupsk, both the Mazowiecki government and Solidarity trade union were caught off guard—the former refusing to negotiate with the strikers and the latter unable to control the workers. Wałęsa stepped in to help resolve the labor dispute.

The groups backing Wałęsa in the OKP caucus in parliament were also critical of the Balcerowicz plan, calling for measures to ease monetary restrictions and increase state investment in the economy. The Christian-national parties, including the PC and ZChN, also increasingly espoused this line. These parties strongly supported the transition to a market-based economy and the privatization of state assets, but they called for greater state involvement in the process and the protection of Poland’s weak industrial and agriculture sectors from Western competition.\(^8^5\) In contrast, the UD and KLD tended to defend the Balcerowicz plan on the grounds that Poland needed to go through the macroeconomic stabilization process to set the stage for growth later.

Although some adjustments were made to the Balcerowicz plan in 1990 – in response to the recession and social unrest – it remained in place for the duration of the

\(^8^4\) An early analysis of the Balcerowicz plan as well as its effects can be found in Edmund Mokrzycki, “The Social Limits of East European Economic Reforms,” *Journal of Socioeconomics*, 22 (1), Spring 1993, 23-30.

\(^8^5\) See comments made by Jan Olszewski, a key member of the PC in the early 1990s who served as prime minister from January-June 1992, in “Market Myths and Polish Realities: Interview with Jan Olszewski,” *Multinational Monitor*, 14 (9), 1993, p. 22.
Mazowiecki cabinet. Little change came under the next government, despite Wałęsa’s electoral victory over Mazowiecki in the fall of 1990.

The Bielecki administration assumed office at the end of 1990 with a rallying call for an acceleration of market-oriented economic reforms. The new government’s approach essentially followed the liberal course set in motion by Mazowiecki’s cabinet, but it emphasized the need to speed up the privatization process. The unpopular “popiwek” tax, for instance, was modified but kept in place. Nevertheless, despite these efforts, a crisis in state finances required emergency measures at mid-year involving further budget cuts due to an unanticipated gap in revenues brought on by the country’s ongoing recession. While the budgetary problems brought howls of criticism from Sejm deputies, Bielecki’s government survived a vote of confidence over the issue. But his subsequent efforts to get Sejm approval for special decree powers on economic issues failed to garner the requisite two-thirds support in the lower chamber thanks largely to the opposition of former communist and peasant party deputies.

The new privatization minister, Janusz Lewandowski, sought to inject new life into the stalled process of selling off state-owned assets. The privatization of state-owned companies was to be jump-started with a radical acceleration of the number of companies slated for commercialization and subsequently for privatization. Privatization in general proceeded using a mix of methods involving restitution, direct sales, auctions, and the engagement of the citizenry at large through the distribution of shares in specially created investment funds. But the government did not achieve all of Lewandowski’s goals in 1991. The investment fund scheme was not ready by the end of the year, the general restitution law failed to make it through parliament, and the number of commercialized and privatized firms fell below expectations for the end of the year. Still, the government did manage to privatize a large chunk of the small firms in the economy.

The Bielecki government’s economic policies were subjected to fierce criticism from most parties and groups in parliament, with the exception of Bielecki’s own KLD and Mazowiecki’s UD. Both the KLD and UD became increasingly close to each other in their emphasis on liberal market-based reforms and macroeconomic stabilization.

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measures during 1991. Their disagreements on the economy tended to be minor and more a matter of emphasis, with the UD advocating certain measures such as tax breaks to spur economic growth toward the end of the year. The UD even backed the government’s request for temporary special powers to overcome the budgetary crisis, despite the party’s tendency to emphasize the importance of standard parliamentary procedure and the rule of law.

The other major post-Solidarity formations were more critical, to varying degrees, of the government’s liberal approach to the economy. The PC continued to be fiercely critical of Balcerowicz, with its representatives attacking government policies both from the Sejm and from the President’s Office. This position increasingly put leading PC figures such as Jarosław Kaczyński at odds with President Wałęsa, who tended to be more supportive of the Bielecki government. Nevertheless, the PC joined the UD and KLD in supporting the government’s request for temporary special powers to deal with the economy. Otherwise, though, the PC’s support for more state interventionist policies placed the party’s position roughly in line with that of the Solidarity trade union, which, under the leadership of Marian Krzaklewski, decided to enter the electoral fray again toward the end of 1991. The peasant parties, which had gone through various fissions and mergers over the previous two years, also continued to advocate a larger role for the state in protecting farmers from the vicissitudes of the economic transformation.

The post-communist SdRP, for its part, had led the formation of a large alliance of left-leaning forces and groups under the banner of Democratic Left Alliance (SLD). The SLD sought to portray itself as a moderate left-leaning force that supported the general course of reforms, but also emphasized the need to support those social groups that had experienced serious economic dislocations as a result of the transition, such as pensioners.

Figure 3.1
Poland 1991 – Party positions on economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPN</th>
<th>SLD</th>
<th>NSZZ</th>
<th>PPPP</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>UD</th>
<th>PChD</th>
<th>UPR</th>
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<td>5.73</td>
<td>12.07</td>
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<td>22.52</td>
<td>65.36</td>
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Planning

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<th>X</th>
<th>PL</th>
<th>WAK</th>
<th>POC</th>
<th>ChD</th>
<th>KLD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>16.13</td>
<td>20.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The parties that emerged from the former Solidarity movement are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; other parties in black.

Compiled from data contained in Klingemann et al. 2006 (please see appendix on page 364 for an explanation of how the data was used).

Decommunization dimension

The issue of decommunization was a central wedge between the two main groups of post-Solidarity parties. As noted in the introduction, the term “decommunization” refers to the removal of former communist functionaries from public life, state offices and institutions as well as from important positions in the economy and media. The narrower concept of “lustration,” which refers to the vetting or screening of employees or new recruits in state institutions to ascertain if they have ever worked in or collaborated with the communist-era state security service, is a component of decommunization more broadly construed.89

The Mazowiecki and Bielecki governments took a muted approach to the issue. From the beginning, Mazowiecki insisted on a gradual transformation of the country’s legal system, which would require a certain degree of continuity of communist-era laws and legal structures. His government did not implement a lustration law or a sweeping decommunization process.

Instead, a narrower verification process was set up to screen officials in the country’s security and legal systems, including prosecutors and members of the former communist-era Security Service (SB). The commissions, whose members included parliamentarians, lawyers, police officials, and Solidarity members, examined whether

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89 See Williams, Fowler and Szczerbiak, “Explaining Lustration in Central Europe,” p. 23.
the officials or agents had violated the law or human rights during their tenure. If they were found fit for office, they could gain employment in the newly revamped legal and security structures of the country.90

In addition to these limited efforts to screen out certain members of the security and legal systems, the new Solidarity-led government also launched a process to investigate and bring to justice communist-era crimes, such as the murder of the priest Jerzy Popiełuszko in 1984.

Mazowiecki was not prepared to go beyond these measures in terms of decommunization. Mazowiecki and his supporters in ROAD (and later UD) argued the gradual dismantling of communist-era institutions and the implementation of economic reforms were the best way of decommunizing. Moreover, they argued that any effort to target former communist functionaries or remove them from public life would represent a form of collective guilt. The stance of these groups came to be symbolized by the image of a “thick line” used by Mazowiecki in an oft-quoted and variously interpreted speech in August 1989. Declaring that he wanted his Solidarity-led government to be a forward-looking administration that would respect the rule of law, Mazowiecki said he would draw a “thick line” under the communist past.

The “thick line” image and the policy of restraint toward former communist functionaries became a central dividing point in Solidarity. The PC led by the Kaczyński brothers, the ZChN and Wałęsa himself began to criticize the Mazowiecki government and its supporters for proceeding too slowly with the process of ridding the country of communist influence. Wałęsa’s calls for an “acceleration” of reforms effectively married his publicly voiced concerns over the state of the economy in 1990 with his contention that Poland was moving too slowly to rid itself of the vestiges of communist-era structures. Part of the blame for the country’s shortages, inflation, and production problems, he and others suggested, lay with the ongoing communist influence. A strong program of decommunization would thus improve the economy and society.

But Wałęsa’s generally vague proclamations in support of decommunization during his long campaign for the presidency in 1990 did not lead to a major change in policies after his assumption of the office at the end of that year. Instead, the new Bielecki administration, put together under Wałęsa’s guidance, tended to focus on economic reforms and avoided the decommunization issue. In fact, Bielecki’s KLD sided with the UD in resisting calls from the PC and ZChN for a more thoroughgoing effort to eliminate former communists from state structures. Although the KLD had been closely allied with the PC when it was formed in 1990, the two parties had divergent views on the key decommunization issue. The KLD leadership, like that of the UD, tended to harbor “skeptical” attitudes toward any calls for sweeping decommunization measures.91

By the time of the 1991 elections, then, the post-Solidarity camp was clearly divided on the issue, with the national and Christian camps, led by the PC and ZChN, calling for strong decommunization measures, while the liberal camp, led by the UD and KLD, insisted on limited, law-based means of dealing with the crimes of the past.

Wałęsa, for his part, drifted on the issue after his rise to the office of president at the end of 1990. Despite his anti-communist rhetoric during the campaign, as president he tended to support the Bielecki government’s position on this issue, and disagreed with any radical moves to implement a decommunization of the state. On various occasions, for instance, Wałęsa opposed efforts to purge or punish former communist officials in the military or police forces for their roles in upholding the pre-1989 regime.92 Indeed, this issue became yet another aspect of the falling out between the Kaczyński brothers, who led the PC, and Wałęsa toward the end of 1991.

Socio-cultural dimension

The decommunization issue was also linked in part to the divide between proponents of a secular state and those who wanted the Polish state to be based on explicit Catholic values. Solidarity had always fostered links to the Catholic Church, and the Church had played a key mediating role many times between the anti-communist opposition and the

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91 Donald Tusk of the KLD said he understood decommunization to mean the “dismantling of communist institutions,” adding that he regarded “zealous decommunizers, calling for a settling of accounts” with skepticism, Polityka, 6 July 1992, p. 27, cited in JPRS-EER-91-112, 31 July 1991, p. 16
regime. These links to the Church continued to be evident in many of the parties and formations that emerged from Solidarity after 1989. The formation of the Christian National Union (ZChN) by several members of Solidarity’s OKP in the fall of that year was followed in subsequent months by the establishment of several other Catholic-based political clubs and formations. While all of these groups identified themselves as Christian or Catholic, they were divided by a combination of interpersonal feuds, the degree to which they believed the Church should be involved in public affairs, and the extent to which the state should intervene in the market economy.

The issue of Church-state relations surfaced several times during the first few months and years of the Polish transition, revealing deep differences within the broad Solidarity movement. Eventually, battle lines were drawn between the parties that emerged out of Solidarity over the issues of religious instruction in public schools, abortion, and Church influence over the media. The question of religious education in public schools was raised by the Episcopal Conference in May 1990 and it was quickly taken up by the ZChN and other Catholic activists within and outside Solidarity. Mazowiecki, himself a moderate Christian democrat, defused the situation temporarily by endorsing the call for voluntary religious education in schools. But rather than attempt to pass a new law on education through the Sejm, the Education Ministry simply added the possibility of voluntary religious education in schools to a new set of regulations. The regulation was a compromise solution to the dispute between advocates of compulsory religious instruction in schools and those favouring a completely secular public education system. Although the ombudsman challenged the decision as unconstitutional, the Constitutional Tribunal upheld it in a January 1991 ruling. After the Bielecki government came into office, members of parliament elected on the Solidarity ticket successfully pushed a new law that enshrined the right to religious education through parliament. Mazowiecki’s support for making voluntary religious education available was to become typical of the approach adopted by the UD toward questions of Church-state relations.

The Mazowiecki government also tried to avoid the issue of abortion. Under the communist regime, a far-reaching right to abortion had been guaranteed since the 1950s. In 1989, an Episcopate commission began pushing for restrictions on abortion, and in 1990, the new Solidarity-controlled Senate passed a law in line with the wishes of the
Church. But the law failed to get through the Sejm, which was still dominated by deputies elected on the PZPR ticket. Once again, the Mazowiecki government effectively circumvented these obstacles when regulatory changes were instituted through the Health Ministry that enabled doctors to refuse to perform abortions. For the time being, the abortion debate divided the bulk of the right-leaning Solidarity representatives in parliament from the Sejm deputies elected on the PZPR ticket in 1989. But early indications of tensions within Solidarity were beginning to appear in 1990.

In January 1991, the Sejm voted to deflect a debate over the contentious Senate bill banning abortion by appointing a special commission to debate the issue. Then after months of debate, the commission narrowly approved the bill and re-submitted to the Sejm in April. In response to this, a group of deputies pushed a separate bill onto the Sejm agenda calling for a referendum on the issue, a step that was opposed by the Church hierarchy and supporters of the ban on abortion. Finally, after two days of debate on the bills, the UD’s Jacek Kuroń put forward a motion to delay a debate on a bill that would have banned abortions. The compromise resolution called for the passage of restrictions on abortion only after the government had drawn up specific policy plans for dealing with the impact of the bill such as an increase in the birth rate.93 The UD’s role in crafting the resolution earned the party a reprimand from Church authorities. Once again the resolution reflected the desire of certain post-Solidarity forces to avoid the contentious issues of Church-state relations. Mazowiecki’s UD, in particular, was at pains to prevent public debate on the issue. This reflected the fact that the loosely organized party was divided between supporters of policies more in line with the Church’s wishes and proponents of a clear line separating the Church from the state and its policies.94

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94 On divisions within the UD with regard to the role of the Catholic Church in public affairs, see the interview with Adam Michnik conducted by Janina Paradowska and published in Telos, 89 (Fall 1991), 95-101.
Figure 3.2
Poland 1991 – Socio-cultural positions of parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>KLD</th>
<th>SLD</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>UD</th>
<th>NSZZ</th>
<th>POC</th>
<th>PChD</th>
<th>ChD</th>
<th>WAK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-16.41</td>
<td></td>
<td>-4.22</td>
<td>-3.02</td>
<td>-1.01</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>9.68</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Libertarian**
-6.78  

**Traditionalism**

* The parties that emerged from the former Solidarity movement are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; other parties in black.

*Compiled from data contained in Klingemann et al. 2006 (please see appendix on page 364 for an explanation of how the data was used).*

Regime divide
The specific course of the Polish transition to democracy affected the first post-communist government of the country under Prime Minister Mazowiecki. Unlike in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, where fully free and fair elections were held within months of the communist regime agreeing to relinquish power, Poland’s first government was created out of the partially free elections of 1989. The Solidarity-led cabinet of Mazowiecki had to include former communist ministers, the president was the communist-era leader Jaruzelski and the government had to work with a parliament in which the successor communist parties had a large presence.

Nevertheless, the regime divide that separated the ex-communist parties from the post-Solidarity parties remained. In 1990, the last communist ministers were removed from the cabinet. By the end of that year, thanks in part to Wałęsa’s calls for “acceleration,” the communist president was gone. Moreover, despite the efforts of the main communist successor parties to support the thrust of the Solidarity parties’ reform program, they were not considered a potential coalition partner for the Mazowiecki and Bielecki governments.95

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95 Grzymala-Busse, “Coalition Formation,” p. 94
**Party switching**

The period stretching from the partially free elections in 1989 to the fully free vote in fall of 1991 witnessed the shattering of the Solidarity movement and the dissolution of the communist PZPR. The Solidarity movement collapsed amid disputes between leadership figures over the course of the Polish transformation. The bid launched by Wałęsa for the presidency, as well as his accompanying efforts to control different organizational components of the Solidarity movement, coupled with the resistance to these efforts by the Mazowiecki and Geremek camps in Solidarity, resulted in the division of the movement. After the efforts of Wałęsa and his supporters to use “voice” to push for his agenda and to criticize the government, both sides resorted to a mutual exit strategy and formed their own organizations. This central dispute was accompanied by other groups exiting the main movement and forming their own proto-parties. But, as was seen in the previous sections, the disputes that led to the break-up of Solidarity were not mere power grabs. They were framed by sharply vocal disagreements on the issues of decommunization, Church-state relations, and economic reform.

The process of Solidarity’s dissolution is not completely reflected in the data on party-switching in the contract Sejm of 1989-1991 (see Table 3.1), since many of the deputies who had joined the PC of the Kaczyński brothers or the liberal KLD had opted to retain formal membership in the Solidarity’s Citizens Parliamentary Club (OKP). Table 3.1 also shows that while individual legislators from the communist-successor party and the erstwhile communist allies, SD and SZL, crossed the regime divide to join Mazowiecki’s Democratic Union, none of the former Solidarity legislators joined any of the former PZPR’s successor groups in the Sejm.
Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party factions in Sejm 1989</th>
<th>Party factions into which deputies switched</th>
<th>Number of deputies 1989</th>
<th>Number of deputies 1991</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PZPR</td>
<td>Democratic Left</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Labour</td>
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<td>102</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faction of Military Deputies</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Democratic Union</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ecology Faction</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Union</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faction of Independents</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OKP</td>
<td>Democratic Union</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solidarity “Labour”</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Christian-Peasants</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Polish Peasant Party</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZSL</td>
<td>Polish Peasant Party</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>Christian-Peasants</td>
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<td>66</td>
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<td>Ecology Faction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Democratic Union</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Independent</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Party</td>
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<td>Seats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Peasants</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Ecology Faction</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>UChS</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PZKS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Peasants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAX</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Poland – 1991-1993**

The period between the parliamentary elections of 1991 and 1993 in Poland witnessed a continuation of the internal struggles within the post-Solidarity parties even as they attempted to distinguish themselves from each other. In contrast, the post-communist SLD continued to exhibit remarkable stability.

This period saw the formation of two governments by the post-opposition forces. The first government, which lasted from December 1991 to June 1992, was put together by a coalition with a relatively coherent Christian conservative program. The second, in power from July 1992 until it lost a confidence vote in May 1993, was a motley assortment of Christian conservatives, secular liberals, peasant groups, and social liberals. In both cases, political struggles surrounding the governments and the policies they adopted led to further realignment of the post-Solidarity parties through both further fragmentation and the development of alliances among parties. Ultimately, this period

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96 If one excludes the brief one-month tenure of the government formed by PSL leader Waldemar Pawlak in 1992.
provided further confirmation of the inability of the post-opposition parties to find common ground on the key issues related to economic, religious, and decommunization policies. The Christian conservative and other rightist elements of the former Solidarity continued to be at odds with their erstwhile liberal and social liberal colleagues from the opposition. The latter, in turn, were increasingly voting in tandem with the ex-communist SLD against the policies of the conservatives.

Nevertheless, all through this period, the SLD remained locked out of any coalition discussions. Some politicians in the post-opposition did start to muse aloud about the possibility of working with the ex-communists, but the reaction from the majority of former Solidarity activists was so vociferously opposed that such musings were quickly silenced. Thus, the liberal and social liberal elements of the former Solidarity continued to work with the Christian conservative elements, despite their increasingly obvious programmatic distance from the latter and their evident programmatic affinities with the ex-communist SLD.

The task of forming a governing coalition after the 1991 parliamentary elections in Poland was complicated by two factors. First, a total of 29 different groups and parties had managed to gain representation in the Sejm, the lower house of the National Assembly, thanks in part to the country’s highly permissive proportional electoral system. Second, the unclear constitutional roles of the president and parliament in government formation led to a struggle for influence that delayed efforts to cobble together a workable coalition.

Much has been made of the extremely permissive electoral law adopted in Poland in 1991, with many observers pointing to it as the underlying reason for the extreme fragmentation of the Sejm after the 1991 elections. Certainly, the electoral law did play a role. Nevertheless, the direction of the causal arrows in this case becomes less clear when one considers the manner in which the law was passed. The disputes over the election law, pitting different factions within the Sejm against each other and subsequently involving President Wałęsa as well, dragged on through 1990 and the first half of 1991.97

In 1989 and early 1990, Solidarity’s OKP caucus in parliament had initially been in favour of adopting a majoritarian system as a means of helping it to maximize electoral returns on its popularity, which had been clearly demonstrated in the partially free elections of 1989. In contrast, the former communist party and its satellites, which were clearly less popular at that stage, tended to favour a proportional system. Early attempts to establish a majoritarian system, and subsequently, a mixed-member system, were defeated in the Sejm, where the post-communist deputies still held a large proportion of seats.

By 1991, the majority in the Sejm seemed to be moving in the direction of supporting a law with a higher degree of proportionality. This coincided with the fragmentation of the OKP into various splinter groups, many of which would have had trouble winning seats under a single-member plurality system. In the end, after a bitter confrontation between Wałęsa and the majority in the Sejm, the parliament passed a highly proportional law with no threshold. The law called for 391 deputies to be elected in 37 multi-member electoral districts and 69 deputies to be elected from national party lists.98

The debate over the law demonstrates that the highly proportional system adopted in advance of the 1991 elections was more a reflection of the already existing fragmentation in the Solidarity movement rather than a cause of it.99 Solidarity’s OKP caucus went from supporting a straightforward majoritarian system when it was united, to supporting a far more proportional system when it was divided into various smaller parties.

In any case, even with a 5-per cent threshold, a total of nine parties and groups would have gained seats in the Sejm after the 1991 elections (see table 3.2). The election results were an unpleasant surprise for the post-Solidarity forces. While the proportion of the vote taken by various post-Solidarity factions and groups was quite high, their fragmentation meant that the unified post-communist coalition of the SLD had come very close to winning the largest block of votes in the election. The UD had managed to scrape

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98 While the law did not have a formal threshold, parties were required to win seats in at least five constituencies or 5 per cent of the national vote to qualify to win seats from the national list.
99 On this, see, for example, Aleks Szczerbiak and Seán Hanley, *Centre-Right Parties in Post-Communist East-Central Europe*. (New York: Routledge, 2006).
together a victory over the post-communists by a razor-thin margin. But the UD’s victory did not ensure that it could form a functioning coalition in the fractured Sejm.

Table 3.2 – Poland – 1991 Parliamentary Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Union (UD)</td>
<td>12.31</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)</td>
<td>11.98</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Electoral Action (WAK)</td>
<td>8.73</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre Civic Accord (POC)</td>
<td>8.71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polish Peasant Party-Program Alliance (PSL-SP)</td>
<td>8.67</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN)</td>
<td>7.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD)</td>
<td>7.48</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peasant Accord (PL)</td>
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<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity (NSZZ)</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>Polish Friends of Beer (PPPP)</td>
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<td>Christian Democracy (ChD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Union of Political Realism (UPR)</td>
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<td>2.05</td>
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<td>Democratic Party (SD)</td>
<td>1.41</td>
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<td>German Minority (MN)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Party of Christian Democrats (PhD)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party X</td>
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<td>Zwiazek Podhalan (Nowy Sacz)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polish Western Union (PZZ)</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Party / Coalition</td>
<td>Seats</td>
<td>Votes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Peasant Party-Peasant Unity (Bydgoszcz)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orthodox Electoral Committee (Białystok)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solidarity 80</td>
<td>0.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wielkopolan and Lubuszan Union (Zielona Gora)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alliance of Women against the Difficulties of Life (Kraków)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Obwieszczenie Państwowej Komisji Wyborczej z dn. 31 X 1991 r., Monitor Polski, Nr 41, poz. 288.

Post-communist parties are indicated in red; post-opposition parties in blue.

This was a time of intensive negotiation and political maneuvering as politicians jockeyed for position and tried to cobble together a workable coalition. The key sticking point was not simply to be found in the sheer number of parties and groups in the Sejm but also in their programmatic diversity. The post-Solidarity vote alone was divided among more than a half-dozen different groups and parties, and any coalition would have had to effectively bridge the various interpersonal and policy differences that had led to the division of the movement in the first place. The post-Solidarity parties were extremely far apart in terms of their approach to religious-cultural issues, with the coalition of conservative Catholic parties in WAK and the pro-market liberal KLD virtually at opposite ends of the spectrum (see Figure 3.2). Even on the economy, substantial differences existed between the post-Solidarity groupings, although they were not quite as wide (see Figure 3.1).

Yet the only realistic option for a governing coalition with a majority in the parliament was some form of combination involving the disparate post-opposition parties. The only competitive divide that was insurmountable was the regime divide separating the post-opposition parties from the post-communist SLD.

The differences between some of the parties were demonstrated by the first attempt to form a coalition by five post-opposition parties. The “group of five” included the secular liberal KLD, the national conservative PC, the Christian conservative WAK, the national populist KPN and the peasant grouping PL. In programmatic terms, these parties literally spanned the entire breadth of Poland’s socio-cultural dimension of
competition and came close to doing so on the economic dimension as well (see figures 3.1 and 3.2). The group included the KLD, which had unequivocally supported the Balcerowicz economic reform plan, and the POC, WAK, and KPN, which had been harshly critical of it. It included the WAK, which had taken the lead in the fight to ban abortions, and the KLD, which had opposed the ban and been attacked by the Church for its secular stance. It included POC, which had led the fight for “decommunization,” and the KLD which had agreed with the Bielecki government’s decision to avoid the issue. These parties nevertheless shared a common heritage in the anti-communist opposition (and many of them had supported Wałęsa’s bid for the presidency in 1990). On this basis, then, they set out to form a governing coalition under Jan Olszewski of the PC.

But the attempt foundered. The liberal KLD walked away from the coalition talks in mid-December, arguing that the proposed Olszewski government would not be able to ensure a “coherent” economic program.100 KPN leader Leszek Moczulski also took his party out of the coalition talks after his effort to secure the defense ministry met with resistance from the rest of the parties.

The Olszewski government was ultimately formed by the remaining three parties of the original “group of five” – PC, WAK, and PL. The government also received backing from other smaller groups in the fractious Sejm, but the key support came from the Polish Peasant Party (PSL).

Considering the fragmented and diverse Sejm of 1991-1993, the Olszewski coalition government was relatively coherent in programmatic terms, grouping together three parties that shared a generally Christian conservative outlook on social issues, a cautious pro-reform approach to the economy, and strong support for decommunization (see figures 3.1 and 3.2). In fact the brief tenure of the Olszewski government stands as perhaps the most coherent post-Solidarity government of the 1990s; there would not be another one like it until the 2000s. As a result of its internal coherence, the government was not torn by major differences in overall policy direction, and there were less instances of policy-based party switching among its deputies. In fact, the Olszewski government served to highlight some of the differences between the Christian conservative and secular liberal camps of the former Solidarity movement, while at the

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same time revealing potential fault lines over programmatic issues within some of the post-opposition parties.

The question of abortion is a good example of this dual tendency. While the government championed a bill that would have criminalized abortions, an alternative bill permitting abortions in certain cases emerged from the opposition ranks. Nevertheless, voting records on the two bills clearly demonstrate the deep divisions on the question within some of the post-Solidarity parties, particularly the UD.

The anti-abortion legislation received the strong endorsement of the Christian-based parties, including ZChN, PChD and ChD, and the majority of deputies in the POC and Solidarity trade union. The opposition parties were far less united on the issue. The UD, in particular, was divided with most of its deputies choosing to support neither of the two bills, while a minority supported the pro-choice bill and an even smaller minority supported the pro-life option. The abortion issue may have been a salient, rallying point for the Christian democratic formations, but it was a potential source of tension for most of the other post-Solidarity formations.

Despite such divisions within the liberal camp of parties, the unification of the Christian conservative parties in the Olszewski government was mirrored by efforts on the part of the post-Solidarity liberal parties to work more closely together. It was during the Olszewski cabinet that the UD, KLD and the Polish Economic Program formed a loose alliance called the “little coalition.”

Nevertheless, the minority coalition government’s precarious position drove it to search for new allies. Naturally, any effort to work with the post-communist SLD was out of the question for both historical and programmatic reasons. And so the Olszewski government was forced to turn to the post-Solidarity liberals, but the talks dragged on

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101 Stefania Szlek Miller, “Religion and Politics in Poland: The Abortion Issue,” Canadian Slavonic Papers, 39 (1/2), March/June 1997, 63-86. Out of the 62 UD deputies in the Sejm, 41 supported neither version of the law, 14 supported the “pro-choice” version and 7 supported the “pro-life” version. As for the PC, 29 of its deputies supported the “pro-life” version, none of them supported the “pro-choice” version and 14 supported neither bill.

102 The Polish Economic Program, or “Large Beer,” was one of the two factions that were created when the Polish Beer-Lovers’ Party (PPPP) fell apart after the 1991 elections. Despite its origins in the bizarrely named PPPP, the Polish Economic Program actually had a serious, pro-market program.
with no result. The government also faced open hostility from President Wałęsa throughout much of its time in office.103

Ultimately, and perhaps ironically, the Olszewski government was brought down by one of the key issues that tended to unite the Christian and conservative forces in the coalition: the issue of decommunization. The Olszewski administration had declared from the moment of its formation that it represented a fresh start in Poland’s political life and a break from the previous two governments. The government pledged to remove the last vestiges of the communist regime that had been left in place by the Mazowiecki and Bielecki governments. To this end, the Olszewski coalition dismissed various officials who had been appointed to posts in ministries and regional governing councils by the Mazowiecki and Bielecki governments.104

It was the issue of lustration, however, that brought down Olszewski’s coalition. In late May, the Sejm passed a motion calling on the government to release lists of current public functionaries who had been secret police collaborators. Within days, Interior Minister Antoni Macierewicz, a founding member of ZChN, presented the leaders of the Sejm with a list of potential collaborators. Although the Macierewicz documents included a preface stating that they did not constitute full proof of collaboration, their delivery to parliament touched off a political storm. The names of various parliamentarians and prominent political figures, including Wałęsa himself, appeared on the lists. The release of the lists led Wałęsa to call for the removal of the government, a request that the Sejm quickly obliged.

Olszewski and his supporters said the timing of the no-confidence vote, just as his government’s “decommunization” drive was being implemented, suggested that

103 While the government was relatively united in policy preferences, other factors continued to undermine the still weakly institutionalized parties in the coalition, as various former Solidarity activists struggled to corner the market on certain segments of the electorate. One example of this occurred when the Polish Peasant Party-Peasant Accord (PSL-PL), a member of the governing coalition, divided into two parliamentary groups, see Ewa Nalewajko, “Political Parties and Agriculture in Poland,” (Liverpool: the University of Liverpool) Working Paper No. 17, Rural Transition Series, p. 10.

104 This included Defense Minister Jan Parys’s sweeping changes in the personnel of his ministry and the armed forces, including some officials personally appointed by President Wałęsa. These actions, which Parys framed as part of the government’s decommunization measures, led to a fierce dispute between the minister and Wałęsa. Ultimately, parliament voted to remove Parys from office after a special legislative commission decided that he had damaged the country’s interests with his accusations (Reuters, 23 May 1992).
communist forces were behind it. Moreover, Olszewski and his supporters declared that President Wałęsa’s decision to nominate PSL leader Waldemar Pawlak as his replacement merely confirmed their warnings that Poland was facing some form of “recommunization.” Jarosław Kaczyński, Wałęsa’s former chief of staff, asserted that the president was surrounded by former communist agents. The Solidarity trade union, at its national congress in 1992, voted to censure the president over the issue.

Nevertheless, Macierewicz’s handling of the collaborator lists came under increasing scrutiny and criticism, as it became evident that many people had been included on the lists with little or no evidence to indicate they had actually worked with the secret police. In fact, the manner in which the lists were released served to drive a wedge into the conservative, anti-communist forces that had originally backed Olszewski’s government. The KPN and ZChN, for instance, both became disenchanted with Olszewski after it emerged that their leaders, longtime opposition activists Leszek Moczulski and Wiesław Chrzanowski, respectively, had appeared on the list of collaborators. Macierewicz, up until then the deputy chairman of the ZChN, was expelled from the party.

**Suchocka government**

Following the collapse of the Olszewski government, Wałęsa surprised many in Poland by nominating PSL leader Waldemar Pawlak to the post of prime minister, suggesting that the peasant leader should cobble together a coalition with the support of the post-Solidarity parties.

While the PSL had already had some success in separating itself from the role it played as a puppet party during the communist regime, Pawlak’s nomination served as an opportunity for the Christian-conservative parties of the post-opposition to play the regime divide card. Those parties, including the PC, ZChN and PChD, refused to entertain the idea of joining a Pawlak administration on the grounds that it would be a government led by “postcommunist forces.”

In fact, the PC’s Jarosław Kaczyński

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105 FBIS-EEU-92-119, 19 June 1992, citing Gazeta Wyborcza, 15 June 1992, p. 3. The stance of the Christian-conservative forces on the Pawlak nomination did not seem entirely honest since the PC and other parties in this group had not been averse to working with the PSL to secure its support for the Olszewski cabinet.
described a coalition involving the PSL and the post-opposition parties as an impossible combination of “fire and water” that would mix the traditions of opposition with those of the communist regime.\textsuperscript{106} The Solidarity trade union itself also refused to join the proposed Pawlak cabinet.\textsuperscript{107}

By contrast, the liberal post-opposition parties, including the UD and KLD, did enter coalition talks with Pawlak. But the situation brought out the internal divisions within the centrist UD. While the party’s leadership was willing to consider a coalition with the PSL, the liberal-conservative faction of the UD led by Aleksander Hall came out against the idea because it left out the “right-wing” post-Solidarity parties. Hall said a broad post-Solidarity government should be created instead.\textsuperscript{108} In any case, the talks between the PSL and the liberal post-opposition parties quickly foundered over the question of which parties would control the government’s economic policy.\textsuperscript{109}

The failure of Pawlak opened the way for yet another attempt to unite the disparate post-Solidarity parties around a common government platform. Eventually, a new government was put together with the UD’s Hanna Suchocka as prime minister. It included the liberal parties of the “little coalition,” (made up of UD, KLD and PPG), ZChN, the Peasant Alliance, the Peasant Christian Alliance and the PChD. It also received critical parliamentary backing from the Solidarity trade union and two smaller parties. The PC of the Kaczyński brothers was initially involved in the talks on the coalition but pulled out at the last minute.

Needless to say, the coalition was far from coherent in programmatic terms. Figure 3.2 shows that the 1991-1993 parliament could not have produced a coalition with more divergent views on socio-cultural issues. On economic questions, the coalition featured generally pro-market parties, but with a substantial degree of differentiation on this dimensions as well (see Figure 3.1). Finally, on the recently sensationalized issue of decommunization, the coalition featured parties that had come out strongly in favour of

\textsuperscript{106} FBIS-EEU-92-110, 8 June 1992, p. 32, citing the Warsaw TVP Television First Program Network.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid, p.32.
lustration, such as the ZChN, as well as those that had opposed it, such as the KLD and UD.\textsuperscript{110}

The only unifying trait of the coalition was that almost all of its parties (with the sole exception of PPG) could trace their roots to the original Solidarity movement. Along with the PC, which had bolted from the coalition at the last moment, the opposition included the PSL and the post-communist SLD. The regime divide had once again become the central dimension of competition in Polish politics, overriding all other issues.

Aware of the diversity of its own members, the broad coalition government of Hanna Suchocka introduced a management style aimed at avoiding the disputes that had ripped through the Sejm during the Olszewski administration. The new approach consisted of dividing responsibility for different issues between the cabinet and the parliament. The government would deal exclusively with issues affecting the economy, while the emotionally charged disputes over Church influence or decommunization would be left to the parliament.\textsuperscript{111} It was hoped that such a division of labor would insulate the ideologically heterogeneous government from zero-sum disputes over religion or communism and allow it to implement its economic reform program. And so, in early August, the government outlined 11 priorities, emphasizing the areas of economic restructuring, social security, agriculture, education, the judiciary and state administration.\textsuperscript{112}

The Suchocka coalition managed to hold firm for several months despite significant differences and fierce debates among its members over abortion, privatization and lustration. Ultimately, though, the government failed to maintain the loyalty of all the parliamentary deputies who had supported it initially, and it collapsed in a May no-confidence vote. Moreover, the brief tenure of the Suchocka administration witnessed additional bouts of party switching involving members of post-Solidarity parties in the government as well as in the opposition. The following section briefly surveys the key issues and debates as well as the new fissures in the country’s parties.

\textsuperscript{110} These differences over the issue of decommunization were perhaps eased after ZChN leader Wiesław Chrzanowski’s name had appeared on the bungled lists of collaborators presented to parliament by Interior Minister and ZChN member Antoni Macierewicz.


Suchocka’s seven-party coalition government entered office in the midst of the most significant spate of labor unrest the country had seen since the collapse of communism in 1989, as workers walked off the job in several industrial sectors. The government refused to accept the workers’ demands in most cases, even resorting to layoffs in some cases, and the strikes gradually tapered off by the end of September. Nevertheless, the strikes did draw a pledge from the new government to offer workers a stronger voice in the privatization and management of their firms. In July, Suchocka outlined the government’s plans to push on with economic reform and privatization by sealing a series of interlinked “social pacts” with industrial workers and other social groups affected by the restructuring process. The measures created debt-relief provisions for struggling state firms; enabled the management and worker representatives in state firms to jointly decide how their firm would be privatized; granted 10 per cent of the shares in firms undergoing privatization to the employees of those firms; required companies to maintain special funds to compensate workers in the event of insolvency; and eliminated the punitive popiwek tax on excess wage increases and replaced with a tripartite system for negotiating wage levels involving negotiations among employers, unions and the state. These measures granted unions and workers an institutionalized role in—and greater responsibility for—the privatization and economic restructuring processes. Moreover, the government secured the support of unions for the new approach by negotiating and signing the entire package—formally known as the Pact on State Enterprises—with the country’s major unions, including both Solidarity and the post-communist OPZZ.

The Pact negotiations were spearheaded by Labor Minister Jacek Kuroń, a prominent member of the UD, and received key backing from Suchocka herself. But it was also criticized from within the coalition. Even some members of the UD, such as the economist Waldemar Kuczynski, argued that it would give too much power to the unions. Ultimately, the Suchocka government collapsed before it could pass the measures contained in the Pact through parliament.

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The Pact had effectively split the coalition government, and the post-Solidarity camp more broadly, between those supporting it as a move toward engaging the unions in the effort to restructure the economy, and those who described it as a dangerous “third way” between capitalism and socialism and a detour from the path toward a market-based economy. As noted above, the Pact also split the UD itself between the “social liberal” wing of Kuroń and a more pro-market wing. Ultimately, the move highlighted the programmatic similarities between one part of the post-Solidarity camp and the post-communist SLD. One of the signatories of the deal was the OPZZ union, itself an allied member of the SLD. Eventually, many of the key provisions in the Pact were implemented by the SLD-led government that took power after the early elections brought about by the collapse of the Suchocka government in 1993. No clearer sign could be found that a significant portion of the UD was closer to the SLD on economic policy than it was to its erstwhile colleagues in the former Solidarity movement. Nevertheless, the SLD remained on the other side of the regime divide.

The precarious situation of the minority Suchocka government got worse in the spring of 1993 when the Peasant Alliance (PL) withdrew from the coalition amid a dispute over agricultural policy. Faced with the increasingly real threat of collapse, the shaky coalition government had to turn to the motley assortment of opposition parties for support on getting its economic agenda through the legislature.

This was epitomized by the debate over the government’s Mass Privatization bill. The bill envisaged the establishment of 20 investment funds to be managed by foreign consultants for the purpose of privatizing some 600 firms and distributing shares in those firms to the public in a voucher scheme. The PSL as well as several conservative post-Solidarity parties, including the PC, UP and RdR and some deputies from the coalition member ZChN, opposed the bill. Many opponents of the bill argued that it gave too much control over the process to foreign interests.

This forced the minority UD-led government to turn to the post-communist SLD for support on passing the bill. After a series of talks on the bill, the government agreed to changes designed to secure the SLD’s support, including the distribution of a percentage of the shares in the investment funds to pensioners and enabling state-owned

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114 Ibid, p. 18.
enterprises to opt out of the program. The SLD was also promised support for its candidate for a post on the country’s television regulator KRRiTV. In the end the bill passed after 28 of the SLD’s 60-member parliamentary caucus voted to support it and 10 other SLD deputies abstained and thereby effectively supported it as well.

But while the government was willing to negotiate with the SLD over the bill, it continued to rule out any possibility of crossing the regime divide in terms of inviting the SLD into the coalition. For its part, the SLD hailed the cooperation on the privatization bill as a milestone in overcoming the regime divide separating it from the post-Solidarity groups in the governing coalition. One SLD official even told a Western reporter that the SLD was aiming to change its image as an anti-market force with an eye to possibly forming a governing coalition with part of the post-Solidarity forces after the next elections. For the moment, the bill illustrated the potential for cooperation and programmatic affinities between the post-opposition UD and post-communist SLD. At the same time, it also demonstrated once again the deepening programmatic gap between the liberal UD and its erstwhile post-Solidarity allies in the national conservative camp, especially the PC and RdR.

Meanwhile, the Suchocka coalition government’s determination to avoid zero-sum disputes over value-laden issues did not prevent the continuation of fierce debates over abortion and decommunization both in parliament and on the streets of Polish cities. In March 1992, after months of debates over the issue, parliament passed a law that permitted abortions only if the mother’s life was in danger, if the fetus was hopelessly damaged or if the pregnancy had resulted from rape or incest. The Christian parties attacked the abortion law as too lenient, while secular deputies denounced it as draconian.

Once again, this issue, like various others, pitted the Christian parties against the post-communist SLD and many liberal post-Solidarity deputies. Significantly, it also

116 Dudek, Historia Polityczna Polski, p. 226.
118 As noted above, even some deputies of the ZChN, the Christian conservative party that was allied with the UD in the coalition government, had been opposed to the privatization bill.
divided the UD, between secular liberals like Barbara Labuda, who were vocally opposed to the abortion law, and members of the party’s moderate Christian Democratic wing. Labuda and Zbigniew Bujak of the Labour Union (UP) launched a grassroots effort to gather signatures to call for a referendum. While their efforts secured more than a million signatures in support of a plebiscite on the issue, no referendum was held. A motion in support of a referendum was tabled in the Sejm by a group of deputies from the post-communist SLD, the PSL, and the post-Solidarity UD, KLD and UP – once again bringing the post-communist and liberal post-opposition parties together on a significant policy issue – but it was defeated by a vote of 225 to 177 with 16 abstentions.\textsuperscript{121}

The issue of decommunization also continued to reverberate under the Suchocka administration. The political explosion over the Macierewicz lists led to the establishment of a Sejm committee to examine the manner in which the government had handled the issue. The committee, which heard testimony from numerous individuals whose names had appeared on the list, concluded that the release of the lists had been mismanaged, leading to leaks and the inclusion of the names of people who had never collaborated.

These revelations led to discussions in the Sejm on the possibility of drawing up a lustration law that would ensure an orderly procedure and include the possibility for those accused to defend themselves. Over the next few months, the lustration issue increasingly pitted the post-Solidarity Christian and conservative parties, including the PC and the new parties formed by Olszewski and Parys, against the secular and liberal post-Solidarity parties. The conservatives favoured tough lustration laws. The liberals increasingly stood opposed to lustration on the grounds that evidence for collaboration would have to rely on communist secret police files that may have been falsified and the fact that ensuring proper legal protections for those accused under the law would create the potential for numerous drawn out court battles. The position of the UD, which was skeptical of lustration, was in fact remarkably close to that of the post-communist SLD, which also opposed lustration.\textsuperscript{122} The KLD, for its part, did support lustration and drew up a bill to that effect. But the liberal party’s efforts were largely aimed at ensuring that

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{121} See Dudek, \textit{Historia Polityczna Polski}, 244-245.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{122} Noel Calhoun, “The Ideological Dilemma of Lustration In Poland,” \textit{East European Politics and Societies}, 16 (2), 2002, 494-520.}
the issue would be neutralized with a compromise law that would provide wide legal opportunities for those accused of collaboration to defend themselves.123

The decommunization divide thus continued to create a gulf between the post-opposition Christian conservative forces on one side and the post-opposition liberal forces together with the post-communist left. In fact, the vitriol coming from the Christian conservative camp did not ease up during the Suchocka government, in part because the PC, a prominent member of the conservative camp, had remained in opposition. PC leader Jarosław Kaczyński continually attacked the Suchocka administration, describing it as “the first stage of a communist backlash.”124

The divisions in the post-Solidarity camp were also evident in the passing of the Constitutional Act in August 1992. The act was known in popular parlance as the “Little Constitution” as it was meant to clarify certain aspects of the system of government as a temporary measure until a more comprehensive constitution could be adopted. The act was passed with the support of deputies from the post-Solidarity formations UD, PPL, PL, and Solidarity itself, some deputies from ZChN and the newly created Polish Convention (KP) as well as the PSL. Deputies from the post-Solidarity parties PC, RdR, and part of the ZChN voted against the changes, while the post-communist SLD and the post-opposition KPN abstained. The act clarified relations between the president and parliament in some areas, created a constructive no-confidence vote, and made it more difficult for deputies to challenge the cabinet. Significantly, however, the act gave the president a say in the appointment of the ministers of interior, defense and foreign affairs.125

The Suchocka government was brought down abruptly in May 1993 when the cabinet failed to win a confidence vote sponsored by Solidarity (NSZZ) in the Sejm. The vote came in the context of labor unrest among public sector workers, and the Solidarity trade union was aiming to use it as another means of pressuring the government. Instead, contrary to the expectations of most observers, including Solidarity itself, the government

123 Ibid, p. 507.
125 Ustawa konstytucyjna z dnia 17 października 1992 r. o wzajemnych stosunkach między władzą ustawodawczą i wykonawczą Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej oraz o samorządzie terytorialnym (Dziennik Ustaw z 23 listopada 1992 r. nr 84, poz. 426) oraz utrzymane w mocy przepisy konstytucyjne, (Warszawa : Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1992).
lost by one vote. Once again, though, the vote underscored the divisions in the post-opposition camp, with deputies from UD, PPL, ZChN and the newly formed KP backing the government, while deputies from KPN, PC, RdR, UPR and most of the Solidarity caucus voting against the cabinet. Under the new “Little Constitution,” Wałęsa had the option of nominating a new prime minister, but he called for new elections instead.

Other explanations
The widespread party switching and fragmentation in the Sejm of 1991-1993 has often been depicted in both scholarly and journalistic accounts of this period as the result of 1) the electoral rules; 2) President Wałęsa’s involvement; or 3) inter-personal rivalries. The first of these factors has been dealt with elsewhere in this chapter (see pp. 67-68). The very permissive proportional representation system certainly facilitated the fragmentation of Poland’s post-opposition parties in the 1991 election. But as discussed above, the system itself was adopted and supported by parties that were already quite fragmented. In that sense, the fragmentation of the post-opposition Solidarity parties led them to support the adoption of a system that would enable them to gain seats in the Sejm. The electoral institutions in this case reflected the structure of the nascent party system and the power dynamics it had created. The post-Solidarity parties were striving to ensure that the institutions would enable them to continue to have access to policymaking and the formal political arena. This is not to say that electoral institutions were irrelevant but rather to point out that in the early periods of transitions to democracy, they are often reflections of the power dynamics already at play. An explanation focused on the electoral institutions would gloss over the policy divides within the Solidarity camp that had unravelled its unity, and later in the 1990s, would act in conjunction with the regime divide to continually undermine efforts to create viable and cohesive parties out of the main currents of the Solidarity movement.

Second, many scholars and observers have seen Wałęsa in his role as president as a major contributor to the fragmentation and instability of the Polish political scene between 1991 and 1993. Some have suggested that Wałęsa’s personality played a major role in the instability of the post-Solidarity parties. Others have pointed to Wałęsa’s involvement in the political process as a source of instability. Still others have argued that Wałęsa’s personality played a major role in the fragmentation of the post-Solidarity parties. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that Wałęsa’s role in the political process was significant.

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126 Two Solidarity deputies broke ranks and actually supported the government. One ZChN deputy boycotted the vote while another ZChN deputy arrived late and missed the vote, causing the government to fall. See Dudek, *Historia Polityczna Polski*, p. 254.
role in the fragmentation. Others have emphasized his use of the incentives and powers that Poland’s relatively strong presidency afforded him. In particular, it is often suggested that Wałęsa undermined the formation of a stable Christian conservative party.

There is certainly much evidence that Wałęsa did play a role in the ongoing fragmentation of the post-Solidarity parties. Nevertheless, a careful analysis of party switching in the Sejm during the 1991-1993 period suggests that Wałęsa’s impact is far from singular or even dominant. In fact, Wałęsa’s role is difficult to understand outside of the context of the disputes that racked the post-Solidarity parties during the 1991-1993 Sejm. If anything, the presidency can be seen as playing a role within the context of the competitive dynamics inside the post-Solidarity camp, as parties, proto-parties and political entrepreneurs searched for their place in the nascent political party system.

Finally many observers have suggested that inter-personal antagonism and rivalry, rather than substantive policy or ideological differences, were what continued to undermine the institutionalization of the post-Solidarity parties. It is difficult to deny that inter-personal relations and clashes played a significant role in the fragmentation of Solidarity and the post-Solidarity parties. Politicians are, if nothing else, ambitious, and their ambitions to hold office often put them into conflict with one another. Nevertheless, as noted in the previous section, the promotion of a particular policy or ideological line is a means by which politicians pursue their political ambitions. Moreover, politicians may choose to switch parties or create their own party for reasons other than policy disputes per se, but the nature of political competition will force them to justify their decisions on the basis of policy preferences. In any case, a close examination of party switching in the Sejm of 1991-1993 reveals that Polish politicians were often

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127 See Kitschelt et al., Post-Communist Party Systems; Wiatr, “Executive-Legislative Relations,” p. 113. Others have seen Wałęsa’s personality as a possible contributing factor, along with other factors, to the fragmentation of post-Solidarity parties, see Szczerbiak, “Patterns of Party Politics in Post-1989 Poland,” p. 109.
130 Heller and Mershon. “Switch or Stick,” p. 9.
quite capable of providing clear and credible policy or ideological rationales for their decision to switch parties.

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The fragmented parliament and the politically tumultuous months between the 1991 and 1993 elections shook up the Polish political scene. The elections saw deputies from a total of 29 different electoral tickets enter the Sejm. By the time early elections were called in 1993, only 17 parties or factions were left in the Sejm along with 18 independent deputies. The term saw the elimination of numerous factions, as their members abandoned the parties or lists that got them into parliament to join other parties or groups in the Sejm, as well as the creation of new factions. In many cases, the numerous proto-parties and oddball organizations that entered the Sejm in 1991 proved to be ephemeral. In total, 131 out of the 460 deputies in the Sejm switched into new parliamentary factions or became independent during the term.

A closer look at the structure of party switching among the post-opposition parties reveals certain patterns. There were 263 deputies elected on the ticket of organizations or parties that could trace their roots to Solidarity and another 46 deputies elected on the ticket of the post-opposition KPN.\textsuperscript{131} Using data from the Manifesto Research Group on the positions of the post-opposition parties with respect to the socio-cultural dimension of competition, these deputies can be grouped into socially liberal and conservative camps (see Figure 3.2).\textsuperscript{132} Such a breakdown reveals that the two camps elected an almost identical number of deputies, with 131 post-Solidarity deputies elected on the tickets of parties in the “liberal” camp and 132 post-Solidarity deputies elected from parties in the “conservative” camp. (If the 46 deputies from the post-opposition KPN led by Leszek Moczulski are included, then the conservative camp had a total of 178 deputies). Remarkably, similar numbers of deputies in each camp also switched their party

\textsuperscript{131}The 263 deputies came from the following lists: UD, WAK, KLD, PC, PSL-PL, NSZZ, ChD, PChD, S “P”, RDS, S “80” and KKSzp. Some deputies who were members of Solidarity in the 1980s but who were elected on the ticket of associations without organizational roots in Solidarity are not included in this list. Such deputies include Kazimierz Świtko, a former Solidarity activist who was elected on the RAS ticket in the 1991 elections.

\textsuperscript{132}The post-Solidarity deputies are divided into “liberal” and “conservative” camps on the basis of whether the position of their party on the socio-cultural dimension of competition is closer to the individualist (liberal) or traditional (conservative) end of the scale. For some deputies, such as Zbigniew Bujak of RDS, the ranking has been done according to interviews and secondary sources citing expert opinion on the ideological position of those deputies with regard to socio-cultural issues.
allegiance or became independent during the 1991-1993 term, with a total of 49 switchers in the liberal camp and 45 in the conservative camp.

An examination of the positions of the parties on the economic dimension of competition is somewhat more difficult, since all of the post-Solidarity formations were on the pro-market side of the divide (see Figure 3.1). Nevertheless, there is still a large amount of programmatic “distance” between the post-Solidarity parties on economic issues. The liberal parties tend as a group to be more pro-market than the conservative parties.133 The only two exceptions are the conservative Christian parties, ChD and PChD, which both adopted strongly pro-market stances in the 1991 elections.134 Aside from those two parties, which had a combined total of only nine deputies in the Sejm, there are clear differences between the conservative and liberal parties on the economic divide. The liberal parties are very pro-market, while the conservative parties are moderately pro-market. In any case, divisions between the post-Solidarity parties over economic issues were not as prominent a source of dispute between 1991 and 1993 as socio-cultural issues. In that sense, there is some justification for focusing this analysis of party switching on the socio-cultural divide between the post-Solidarity liberal and conservative parties.

The following analysis examines party switching in the 1991-1993 Sejm among the parties that gained parliamentary representation in 1991 as well as some of the new parties that were created as a result of deputies switching allegiances.

In the conservative camp, most of the defections involved moves by deputies from one conservatively oriented faction to another. Yet there was a significant difference between the trends in each camp. While the liberal camp, which was in opposition for the first several months of the 1991-1993 term, witnessed moves toward consolidation among its ranks, the conservative camp experienced further fragmentation as a result of the disputes and chaos unleashed during their time in government under Olszewski.

133 This categorization is based on taking the mid-point on the economic-distributive divide between the most pro-market post-Solidarity party and the least pro-market post-Solidarity party (see Figure 3.1).
134 Another potential exception not accounted for in the Manifesto Research Group data is the sole deputy elected on the RDS ticket, Zbigniew Bujak, who went on to form the social-democratic Labour Union.
Post-Solidarity conservative camp

The disputes over lustration that brought down the Olszewski government also led to a further fragmentation of the Christian conservative parties of the post-opposition camp, as the two main representatives of the radical decommunization drive left their parties to form new groups in parliament. Macierewicz went on to form the Christian National Movement-Polish Action (RChN-AP) together with a couple of other deputies from the ZChN, while Olszewski led a large group of deputies out of the PC into a new group called the Movement for the Republic (RdR).

Christian National Union (ZChN)

The disputes and fragmentation in the Christian-conservative camp were certainly in part a reflection of personal antagonisms coupled with Macierewicz’s reckless approach to lustration. Macierewicz himself was expelled from the party as a result of his actions during the lustration debacle in May and June. But divisions over policy preferences and ideology were not entirely absent on the “right” side of the political spectrum. The ZChN’s decision to join the ideologically unwieldy Suchocka government created internal tensions for that conservative party. The ZChN was internally divided over several key questions it had to deal with in the Suchocka cabinet, including the government’s key privatization bill and the “Little Constitution,” which were supported by the liberal parties in the coalition. As a result of the compromises demanded by membership in the Suchocka government, several parliamentarians abandoned the ZChN. Seven deputies decided to form the Catholics’ Action faction within ZChN to protest the party’s standing in the Suchocka cabinet. The ZChN leadership forced the faction to disband and, as a result, two of its members abandoned the party.135 Moreover, the collapse of the Suchocka cabinet was brought about in part by the failure of two ZChN members to take part in the confidence vote of May 1993.136 One of them arrived seven minutes too late for the voting, while the other, Bogumila Boba, openly refused to take part in the vote. A member of the ZChN’s ultra-Catholic wing, Boba had been opposed to

135 Dudek, Historia Polityczna Polski, 219-220.
what she viewed as her party’s compromises with the liberal parties in supporting the Suchocka government. As a result of her use of “voice” in protest against her party’s support of the government, Boba was expelled from the ZChN.137

Centre Accord (PC)
The party that was most affected by defections in the Christian conservative camp was the PC led by Jarosław Kaczyński. This was also the party most involved in the disputes with President Wałęsa. The PC’s Kaczyński brothers mounted a relentless and fierce campaign of public attacks on Wałęsa, denouncing him as a stooge of former communist secret agents, supporting or issuing publications about his purportedly murky past and organizing demonstrations against him.

While the dispute between the Kaczyńskis and Wałęsa likely contributed to turning some PC deputies away from the party’s leadership, it was not entirely or simply an inter-personal dispute. For all its personal content, the dispute was also inextricably linked to the overall decommunization strategy of the PC leadership. Framing Wałęsa as somehow tainted by the Roundtable Accords served the ideological strategy of the PC quite well. The aim of the Kaczyńskis was to present the Roundtable Accords as a compromise with the communists that had led Poland down the path of a pseudo-democracy in which the former nomenklatura was enriching itself at the expense of average Poles. Wałęsa and the UD leadership were presented as complicit in this deal with the communists. In that sense, the dispute with Wałęsa was part of the PC’s efforts to paint itself as an uncorrupted and truly anti-communist political force that would set Poland on the right path toward true democracy.

Nevertheless, the personal attacks of the Kaczyńskis did play a role in undermining the unity of the PC. The so-called “Christian-democratic” faction within the PC, for instance, rebuked Kaczyński in May 1992 for his “antipathy toward the president” and called on Olszewski to cooperate with Wałęsa.138 This faction served as Olszewski’s power base within the PC and they had grown increasingly critical of

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Kaczyński’s tactics and his vitriolic attacks on the president. Nevertheless, Wałęsa was not the only issue at stake in the dispute. After all, both Olszewski and Kaczyński were known to have had difficult relations with Wałęsa. The disagreements between the two seem to have revolved around differences over political strategy. In March, for instance, Olszewski’s backers in the PC accused Kaczyński of staging secret negotiations with the other post-Solidarity parties behind their backs. Kaczyński, for his part, fired back at Olszewski for failing to secure wider support for his minority government and blasted the Christian-democratic faction for undermining party unity within the PC.\(^{139}\)

Moreover, once the scandal around the secret police files broke out in late May and early June 1992, even members of the Christian-democratic faction drew a line in the sand between their group and Wałęsa. It now seemed to them that their support for a radical decommunization of Poland had earned them the ire of Wałęsa as well as many other post-Solidarity parties. By the time of the Olszewski government’s collapse, then, both Kaczyński and his opponents in the PC’s Christian-democratic faction were in a state of opposition to Wałęsa. This, however, did not prevent them from drifting further away from the PC, until, in June 1992, they and Olszewski were expelled from the party.

The other defections from the PC during the 1991-1993 period were far more clearly related to policy preferences than the departure of Olszewski and his group. One of the few examples of party switching between the post-Solidarity liberal and conservative camps involved the departure of four deputies from the conservative PC who crossed the Sejm floor to join the newly formed liberal PPL caucus. These deputies, led by Jerzy Eysymontt, had been known as the “liberal faction” within the PC. In 1992, they decided to support the Suchocka coalition government, breaking from the PC leadership’s stance on that issue. Eysymontt had served as head of the Central Planning Office in the Olszewski government, but he abandoned the PC in 1992 saying it was no longer possible to create “a strong centre-right” through that party. While he initially became known for his insistence on “anti-recessionary measures” as a counter-balance to the “anti-inflationary” approach of the monetarists on the liberal right, Eysymontt revealed his rightist economic credentials by also calling for “quick and even brutal

Restructuring” of state-owned industry and criticizing the government’s proposed pact with the unions. At the same time, the liberal faction disagreed with the radical and strident approach to decommunization adopted by their erstwhile colleagues in the PC.\textsuperscript{140} Andrzej Urbanski, another of the Sejm deputies in the PC’s “liberal faction,” framed his decision to leave the PC as a natural consequence of the Polish political scene dividing up according to policy preferences rather than personal loyalties: “The division into supporters of Wałęsa and Mazowiecki is an anachronism. Today, political disputes should revolve around, for example, the level of the turnover tax or the issue of reducing pensions and benefits.”\textsuperscript{141}

Finally, like most parties in the post-Solidarity bloc, the PC also saw a couple of its deputies abandon the party to sit as independents. One of these was Tadeusz Kowalczyk, who left the PC in 1992 saying he opposed his party’s “aggressive” stance against the Suchocka government and declaring that the PC had become “lost in political games, populism and fundamentalism.”\textsuperscript{142}

\textit{Polish Peasant Party-Peasant Accord (PSL-PL)}

The PSL-PL was an electoral coalition that brought together members of Rural Solidarity and other peasant activists under one banner. Almost immediately after the election, one group led by former Solidarity activist and Senator Józef Slisz departed from the PSL-PL to form its own parliamentary group. Nevertheless, both groups supported the formation of the Olszewski government. Eventually, the Slisz group renamed itself the Christian-People’s Party (SLCh) and joined the newly formed Polish Convention (KP), a parliamentary caucus bringing together moderately conservative deputies. The remaining members of PSL-PL went on to join the Suchocka government. They played a crucial role in that government’s downfall by quitting the coalition in a dispute over agriculture policy. Most observers attribute the split in the PSL-PL to an inter-personal rivalry.

between Slisz and PSL-PL leader Gabriel Janowski, although there were some marginal programmatic differences.\textsuperscript{143}

**Post-Solidarity liberal camp**

The bulk of the party switching in the post-Solidarity liberal camp can be attributed to mergers that created two new factions in parliament. The pro-market Polish Liberal Program (PPL) parliamentary group was created through the merger of deputies from KLD and the “Large Beer” faction of PPPP, and the social-democratic Labour Union (UP) was created through the merger of deputies from RDS and Solidarity Labour.\textsuperscript{144} The creation of these two groups can be attributed both to programmatic similarities as well as to the competitive dynamics and coalition politics of the 1991-1993 period.

*Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD)*

The KLD leadership had shared good relations with President Wałęsa, leading to the installment of KLD leader Jan Krzysztof Bielecki in the prime minister’s seat after Wałęsa’s victory in the presidential poll of 1990. After the 1991 parliamentary elections, KLD leaders had pretensions of playing a key role in a coalition government with the conservative post-Solidarity formations of the PC and ZChN. Given PC leader Jarosław Kaczyński’s stormy relationship with Wałęsa, Bielecki and his colleagues in the KLD figured they could act as a bridge between the PC and the presidency. But serious programmatic differences between the KLD and the conservative parties drove the former out of the coalition talks.

During the months that followed, the strident anti-communist rhetoric and religious conservatism of the parties in the Olszewski government pushed the KLD even closer to the secular and pro-market liberals in the UD and the Polish Economic Program (PPG), which had emerged from the divided Friends of Beer Party (PPPP). It was while these parties were in opposition to the Olszewski government that they began to coalesce into the so-called “little coalition” that brought the KLD, UD and PPG together. As stormy as its brief tenure in office was, the Olszewski government nevertheless reflected

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\textsuperscript{143} Ewa Nalewajko, “Political Parties and Agriculture in Poland,” (Liverpool: University of Liverpool), Working Paper No. 17, Rural Transition Series.

\textsuperscript{144} The new UP faction in the Sejm was also joined by one deputy from the SLD and the one deputy elected on the Wielkopolsce i Polsce ticket.
a natural division between the post-Solidarity conservatives in government and the post-
Solidarity liberals in opposition. The KLD and PPG eventually decided to forge a
common parliamentary caucus under the title Polish Liberal Program during the
subsequent Suchocka administration. It that sense, the clear programmatic differences
between the post-Solidarity conservatives and liberals actually served to alter the
predisposition of KLD leaders to serve in a government led by Olszewski. Subsequently,
while in opposition, the KLD and its allies in PPG as well as a handful of deputies from
the conservative PC, were able to mount a common front to shore up their pro-market
position in the Sejm. While the final agreement to create the Polish Liberal Program was
sealed somewhat later, the groundwork for its creation was laid during their time in
opposition to the conservative Olszewski government.

During the Suchocka administration, the KLD also lost two deputies who
represented a minority conservative strand in the party. One of them, Lech Mażewski,
had attempted to win the leadership of the party on the basis of a moderate conservative
vision. Failing in this and disagreeing with the KLD’s very liberal approach to socio-
cultural issues, Mażewski and his supporters left the party to join the newly forming
moderately conservative faction in the Sejm known as the Polish Convention.145 The
departure of Mażewski reflected precisely the kinds of ideological disputes that emerged
between the various post-Solidarity formations during the Olszewski and Suchocka
governments.

Democratic Union (UD)

Another indication that the divisions within the Christian-conservative camp were not
entirely of an interpersonal nature was demonstrated by the other major defection that
occurred between the post-Solidarity liberal and conservative camps, namely the
departure of Aleksander Hall’s conservative faction from the liberal UD. The UD was
one of the few parties with explicit rules in its statutes governing the existence of factions
within the party. Hall’s faction, which bore the formal title of Forum of the Democratic
Right (FDP), was one of three in existence within the UD.146 The FDP had been drifting

145 They ended up joining Aleksander Hall’s Conservative Party, which emerged out of this faction.
146 The UD also had a social liberal and an ecological faction.
from the leadership of the UD at least since the 1991 elections. Hall, a former Solidarity activist, had opposed the UD leadership’s stance against the Olszewski government and later had refused to accept the UD leadership’s decision to pursue talks with Pawlak’s PSL. In general, Hall tended to advocate cooperation between the UD and the post-Solidarity conservative parties, such as PC and ZChN.

In explaining his decision to leave the UD, Hall said his faction had ended up within the UD as a result of the Wałęsa-Mazowiecki clash of 1990, and that he now wanted to form a party on the basis of his own policy preferences:

“We were divided over ideological views. The Forum of the Democratic Right accepts the presence in public life of national and Christian values, which part of the Democratic Union regards with far-reaching mistrust and associates with nationalism and clericalism.”

Hall decided to construct what he saw as a mainstream “conservative” option in parliament by embracing traditional socially conservative values while at the same time advocating a pro-market attitude toward economic reforms. The British Conservative Party was the model. In pursuing this goal, however, Hall began to criticize the existing Christian-conservative parties in Poland. He argued that the Polish “right” had made mistakes. He wanted to move beyond what he saw as the excessive emphasis on the market of the liberal parties, the exclusionary approach of some Christian parties, and the one-dimensional focus on “decommunization” in the Olszewski-led national conservative parties.

With this new goal in mind, Hall’s group formally left the UD in September 1992 to join a new caucus of deputies in parliament called the Polish Convention (KP). This faction attracted members from a variety of post-opposition parties in the Sejm, including six deputies from the UD, two KLD deputies, one ZChN deputy, four PChD deputies (which amounted to that party’s entire Sejm faction), two PC deputies, and three deputies.

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from smaller Solidarity successor formations. Later, Hall’s FDP joined two other groups to form the Conservative Party (PK) in December 1992.150

While the individual motivations behind each KP deputy’s decision for joining the group may have differed in the details, the ideological position of this caucus clearly suggests an attempt to stake out a middle ground between the warring liberal and conservative camps of the former Solidarity movement. Some deputies in this group realized during the Olszewski and Suchocka governments that their own position on many key issues differed from that of their party, while others were searching for a moderate parliamentary caucus within which to work. All of them, though, decided to stake out a position on the moderate conservative side of the spectrum. In that sense, this group as a whole was a result of the fierce fights over decommunization and socio-cultural issues of the 1991-1993 period.151

The formation of the PK by Hall is significant because it suggests that the disputes among the various strands of conservatism in Solidarity were not entirely based on inter-personal conflicts despite the fact that this characterization is widely accepted in both scholarly and journalistic accounts of the era.152 Hall’s move was a reaction to the competitive dynamics that had ripped apart Solidarity and created polarized attitudes among the post-Solidarity parties, particularly in the key areas of religion and decommunization. The national and Christian conservatives of the post-Solidarity camp had become, in Hall’s estimation, too extreme on the first two questions, while the liberals had become equally extreme in their reactions to the Christian conservatives. The new PK was conceived, therefore, as a “conservative-liberal” party with a “centre-right” program.153 Hall rejected an offer from the liberal KLD to join the newly formed Polish

150 The other two groups were Michal Wojtczak’s Republic Coalition and a Silesian branch of the Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD).
151 Ultimately, though, the deputies in the KP caucus did not forge a common political party. Instead, the deputies in this caucus joined a variety of new parties ahead of the 1993 elections, including Aleksander Hall’s Conservative Party (PK), the Christian-People’s Party (SLCh), and the newly created Non-Party Bloc for the Support of Reforms (BBWR).
Liberal Program faction in the Sejm, citing that party’s stance on church issues. Instead, he wanted to use the KP to unite the moderate conservative forces in Poland.

Given his over-arching aim, Hall’s creation of the PK served to underline the fact that the post-Solidarity “right” was, in fact, divided over the key dimensions of Church-state relations and decommunization. The disputes that had emerged within the post-Solidarity camp over the issues of Church and decommunization during the Mazowiecki, Bielecki, and Suchocka administrations had even forced wedges between some proponents of conservative politics in the post-Solidarity camp.

**Labour Union (UP)**

Similar programmatic motivations brought together another group of opposition deputies who formed the UP. Squeezed between a generally pro-market and/or socially conservative set of post-Solidarity parties on one side, and the untouchable post-communist SLD on the other, the left-leaning deputies of Solidarity Labour and RDS decided to forge a new post-opposition party with a social democratic orientation called the Labour Union (UP). As in the case of the liberal parties discussed above, the effort to forge the UP also took place while these deputies sat in opposition to both the Olszewski and Suchocka administrations. Once again, as in the case of the PPL, the fact of being in opposition seemed to facilitate the process of coalescence between programmatically similar parties.

**Party switching**

A detailed analysis of party switching in the 1991-1993 Sejm reveals some clear patterns in the behavior of deputies. A total of 20 deputies from the ZChN, KLD, UD and PC left their parties or were expelled as a result of disputes over policy and/or the coalition

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155 The UP was also significant in another sense because it was the first attempt to bring together deputies from both the post-communist and post-opposition camps. Nevertheless, the attempt hardly constituted a crossing of the regime divide since the UP was joined only by a small break-away faction of the former communist PZPR led by Tadeusz Fiszbach. The UP as a whole, despite its connections to this small group of ex-PZPR members continued to view cooperation with SLD as undesirable. In fact, the aim of the party was to usurp the SLD’s relatively strong position on the left side of the spectrum (author’s interview with Zbigniew Bujak, 5 July 2005).
choices of their parties. In addition, some deputies cited programmatic differences or disputes to abandon their parties and sit as independents.

Some parties, such as the KLD and its allies in the PPG and UD, used periods of time in opposition to forge closer links. The talks between those parties ultimately led to the creation of the Polish Liberal Program caucus in Sejm bringing together 33 KLD deputies with four defectors from the PC and 11 members of PPG.

Finally, some parties did fall apart as a result of a mix of inter-personal struggles and disputes over strategy. This list would include the departure of Olszewski and his supporters from the PC as well as the split in the PSL-PL.

Ultimately, the Sejm of 1991-1993 was marked by the continuing re-organization of the political space left by the former Solidarity movement. And yet, despite the apparent chaos involved in the dissolution, splitting, and formation of post-Solidarity parties, a clear pattern was emerging. The Solidarity camp had become more clearly divided into liberal and conservative camps. Moreover, the liberal post-Solidarity parties increasingly found themselves closer to the post-communist SLD on the central issues of the day—including decommunization and Church-state relations—than they were to the post-Solidarity conservatives. Even on some crucial economic issues, such as the legal framework for privatization, the liberals found themselves relying on support from the post-communist SLD to overcome objections from the conservative camp.

Nevertheless, the regime divide continued to make cooperation with the SLD inadmissible. It was fine to cooperate with the SLD on particular bills but a coalition with the post-communists was still considered to be off the table. Thus, the 1991-1993 Sejm was marked by continual attempts to find a modus vivendi between the two conflicting social visions of the post-Solidarity liberals and conservatives. The result was two extremely short-lived coalition governments, ongoing fragmentation and party switching in the Sejm, and finally, the dissolution of the Sejm and early elections.

156 This list does not include Antoni Macierewicz, who was expelled from his party as a result of his handling of the lustration issue in May-June 1992.
157 There were some, rather timid, efforts by certain UD members to suggest that the post-communist SLD should perhaps be allowed back in to mainstream politics (albeit not necessarily into a coalition government). These hints tended to be met with indignant outrage on the part of the post-Solidarity conservatives and UD leaders tended to distance themselves from any suggestion that they would be willing to serve in a coalition government with the SLD (see Sabbat-Swidlicka, “Poland: Weak Government,” 2-3).
**Table 3.3**

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### New Parties and Factions Created During 1991-1993 Sejm

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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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Acronyms:
SLD – Democratic Left Alliance
UD – Democratic Union
WAK – Catholic Electoral Action (led by Christian National Union (ZChN))
PSL – Polish Peasant Party
KPN – Confederation for an Independent Poland
PC – Centre Accord
KLD – Congress of Liberal Democrats
PSL-PL – Polish Peasant Party-Peasant Accord
NSZZ – Solidarity trade union
PPPP – Polish Friends of Beer Party
MN – German Minority coalition
ChD – Christian Democrats
PChD – Party of Christian Democrats
S–“P” – Solidarity Labour
PZZ – Polish Western Union
Partia X – Party X
UPR – Union of Real Politics
RAS – Silesian Autonomy Movement
RDS – Democratic-Social Movement
KWP (Białystok) – Orthodox Electoral Committee (Białystok)
S “80” – Solidarity 80
SD – Democratic Party
UWiL (Zielona Gora) – Wielkopolsan and Lubuszan Union (Zielona Gora)
ZP Nowy Sącz – Związek Podhalan (Nowy Sącz)
KKSzP – Solidarity with the President Kraków Coalition
LPW “Piast” – Electoral Peasant Accord “Piast”
WiP Poznań – Wielkopolsce and Poland (Poznań)
PSL-JL Bydgoszcz – Polish Peasant Party-Peasant Unity (Bydgoszcz)
SKpTZ Kraków – Alliance of Women against the Difficulties of Life (Kraków)
PERN – Party of Pensioners and Retirees “Hope”
KP – Polish Convention
RdR – Movement for the Republic
AP – Polish Action
PPL – Polish Liberal Program

Hungary – 1990-1994

The fight for office

The three main Hungarian opposition parties that had worked together to negotiate the transition with the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (MSZMP) became increasingly competitive with each other during the fall of 1989 and winter of 1990. A major split occurred in October, when two of the parties, the SZDSZ and Fidesz refused to sign on to the deal. They both argued that holding direct presidential elections in advance of the parliamentary vote threatened to enable the communists, with their popular reformer Imre Pozsgay, to win the presidency. They also wanted a weaker presidency elected by
parliament. So rather than sign the agreement, the SZDSZ and Fidesz called for a referendum on the question of the presidential elections.

The campaign for the referendum, which took place in November and included three other questions related to reducing the role of the communist party, gave the still small organizations of SZDSZ and Fidesz a chance to gain greater public exposure and build their reputations as the most radical reformers in the EKA. By contrast, the MDF called on voters to boycott the referendum, preferring to stick to the agreement hammered out with the MSZMP. In the event, the referendum was a victory for the SZDSZ and Fidesz, as voters supported their positions on all four questions. The public profile of the SZDSZ in particular increased dramatically as a result of this key victory.

And so, as the three opposition parties entered the campaign for the March-April 1990 elections, they were in a distinctly different position from their counterparts in Poland. It was not simply that there was no single umbrella movement in Hungary, but the three opposition parties that did exist already had experience campaigning on different sides of an issue.

Moreover, the first election campaign saw the three main opposition parties distinctly divided on certain policy dimensions. A close look at their 1990 platforms with respect to economic policy questions shows Fidesz and MDF as the most radically pro-market formations of the ex-opposition parties (along with the Smallholders), but most of the political spectrum was in broad agreement on the need for market-oriented economic reforms, including even the ex-communist MSZP. The SZDSZ, which was pro-market but also emphasized the importance of trade unions in its program, appeared to be close to the MSZP in terms of the two parties’ economic platforms.158 On socio-cultural questions, the secular and urban SZDSZ was clearly distinct from the MDF, which adopted a moderate Christian democratic approach.159 In fact, on this scale, the SZDSZ appears to have emphasized liberal attitudes in its program to a significantly greater degree than Fidesz, a party that was widely seen at the time as a liberal ally of SZDSZ.

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Figure 3.3

Hungary 1990 – Socio-cultural positions of parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SZDSZ</th>
<th>FIDESZ</th>
<th>MDF</th>
<th>FKGP</th>
<th>KDNP</th>
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<td>Traditionalism</td>
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* The parties that emerged from the anti-communist opposition are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; and other parties in black. The party acronyms: MSZP = Hungarian Socialist Party; SZDSZ = Alliance of Free Democrats; FKGP = Independent Smallholders Party; FIDESZ = Alliance of Young Democrats; MDF = Hungarian Democratic Forum; KDNP = Christian Democratic People’s Party.

Figure 3.4

Hungary 1990 – Party positions on the economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MSZP</th>
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<th>MDF</th>
<th>FKGP</th>
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<td>Market</td>
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* The parties that emerged from the anti-communist opposition are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; and other parties in black. The party acronyms: MSZP = Hungarian Socialist Party; SZDSZ = Alliance of Free Democrats; FKGP = Independent Smallholders Party; FIDESZ = Alliance of Young Democrats; MDF = Hungarian Democratic Forum; KDNP = Christian Democratic People’s Party.
The MDF scored a major victory in the elections, winning 164 out of 386 seats. The party did particularly well in the single-member constituencies but also outpolled the other parties on the regional lists elected by proportional representation, winning just under 25 per cent of the vote in the first round of the elections on 25 March, 1990. The SZDSZ came in second with 94 seats, and Fidesz finished a distant fourth with just 22 seats.

The results presented the MDF leadership with a number of possible coalition options. While commentators in the media had speculated about the likelihood of an all-opposition governing coalition of the MDF, SZDSZ, and Fidesz, there had also been speculation about a post-election alliance between the MDF and the ex-communist MSZP (reflecting the moderate stance of the MDF during the transition). Opinion polls tended to show a desire in the public for some form of grand coalition that would group together all of the parties of the Opposition Roundtable. But, in the presence of various other coalition options, the MDF leaders gave little consideration to the option of crossing the regime divide to work with the revamped Socialists or to that of setting up a coalition with its erstwhile allies from the Opposition Roundtable.

Instead, the MDF decided to form a coalition with the revived historical parties, the Independent Smallholders (FKGP) and the Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP). In some ways, this coalition option may seem like the most difficult one to explain in light of the policy positions of the parties. In fact, the MDF had potentially closer partners than the FKGP and KDNP on every dimension except for the economic scale, where it was relatively close to the FKgP. Still, the significance of the socio-cultural dimension of competition in Hungary, even at this early stage of the transition, meant that the MDF had significantly more important commonalities with the right-wing FKGP and KDNP than it did with the liberal ex-dissidents of the SZDSZ.

An alliance with the Smallholders would have amounted to a minimum-winning coalition with a majority in the parliament. But the MDF decided to let the Christian Democrats in as well as a means of counterbalancing the influence of the Smallholders.

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161 Tokes, *Hungary’s Negotiated Revolution*.
The MDF’s coalition choice also reflected the degree of mistrust between the MDF and SZDSZ, dating back to the historical differences between the two oppositional groups as well as competition between the two parties during the recent referendum and election campaigns. Moreover, the MDF had a strong national-conservative element in its ranks, and Antall himself was close to the Independent Smallholders and Christian Democrats. In fact, he had been viewed as a potential leader of both parties at different junctures in the late 1980s, before finally assuming the leadership of the MDF.

Overall, the coalition choices of the MDF served to lay the foundations for the much-discussed three-dimensional Hungarian political space, consisting of a Christian-national bloc (MDF, FKgP and KDNP), a liberal bloc (SZDSZ and Fidesz), and a socialist bloc (MSZP). While this coalition choice kept in place the regime divide between the ex-communists and the ex-opposition groups, it also divided the opposition into Christian-national and secular-liberal wings.

Still, there was some degree of cooperation at the outset between the MDF and the SZDSZ on procedural questions, despite the antagonistic tone of the election campaign. Immediately after the elections, the SZDSZ and MDF negotiated an instrumental deal out of the public eye. The deal was aimed at altering some of the provisions of the Roundtable agreements. The SZDSZ was the only party with enough seats to help the MDF alter the agreements. Primarily, the two parties agreed to reduce the number of laws requiring a constitutional two-thirds majority to be passed, which under the Roundtable agreement had constituted a relatively large proportion of legislation. In addition, the two parties agreed that the president would be elected by parliament and adopted the mechanism of a constructive no-confidence vote for defeating the government. In exchange for agreeing to ease the task of governing for the MDF in this way, the SZDSZ got MDF support for their own presidential candidate, Árpád Göncz, as well as a number of key positions on parliamentary committees. But the cooperation between the erstwhile Opposition Roundtable allies did not extend beyond that, and apparently little consideration was given to a governing coalition between the two

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parties. Indeed, even this instrumental agreement caused consternation in the ranks of the MDF. In an early example of party switching, the former communist Zoltán Király, who had run as an MDF candidate, abandoned the party’s faction when it came out that the MDF and SZDSZ had agreed on a candidate for the presidency and that direct presidential elections were off the table.

Between 1990 and 1994, a number of other defections that were at least partially based on policy differences changed the face of parliament. They also served to solidify the ideological content of the ex-opposition parties. The MDF went through a number of splits and defections. The origins of some of these internal disputes can be traced to the fact that MDF leader József Antall had left almost all of the party’s “founding fathers” from Lakitelek out of his cabinet. Of the founders, only Lajos Fur and Bertalan Andrasfalvy were invited into cabinet. This led to tensions between the government and the MDF party organization, which still featured many of the founding populist group in leadership positions. But there were also some clear ideological differences, particularly over national issues and decommunization. The other two opposition parties, which had been consigned to the opposition benches, also suffered some defections and internal turmoil as the parties sought to position themselves on the emerging Hungarian political landscape. In addition, the heated rhetoric intensified between the governing MDF and the opposition SZDSZ, replaying the divisions of the late 1980s and deepening the rift between the erstwhile partners of the Opposition Roundtable. The SZDSZ increasingly found itself on the same side of divisive socio-cultural issues as the ex-communist MSZP. While many commentators have suggested that the disputes and internal tensions within the parties were largely reflections of personal animosities among the ex-opposition activists, the following section will demonstrate that underlying differences in policy preferences were also powerful contributors to the disputes within the main governing party and between the governing and opposition parties. In Hungary, the central disputes within and between the former opposition parties revolved most

164 Interview with Imre Furmann, May 2006; Interview with Géza Jeszenszky, June 2005.
165 Király later became head of the Hungarian Social Democratic Party, which failed to win seats in parliament in the next elections. Nigel Swain, Political Developments 1989-90, Centre for Central and Eastern European Studies, Working Paper No. 4, p. 6.
166 Tokes, Hungary’s Negotiated Revolution, p. 398.
167 Interview with Géza Jeszenszky, June 2005.
powerfully around socio-cultural and decommunization issue dimensions, but disputes around the economic-distributive dimension were also present. The most acute disputes caused the protagonists to fight for control of their parties. Generally, such efforts failed, leading the disgruntled groups to abandon their parties or be forced out.

Socio-cultural dimension

The socio-cultural dimension of party competition in Hungary involved a mix of religious and national questions. The three-party governing coalition shared policy preferences on the socio-cultural issues, and could be grouped into a Christian-national bloc. Confronting them were the two post-opposition parties, SZDSZ and Fidesz, which in the early 1990s were both secular liberal parties, and the ex-communist MSZP.

The governing coalition under Prime Minister Antall adopted a general outlook aimed at supporting a Christian-democratic tone in society. To that end, the government implemented a number of measures, including the reintroduction of religious instruction in state schools, albeit on a voluntary basis, and a limited restitution program for former church property nationalized by the communist regime. The latter law was aimed at restituting buildings that had been confiscated from the churches for traditional religious or social activities. The buildings were only to be returned if the churches had the means to make use of them for those purposes, and the entire restitution process would be spread over the course of 10 years and financed by the state. The opposition parties criticized the MDF-led government’s policies in these areas, arguing that they excessively blurred the line between church and state, and that the government was adopting a “Christian course” in running the country. Nevertheless, as emotional as the debates occasionally were, they generally took place between the opposition and governing parties.

A more internally divisive issue for MDF turned on the questions of Hungarian nationhood, history, and minorities, both inside and outside of the country. As was seen in the previous chapter, the MDF was founded by a group of national-populist writers who were very interested in the question of Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries as well as the issue of Hungarian identity generally. These concerns remained

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important for many members of the party after it took office in 1990. Prime Minister Antall, who had not emerged from the national populist group, confirmed the ongoing importance of the issue for the MDF when he declared after taking office that he would aim to serve as a leader for 15 million Hungarian rather than just for the 10 million actually living in Hungary. Nevertheless, Antall also sought to moderate the appeals of his party on these issues in the interests of maintaining unity in the MDF between its national liberal, Christian democratic, and national populist wings. But this balancing act proved impossible to sustain in the face of the increasingly vitriolic rhetoric from the MDF’s radical nationalist wing. The clashes between this group and the MDF’s national liberal wing began to seriously undermine Antall’s ability to hold the party together.

The nationalist wing within the MDF was grouped around the Lakitelek veteran and national populist playwright István Csurka, who was also the deputy chairman of the party. In the weekly newspaper *Magyar Forum*, Csurka and his followers took to openly questioning the legitimacy of Hungary’s post-war borders and attacking the “cosmopolitan” tendencies of the liberal opposition. An essay published in the *Magyar Forum* by Csurka in August 1992 was widely condemned for its anti-Semitic and extremist rhetoric. Csurka claimed in the article that President Göncz was “taking orders from communists, reform communists, liberals, Paris, New York, and Tel Aviv.” He also called on Antall, who by then was struggling with cancer, to resign and appoint a successor.¹⁶⁹ The article brought to a head the disputes between Csurka and the national-liberal wing of the party. In an open letter written in response to Csurka’s article, József Debreczeni, an MDF parliamentarian and representative of the latter group, denounced the playwright as a “Nazi,” and called for him to be expelled from the party.¹⁷⁰

Despite the increasing criticism of Csurka from the domestic and international media as well as from moderate members of the MDF itself, Antall initially refused to have Csurka expelled, preferring instead to simply distance himself from the radical MDF member’s extremist pronouncements. But tensions continued to rise. Csurka established a faction known as Hungarian Justice among MDF parliamentarians and even

his own extra-parliamentary organization known as the Hungarian Way. In May 1993, Lajos Für, who had acted as moderate balancer of the different warring factions within the forum, announced that he was quitting the leadership because of the ongoing disputes. Für’s resignation came amid the Csurka faction’s public denunciation of the government’s treaty with Ukraine, in which Hungary formally renounced any territorial claims on the former Soviet republic. Csurka declared that the Antall government had abandoned the 200,000 ethnic Hungarians living in Ukraine. These developments finally brought matters to a head. In June 1993, Antall had Csurka and his backers expelled from the MDF parliamentary faction. At the same time, he also expelled two members of the MDF’s self-proclaimed national-liberal wing, Debreczeni and István Elek, on the grounds that they had also contributed to the internal crisis. The latter move was clearly designed to placate the populist founders of the MDF, many of whom rejected Debreczeni’s criticisms of Csurka’s faction as excessive even while not agreeing with the latter’s extremist rhetoric. Sándor Lezsák, who had replaced Für as the party’s executive chairman, even declared that he could not remain in “an MDF which contained the József Debreczeni who said István Csurka was a Nazi.”

While these disputes within the MDF were certainly coloured by inter-personal rivalries, their ideological content is also undeniable. The disputes surrounding Csurka, and their resolution, contributed to three changes with ideological import in the relations between the ex-opposition parties. First, the MDF shed its liberal and nationalist wings and became more of a moderate conservative party with a Christian democratic component, at least at the leadership and parliamentary level. Second, it led to the creation by Csurka and his supporters of a new far-right formation known as the Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP), although the party was not able to gain seats in parliament until the 1998 elections. Meanwhile, the expelled MDF members from the so-called national-liberal wing of the party decided against forming their own party. Instead, they sat out the rest of the electoral term in parliament as independent members. That their most prominent members did not consider joining the liberal SZDSZ reflects in part the historical division between the former Democratic Opposition and the national-

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populist group of anti-communist opposition. But it also resulted in part from the other major change in the party system: the rapprochement between the anti-communist SZDSZ and the ex-communist MSZP.

In the midst of the internal disputes within the MDF and Csurka’s high-profile proclamations, the liberal opposition grew increasingly critical of what it saw as the government’s drift toward the extreme right. Nevertheless, the SZDSZ also went through an internal crisis of its own, despite the party’s success in the local elections of late 1990. Over the course of 1991, the SZDSZ fared poorly in a series of by-elections and had reportedly lost two-thirds of its original 32,000-strong membership and some MPs by the fall of that year. In this atmosphere, János Kis, the former dissident and leading light of the Alliance, decided to resign from the chairmanship. Kis alluded to the ideological divisions within the SZDSZ at the time when said he would prefer to sit as a representative of the party’s social liberal wing, rather than as the moderating leadership figure of the party. Many of the party’s prominent ex-dissidents favoured the candidacy of Alajos Dornbach, who had defended dissidents as a lawyer under the Kádár regime. But the leadership was won at a dramatic party congress in November 1991 by the lawyer Péter Tölgyessy, who had played a prominent role in the Roundtable talks of 1989 but had not been a part of the pre-1989 Democratic Opposition. Tölgyessy’s unexpected victory was an indication of the wide gulf between the ex-dissident and Budapest-based leadership of the SZDSZ and the grassroots membership in the regions. By tapping in to the disgruntled membership base, Tölgyessy, not unlike Václav Klaus in the Czech Civic Forum movement, was able to win the leadership of the party in which he was viewed as an “outsider” by the ex-dissident core. Many of the former members of the Democratic Opposition tended to dismiss Tölgyessy’s bid for the leadership as lacking in any ideological or programmatic substance. Nevertheless, there were some signs that his leadership would cause a change in the general orientation of the SZDSZ. Tölgyessy, for instance, suggested that the SZDSZ should work to find compromises with the MDF on some questions. Also, his election as leader was welcomed by Imre Kónya, of the MDF, and parts of the media speculated that he would bring the SZDSZ closer to the

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172 Interview with József Debreczeni, June 2006; Interview with Imre Furmann, May 2006.
MDF because he had taken part in the negotiation of the “pact” with the MDF after the 1990 elections. His victory prompted many of the ex-dissidents and founders of the SZDSZ to withdraw from the party’s national executive, including Gáspár Miklós Tamás, Miklós Harasztí, László Rajk, and Ferenc Koszeg. Former Democratic Opposition activist Iván Pető even stated on the occasion that the SZDSZ was being “devoured” by its membership and promptly resigned from his post as parliamentary caucus chairman.

But the SZDSZ’s dissident founders proved adept at using the internal structure of the party to challenge Tölgyessy’s leadership. Various platforms and factions were formed among the leading members of the party to challenge Tölgyessy and his supporters, and there were many conflicts between the parliamentary caucus and the leadership. Just one year after assuming the leadership of the SZDSZ, Tölgyessy lost it at the December 1992 congress, which elected Pető as SZDSZ leader by a vote of 525 to 292.

Even as the SZDSZ was consumed by its own internal struggles, a group of intellectuals with close ties to the SZDSZ joined others with ties to the ex-communist MSZP to produce a document entitled the Democratic Charter. The Charter was based on a 17-point statement that declared the consolidation of a true or full democracy to be incomplete in Hungary. It came on the heels of the publication of a document drawn up by Imre Konya for the MDF parliamentary caucus in which he called on his party to push through radical decommunization (see the next section) and impose its will on the public broadcasters. In response to Kónya’s comments, the Charter called for the government to respect various democratic norms, such as press freedoms and independence. The overt motive behind the charter was to create a parliamentary and societal bulwark against extremism. The ex-communist MSZP, which had also been critical of the extreme views of Csurka and others in the MDF, readily joined the charter. The Charter organized

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179 The MDF had been complaining for some time that some parts of the media, in particular the public broadcasters, were biased against the coalition government.
petitions, demonstrations, and public appeals as a means of defending “democratic values” in response to specific acts or statements by government politicians. For their part, the governing coalition parties were strongly opposed to the Charter, arguing that it was a political movement supported by the opposition and that it was wrong-headed and even provocative to launch a pro-democracy movement against a democratically elected government.\footnote{András Bozóki, “Intellectuals in a New Democracy: The Democratic Charter in Hungary,” \textit{East European Politics and Societies}, 10 (2), 1996, 173-213.} When the head of the Hungarian National Bank, György Surányi, added his signature to the Charter, the government dismissed him.\footnote{“Így járhat mindenki …” \textit{East European Reporter}, 5 (1), January-February 1992, p. 35.}

For its part, while Fidesz had also given its support to the Charter, the party’s parliamentarians stressed as early as December 1991 that their party would not support the transformation of the Charter into a political movement.\footnote{Bozóki, p. 187.} By 1993, Fidesz had grown increasingly critical of the Democratic Charter and the core leadership around Viktor Orbán began pushing the party toward the right side of the Hungarian spectrum. These moves came at a time when Fidesz was far and way the most popular party in the country.\footnote{See “Development of Voter Preference in Hungary 1989-1992” compiled from polls by the Hungarian Institute for Public Opinion Research, Median Public Opinion Research Ltd. and Gallup Hungary Ltd. in \textit{East European Reporter}, 5 (3), May-June 1992, p. 72.} In this atmosphere, the party decided to abandon its collective leadership structure and elect a single leader. Orbán took the leadership of the party easily.

Meanwhile, tensions within the leadership increased, particularly between Orbán’s group and Gábor Fodor. Fodor, who was the most visible proponent of the leadership’s social liberal wing, wanted to maintain a looser ideological profile for Fidesz, which would allow numerous tendencies to coexist within the party.\footnote{Judith Ingram, “The Party’s Just Begun,” \textit{Uncaptive Minds}, 6 (2), Summer 1993, 29-30.} He was also the most popular Fidesz politician at the time and the second most popular politician in the country.\footnote{Ibid, p. 29.} His ideas and his vision of the party came into increasing conflict with Orbán’s push for a more hierarchical and right-leaning Fidesz. The dispute came to a head when Fodor ran for the leadership of the party’s national council, the umbrella body for the party’s regional organizations. In a close and bitterly contested vote, Orbán’s chosen candidate for the post, József Szajer, defeated Fodor for the post at a party congress in late 1993.

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\footnote{182 “Így járhat mindenki …” \textit{East European Reporter}, 5 (1), January-February 1992, p. 35.}
\footnote{183 Bozóki, p. 187.}
\footnote{185 Judith Ingram, “The Party’s Just Begun,” \textit{Uncaptive Minds}, 6 (2), Summer 1993, 29-30.}
\footnote{186 Ibid, p. 29.}
This defeat eventually prompted Fodor, along with two of his key supporters, Péter Molnár and Klára Ungár, to leave the party and resign from their seats in parliament. A few months later, Fodor joined the SZDSZ and ran in a prominent place on the party’s list for the 1994 elections.

**Figure 3.5**

**Hungary 1994 – Socio-cultural positions of parties**

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<th>MSZP</th>
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</table>

[Libertarian -0.47 0.16]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIDESZ</th>
<th>MDF</th>
<th>KDNP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled from data contained in Klingemann et al. 2006.

* The parties that emerged from the anti-communist opposition are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; and other parties in black. The party acronyms: MSZP = Hungarian Socialist Party; SZDSZ = Alliance of Free Democrats; FKGP = Independent Smallholders Party; FIDESZ = Alliance of Young Democrats; MDF = Hungarian Democratic Forum; KDNP = Christian Democratic Peoples Party.

**Decommunization dimension**

During the Routable talks with the MSZP, the SZDSZ and Fidesz laid claim to the image of radical anti-communism. The two liberal opposition parties underscored their anti-communist images in the November 1989 referendum campaign, during which they campaigned on three questions calling for a reduction in communist influence in society, along with the question of the presidency. In early 1990, the two parties also went public with the revelation that the communist secret service had continued to carry out its surveillance work even after the signing of the October Roundtable agreement. The scandal, known as “Dunagate,” placed the issue of decommunization high on the public agenda in the lead-up to the March-April elections. During the election campaign, both
SZDSZ and Fidesz presented themselves to the public as radically anti-communist. Fidesz, for example, ran under the slogan “liberal, radical, alternative.” The MDF generally continued to portray itself as a moderate opposition force, running under the slogan “calm strength.” At the same time, though, the MDF also had a strong anti-communist current within its ranks, and another of its campaign slogans called for a “spring cleaning” of the Hungarian state.

As in other post-communist countries, there were two different, albeit related, dimensions to the decommunization debate in Hungary. Discussions in parliament focused on: 1) efforts to bring to justice communist-era crimes; and 2) efforts to screen out ex-secret police agents and informers from public posts.

A group within the MDF tackled the first of these dimensions with the so-called Justitia plan produced in August 1990. Justitia was a sweeping proposal that would have led to criminal proceedings against communist-era officials as well as the curtailing of pensions for such officials.\(^{187}\) Several months of debate ensued over the plan, leading in the fall of 1991 to a bill sponsored by two members of the MDF, Zsolt Zétényi and Péter Takács, proposed lifting the statute of limitations on certain crimes, such as treason and premadeitated murder, for the period of communist rule between 1944 and 1990. The Zétényi-Takács bill passed with the support of the MDF and its coalition partners. The SZDSZ members largely abstained, while Fidesz voted outright against the bill along with the ex-communist MSZP. But the legislation was soon annulled after President Göncz, who had emerged from the ranks of the SZDSZ, sent it to the Constitutional Court, which threw it out as unconstitutional. The MDF-government attempted to push through similar bills again two years later. In February 1993, parliament passed an “authoritative resolution” calling for the prosecution of certain crimes despite the statue of limitations and a bill that called for the prosecution of crimes committed in the aftermath of the 1956 invasion as, among other things, “war crimes” or “crimes against humanity.” Fidesz and SZDSZ abstained from voting on the bill. Again, President Göncz turned to the Constitutional Court for a ruling. This time, the court struck down the first

bill and part of the second bill, leaving in place the provisions for the prosecution of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The second dimension of the decommunization debate in Hungary involved discussions over the screening, or lustration, of public officials to determine if they had worked for the III/III department of the communist-era Interior Ministry. The first bill on screening was put together in 1990 by two ex-dissident parliamentarians for SZDSZ. The bill was aimed at screening people serving in public office to ascertain if they had served as agents or collaborators of the Interior Ministry’s III/III department. Milder than the Czech lustration law, the bill would have offered public office holders whose names were discovered in the department’s records a chance to resign discretely in order to prevent their names from being released to the public. No further sanction other than publicity would be imposed on former members of the III/III network who chose to remain in office. The bill was tabled in the politicized atmosphere in advance of the fall local elections, and amid suggestions that the names of former agents were going to be used for political purposes to discredit certain candidates. This time, it was the governing MDF that joined the ex-communist MSZP in preventing the bill from passing.

Instead, the MDF-led coalition government produced its own screening bill the following year. But several months later, the bill was withdrawn in the aftermath of a tidal wave of amendments from parliamentarians. It was finally resubmitted in 1993 and passed in 1994, shortly before the June elections. The government-sponsored law extended screening requirements to far more positions than originally envisioned in the 1990 SZDSZ law, including government members, high-ranking state administration officials, the heads of state-owned financial institutions, and even the editors in chief and executives of news publications with a circulation of more than 30,000. The law also expanded the range of past positions to affect not only people who worked for the III/III department but also people who read its reports as well as militia members and members of the war-time Arrow Cross. Again, though, the law did not contain a sanction for people in these positions who were found to have worked in the proscribed functions.
before 1989, and simply required them to resign from their current posts or face the publication of their names.188

The vote on the law contained a number of interesting markers for the positions of the parties on decommunization and on the political landscape in general as the June 1994 parliamentary elections approached. First, the MDF and its coalition partners voted to pass the law, while the ex-communist MSZP voted against; the opposition SZDSZ protested against the scope of the law, including the fact that it affected privately owned media outlets, and the bulk of its members abstained from the vote; finally, and perhaps most interestingly, Fidesz voted to support the law. In that sense, the law underlined a division on decommunization that pitted the positions of MDF and Fidesz on one side against the reluctance of SZDSZ on the other. Not only did this place Fidesz closer to MDF on decommunization, it also placed the SZDSZ closer to MSZP on the other side of the issue. This was a major change in the dynamic of the decommunization issue. It was, after all, SZDSZ that had first raised the screening issue almost immediately after the 1990 elections. Moreover, in 1993, Fidesz and SZDSZ had shared a position supporting strict adherence to the rule of law in their reluctance to support efforts by the MDF-led coalition to create a legal framework for the prosecution of communist-era crimes.

The seeming adjustments in the positions of the MDF, SZDSZ, and Fidesz with respect to the decommunization divide reflect a number of inter-related factors. Between 1990 and 1994, the issue of decommunization had become highly politicized in the context of relations between the three former allies at the Roundtable talks. The MDF in particular was affected by the debates over decommunization. The 1991 abortive coup against Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev by hard-line communists in Moscow stirred renewed discussion in Hungary, as it did in other East-Central European countries, about how to deal with the country’s domestic communists. In an internal report to his party that was obtained by the press, MDF parliamentary caucus leader Imre Kónya called on his party to seize the moment to push through as many of the principles of the Justitia

plan as possible.\textsuperscript{189} “There is no doubt that our supporters demand justice,” he wrote, adding that this demand should be fulfilled even if the majority of the population did not agree.\textsuperscript{190} Kónya also called for changes in the “political outlook” and “mentality” at the publicly owned Hungarian Radio and Television.\textsuperscript{191} Kónya’s radical call for decommunization and a shake-up in the media helped to set the political stage for the MDF-led government’s bill on communist-era crimes discussed above. But it also met with outrage from among the opposition parties as well as from groups within the MDF itself. The MDF’s national liberal wing attacked the Kónya program, saying it diverged from the principles of democracy and respect for a diversity of viewpoints that had attended the creation of the forum in the late 1980s. One prominent MDF liberal, Kata Beke, quit the party after writing a rebuttal to Kónya for 	extit{Magyar Hírlap} entitled “Why Did He Write It?”\textsuperscript{192}

As for the opposition, the SZDSZ and Fidesz, as was seen above, did not support the MDF’s efforts to suspend the statute of limitations for communist crimes committed after 1944. Fidesz adopted “a determined position” against the idea of lifting the statute of limitations, characterizing the move as “an assault on the constitution.”\textsuperscript{193} Fidesz leader Viktor Orbán even said his party found the MDF’s attempt to “pass judgment on others” to be “tasteless” given that many MDF parliamentarians had lived well under communism.\textsuperscript{194} And although the bulk of SZDSZ members abstained from the MDF-inspired bill, some of its members, such as Miklós Vásárhelyi, denounced the law and said the party should have taken a stronger stand against it.\textsuperscript{195}

\textsuperscript{190} Ibid, p.35.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid, p.73.
The opposition also responded in part with the Democratic Charter, which among other demands, rejected “autocratic and exceptional laws.”196 Crucially, the charter began the process of bringing the strongly anti-communist SZDSZ closer to the MSZP.197 While the charter initially declared itself open to any who supported it and emphasized its “non-party” character, it had close ties to the SZDSZ and MSZP, and some prominent members of the two parties served as spokespeople for the movement. For a time, Fidesz also supported the movement, but it later withdrew that support on the grounds that the Charter had become too political.

The decommunization issue continued to play a role in the MDF’s internal divisions throughout its term in office. The Constitutional Court’s rejection of the bill on suspending the statute of limitations kept the issue in the spotlight. Moreover, the MDF-led government’s effort to produce a screening law (after it had rejected a proposed SZDSZ screening bill) dragged on for months. Various observers have suggested that part of the reason behind the delay was the fact that any screening law affecting elected parliamentarians would have had a significant impact on the MDF faction in parliament.198 These delays drew increasing criticism from a radically anti-communist wing in the MDF. In fact, one of the issues championed by Csurka and his followers was that of decommunization. Other wings of the MDF tended to recoil from Csurka’s wild rhetoric, including some that supported stronger decommunization measures as well as the national liberal group. Following his group’s expulsion from the MDF in 1993, Csurka’s newly formed Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP) continued to promote a radical form of anti-communism. During the parliamentary debate on the screening law

198 It has been suggested by various observers that the MDF faction in parliament included some members who had collaborated with the secret police. Moreover, many have also suggested that Prime Minister József Antall had an interest in delaying the passage of a screening law until the end of the electoral term so that he could both limit damage to his MDF faction as well as use the files for his own purposes. See Barrett, Hack and Munkácsi, “Lustration as Political Competition,” 270; Csilla Kiss, “The Misuses of Manipulation: The Failure of Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Hungary,” Europe-Asia Studies, 58 (6), September 2006, 930-931; Kieran Williams, Brigid Fowler and Aleks Szcerbiak, “Explaining Lustration in Central Europe: A ‘Post-communist Politics’ Approach,” Democratization, 12 (1), February 2005, p. 29 and 35-36; Tokes, Hungary’s Negotiated Revolution, p. 426.
in 1994, for instance, members of MIÉP supported efforts to extend the scope of the law
to include even priests.\textsuperscript{199}

By the end of the 1990-1994 electoral term, then, the decommunization debate
had evolved and the issue had contributed to the forces that ended up ripping apart the
MDF and deepening the chasm between the remaining shards of the MDF and the
SZDSZ. Although the SZDSZ was a strongly anti-communist party during the transition
and the Roundtable talks, it always insisted on a strictly legal approach to the issue that
would respect individual rights and the constitution. In contrast, some elements in the
MDF were willing to push the envelope on decommunization and test the limits of the
constitution on the issue, while at the same time the party seemed to drag its feet on the
screening law. Fidesz, for its part, began the term with a position that was closer to
SZDSZ on the issue of decommunization, but toward the end of the term, the party
became more forceful on decommunization and supported the government’s screening
law.

\textit{Economic-distributive dimension}

The fact that Hungary’s opposition movements were already divided into three distinct
parties even before the transition to democracy had an impact on the manner in which
party competition across the economic issue divide took place. The main points of
contention over economic polices occurred between the governing MDF-led coalition and
the opposition SZDSZ and Fidesz, although there were also conflicts on the course of
economic reform within the MDF as well.

Hungary’s position differed significantly from that of other East-Central
European states. Years of Kádáríte reform communism meant that the Hungarian
economy was already a recipient of substantial inflows of foreign direct investment and
had something of an entrepreneurial class in place by 1990. At the same time, the country
was also saddled with a substantial foreign debt load. Moreover, a process of so-called
“spontaneous privatization” had already begun among state-owned firms in the country,
as enterprise managers took advantage of liberalizing rules implemented under the last

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{199} A MIÉP legislator supported an amendment to extend screening to priests provided that at least 20 per
cent of the active priesthood supported it, see Oltay, “Hungary’s Screening Law,” p. 14.
\end{footnote}
reform communist governments to form limited liability companies. This had led to asset stripping in which the valuable assets of many state-owned firms were moved into new companies owned by enterprise managers.

In comparison with some other East-Central European countries, the MDF-led government’s economic transformation strategy has been described as ‘gradualistic’. Indeed, one of the most common criticisms of the MDF government’s approach from the liberal opposition parties was that it was proceeding too slowly and that it was implementing an “etatist” form of economic transformation. While the MDF rejected such accusations as misleading, one of its earliest internal struggles over economic reform strategy resulted in the resignation of the chief proponent of “shock therapy” program in the MDF-led government. In 1990, György Matolcsy, the state secretary for economic affairs, advocated a radical economic reform program involving rapid privatization and various measures to spur economic growth. Confronted with resistance from the finance minister and other cabinet ministers, Matolcsy eventually resigned. Although the finance minister at the time also stepped down, Matolcsy’s program was not adopted. Instead, the MDF opted for a less radical approach to the economic transformation, despite the ballooning state budget deficit and contracting economy.

Nevertheless, the government felt forced to implement price increases that led to the sharpest and most memorable conflict of the first few years of Hungary’s economic transformation. In October, after the government announced average price hikes of 66 per cent for gasoline, the country’s taxi drivers and other private carriers went on strike and staged a blockade of major roads and bridges across the country. The strike was resolved with a compromise after three tense days of negotiations and heated arguments involving the government, the unions, and the opposition parties. Many politicians of the era cite the strike as a major contributor to the deepening distrust between the governing MDF and the opposition SZDSZ. SZDSZ leaders placed the blame for the strike on the

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202 Interview with Géza Jeszenszky.
government and even called on it to resign, while the MDF and its supporters have accused the opposition of acting irresponsibly during the disturbances.

In the crucial area of privatization, the MDF took an early and more strongly critical stand toward the issue of “spontaneous privatization” than the liberal SZDSZ and Fidesz. After it entered government in 1990, the MDF established a State Privatization Agency (SPA) to bring order to the privatization process. The agency was to manage state assets, prepare firms for privatization, and facilitate the privatization process. The MDF also put in place a variety of mechanisms for privatization, launching an Employee Share Ownership Program (ESOP) and enabling Hungarians whose property had been nationalized by the communist regime to use special vouchers to invest in companies. Through the SPA, the government also launched a process to commission international investment banks and consultants to advise on the privatization of state-owned firms on a case-by-case basis. In this way, privatization through foreign direct investment became the lynchpin to the sale of state assets in Hungary.

Other forms of privatization were adopted by the government as a result of compromises within the governing coalition between the MDF and its two junior partners, the Christian Democrats (KDNP) and the Independent Smallholders (FKGP). The KDNP pushed for and got a law on the restitution of some Church property (as discussed in the previous section). The FKGP managed to secure a compromise law offering a mix of compensation and restitution to the former owners of lands nationalized by the communist regime or their descendants, although FKGP leader József Torgyán criticized the MDF and the law for not having gone far enough. These compensation laws, particularly the latter one with the FKGP, were not strongly supported by the MDF, but were carried out as a price for keeping the coalition together. Both the church and farmland compensation programs were subjected to heated criticism from the liberal SZDSZ and Fidesz, who argued that they would delay the process of economic transformation (in addition to their concerns about expanding church influence discussed

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204 Ibid, 141-142.
One of the most significant issues for Hungarian macroeconomic stability toward the end of the MDF-led coalition’s term in office was the deteriorating fiscal situation. The budget deficit amounted to 8.4 per cent of GDP by 1994, up from 3.2 per cent in 1989. Including social security funds, the total public sector deficit was actually equal to 11.5 percent of GDP.\footnote{David Bartlett, The Political Economy of Dual Transformations: Market Reform and Democratization in Hungary (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997) 200-202; Karoly Okolicsansyi, “Hungary’s Budget Deficit Worsens, RFE/RL Research Report, 3 (2), 14 January 1994, 36-38.} The worsening fiscal situation, in part an inheritance of the communist era and in part due to the MDF-led government’s reluctance to engage in politically sensitive fiscal reform,\footnote{Bartlett, Political Economy, 200-202.} would have major implications for the next government.

The main thrust of political competition along the economic-distributive divide pitted the MDF and its coalition partners against the opposition SZDSZ and Fidesz. The MDF’s economic strategy encountered its most vociferous criticism from the SZDSZ and Fidesz. While there were some internal disagreements within the MDF over economic policy, as demonstrated by the alternation of finance ministers and other economic policy officials during the term, this dimension of political competition was not a major contributor to party fragmentation.

Figure 3.6
Hungary 1994 – Party positions on economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KDNP</th>
<th>MSZP</th>
<th>FKGP</th>
<th>SZDSZ</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1.69</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>13.25</td>
<td>40.35</td>
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Planning

<table>
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<th>FIDESZ</th>
<th>MDF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>22.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Market

Compiled from data contained in Klingemann et al. 2006.
* The parties that emerged from the anti-communist opposition are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; and other parties in black. The party acronyms: MSZP = Hungarian Socialist Party; SZDSZ = Alliance of Free Democrats; FKGP = Independent Smallholders Party; FIDESZ = Alliance of Young Democrats; MDF = Hungarian Democratic Forum; KDNP = Christian Democratic People’s Party.

**Regime divide**

In combination, the controversies over István Csurka’s extremist rhetoric, the “media wars,” and the Democratic Charter widened the already considerable gap between the SZDSZ and MDF, contributed to the cooling of relations between the SZDSZ and FIDESZ, and pushed the formerly anti-communist SZDSZ toward ever closer cooperation with the ex-communist MSZP. The change in attitudes among SZDSZ members with regard to working with the MSZP was gradual but undeniable. In late 1991, soon after the Democratic Charter was created, leading SZDSZ members were still unwilling to consider a future coalition with the MSZP, although they were already willing to hold out the possibility of some day forming such a coalition if the former communist party were to complete its “transformation” into a moderate social-democratic party. In November 1991, for instance, Imre Mecs, one of the left-leaning members of the SZDSZ, said “the time [had] not yet come for coalition cooperation” with the MSZP because the communist successor party had not yet fully transformed itself. 209Still, both SZDSZ and MSZP members acknowledged that their parties were able to work on some issues together in parliament. 210

But by late 1992, in the aftermath of the Tögyessy interlude, various members of the SZDSZ, including János Kis, started to increasingly speak of some form of future cooperation with the MSZP in government as a possibility. 211 While a rapprochement with the ex-communists was opposed by many in the SZDSZ rank-and-file, including Tögyessy, his defeat at the 1992 congress seemed to open the way for a future coalition with the MSZP. 212

Indications of a potential coalition between the MSZP and SZDSZ increased in 1994 in the run-up to the May elections. Another step was taken at the SZDSZ congress in January 1994, where the party formally voted to establish itself as a “social-liberal party of the Centre.” That same month the SZDSZ leadership also suggested that it might be willing to strike a coalition with the MSZP. Similarly, from the other side, the MSZP also suggested in early 1994 that its preferred coalition partner would be the SZDSZ.

**Party switching**

The first electoral term from 1990 to 1994 saw a number of defections and expulsions of MPs among all the key parties (see Table 3.3). Often the result of inter-personal conflicts or naked political ambition, many of these moves nevertheless tended to also reflect sets of significant differences among politicians on questions of ideology and policy. Thus the MDF expelled both its radical-populist wing around István Csurka as well as the most vocal part of its national-liberal wing around József Debreczeni; the SZDSZ resisted efforts by a group around Péter Tőgyessy to push the party away from the MSZP and a little closer to Fidesz and MDF; and FIDESZ saw the exit of Gábor Fodor and a handful of other representatives of the party’s social liberal tendency as Viktor Orbán began to slowly refashion the movement into a conservative party. These changes reflected the sharpening crystallization of the political scene, as the initially loose and amorphous opposition movements gradually acquired increasingly defined ideological positions in the heat of competitive electoral politics. At the same time, ex-opposition dissidents and political entrepreneurs honed their own ideological profiles and discovered those of the parties they had initially joined.

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214 Ibid.
215 Ibid.
### Table 3.4

**Party Switching in the Hungarian Parliament (1990-1994)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party factions in Sejm 1990</th>
<th>Party factions into which deputies switched</th>
<th>Number of deputies 1990</th>
<th>Number of deputies 1994</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MDF</td>
<td></td>
<td>165</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Justice and Life Party (MIÉP)</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FIDESZ</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KDNP</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>SZDSZ</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>83</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KDNP</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>MDF</td>
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<td>FIDESZ</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>EKGP</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Independent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Christian Peasants</td>
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<tr>
<td>KDNP</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EKGP</td>
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</table>
Conclusions

This chapter has examined the manner in which the anti-communist opposition movements that rose to power in Poland and Hungary handled the internal dissension that surfaced in all of them once they were in government. In both the cases of Solidarity and the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the internal disputes of the early 1990s involved struggles between factions involving attempts to seize control of key institutional positions in the state and/or the movement. In both cases, the disputes resulted in the exit, either forced or voluntary, of various factions from the original movement. This either caused the fragmentation of the movement’s political arm (as in Poland) or a reduction in the size of the movement in parliament (as in Hungary). In both cases, the fracturing of the movements took place in the context of their governing roles. This fact is underlined by the case of Hungary, where the fractious disputes experienced by the governing MDF had a larger impact on that party’s unity than the disputes experienced by the other two anti-communist opposition movements had on their unity.

Crucially, the preceding sections have shown that the disputes that tore apart these movements were not merely based on personality differences or a fight for control of particular offices. They also involved acute disagreements over specific policies that were crucial to the political and economic transitions the countries were experiencing. Vocal and very public fights over decommunization and economic reform policy were central to the dissolution of the movements and the subsequent creation of new parties in both countries. In addition, the movements in Hungary and Poland were also racked by fierce socio-cultural debates over religion and questions of national identity. The main protagonists in these political battles often framed their attempts to take control of their movements or splinter away from them in the context of these over-arching policy disagreements.
Moreover, the initial disputes that undermined the unity of the anti-communist opposition movements took place in a context in which the communist-successor party (or parties) was severely weakened and/or disrupted by its own internal struggles. Indeed, the very weakness of the communist successor party was often used by the protagonists of internal disputes in the post-opposition movements as a justification for dividing the movements. As long as the former communists were weak and discredited, it was safe for the former anti-communist opposition to divide according to differing policy preferences.

At the same time, the regime divide between the ex-communist parties and the post-opposition *governing* parties in each country remained strong. In Hungary, however, the fierce socio-cultural battles between different post-opposition parties within and outside of government led one those parties to begin considering closer cooperation with the post-communists. The regime divide in Hungary, as was seen in Chapter 2, was not as strong as it was in Poland. These early signs of commonality between a part of the post-opposition forces and the ex-communists laid the groundwork for a strategic move that would have momentous consequences for the Hungarian political landscape after the next election.

Finally, as the first electoral term in each country came to a close, opinion polls showed that the communist successor parties were beginning to recover from post-transition weakness and disarray. This, too, would have a major impact on the future of the political party system in each country and the role of the post-opposition parties in it.
Chapter 4

The effects of coalitions

The anti-communist opposition movements that came to power across East-Central Europe in 1989-1990 went through a tumultuous first term in office. The pressures of governmental and parliamentary politics brought out the existing internal differences in policy preferences among the diverse activists in these movements. Almost inevitably, they splintered and gave birth to a number of new political parties and proto-parties. Like other such umbrella movements in the region, Poland’s Solidarity and Hungarian Democratic Forum were both torn apart by internecine struggles that emerged with the need to generate policies for the transition of their countries to democratic and market-based structures. By the time of the second elections since the collapse of communism, the newly minted democratic politicians of these countries were confronted with a very different political landscape compared with the one they had faced in 1989.

While the details differed between countries, in each country splits and defections had affected the former opposition movements. New parties had emerged to vie for votes and the differences between parties in terms of policy preferences were both more clearly visible and more complex. The regime divide between the successors to the former communist party and anti-communist opposition remained, but there were also sharper divisions between the parties over economic and social policy issues.

In other words, during the first electoral term, the early beginnings of a party system based on competition along identifiable issue dimensions had begun. The era during which the former anti-communist opposition movements had demonstrated a degree of unity was seemingly over. Divisions over a range of policy issues confronting the new democracies had broken down this unity. Newly minted politicians had emerged from the former umbrella opposition movements to grab hold of these issue differences. They used them to form new parties and to compete for votes in the second round of elections.

The second elections would, in turn, create a new dynamic. The new parties emerging from the wreckage of the former anti-communist movements to contest the second set of elections would now be confronted with the strategic problem of
coalescence. One of the fundamental challenges of representative democracy, coalescence in the context of political party systems involves coalition-building.\textsuperscript{216} Faced with the task of governing in systems in which it is highly unlikely for any single party to obtain a majority in the legislature, parties are forced to work together to form either informal or formal coalitions to facilitate that task.\textsuperscript{217} Having divided into a number of different parties, the successors of the former anti-communist opposition, as well as the other parties in the nascent systems of East-Central Europe, were now faced with the strategic dilemma of coalition-building.

In a sense, of course, the former opposition movements already had coalition experience by the time of the second round of national elections since the fall of communism. In Hungary, the opposition had been divided from the start into three main parties, one of which had formed a governing coalition with two other parties for the 1990-1994 electoral term. Poland, too, had witnessed the formation of a Solidarity-led cabinet in which the Communist PZPR and the regime’s two satellite parties held some ministerial posts.

Nevertheless, by the time of the second round of free and fair elections, the situation was different. The first elections in each country had mainly pitted the former opposition movements in each country against their respective communist parties. Aside from this central division, the opposition movements had little in the way of previous experience to determine how their potential allies might behave in coalition government. What little information they did have was based on how the other parties (such as the communist-era satellite parties) and their own fellow opposition members had behaved under the communist regime and during the transition.\textsuperscript{218} In other words, the real strategic game of coalition politics had not yet begun in earnest.

\textsuperscript{217} Ibid, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{218} While such information is not equivalent to the experience of seeing how parties and leaders behave in a democratic parliament, it did influence the coalition choices of opposition leaders in the aftermath of the first elections. In Hungary, for instance, the cool relationship between members of the MDF and SZDSZ, which dated back years, contributed to the decision by MDF leaders to form a coalition government with two other parties. Nevertheless, even politicians in Hungary had little to go on in terms of anticipating how the leaders of other parties would behave in the new democratic conditions after the March 1990 elections. For a discussion of the importance of past experiences with governing coalitions for politicians engaged in
Moreover, in both countries, new parties had emerged from the wreckage of the governing ex-opposition movements. In Poland, the new parties that were created when Solidarity splintered now had to consider whether to rejoin their erstwhile allies in a coalition government or find new partners to work with among the other parties on the scene. In Hungary, the situation was further complicated by the fact that some of the former opposition movements had not yet had a chance to enter government.

Between the first and second elections of the post-communist period, the parties emerging from the former opposition, the former communist parties, and the other parties of East-Central Europe had divided along a range of economic, socio-cultural, and decommunization issues that were outlined in Chapter 3. The parties, although in many cases new to the game of politics, were beginning to create public profiles for their organizations in relation to one or more of these issue areas. At same time, party leaders were aware of the stances of other parties along these different issue dimensions. Immediately after the second round of elections, party leaders had to make decisions about potential governing coalitions with other parties in the system based in part on where those parties stood on these issue dimensions. Critically, and in contrast to other kinds of party systems, they also had to take into account the regime divide that separated the post-opposition parties from the post-communist parties. This issue was particularly acute in those countries, such as Poland and Hungary, where the former communist party had gained in electoral strength.

Naturally, the coalition decisions of these post-opposition parties would have important consequences for government policy. This chapter, however, will demonstrate that those coalition decisions would also have serious consequences for the cohesiveness of the post-opposition parties that were making them. This, in turn, had an impact on the level of fragmentation among the post-opposition parties. Previous studies of the region’s political party systems have emphasized other factors to account for such fragmentation in the process of coalition bargaining, see Wolfgang C. Müller, Torbjörn Bergman and Kaare Strøm, “Coalition Theory and Cabinet Governance,” in Kaare Strøm, Wolfgang C. Müller and Torbjörn Bergman, eds., Cabinets and Coalition Bargaining: The Democratic Life Cycle in Western Europe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 1-50, especially 14-18. The landmark study conducted by Herbert Kitschelt and his associates in the first half of the 1990s and based in part on surveys that asked politicians to rank the other parties in their country along certain issue dimensions, indicates that the party leaders had well developed views of the policy preferences of their competitors. See Kitschelt, Mansfeldová, Markowski and Toka, Post-Communist Party Systems.
(or lack of it). Broad historical-structural factors, cultural specificities, institutional factors, the cohesiveness of certain elite groups or the interventions of particular political leaders have all been offered as reasons for the differences in fragmentation among the parties of the former opposition. The broader literature on political parties contains these factors as well and adds social cleavage structures as another possible explanation for particular patterns of fragmentation. While these factors may give us some traction for explaining party fragmentation in general, they tend to overlook some of the specific dynamics of the post-communist East-Central European democracies.

They also overlook the specific nature of the challenge of coalescence in East-Central Europe. While elections are competitive, they tend to produce a diversity of political representatives, and at least some of them must find some way of cooperating in order to advance a legislative agenda. This is the problem of coalescence. While the importance of this challenge for coalition building is widely acknowledged in the literature in terms of its impact on the kinds of governing coalitions that are created in democracies, the potential impact of governing coalitions on the internal cohesiveness of political parties is rarely addressed. This may be because internal party cohesiveness in mature democracies is not a major issue. To be sure, parties in mature democracies do, on occasion, splinter and fall apart. But the incidence of such splintering is not so frequent that it would require scholars to abandon the widely held assumption that parties can be treated as unitary actors. In East-Central Europe, as will become evident in this chapter, this assumption is a perilous one. This chapter will demonstrate that coalitions had a major and often overlooked impact on the internal cohesiveness of the post-opposition parties of East-Central Europe, and therefore on the level of fragmentation in the party systems taken as a whole. In pointing to the intra-party impact of coalitions, this chapter will also highlight an area that is often overlooked in the broader literature on coalitions.

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The challenge of building coalitions

Scholars who study coalition formation have advanced a number of variables to explain and predict what kinds of coalitions political parties in multi-party systems are likely to form after elections. These variables can be loosely categorized as structural attributes of the legislature, policy preferences of the parties, institutional rules governing the political system, and bargaining dynamics. In general, these theories have tended to assume that the coalition behavior of parties was driven by their efforts to secure offices, policies, votes, or some combination of those goals. More recent theories have tended to see parties as restricted by institutional rules or bargaining dynamics in their pursuit of these goals through coalition building. The vast majority of these theories have been based on models that assumed parties to be unitary actors.

Early theories of coalition formation tended to predict that parties would form so-called minimal winning coalitions. Pioneered by Riker, this theory was based on the assumption that parties were most interested in seeking the benefits of occupying governmental and parliamentary offices. They would thus seek to create a coalition that had 1) a majority in the legislature to prevent other office-seeking parties from toppling it and 2) the minimal number of seats needed to secure a majority in order to minimize the spread of finite office benefits across coalition members. A variation of this theory had parties seeking to form coalitions with the minimum number of parties as opposed to seats in the legislature. These theories did not, however, represent a switch in the level of analysis from party to individual legislator, but rather it was a suggestion that parties would seek to form coalitions that would contain the combination of partners with the minimum number of seats necessary for holding a majority in parliament. Later, other theorists tried to integrate questions of ideology and/or policy preference into their models of coalition formation. Parties, according to this view, would seek to form majority winning coalitions with other parties that are closest to them in terms of ideological stance. The work of De Swaan took this further, arguing that parties in fact

224 Robert Axelrod, Conflict of Interest (Chicago: Markham, 1970).
sought to form coalitions based on their policy preferences.\textsuperscript{225} Early versions of this approach tended to construct the policy space as a one-dimensional spectrum;\textsuperscript{226} later versions added one or more dimensions to more closely approximate the policy space.\textsuperscript{227} Finally, more recent studies have also incorporated institutional rules,\textsuperscript{228} such as the role of \textit{formateurs}, as well as bargaining dynamics\textsuperscript{229} into theories about coalitions.

As noted above, most theories of coalitions, including those that emphasize policy preferences, are based on the assumption that political parties can be treated as unitary actors. In study after study, researchers laid out this assumption openly, albeit sometimes almost apologetically. Their defense, which is eminently reasonable for their purposes, is based on two observations: 1) the idea that political parties in Western democracies tend for the most part to behave as if they were unitary actors; and 2) the empirical and theoretical requirements of unpacking an entity as complex as a political party and treating it as a system unto itself are too onerous if the main objective of a theory is to explain the formation of coalitions.\textsuperscript{230}

Nevertheless, some scholars of coalition politics have lifted the lid on political parties. Laver and Shepsle, for example, examined the manner in which factions within political parties can affect the formation of coalitions.\textsuperscript{231} Others have included some aspects of the internal life of parties in their analyses of how and why coalitions are formed.\textsuperscript{232} Many scholars have connected intra-party politics with coalition formation by adopting Luebbert’s proposition that party leaders are primarily interested in maintaining


\textsuperscript{226} Axelrod, \textit{Conflict of Interest}.


\textsuperscript{231} Laver and Shepsle, \textit{Making and Breaking Governments}, 246-276.

their positions at the head of their party.\textsuperscript{233} If a particular coalition with another party threatens a leader’s position in their own party because of internal opposition, the leader will prefer to discontinue the coalition. Thus party leaders, according to Luebbert, aim to “minimize disunity” in their own organization, and so they strive to limit their party’s policy preferences in coalition talks to those “decisive preferences” that “are of the greatest concern to their party.”\textsuperscript{234} The concern with internal unity, Luebbert suggested in an oft-quoted passage of his book, is why coalition negotiations between parties often take a long time. While the leaders of different parties tend to be able to conclude their negotiations with each other relatively quickly, those same leaders must spend a large amount of time ensuring that their own members support the coalition deal.\textsuperscript{235}

Following Luebbert, Maor found that conflicts between factions within parties can have an impact on coalition formation, but this impact depends on the internal organizational structure of the party. Internal conflicts within strongly centralized parties are more likely to cause the disruption of governing coalitions than internal struggles in decentralized parties. This is so because decentralized parties can accommodate the existence of factions without falling apart or having to alter their coalition strategy.\textsuperscript{236} Maor’s research is part of a rich literature that has emphasized the importance of the organizational attributes of parties and has made use of Hirschman’s exit, voice and loyalty model for understanding how members respond to the declines of their organizations.\textsuperscript{237} Nevertheless, although Maor does demonstrate that coalition choices can have an impact on the cohesion of parties, the central thrust of his analysis, like that of Laver and Shepsle and even that of Luebbert, is aimed at explaining the impact of internal party politics on coalition formation and termination.\textsuperscript{238}

The literature on coalitions, then, has been largely concerned with how and why certain kinds of coalitions are formed. Many of the insights regarding office- versus

\textsuperscript{234} Ibid, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{235} Ibid, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{236} Moshe Maor, \textit{Parties, Conflicts and Coalitions in Western Europe} (London: Routledge, 1998) 13-16.
\textsuperscript{237} Another example is the work of Jonathan Hopkin on the collapse of the Union of the Democratic Centre in post-Franco Spain, Jonathan Hopkin, \textit{Party Formation and Democratic Transition in Spain} (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1999).
\textsuperscript{238} Maor, \textit{Parties, Conflicts and Coalitions}, xi.
policy-seeking motivations, as well as the concern with reputation and credibility in this broad literature, are based on research into Western European party systems. In order to be useful for the study of post-communist East-Central Europe, those insights must be adjusted to the reality of conditions in the nascent and far more fluid party systems of that region. While the policy preferences of parties in the region can sometimes help to explain their coalition behavior, by far the best predictor of coalition preferences in post-communist countries is the regime divide separating the communist successor party from the post-opposition parties. In the vast majority of cases, parties emerging from the former anti-communist opposition will avoid crossing the regime divide to form a governing coalition with the communist successor party, even if that forces them to join coalitions with parties that are more distant from them in terms of policy preferences. The regime divide, then, is one of the major differences between the post-communist party systems and their counterparts in Western Europe. The legacy of communist rule in the region has the effect of forcing parties to form governing coalitions that are not based on shared policy preferences, but rather on keeping the communist successor party out of power or, if that is not possible, avoiding any form of alliance with it. This means, among other things, that if the communist successor party is in a position to form a government, at least some parties of the former opposition are willing to sacrifice both policy- and office-seeking motivations to avoid forming coalitions with the former communists.

This in turn means that parties of the former opposition will often be forced to form ideologically heterogeneous coalitions that do not reflect their policy preferences. The literature suggests that such coalitions are not as cohesive as those that group together parties with more closely shared policy preferences. Sartori, for example, attributed the frequent changeover of governments in Italy to the fact that the country’s moderate parties were forced to form ideologically diverse coalitions due to the presence of large anti-system parties in the system, which were considered out of bounds. This line of reasoning was followed by Warwick, who explored the implications of ideological diversity within governing coalitions for inter-party cooperation. He concluded that alliances between parties with divergent policy preferences are not likely to last as long

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239 Grzymala-Busse, Coalition Formation, 91-92.
as coalitions that are more closely connected on policy issues.\textsuperscript{241} Simply put, parties have a tendency to defect from an ideologically diverse coalition. Warwick has suggested that at least part of the reason for this is related to the internal dynamics of the parties and the need for the leaders to justify their coalition choices to party members and supporters. Party leaders may be able to justify entering a coalition with other parties that have very different programmatic priorities on the grounds that there are few other options or with the argument that it is better to be in government, with all the opportunities for influencing policy such a position afford, than to remain relatively powerless in opposition. Nevertheless, the more the coalition government produces policies that are divergent from the preferences of the party, the more difficult it will be for the leadership to justify to the rest of the membership why it is better to remain in such a government.\textsuperscript{242}

Warwick’s suggestion that internal party dynamics impact the strategic decisions of a party’s leadership with regard to joining or remaining in a coalition opens a new line of inquiry. What if the causal arrows are switched? Do such coalitions have an impact on the internal cohesion of the parties in them? What would happen if a party contains factions that have differing opinions on the benefits of remaining in such a coalition?

There is, of course, a rich literature on the internal life of political parties as organizations. While it developed somewhat separately from the literature on coalition formation, the scholarly work on parties as organizations has also dealt with the relations between parties.\textsuperscript{243}

Some of this work has also sought to tie the organizational and ideological attributes of parties to coalition formation. In the context of his work on party organization and institutionalization, Panebianco, for instance, found that alliances (or coalitions) between parties that are close to each other in terms of ideological profiles are a greater threat to the internal stability of those parties than alliances between parties that are more ideologically distant from each other. This is because, as Panebianco put it, parties that are close to each other ideologically are competing with each other for the

\textsuperscript{241} Warwick, \textit{Government Survival}.
\textsuperscript{242} Warwick, \textit{Government Survival}, 142-146.
\textsuperscript{243} See, for example, the early work by Duverger on this issue, Maurice Duverger, \textit{Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State} (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1954), 281-351.
same “hunting ground” in terms of electoral support. A key element in Panebianco’s proposition is the question of a political party’s identity. A party is particularly threatened by alliances with ideologically close competitors because such alliances threaten the party’s identity, defined again in ideological terms. In that sense, this approach assumes the existence of specific party identities. These, in turn, must be protected from competitors.

One problem with Panebianco’s conception is that parties do often seek out coalitions with other parties that are closest to them in terms of ideological identity or policy preference. If such coalitions represent a threat to the internal unity of the parties in them, why do parties have such a strong preference for precisely those kinds of coalitions? His conclusions also seem problematic when applied to party development in the new democracies of East-Central Europe during the 1990s. The new parties that were formed by the dozens and hundreds in the post-communist countries were faced with the task of creating and maintaining stable identities. This task involved the development of a credible reputation in the eyes of both the voters and the other parties. Grzymala-Busse has underscored this dilemma for the parties of the region in her analysis of the impact of the regime divide on post-communist politics. The new parties of the region, particularly those emerging out of the former opposition, did not have an extensive history of previous elections and coalition bargaining to draw on in creating a reputation. What they could draw on, however, was their previous opposition to the regime, and so the one strategic stance they did tend to insist on was the fact that they would never enter a coalition with the former communists. But this only captures one aspect of the problem faced by these new post-opposition parties. Since the umbrella opposition movements that came to power in 1989-1990 tended to fall apart after the first elections, the new post-opposition successor parties needed some way to distinguish themselves from each other as well as from the communist successor party. This is why differences between

246 See Paul Mitchell and Bejamin Nyblade, “Government Formation and Cabinet Type” in Strøm, Müller and Bergman, eds., Cabinets and Coalition Bargaining, p. 217, where the authors find that the “vast majority of European cabinets are either ideologically connected or single-party cabinets (71.5% combined), in which case the issue does not arise.”
these new parties over policy preferences on a range of issue areas became so important.
The new parties had to begin the process of carving out reputations based on specific sets
of policy stances. These policy stances, as outlined in the previous chapter, tended to be
located in the economic and socio-cultural issue dimensions as well as in relation to the
issue of decommunization.

In this context, then, alliances with parties that were distant in terms of ideology
or policy preferences represented at least as great a threat for these new parties as
alliances with close competitors. If these new parties were in the business of creating
policy profiles for themselves, a move toward a coalition partner with a starkly differing
policy profile would undermine this process. As Western parties did when they first
formed, these new parties of East-Central Europe were attempting to resolve collective
action and social choice problems by bringing together groups of politicians and activists
under the banner of a broad set of shared policy goals.248 In this context, any move
toward a coalition with an ideologically distant party held the potential consequence of:
1) ceding the party’s original space in the ideological spectrum to potential competitors;
and/or 2) causing groups of activists within the party to abandon it to form a new party to
capture that original space. Thus, the problem confronted by political leaders in the post-
communist systems of the 1990s differs from what Panebianco saw as a problem facing
party leaders in Western democracies with more mature political party systems.

The key for the new parties emerging from the former anti-communist opposition
was to build up a cohesive party that could develop a reputation staked on a clear set of
policy goals or at least an ideological narrative. Indeed, one team of researchers has
identified the accomplishment of this key party-building goal as an essential pre-requisite
for the success of the centre-right parties that emerged from the former anti-communist
opposition.249 But this is only part of the picture. Those parties did not, after all,
accomplish this task in a vacuum. Instead, they had to do so within the context of the cut
and thrust of post-communist political competition. In that sense, the best way for the
post-opposition parties to establish a reputation based on a clear ideological profile was

249 On this point, see the insightful work on the development of centre-right parties in the region in Seán
2008.
to only form coalitions with other parties that shared their fundamental policy preferences. If, however, the nature of the party system—particularly, the existence of a deep regime divide—compelled the leaders of a post-opposition party to opt for coalitions with parties that had substantively different policy goals, the task of forming a cohesive party based on a clear ideological narrative became much more difficult. In that sense, it is not simply the internal efforts of party leaders to craft a compelling party program that matters but also the context in which these efforts take place.

In order to capture the contextual dynamics within which East-Central European party formation took place, this study will specifically examine the successor parties to the former anti-communist opposition movements, and their efforts to establish durable organizations while they at the same time competed against or formed coalitions with other parties. This approach provides leverage for uncovering the ways in which the regime divide impacted the formation of durable parties through the mechanism of coalition formation. It also differs from much of the recent scholarship on the parties of the region in that it focuses on the post-opposition parties as a whole. While a number of scholars did examine the anti-communist opposition movements as they assumed power in the early 1990s, much of the recent scholarship has been focused either on entire party systems of the region or on smaller subsets of parties, such as the communist successor parties, leftist parties, or centre-right parties. Since the successor parties of the opposition movements can be variously classified in programmatic terms on a left-right continuum, and they tend to include parties of divergent ideological profiles, there have been few studies in recent years that focused on parties that emerged from the common historical legacy of the umbrella anti-communist opposition movements that came to power in 1989-1990. This oversight has led to a general and regrettable downgrading of

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the importance of those legacies for the formation and relative durability of the parties that emerged from the former opposition.

This chapter will examine data based on two indicators of party cohesion and fragmentation – party switching and electoral volatility. Chapters 5 and 6 will then examine more closely the coalition choices that were available to the leaders of the post-opposition parties of Poland and Hungary, the actual choices they made, and the consequences of those choices for the internal cohesion of their nascent parties.

**Party switching**

In order to get traction on the issue of cohesion, the data and analysis of this chapter and the subsequent two chapters will focus on the behavior of the elected parliamentarians and cabinet ministers of the post-opposition parties, granting only peripheral attention to the rank-and-file memberships of the parties. Thus the bulk of the analysis will focus on the “party in public office” as opposed to the “party central office” or the “party on the ground.”

This analytical choice is justified because the nascent parties of East-Central Europe tended to have relatively small rank-and-file memberships. Moreover, the central battleground between and within parties over policy was the legislature. This is not to say that the memberships of the post-opposition parties played absolutely no role but rather that the role of the membership was not as critical for these parties as it was for other parties in East-Central Europe (such as the communist-successor parties) or for other parties in other countries (such as the mass membership parties of the West). The rank-and-file memberships will not, however, be ignored in chapters 5 and 6, and where relevant, the role of such members will be incorporated. The main indicator of party cohesion, nevertheless, will be the behavior of the legislative factions and cabinet ministers of the post-opposition parties. Following the growing literature on party switching, the analysis will examine the motivations behind the decisions of individual

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legislators or groups of legislators to “switch” to new parties or “stick” with their own party, as well as the consequences of those decisions for the parties involved.

Scholars of party switching have suggested that individual legislators may decide to abandon their party if it 1) is unable to influence policy; 2) adopts a policy that differs from the preference of the legislator; 3) is unable to attract voters; 4) does not allow the legislator to publicly express opinions that differ from the stance of the party on particular issues; 5) constrains or restricts the ability of the legislator to influence the party’s policy stances.252

While these potential motivations for switching could be present in the post-communist context, it is likely that they will manifest themselves in different degrees due to the relative inexperience of the parliamentary deputies and the fluidity of the nascent political party system. It may be difficult, for example, for elected deputies in post-communist countries to determine exactly where to position themselves ahead of an election in order to maximize their chances of re-election. Nevertheless, a close examination of the context of party switching along with the legislator’s public justification for it can be important indicators of the motivations behind the move.

Moreover, the location of the deputy in the political landscape of the legislature will be important if the regime and policy divides outlined above are playing a significant role. That is, if a deputy is in a governing coalition, then any policy differences between his or her party and the coalition partner(s) will play a significant role in potential decisions to switch. If a post-opposition party is forced by the regime divide into a governing coalition with another post-opposition party with widely divergent policy preferences, a higher rate of party switching should be the result. When the post-opposition party or parties are in opposition, party switching should be less frequent in the absence of the need to agree on specific policies and bills. In fact, if the post-communist party is in power, then the post-opposition parties may even exhibit a tendency to coalesce in an effort to mount a united front against the “communists.” Coalescence is facilitated in this case because, while in opposition, parties do not need to commit to and defend major policy initiatives, as they do when in government. Policy

252 Heller and Mershon, “Switch or Stick?” p. 15.
considerations, and their consequences for party switching and cohesion, are more prominent when the post-opposition parties are in government together.

**Electoral volatility**

While the party switching indicator appears suited for understanding the dynamics behind the cohesion and fragmentation of post-opposition parties in East-Central Europe, given their lack of mass memberships and their dominance by elites, this chapter will also examine electoral volatility in Poland and Hungary. Following the literature on volatility, it is possible to refine the indicator to examine the actual causes of volatility in the two cases. This can help determine whether the volatility is being driven by voters switching between parties or parties themselves appearing and disappearing between elections. Similarly, electoral volatility measures can be refined to determine which specific parties or groups of parties are contributing the most to volatility in a given country. Such refinements will be crucial for determining the extent to which the post-opposition parties have been stable or not. It will also enable the research to identify the source of volatility in a country. If a given country scores high on measures of electoral volatility, this could be an indicator of general party system instability if all parties are more or less equally contributing to the volatility, suggesting a broader, systemic explanation. But if one particular group of parties is contributing most of the volatility while other groups of parties in the system are relatively stable, this suggests that the explanation could be within the former group of parties rather than in the system as a whole.

**Measuring party switching**

If the predictions of this model hold, party switching out of post-opposition parties should be frequent when they are in ideologically diverse governing coalitions together. Conversely, party switching should go down in frequency when post-opposition parties are not in governing coalitions together, either because they are all in opposition or because one of them is in government and the others are in opposition.

The following figures illustrate the incidence of party switching out of post-opposition parties over several electoral terms in Poland and Hungary. It is evident from Table 4.1 that party switching has occurred much more frequently in Poland than in
Hungary. In almost every electoral term, there was much more party switching in the Polish Sejm than in the Hungarian parliament.

**Table 4.1 – Party switching over time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-2 elections</th>
<th>2-3 elections</th>
<th>3-4 elections</th>
<th>4-5 elections</th>
<th>5-6 elections</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4.2 looks only at party switching in the post-opposition parties. The picture in this table is more complex. It is evident that party switching affected the Polish post-opposition parties far more than their Hungarian counter-parts right up to the fourth set of elections. After that election, though, there is a precipitous decline in party switching out of the Polish post-opposition parties. After the fourth election, in fact, the Polish and Hungarian post-opposition parties experienced similar levels of party switching.

What changed after the fourth election in Poland? Figures 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate the incidence of party switching affecting post-opposition parties in Poland and Hungary, along with the position of those parties in the legislature during each term. The result indicates that the lowest incidence of party switching occurred in both countries when the post-opposition parties were divided in the legislature into separate governing and opposition roles. When all of the post-opposition parties were together in government, a situation that only occurred in Poland, the incidence of party switching was greater. Finally, when the post-opposition parties were together in the opposition, again a situation that occurred only in Poland, the results are a little less clear.
Table 4.2 – Party switching in post-opposition parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-2 elections</th>
<th>2-3 elections</th>
<th>3-4 elections</th>
<th>4-5 elections</th>
<th>5-6 elections</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>39 (14%)</td>
<td>25 (20%)</td>
<td>4 (2%)</td>
<td>19 (9%)</td>
<td>8 (0.05%)</td>
<td>19 (9.01%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>97 (32%)</td>
<td>46 (30%)</td>
<td>84 (31%)</td>
<td>10 (9%)</td>
<td>11 (4%)</td>
<td>50 (21%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table indicates the number of deputies who switched out of post-opposition parties during each electoral period. Percentage figure indicates proportion of post-opposition deputies who switched.

Figure 4.1 Post-opposition Party Switching in Poland 1991-2007 (in %)

* The meaning of the terms in the legend is as follows: 1) In government: Two or more post-opposition parties are in a governing coalition together; 2) In opposition: All post-opposition parties are in the opposition together; 3) Separate: One post-opposition party is in government while the others are in the opposition.
In the Polish case, parties that emerged from Solidarity consistently found themselves on the same side of the legislature, either in government or in the opposition, for the three electoral terms between 1991 and 2001. During this period, party switching involved almost one-third of all the post-opposition deputies in each of the three terms from 1991-1993, 1992-1997, and 1997-2001.

- **1991-1993**: Ideologically diverse post-Solidarity parties in governing coalitions together under Prime Minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki and later under Prime Minister Hanna Suchocka; some
- **1993-1997**: Post-Solidarity parties in opposition while the post-communist SLD and the PSL are in power in a coalition.
- **1997-2001**: Post-Solidarity parties in power together again with the AWS and UW in coalition together; the coalition falls apart toward the end of the term as both the AWS and UW unravel amid internal disputes.
- **2001-2005**: Post-communist SLD in power with PSL with the new post-Solidarity parties PO and PiS in opposition.
- **2005-2006**: Post-Solidarity PiS forms a coalition government with LPR and Samoobrona; the coalition falls apart, sparking early elections.
- **2006-present**: Post-Solidarity PO forms a coalition government with PSL.
The post-Solidarity parties were in power together for much of the 1991-1993 and 1997-2001 terms. The coalition governments of that period involved the participation of post-Solidarity parties of both Christian-conservative and liberal persuasions. The policy preferences of these two groups of parties were quite different on issues related to the key socio-cultural and economic competitive dimensions (as shall become clear in chapter 5). They also had some substantial differences over the decommunization issue, particularly during the 1991-1993 term.

Nevertheless, they decided to enter governing coalitions together because the only viable alternatives were either populist parties (in 1997-2001) or the post-communist SLD. The latter party was actually quite close to the post-Solidarity liberals in policy preferences, but a coalition proved impossible because the former Solidarity activists were loath to cross the historical regime divide.

The coalitions grouping together post-Solidarity conservatives and liberals in 1991 -1993 and 1997-2001 proved tumultuous. Bitter disputes over policies were the norm, there were a total of four different governments, a number of parties fell apart and one out of every three post-opposition deputies switched parties at least once. The result is evident in the figures on party switching.

Figure 4.1 shows that the rate of party switching did not decrease substantially even when the post-Solidarity parties were all in opposition together during the SLD-led coalition governments of 1993-1997. Figure 4.2 shows that the absolute number of party switchers among the post-opposition parties did decrease, amounting to only 46 deputies in 1993-1997. This still represented almost one-third of all post-opposition deputies in the Sejm at the time because the 1993 elections saw a substantially smaller number of post-opposition deputies win seats.

Nevertheless, the nature of party switching during the 1993-1997 Sejm was different from the terms before and after it. The 1993-1997 period saw the creation of two new post-opposition formations in the Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) movement and the Freedom Union (UW). These two parties served as magnets for former Solidarity activists both inside and outside the Sejm, and some of the party switching between 1993 and 1997 can be attributed to the efforts of those two new parties to consolidate the post-opposition space. In that sense, a substantial portion of the party switching in that period
can be described as integrative rather than disintegrative, since it involved the creation of large parties aimed at unifying the post-Solidarity scene.

A massive drop in party switching among the post-opposition deputies then occurred after 2001, when the new post-Solidarity parties Civic Platform (PO) and Law and Justice (PiS) made it into the Sejm. These parties remained remarkably stable throughout the 2001-2005 term while they were in opposition. After the 2005 elections, the PO and PiS broke the pattern of Polish politics by failing to form a governing coalition together. Instead, PiS formed a coalition government with two radical parties, the League of Polish Families (LPR) and Self-Defense of the Polish Republic (SRP), while the PO went into the opposition. With the two successors to the Solidarity movement now in separate governmental and oppositional roles in the Sejm, party switching remained at a minimum among the deputies of those two parties.

In Hungary, the three main post-opposition parties were already separate going into the first set of elections in 1990 as was discussed in the previous chapter. Those three main parties, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) and Fidesz, then proceeded to alternate in governing and oppositional roles over the next few electoral terms.

- 1990-1994: MDF formed a governing coalition with two other parties, while SZDSZ and Fidesz remained in the opposition
- 1994-1998: SZDSZ boldly crossed the regime divide to join a coalition government led by the post-communist MSZP, while MDF joined Fidesz in the opposition
- 1998-2002: Fidesz took its turn in government by forming coalition with MDF and one other party, while SZDSZ sat in opposition
- 2002-2006: SZDSZ once again joined the post-communist MSZP to form a governing coalition, while Fidesz and MDF went back into the opposition
- 2006-2010: SZDSZ and MSZP are in a coalition government together, while Fidesz and MDF are in the opposition

From the beginning, as seen in the last chapter, MDF was a national-conservative party, while SZDSZ was a secular liberal party. Fidesz, for its part, began its existence and fought the elections of 1990 as a liberal party, but it gradually moved toward an increasingly conservative stance on the key socio-cultural competitive dimension. The Hungarian post-opposition parties thus became divided between the conservatives
represented by MDF and eventually also Fidesz on one side and the liberals represented by SZDSZ on the other.

SZDSZ, like its post-opposition liberal counterparts in Poland, was closer in various key policy preferences to the post-communist MSZP than it was to the other two post-opposition parties. And since the regime divide in Hungary proved to be substantially weaker than in Poland, the post-opposition SZDSZ could make the decision to join the post-communist MSZP in a coalition in 1994, and then again in 2002 and 2006.

The fact, then, that the post-opposition conservatives and liberals operated separately from each other enabled Fidesz and SZDSZ to consolidate and stake out clear positions on the main competitive dimensions of Hungarian politics. The result was a quickly stabilized political party system in the 1990s, comparably more stable coalition governments than in Poland, and markedly less party switching involving post-opposition deputies, as can be seen in figures 4.3 and 4.4.

**Figure 4.3 Post-opposition Party Switching in Hungary 1990-2010**

* The meaning of the terms in the legend is as follows: 1) Separate: One post-opposition party is in government while the others are in the opposition; 2) In government: Two or more post-opposition parties are in a governing coalition together; 3) In opposition: All post-opposition parties are in the opposition together.*
Overall, then, a comparison of the cohesiveness of the Hungarian and Polish post-opposition parties provides an image of contrast during the 1990s and convergence in the 2000s. Hungary’s post-opposition parties exhibited relatively less party switching than Poland in the 1990s and experienced a general decline in such behavior over time.

In Poland, by contrast, party switching was quite common among post-opposition deputies in the 1990s, when those parties attempted to work together in coalition governments, followed by a sharp decline in party switching during the 2000s, after the post-opposition parties had gone their separate ways.

By the 2000s, the remaining conservative and liberal post-opposition parties in both Hungary and Poland were in competitive relationships with each other and the incidence of party switching had declined considerably. In fact, Poland saw fewer of its post-opposition deputies switch parties between the 4-5 elections, although in both cases the numbers were small (see Figure 4.6).
Figure 4.5 Post-opposition Party Switching in Poland and Hungary 1990-2010 in %

* The meaning of the terms in the legend is as follows: 1) In government: Two or more post-opposition parties are in a governing coalition together; 2) In opposition: All post-opposition parties are in the opposition together; 3) Separate: One post-opposition party is in government while the others are in the opposition.
Figure 4.6 Post-opposition Party Switching in Poland and Hungary 1990-2010 in numbers

* The meaning of the terms in the legend is as follows: 1) In government: Two or more post-opposition parties are in a governing coalition together; 2) In opposition: All post-opposition parties are in the opposition together; 3) Separate: One post-opposition party is in government while the others are in the opposition.

Measuring electoral volatility

Another lens through which to view the relative cohesiveness of political parties can be provided by measures of electoral volatility. This indicator has been used widely in the literature on political parties. Classic measures of aggregate electoral volatility provide an indication of the stability or instability of voter support for parties between elections. The post-communist countries of East-Central Europe have been widely found to have much higher levels of aggregate electoral volatility than other democracies. The numbers in Table 4.3 confirm this, and also show more volatility in Poland than in Hungary overall.

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254 See, for example, Rose and Munro, Elections and Parties, 84-87.
There are questions, however, about the usefulness of this particular indicator in the post-communist context. A broad measure of aggregate electoral volatility lumps together two kinds of change between elections. Volatility may be caused either by voters switching their support from one existing party to another over two elections or by parties disappearing or appearing on the political scene. Rose and Munro have termed this a difference between voter “demand” and party “supply,”255 while Powell and Tucker have identified Type A and Type B volatility.256

While this move helps to bring greater clarity to the real causes of volatility in any country, it is crucial in post-communist East-Central Europe. Various scholars have pointed out that the frequency of party mergers, splits and failures in many post-countries is doing most of the heavy lifting in raising volatility scores. Rose and Munro found that party instability, or “supply” as they termed it, was the chief cause of volatility in the 11 post-communist countries they analyzed.

Similarly, in a study of 21 post-communist countries, Powell and Tucker likewise found that mean measures of volatility caused by party instability were larger than volatility caused by voter switching in almost every country of the region over several elections. Moreover, Type A volatility, which is the term they use for volatility caused by party changes, generally accounted for the bulk of overall volatility in the vast majority of post-communist countries they analyzed.

In another study of 25 elections in 10 East-Central European countries, Sikk found that few genuinely new parties have been successful in the region.257 Many of the party changes that contributed to volatility involved splits, mergers or the renaming of existing parties or the founding of a new party by political veterans who had switched out of their own original parties.

This research points to a striking lack of cohesion among East-Central European parties in general. Nevertheless, there has been a significant degree of variation among post-communist countries on this indicator. Powell and Tucker found Hungary to have

one of the lowest levels of mean volatility in the region, while Poland had the ninth highest out of 21 countries.\textsuperscript{258} Rose and Munro listed Hungary as the only country in their study of 11 post-communist states to have lower levels of volatility stemming from party instability (supply) than voter decisions among existing parties (demand).\textsuperscript{259} Table 4.3 illustrates changes in volatility in Hungary and Poland over time, confirming that Hungary has had less average volatility over time.

\begin{table}[h!]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & 1-2 elections & 2-3 elections & 3-4 elections & 4-5 elections & 5-6 elections & Average \\
\hline
Hungary & 22.66 & 30.95 & 18.27 & 8.38 & 33.20 & 22.69 \\
Poland & 34.11 & 19.67 & 49.44 & 34.38 & 24.94 & 32.51 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Electoral volatility}
\end{table}

* Based on author’s calculations using electoral results taken from Panstwowa Komisja Wyborcza and Monitor Polski for Poland and Országos Választási Bizottság for Hungary.

While a growing body of research has thus pointed to party instability as the key contributor to electoral volatility in East-Central Europe, the data can be unpacked to reveal if certain groups of parties are contributing more than others to the instability. Using the classic approach to calculating electoral volatility outlined by Bartolini and Mair, it is possible to separate out the volatility figures for post-opposition parties. Figures 4.7 and 4.8 indicate the results for Poland and Hungary. These figures indicate that volatility affecting post-opposition parties has generally made up at least half or more of the volatility in Poland since 1991. In Hungary, post-opposition volatility has alternated between being the predominant source of overall volatility and playing a lesser role.

\textsuperscript{258} Powell and Tucker, “New Approaches,” p. 32.
\textsuperscript{259} Rose and Munro, \textit{Elections and Parties}, p. 83.
Figure 4.7 - Overall electoral volatility and post-opposition electoral volatility in Poland

* Based on author’s calculations using electoral results taken from Panstwowa Komisja Wyborcza and Monitor Polski for Poland and Országos Választási Bizottság for Hungary.
Nevertheless, simply isolating a volatility score for post-opposition parties does not provide any clues as to the source of that volatility. Are the post-opposition parties experiencing volatility because of voters switching their support or because of organizational instability leading to splits, mergers and failures of parties? The next step, then, is to determine the source of the volatility associated with post-opposition parties. For this purpose, the Powell and Tucker criteria for distinguishing volatility caused by party instability from volatility caused by voter decisions can be applied to the volatility associated only with the post-opposition parties.260

* Based on author’s calculations using electoral results taken from Országos Választási Bizottság.

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260 Powell and Tucker used a number of criteria for determining whether volatility should be considered as caused by voters (Type B) or parties (Type A). First, they only included parties that won at least 2 per cent of the vote in their analysis, due to inconsistencies across countries in terms of reporting election results. New parties are those that won at least 2 per cent of the vote in one election but did not compete or won less than 2 per cent in the previous election. New parties are also those that result from mergers of two
Figures 4.9 and 4.10 indicate the sources of the volatility associated with post-opposition parties in Poland and Hungary. For Poland, Figure 4.9 indicates that Type A volatility—the kind caused by party splits, mergers, failures and the like—was the predominant cause of the electoral volatility associated with post-opposition parties for elections between 1991 and 2001 (from the 1-2 elections to the 3-4 elections). This suddenly and dramatically changes after 2001, and for the next two sets of elections, the volatility associated with the post-opposition parties is of the Type A variety—the kind that is driven by voters changing their preferences between the existing parties.

The results add further confirmation to the picture of the Polish post-Solidarity scene that emerged from the data on party switching. Until 2001, the Polish post-opposition parties lacked cohesion and stability. They went through numerous splits and mergers, leading to a substantial amount of electoral volatility. After 2001, however, the post-opposition parties appear to have consolidated and stabilized. Since those elections, the volatility associated with those parties has resulted from voters switching their vote among the existing parties.

This remarkable shift coincides with the creation, ahead of the 2001 elections, of the Law and Justice (PiS) and Civic Platform (PO) parties. It also coincides with a period in which these two post-Solidarity parties were either both not in government or were divided into separate governmental and oppositional roles.

By contrast, the period during which Type A volatility is strongly associated with the post-opposition parties coincides with two terms in which the post-Solidarity conservative and liberal parties were in coalition governments together between the 1-2 elections and the 3-4 elections (see Figure 4.9).

It also coincides with a period between the 2-3 elections (1993-1997), when the post-Solidarity parties were in opposition and a post-communist SLD-PSL coalition government was in power. This period, then, still saw a large amount of party instability on the post-opposition scene despite the fact that the post-Solidarity parties were not in parties that both received at least 5 per cent of the vote in the previous election. If only one party in the merger won at least 5 per cent of the vote in the previous election, the party resulting from the merger is considered to be a continuation of the larger party under a different name. If a party splits, and one party is considered to be the clear successor, that party is recorded under Type B volatility, while the other party is listed as a new party under Type A volatility. If a party splits without a clear successor, then all the resulting parties are considered new and listed under Type A volatility. For more details, see Powell and Tucker, “New Approaches,” 14-15.
government together and did not have to forge difficult programmatic compromises with each other.

**Figure 4.9 – Type A and Type B electoral volatility among post-opposition parties in Poland 1991-2007**

![Graph showing Type A and Type B electoral volatility](image)

* Volatility figures for the 5-6 elections include the Democratic Party (PD) as a successor of the Freedom Union (UW). They do not, however, include the Left and Democracy (LiD) coalition, in which the PD served as a member, because the coalition was dominated by the post-communist SLD and also included the post-communist Social Democratic Party of Poland (SdPi). In terms of the criteria followed by Powell and Tucker, the LiD coalition is thus treated as a “continuation under a different name” of the SLD.

As seen in the previous section on party switching, however, the period after the 1993 post-communist electoral victory saw the post-Solidarity conservatives and liberals make moves to forge new umbrella movements and parties in order to better position themselves to challenge the SLD in the next election. These moves led to the creation of the conservative Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) movement and the liberal Freedom Union (UW). The building of these two organizations required merging other existing post-Solidarity parties both within and outside the Sejm. In that sense, relatively large amount of Type A volatility between the 2nd and 3rd elections (from 1993 to 1997)
reflected the creation of the AWS and UW. This, in other words, was an example of integrative party switching rather than the disintegrative moves that took place whenever the post-Solidarity conservatives and liberals were in a coalition government together.

**Figure 4.10 – Type A and Type B electoral volatility among post-opposition parties in Hungary 1990-2010**

* Between the 2-3 elections, the Hungarian Democratic People’s Party (MDNP), a splinter that broke off from the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) in 1995, is considered a new party, in line with the Powell-Tucker criteria.

* Volatility figures associated with the Centrum Party for the 3-4 elections period are not included because the party resulted from a merger between two non-post-opposition parties, KDNP and MZP, and only one post-opposition party, MDNP. Instead, only figures for MDNP from the 3rd election are included.

In Hungary, the story is one of consistency. Throughout the 1990-2006 period, party splits, mergers and failings (Type A volatility) have substantially less impact on the post-opposition parties than voter choices among existing parties (Type B volatility). Between every set of elections since 1990, voter choices are the predominant cause of electoral volatility associated with Hungary’s post-opposition parties. Moreover, Type A
volatility exhibits a tendency to decrease, and between the 4-5 elections of 2002 and 2006, there was no Type A volatility associated with the post-opposition parties to record at all. The data also indicate that voters did make choices among these parties. The large spike in Type B volatility between the 2-3 elections reflects the jump by Fidesz from 7 per cent of the vote in 1994 to almost 30 per cent in 1998.

These results indicate a high degree of stability among Hungary’s post-opposition parties. They suggest that the post-opposition liberal and conservative parties quickly became relatively stabilized and were able to offer a consistent choice to voters in election after election. The post-opposition liberals and conservatives in Hungary never once sat in a coalition government together. They were thus not required to make difficult programmatic compromises that might have undermined party cohesion.

After the post-opposition liberal SZDSZ decided to cross the regime divide and form a coalition with the post-communist MSZP in 1994, Fidesz was able to consolidate the conservative space by altering its own program and inviting other conservatives to join it. These sequential moves by SZDSZ and Fidesz served to clarify the political party system for both Hungarian voters and parliamentarians. From the 1998 elections onward, voters were given a choice between a liberal-socialist bloc involving SZDSZ and MSZP, and a national-Christian-conservative bloc dominated by Fidesz.

Between 2006 and 2010 this dynamic was disrupted as the MSZP-SZDSZ coalition government faced the extraordinary pressures of a global financial crisis and the country’s dire fiscal situation. As a result, the 2010 elections saw the MSZP’s support cut in half while Fidesz surged ahead to win more than half of the party list vote. The SZDSZ, for its part, did not even run as a party in the elections, although some of its members ran on the MDF ticket. The collapse of the SZDSZ explains the sudden rise in Type A volatility between the 5th and 6th elections in Hungary. Nevertheless, these disruptions remain far below those seen in the Poland prior to the creation of PiS and PO in the early 2000s and the collapse in support for the SLD. Moreover, Type B volatility continued to be higher than Type A volatility as it has been since 1990 in Hungary, underscoring the relative stability of post-opposition parties in the country despite the collapse of the SZDSZ in the late 2000s.
Conclusions

The data analyzed in this chapter show that the Polish and Hungarian post-opposition parties followed very different paths in the 1990s. The post-opposition conservatives and liberals of Poland were continually forced to work together in ideologically heterogeneous coalitions because of the unwillingness of the liberals to cross the regime divide to work with the programmatically closer post-communist party. The programmatic incompatibility of the post-opposition coalitions mixing ideological conservatives and liberals undermined the party loyalty of deputies in the Sejm. This led to a high rate of party switching by deputies and electoral volatility caused by continual party splits, mergers and failures.

By contrast, Hungary’s post-opposition parties, already separate from the beginning of the 1990s, never needed to work together in a coalition government because the post-opposition liberal party crossed the regime divide in 1994 to work with the programmatically compatible post-communist party. This led to the creation of separate conservative and liberal-socialist blocs in parliament, enabling the consolidation of programmatically clear and cohesive parties. The data indicate there was substantially less party switching in Hungary as compared to Poland as well as less electoral volatility caused by party splits, mergers, and failures. Instead, most of the aggregate electoral volatility in Hungary is associated with decisions by voters.

The next two chapters will examine in greater detail the coalition choices that were available to the leaders of the post-opposition parties of Poland and Hungary, the actual choices they made, and the consequences of those choices for the internal cohesion of their nascent parties.
Chapter 5

To cross or not to cross the regime divide

The pressures of governing had unraveled the unity of post-opposition movements across the East-Central European region during the first few years after 1989. They fell apart, as discussed in Chapter 3, amid differences over policy preferences. United against the communist regime before 1989, the activists of these former opposition movements found that they disagreed with each other on a number of issues. In fact, the key competitive divides over questions of economics, socio-cultural attitudes and decommunization ran right through those former opposition movements.

In both Poland and Hungary, the former opposition movements could be divided into liberal and conservative groups. Most of the disputes over economic and socio-cultural issues as well as questions of decommunization pitted the post-opposition liberals against the post-opposition conservatives. These disputes, in turn, undermined the cohesion of those post-opposition groups that actually had to govern. The experience of the first few years of these new democracies seemed to suggest that the differences between the post-opposition liberals and conservatives ran deep. So deep, in fact, that they seemed to preclude any reasonable prospect of these parties working together in a governing coalition.

Nevertheless, unless either the post-opposition liberal or conservative parties could alone win an outright majority in parliament, they were forced to look around for coalition partners. And the fourth competitive dimension of politics in the region—the regime divide separating the former opposition as a whole from the former communists—seemed to require the post-opposition parties to cooperate, regardless of how deep their differences ran. Despite the fact that the post-communist parties of both Poland and Hungary shared many programmatic similarities with the post-opposition liberal parties in those countries, the regime divide seemed like an impassable barrier. Unless a post-opposition liberal party was willing to cross the regime divide to work with the ex-communists, they seemed condemned to form coalitions with their ideological rivals among the post-opposition conservatives. This electoral reality had held in Poland from
1991 onward, and the first few years of the 1990s in Hungary seemed at first to suggest that it would hold true for that country as well.

In both countries, then, the post-opposition liberals were confronted with a dilemma. They could remain loyal to their historical legacy of opposition to communism by seeking alliances only with their erstwhile allies from the post-opposition conservative camp, or they could uphold their policy preferences by forming an alliance with their erstwhile persecutors in the post-communist camp. The former choice would likely lead to further debilitating disputes that would undermine internal party cohesion. The latter was difficult for even the most forgiving of post-opposition deputies to stomach. The decision was nothing short of historical. This chapter will examine how the post-opposition liberals in Poland and Hungary approached this question, what they decided to do, how they justified that decision and the consequences it had for the post-opposition camp as a whole.

The logic of party switching in East-Central Europe

The previous chapter examined aggregate party switching among the members of post-opposition parties in Poland and Hungary. The next two chapters will look more closely at the coalition choices and party switching of the post-opposition politicians in order to trace the context, motivations and consequences of this behavior. This requires detailed analysis of the politics of the 1990s and 2000s in these two countries.

If policy disputes between and within post-opposition parties are a major source of party switching and party fragmentation, then major governmental policy initiatives on which there is significant disagreement within the coalition government should be accompanied by a spike in party switching. Those members who “lose” in the internal debate within the coalition government on specific policy initiatives will be tempted to abandon their party to join another or form their own party.

But there are other moments when party switching might affect an ideologically diverse governing coalition. One of those is the coalition formation stage itself. Not all members of a party’s leadership or group of elected deputies will necessarily agree on a particular coalition strategy, particularly if that strategy leads the party to enter into a
coalition with another party that has significantly different policy preferences. This can lead to defections from the party immediately after or even during coalition talks.

Another such moment, following the work of Mershon and Shvetsova, should come toward the end of the term, as the election approaches.\textsuperscript{261} As noted above, during the first couple of election cycles after the transition, deputies and parties in post-communist countries may have some trouble determining exactly where they should position themselves in order to maximize their chances for re-election. Nevertheless, this does not preclude efforts to do exactly that, and so there should be some party switching visible in the late stages of the parliamentary term ahead of an election. While such a move on the part of a deputy could essentially be characterized as an effort to secure votes (by moving from a less popular party to a more popular one) or office (by moving from a party unlikely to gain seats in the legislature to a party likely to do so), it may be presented to the public by the legislator as a policy-based move. It is difficult, however, to analytically determine the exact nature of a legislator’s motivations in switching parties toward the end of the parliamentary cycle. Nevertheless, it is possible that such a decision will have the effect of reinforcing earlier decisions by other legislators to defect from their parties. One group of deputies from a governing party may decide in the middle of the electoral term to leave their party over a policy dispute and form a new party. Later, as a new election looms closer, other members of governing parties may choose to join the new party, particularly if the latter party is doing well in public opinion polls. In this situation, such a process of cascading decisions to switch parties\textsuperscript{262} is launched when one group of legislators decides to switch parties because of a policy dispute.

While these considerations are important, it is difficult to ascertain the individual motives of each legislator in any given situation. Scholars have noted that the motives of politicians are likely to be informed by an ambition that is best served in the political arena.\textsuperscript{263} Heller and Mershon have suggested that legislators are distinguished by political ambition, which drives them to seek re-election in order to achieve one of two central


\textsuperscript{262} On the dynamics of cascading see Heller and Mershon, “Switch or Stick?” p. 5 and 14-15.

\textsuperscript{263} Ibid, p. 9.
goals: power or influence over policy. Both of these goals, they argue, can be served by seeking greater policy influence. In that sense, the effort to increase policy influence can be said to be at the heart a legislator’s decision to either remain in their party or switch parties. Sometimes the individual legislator’s goal of policy influence is better served in a strong and unified party; other times it may be better served by joining another party or forging out to co-found a new party with other similarly minded legislators.

But the drive to increase policy influence is not exactly the same thing as the desire to ensure that the policies that are closest to one’s own preferences are implemented. In order to determine the extent to which divergent policy preferences and the disputes emanating from them within coalitions have an impact on decisions by legislators to switch—the purpose of this study—it will be necessary to restrict the analysis to those cases in which a major policy dispute was used to justify the decision to switch. The term “justify” is used purposefully. Legislators will either switch from their parties because of observable policy disagreements or they will switch for a combination of other reasons but use policy disagreements as a justification for their actions. In both cases, policy preferences are playing a key role in the observed fragmentation of the political parties involved. In that sense, the key cases for the purposes of this study will be those in which legislators from governing parties switched their allegiances in response to coalition agreements concluded by their own parties or switched in response to particular policy initiatives put forward by the coalition government in which their party is located.

In older and more stable democracies, party leaders attempt to maintain party unity by imposing a certain degree of discipline on legislators. Even in such democracies, though, party discipline remains a problem. In the post-communist context, however, party discipline tends to be even more elusive, particularly in the early years after democratization, due to the relative fluidity and novelty of the political parties and party systems. Lacking an extensive set of past experiences with previous electoral terms, post-communist politicians have less information at their disposal on the likelihood that

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264 Ibid, 9-10
265 Ibid, p. 10.
266 Heller and Mershon, “Switch or Stick?” p. 12.
their current party will fare better in future elections than a potential new party they might create. In that sense, they tend to be more willing to consider the option of switching either into another party or into a completely new party. Naturally, these considerations are influenced by institutional constraints such as electoral thresholds and parliamentary rules on the creation of new parties. But in the early years of the post-communist electoral systems, these institutional constraints were weak as politicians had little experience with the particular incentives those institutions create.

Thus, there are fewer constraints against party switching in post-communist democracies and it is likely to be a far more significant phenomenon in those countries than it is in older and more stable democracies. Party switching will be all the more common if the structure of the party system frequently forces party leaders into coalitions with ideologically divergent partners. Such ideologically diverse coalitions become, in essence, battlegrounds over policy influence. The losers in such battles have a strong incentive to leave and form a new party in order to portray themselves as dedicated to an alternative policy that was not espoused by the governing coalition. The incentive to do so is strong precisely because the party system is new and voters have not yet developed strong ties to any particular party. In such a situation, the chances of new parties founded by well-known personalities and based on a principled policy stance are not negligible. Thus the structure of the party system, mediated by coalition bargaining and governance, becomes a key variable in determining the internal cohesion of these new parties. In contrast to much of the literature on coalitions, then, this approach examines the impact of coalitions on internal party cohesion, rather than taking the party’s unity as given or examining the impact of internal party cohesion on coalitions.

The logic of this model works as follows. At the beginning of the cycle, political parties, including both post-opposition and post-communist parties, seek coalition partners for the purpose of governing. If the leaders of the post-opposition parties can find a governing partner with compatible policy preferences, they are likely to experience less party switching. If, however, they are forced (by the regime divide) to form a coalition with other parties that have divergent policy preferences, they may face more

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267 Grzymala-Busse has also noted the lack of parliamentary reputations among the new political parties of the region in the early 1990s, see Grzymala-Busse, “Coalition Formation,” 2001, p. 87.

268 Kitschelt, Mansfeldová, Markowski and Toka, *Post-Communist Party Systems*.
party switching on the part of individual legislators from their own party due to the relatively large policy compromises they will have to make in order to maintain the coalition. Those legislators will draw public attention to the policy compromises of their former party and their own consistent policy stance as they switch to other parties or to new parties.

The next section will examine the key coalition decisions of the post-opposition parties in Poland and Hungary over several electoral terms, and the consequences of those decisions for party unity. It will also examine the major policy initiatives of governing coalitions dominated by post-opposition parties.

**Poland 1993-1997**

*The 1993 elections*

Poland’s post-opposition camp approached the elections of 1993 divided into various parties and coalitions. Ahead of the elections, various attempts were made to form coalitions on the basis of programmatic similarities. President Wałęsa suggested that the parties in the ideologically diverse Suchocka cabinet form a coalition, but the idea went nowhere. Instead, the parties in the post-Solidarity camp pursued their own coalition options.

In the post-Solidarity liberal camp, the main parties of the “little coalition,” the UD and KLD, discussed running on a common ticket, but in the end decided to run separately. This decision was based in part on public opinion polling that revealed the two parties would garner more votes running as two distinct parties than they would as a coalition.\(^{269}\) It also reflected fears in the KLD of losing their specific political brand and independence in a coalition with the larger UD.\(^{270}\) As seen in Chapter 3, the post-Solidarity left had also come together to form the Labour Union (UP).

Talks on pre-election cooperation likewise took place in the post-Solidarity conservative camp. Talks involving the PC, RdR, ZChN, PSL-PL and KP in various combinations took place at different junctures between the collapse of the Suchocka


cabinet in May and the elections in September. Ultimately, though, these discussions failed to create a united conservative bloc. Instead, three coalitions were set up.

The ZChN joined the KP as well as one other small party in forming a coalition called the Fatherland Electoral Committee (O) that was widely seen as closest to the Church hierarchy. This coalition brought together a somewhat odd group of bedfellows. ZChN was far more socially conservative and far less pro-market than KP.271

The leaders of the PC and RdR, who had split from each other in the chaotic aftermath of the Olszewski government’s collapse, engaged in two months of widely publicized talks on an alliance, but ultimately decided to go it alone. They each formed their own separate coalitions of small Christian-conservative parties: the Centre Agreement-United Poland (PC-ZP) and the Coalition for the Republic (KdR).272

Three of the most significant parties in the conservative camp, the PC, RdR and ZChN, thus failed to form a coalition. The three parties, while sharing many programmatic commonalities, tended to emphasize different issues. The ZChN strongly identified itself as a Christian and specifically Catholic party with a very socially conservative program. The RdR, forged out of the fight over lustration, placed particular emphasis on decommunization as the best way to move Poland forward. The PC, while also emphasizing decommunization, had become particularly focused on its opposition to President Wałęsa.

Wałęsa also entered the fray by sponsoring the creation of a new party called the Non-party Bloc for the Support of Reforms (BBWR). The BBWR was framed as a movement that would stand on “four legs”: the local authorities, farmers, workers and entrepreneurs. Led by Andrzej Olechowski, a former finance minister in Olszewski’s government, the movement was backed by some post-Solidarity politicians such as Jerzy Eysymontt and former Wałęsa advisers as well as people who had not been part of the political scene until then. The BBWR adopted a relatively neutral stance on socio-cultural issues and a very pro-market position on the economy.

272 The PC-ZP consisted of the Centre Accord led by Jarosław Kaczyński, the Third Republic Movement of Jan Parys, the Christian Democratic Labour Party, the Party of Loyalty to the Republic and the Regional Accord RdR led by Andrzej Anusz, which was a break-away group from the RdR. The KdR consisted of the RdR of Jan Olszewski, the Freedom Party led by Kornel Morawiecki, Solidarity ‘80’, the Democratic Party of Poland, Patrimony led by Roman Bartoszcze and a few other even smaller groups.
Finally, the group of the most important post-opposition parties was rounded out by the Solidarity trade union and Leszek Moczulski’s KPN. The post-Solidarity peasant party, PSL-PL, also ran alone after failing to come to an agreement on a coalition with the other parties in the Christian-conservative camp.

The failure of the post-Solidarity parties to unite, at least in unified liberal and conservative camps, is all the more striking in the face of the changes to the electoral system just before the elections. In May 1993, the same month that Suchocka’s government lost the confidence vote, parliament passed a new electoral law. The law created a nationwide minimum threshold for entering parliament of 5 per cent for political parties and 8 per cent for coalitions, and increased the number of districts from 37 to 52. It also introduced the D’Hondt formula for determining seat shares, a system that is favourable to strong parties. Naturally, the law gained the support of some of the largest parties in the Sejm, including the UD, SLD, KPN and PSL. Fatefully, however, the PC and the liberal KLD supported the law. Both of these post-Solidarity parties subsequently failed to win the minimum support necessary for entering parliament. In contrast, many of the smaller or newer post-Solidarity formations, including PL, UP, ChD, KP and RdR, voted against the law. Likewise, ZChN and the Solidarity trade union opposed the law. But while these parties perhaps correctly calculated that the new law would make it particularly difficult for them to win seats in parliament, they did not manage to cobble together a united front to improve their chances ahead of the elections.

Figure 5.1
Poland 1993 – Socio-cultural positions of parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLD</th>
<th>PSL</th>
<th>UD</th>
<th>KPN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-6.32</td>
<td>-4.00</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Libertarian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UP</th>
<th>BBWR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-5.56</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Traditionalism

*Compiled from data contained in Klingemann et al. 2006.*
The parties that emerged from the former Solidarity movement are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; other parties in black.
The elections caused a significant shake-up in the composition of the post-
Solidarity parties in the Sejm. The post-communist SLD won a stunning victory with 20
per cent of the vote and the PSL finished second with 15 per cent. Out of the post-
Solidarity parties, only Mazowiecki’s UD, the left-leaning UP, and Wałęsa’s won seats in
the Sejm. All of the Christian-conservative groups failed to clear the threshold.273

Table 5.1 – Poland – 1993 Parliamentary Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)</td>
<td>20.41</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Peasant Party (PSL)</td>
<td>15.40</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Union (UD)</td>
<td>10.59</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Union (UP)</td>
<td>7.28</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN)</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Party Bloc in Support of Reforms (BBWR)</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatherland (O)</td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

273 Jacek Raciborski, Polskie Wybory: Zachowania wyborcze społeczeństwa polskiego 1989-1995,
Government coalition talks

The election results created a dilemma for the post-communist SLD. The Alliance had clearly won the elections, but it needed at least one coalition partner to form a majority government. SLD leader Aleksander Kwaśniewski immediately made overtures to the UD, suggesting that his preference was for a coalition with the largest post-Solidarity grouping.274 The UP also said it would support a coalition bringing together the SLD and UD. At the time, members of both SLD and UP emphasized the international prestige of the UD as well as its supposed status as a political darling of the Polish media. Kwaśniewski even suggested that the SLD might be willing to consider keeping the UD’s Suchocka as prime minister.275 The two parties were close to each other in terms of their largely secular stances on socio-cultural issues.276 In addition, as Figure 5.2 confirms, UD was also much closer to the SLD on economic issues than it was to the other post-Solidarity Christian and conservative parties. The SLD also made overtures to


276 The Manifesto Research Group data for the 1993 elections places the UD at 0.0 on the socio-cultural scale, suggesting a lack of data or a completely neutral position by the party on these issues. Nevertheless, numerous other data sets have placed the UD and UP relatively close to the SLD on socio-cultural issues and both parties further away from most of the post-Solidarity Christian and conservative parties. See, for example, data based on mass surveys of voters in Krzysztof Jasiewicz, “Anarchia czy pluralizm? Podzialy polityczne i zachowania wyborcze w roku 1991 i 1993,” in Stanislaw Gebethner, eds., Wybory Parlamentarne 1991 i 1993 (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1995) 49-71. See also Grzymala-Busse, “Coalition Formation and the Regime Divide,” 94-95; Kitschelt, Mansfeldová, Markowski and Toka, Post-Communist Party Systems, 246-248.
the more left-leaning UP, with which it also shared similar policy objectives. Both post-
Solidarity formations decided not to join the government.

The leading figures of the UD and UP tend to cite three factors as having
influenced their decision not to join the SLD in a coalition. First, the communist past of
the SLD was too significant a factor for these former Solidarity activists to overcome,
despite various common policy stances among the three parties. “It is because our party
was formed in the anti-communist resistance,” noted Bronisław Geremek, then a
prominent leadership figure in the UD, in an interview years later. “And we did not
accept that we could abandon this traditional attachment to the history and the values, and
that we could accept cooperation with the communist party.” This factor had less to do
with rational calculation than it did with emotion. In fact, Henryk Wujec, another
prominent UD member at the time, said a coalition with the SLD would have been
“emotionally unacceptable.”

The second factor was the idea that the SLD had not completely reformed itself.
Wujec said his party could not accept that the SLD could simply change itself into a
democratic party “overnight.” Geremek added:

“Even if the young leaders [of the SLD] like Kwaśniewski did not represent the
mentality, the spirit, of the previous era, behind them stood everybody from the
[communist era] nomenklatura and power apparatus.”

The third factor was based on a certain lack of trust. Wujec said he simply did not
believe that the SLD was being honest about its offer of a coalition, dismissing it as “a
PR stunt.” Zbigniew Bujak, a founding member of the UP, puts it plainly: “We did not
trust them.”

All three of these factors are obviously related to the history of antagonistic
relations between the former Solidarity and the communist PZPR, which gave rise to the

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277 Interview with Henryk Wujec, Warsaw, July 2005.
278 Ibid.
279 Interview with Bronisław Geremek, Warsaw, July 2006.
280 Interview with Wujec.
281 Interview with Zbigniew Bujak, Warsaw, 1 July 2005.
regime divide that separated the SLD from the UD and UP. Neither the UD nor even the left-leaning UP felt capable of crossing that divide.

Almost immediately after the SLD made a public offer to work with the UD in a coalition, the UD turned it down. In explaining the decision to the public, UD leaders said the SLD and PSL had placed first and second in the elections, while the parties of the Suchocka government had performed much worse. Therefore, the SLD and PSL deserved a chance at governing. In addition, UD leaders contended that the campaign promises of both the SLD and PSL had been unrealistic and had awoken expectations in the public that could not be fulfilled.

While the public declarations by UD leaders on the “unrealistic” campaign promises and program of the SLD may not have been disingenuous, it is difficult to consider them to have been the pivotal reason for the UD to avoid a coalition with the SLD, especially when they are compared to the UD’s attitude toward other parties with similar programs. Even before the election, for instance, UD leader Tadeusz Mazowiecki had stated that his party would not join a coalition led by the post-communist SLD but left open the possibility of working with the post-Solidarity UP. This, despite the fact that the programmatic differences between the UD and those two left-leaning parties were about the same – in fact, if anything, the UD was closer to the SLD on certain issues than it was to the UP. Moreover, Mazowiecki also acknowledged that the UP had also benefited “from the same social discontent” as the SLD.

In actual fact, then, the key difference between the SLD and UP as potential coalition partners was, of course, the historical roots of those two parties. A coalition with the UP was conceivable because of its roots in Solidarity, while a coalition with SLD was not because of that party’s roots in the communist regime.

In fact, UD leaders were aware of certain basic programmatic similarities between the UD and SLD on socio-cultural issues and even on some economic issues. Those

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285 Ibid, p. 27.
similarities appeared to call out for a coalition between the two parties. Geremek characterized the UD’s post-election attitude in this way:

“We had a moment of sadness, of defeat, but also of great satisfaction that the victorious party had expressed a practical will, a will to implement our program. They declared that they want privatization, a market economy, no [economic] planning, and therefore the abandonment of all heritage of the communist political economy. They declared that they wanted to strengthen democracy since they had profited from it. And thirdly, they wanted Poland to enter all of the structures of European solidarity, including NATO along with the United States, and the European Community.”

These similarities, however, could not overcome the regime divide. Geremek said the UD was concerned about the danger of a possible “communist revival.”

But there were other, strategic reasons for avoiding a coalition with the large and powerful SLD that emerged from the 1993 elections, particularly in the case of UP, which actually did engage in extensive coalition talks with the SLD. The UP leadership’s decision to walk away from those talks appears to have reflected concerns that their small social-democratic party would have difficulty differentiating itself from the SLD in a governing coalition. Bujak, a key member of the UP at the time, said the party’s leaders were worried that the UP might eventually “dissolve” into the much larger post-communist party if it were to join a coalition with it. This was why the UP initially insisted it was only willing to consider entering a coalition with the SLD if the UD was

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286 Interview with Geremek.
287 Ibid. Geremek also noted that when the Hungarian Alliance of Free Democrats decided to join a coalition with that country’s post-communist party in 1994, he discussed the issue at length with leaders of that party, including such former dissidents as János Kis, László Rajk Jr. and Gábor Demszky. “We talked for hours and nights. They explained to me that for them, in their situation, it was the only way to confront the revival of Hungarian nationalism, which was dangerous for Hungarian democracy. This was not our problem. At the time, what we perceived to be a danger was a communist revival, while the right was after all inside the tradition of Solidarity. There was no nationalist, extremist right reviving the old extremist Polish right. This was the difference in our attitudes.”
288 Interview with Bujak.
also in the coalition. Such a coalition would have enabled the UP to play the statesman-like mediator’s role between the UD and SLD.

Some observers have suggested that the UD was also concerned at the prospect of playing the role of the weak partner to a large party, like the SLD, in a coalition. This concern was even voiced by UD officials at the time. Nevertheless, it is difficult to separate such considerations from the fact that the SLD was the post-communist party. Jan Maria Rokita, a leading UD figure at the time, put it this way:

“If any small party, such as UD in the new parliament, wanted to participate in establishing the government where post-PRL [the acronym for the communist-era Polish People’s Republic] parties would have such an overwhelming majority, it would have to play the role of a puppet that adds credibility to this government. This is totally unacceptable to UD.”

Rokita’s comments are revealing. The problem was not simply the fact of playing the role of a small party in a coalition dominated by larger parties, but the fact of being the small party in a coalition dominated specifically by post-communist parties. Four years later, in fact, the successor organization of the UD joined a coalition with a much larger post-Solidarity party in parliament.

Strategically, the UD’s decision enabled it to stake out a position in parliament as the main post-Solidarity party standing in opposition to the post-communist SLD-led government in the Sejm. This position was available to the UD at the time because the other post-Solidarity parties were relatively weak and the post-Solidarity conservatives virtually unrepresented in the legislature. Nevertheless, such a strategy depended on the UD’s willingness and ability to usurp the place of the conservative right in the political spectrum. The next four years would show, however, that the UD was committed to its

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291 Dudek, *Historia Polityczna Polski*.
293 This was coalition government of the Freedom Union (UW), the successor party to the UD, and the much larger Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS), which was formed after the 1997 elections.
“centrist” position in Polish politics and that the post-Solidarity conservatives would prove capable of setting aside their disputes and banding together to regain their place in parliament.

The UP, for its part, seemed on the surface to take a somewhat less prejudiced view of joining the SLD in a coalition. On closer inspection, however, it is evident that the regime divide also weighed on the UP. While the UP’s membership favoured a coalition with the SLD, the leadership was reticent, at first insisting that it would only join such a coalition if the UD did as well, and later suggesting that PSL rather than SLD play the lead role in forming it. Moreover, although prominent UP figures such as Karol Modzelewski insisted that UP was not opposed to working with SLD simply because of its origin in the communist regime, there were clear signs that many in the leadership, including the UP chair himself, did not consider the regime divide to be wholly irrelevant. UP leader Ryszard Bugaj, for instance, said he was willing to consider a coalition with SLD but only if certain SLD members who were particularly compromised by their role in the former regime would not be given a role in the government. “What would we tell our colleagues who fought against the communist regime for many years? Should we tell them that we are in the same government and that minister over there is ours? Time certainly heals all wounds, but time really must pass.”

Ultimately, the UP presidium decided by the slimmest of margins to stay out of the SLD-PSL coalition government, with six members voting against joining, six in favour and two abstaining. Among the reasons that were cited by those opposed to entering the coalition, two were prominent. For one, the UP was calling for scaling back the mass privatization program, while the SLD wanted to maintain the program, which had been launched by the Suchocka government and supported by several SLD deputies. Second, both the SLD and PSL disagreed with the UP’s proposal that people “known for their anti-democratic activity or involvement in illegal activities” be

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297 Rzeczpospolita, 7 October 1993, p. 2, FBIS-EEU-93-194, 8 October 1993, p. 35. This difference also highlights the similarity in approach between the SLD and the UD. While the UP wanted to restrict privatization, the SLD, in line with the UD, wanted to maintain the existing privatization program.
prevented from occupying high posts in the state administration. This UP proposal, which in the words of Bugaj was aimed at preventing “a wave of promotions” of people with “bad reputations from the previous era,” clearly underlines the historical differences between the post-Solidarity leadership of the UP and the post-communist SLD. The UP did not want to cross the regime divide to join a coalition that would feature ministers and other state administration officials who had played an active role in suppressing dissent under the communist regime. Instead, the UP leader declared that his party would support any government initiatives that would be in line with its program, but “we do not have to blur the line between ourselves and SLD.”

Unable to convince either the UD or the UP to join it in government, the SLD ultimately put together a coalition with the PSL. The PSL had emerged from the peasant party that had been allied with the communists under the previous regime. It was now an independent grouping with a strong social base in the countryside and it was attempting to refashion itself as a party that had also been “oppressed” by the former regime. The SLD and PSL party programs in 1993 were close to each other in the policy space in terms of both socio-cultural and economic issues. But the data obscure the fact that the two parties had serious disagreements in various areas such as agricultural policy, relations with the Church and privatization. Moreover, the parties subsequently drifted away from each other on a number of issues and the disagreements became quite acrimonious during the life of the coalition government after 1993. In any case, the coalition with the PSL represented a disappointment for SLD leader Kwaśniewski’s effort to secure the support of the UD as a means of shoring up the democratic credentials of the post-communists. Kwaśniewski had also thought the UD would serve as a good

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300 Grzymała-Busse, “Coalition Formation and the Regime Divide,” p. 95.
303 Klingemann et al., \textit{Mapping Policy Preferences II}, p. 13.
programmatic counter-weight to the PSL, suggesting at one point that it would be difficult to keep the budget deficit under control in a coalition with the PSL alone.\(^\text{304}\)

*Party developments 1993-1997*

The numerous post-Solidarity parties, now in opposition, spent much of the 1993-1997 term striving to create a unified bloc that could mount an effective challenge to the post-communist SLD and its ally the PSL. Freed of the decision-making that comes with governing, the post-Solidarity forces focused on establishing a programmatic minimum around which they could create a coherent electoral force. But it would take almost the entire 1993-1997 term, and another electoral defeat in the presidential vote of 1995, to find that unity. In the presidential election, there were a total of seven candidates from the former anti-communist opposition facing one candidate each from the SLD and PSL. In the end, the SLD’s Aleksander Kwaśniewski won the election, defeating Wałęsa in the second round of voting.\(^\text{305}\)

The presidential election, which effectively gave the SLD control of both the government and the presidency, had the effect of focusing minds in the post-Solidarity camp around a project of consolidation. And yet, even at the end of this period, the post-Solidarity forces did not create a single electoral machine. Instead, they formed parties that would reflect the natural programmatic differences between the liberal and conservative post-Solidarity camps. Indeed, the bulk of the efforts aimed at unifying the post-Solidarity forces took place within each of the liberal and conservative camps rather than between them.\(^\text{306}\) The next section examines the essentially separate efforts of the post-Solidarity conservative and liberal camps at achieving unity.

*Post-Solidarity conservatives*

In the aftermath of the 1993 electoral victory of the post-communist SLD, the post-Solidarity forces made almost immediate efforts at overcoming their internal differences.


\(^{306}\) The liberal KLD, at one point, had considered a coalition with the conservative PK, but the idea was scuttled after “supporters of maintaining the conservative identity” of the PK reasserted their control of that party; *Rzeczpospolita*, 7 December 1993, 1-2, FBIS-EEU-93-234, 8 December 1993, 25-26.
Within days of the elections, for instance, PC leader Jarosław Kaczyński called for the unification of the country’s “centre-right parties,” saying he hoped the “post-election shock” would facilitate such a move. In a letter addressed to 14 parties, including the post-Solidarity formations of ZChN, RdR, PK, PL and even the liberal KLD, Kaczyński cited the “regaining of power by the communists” and called for unification. Within weeks, the ZChN, PC and PL were working together on joint statements criticizing government policy.307

Despite this quick move, the unification of the post-Solidarity conservatives was to be an arduous and complex process with more than a few setbacks and false starts. Between the parliamentary elections of 1993 and the presidential vote of 1995, three different conservative umbrella groups were created. They all faded quickly from view. In 1993, Kaczyński’s PC joined the PL and a group of smaller allies to form the Secretariat of Centre-Right Groups (SUC), but the PC and PL eventually abandoned the SUC. The SUC was later associated more closely with the Solidarity trade union.

Another group, the 11 November Understanding, was formed by Aleksander Hall’s PK, Janusz Korwin-Mikke’s UPR, the PChD, the SLCh, and the Party of National Democrats (SND). Finally, in 1994, following their abandonment of the SUC, Kaczyński’s PC joined the ZChN to form the Alliance for Poland (PdP). The PL, RdR, and the Conservative Coalition (KK) also joined this alliance. There was talk of establishing links between the PdP and the 11 November, but cracks started to appear in both formations later that same year amid disputes over strategy and alliances with other conservative groupings.

Part of the reason these umbrella groups failed was related to differences in policy preferences, particularly on economic issues. Some of the splinter groups in the broad conservative camp tended to be more pro-market, such as KK, while others favoured a

310 The Conservative Coalition (KK), led by Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski, was a party set up by a break-away faction from the PK; Rzeczpospolita, 12 May 1994, p.3, FBIS-EEU-94-093, 13 May 1994, 16-17.
relatively larger degree of state involvement in the economy, such as PL. There were also personality conflicts and differences in attitudes toward President Wałęsa. Nevertheless, it is difficult to separate out the different influences on the splintering of the post-Solidarity conservative camp—a process that continued to stymie unification efforts even after the election victory of the post-communist SLD in 1993. In the end, these groups did manage to come together, and the decisive event that triggered their unification was the presidential election, which served to accentuate the regime divide in Polish politics.

As the presidential elections of 1995 approached, Aleksander Hall of the PK called for all post-Solidarity parties, including both the conservative and liberal camps, to rally around a single candidate.313 This was supposed to ensure that the SLD would not win the presidency as well. Talks were even staged between the post-Solidarity liberals, represented by the Freedom Union, and the conservatives, represented by the PdP, on the possibility of supporting a common presidential candidate, but the differences between the two groups proved too great.314 It became increasingly clear that the two divergent post-Solidarity camps would field separate candidates.

Nevertheless, even finding its own candidate proved a difficult task for the post-Solidarity parties of the conservative camp. Numerous attempts to forge an agreement on this issue, including a Church-sponsored initiative called the St. Catherine’s Convention,315 failed to produce a single candidate who could be endorsed by all of the many post-Solidarity conservative parties and groups.316 Some in the post-Solidarity conservative camp wanted to support Wałęsa for a second term, while others favoured a new candidate. In the end, a number of candidates from this part of the spectrum

315 The initiative was named after an initial meeting of 19 conservative parties that was held in Warsaw’s St. Catherine’s parish in December 1994 to discuss cooperation and possible presidential candidates. The communiqé issued after the meeting stated that the presidential candidate of the right should “respect Catholic and national values, be guided by anticommunist convictions, and ensure that the Constitution be observed closely.” While the St. Catherine’s Convention recommended Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz for president, the decision was rejected by as many as nine of the convention’s members, including the supporters of Jan Olszewski, who declared that the vote had been manipulated. *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 December 1994, p. 2, FBIS-EEU-94-234, 38-39; *Rzeczpospolita*, 19-20 August 1995, p. 2, FBIS-EEU-95-162.
contested the election, including the central bank chair Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, former prime minister Jan Olszewski, and Wałęsa himself. While each of these three candidates had the formal support of specific parties, in some cases their support actually extended across parties. The ZChN leadership formally endorsed Gronkiewicz-Waltz, for instance, but some activists in that party actually lent support to Wałęsa.\(^3\) Such cross-party support was true in varying degrees of many of the post-Solidarity candidates. The post-Solidarity parties in the conservative camp were divided over the question of Wałęsa. Certainly, Wałęsa’s hiring and dismissal of personnel in the presidential office has been widely seen by both journalists and scholars as one source of the divisions in the post-Solidarity camp.\(^3\) Such divisions appear to have played a role in fomenting tensions within the Alliance for Poland (PdP) for instance.\(^3\)

Nevertheless, relations with Wałęsa were far from the only factor dividing the post-Solidarity conservatives. For one, some splits occurred between groups who sat on the same side of the Wałęsa question. The BBWR, for instance, fell apart ahead of the presidential elections, but all three of its splinter groups supported Wałęsa for president.\(^3\)

The post-Solidarity conservatives, or simply “the right” or “centre-right” as many in this camp were wont to call themselves, were divided in more and deeper ways than their respective attitudes toward Wałęsa. There were differences within the camp over the degree of state intervention in the economy. After all, the various parties and groups involved in the “unite the right” initiatives described above included the radically pro-market and anti-union UPR and the markedly less pro-market PL, PC and even the Solidarity trade union itself (see Figure 3.1). There were also differences over the role of

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\(^3\) See, for example, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 13 October 1994, p.3, FBIS-EEU-94-199, 14 October 1994, p.14, in which the author suggests that it was in Wałęsa’s interest to prevent a strong candidate from emerging out of the post-Solidarity right who would be vying for the same anti-communist vote in the presidential election as Wałęsa. See also *Rzeczpospolitą*, 2 December 1994, p.2, FBIS-EEU-94-233, 25-26, in which the author argues that Wałęsa’s election campaign was creating divisions on the right. See also *Życie Warszawy*, 10 May 1995, p. 1, FBIS-EEU-95-091, 11 May 1995, on Wałęsa’s decision to appoint Marek Jurek of the ZChN as head of the National Radio and Television Council, in a move that was seen as an attempt to gain the support of the ZChN in the presidential elections.

\(^3\) Ibid.

the Church in public life (see Figure 3.2) and even over EU and NATO membership.\textsuperscript{321} All of these differences pointed to deeper underlying divisions over the question of modernization and the future of Polish society, and indeed, Poland’s place in Europe. Aleksander Hall, the leader of one of the many conservative splinter parties, described the “confusion of ideas” on the right side of the spectrum in this way:

“Some expected the right to settle accounts with the [communist] \textit{nomenklatura} while retaining the economic system (at least its fundamental elements) inherited from socialism. Others saw the right as bequeathed with the historical duty of modernizing Poland according to national traditions and basing the economic system on private ownership. There was also a vision that the right was to build a system offering an alternative not only to socialism, but also to the liberal democracies in the West.”\textsuperscript{322}

This, however, did not mean that the differences between the post-Solidarity conservative parties and the post-Solidarity liberals were any less deep. If anything, the differences with the secular liberals were even greater. Despite their differences on many issues, the post-Solidarity conservatives tended all to prefer forging a compact with each other on the basis of traditional values, rather than come to an agreement with the more secular liberal camp.\textsuperscript{323}

Beyond that, the question of support for, or opposition to, Wałęsa was not entirely separable from the platforms and strategies of some of the post-Solidarity parties. The candidacy of Olszewski, for instance, naturally received the support of those parts of the post-Solidarity conservative camp that had fallen out with Wałęsa in the early 1990s. For those parties, including Olszewski’s RdR and the PC of the Kaczyński, Wałęsa’s

\textsuperscript{321} See, for example, the interview with PC leader Jarosław Kaczyński in \textit{Gazeta Wyborcza}, 30 August 1995, p. 5, FBIS-EEU-95-169, p. 54. While the PC supported EU membership for Poland, some groups on the right were concerned at the effect that EU membership might have on the “national identity” of Poland.

\textsuperscript{322} See article by Aleksander Hall in \textit{Rzeczpospolita}, 16 February 1995, p. 5, FBIS-EEU-95-033, 17 February 1995, 21-22. Hall also attributed some of the blame for the divisions in the right on Wałęsa but presented this as only one factor behind those divisions.

\textsuperscript{323} This is not to overlook the fact that the UW, and the UD before it, had a significant Christian-democratic contingent in its ranks. Nevertheless, the moderate Christian-democrats in the UW (and UD) were more comfortable with a secular vision of the state than most of the parties in the post-Solidarity conservative camp.
presidency had become an aspect of their claims that the country was still under communist influence in one form or another. Commenting on Wałęsa’s decision to run for a re-election on an anti-communist ticket, PC leader Jarosław Kaczyński said, “Wałęsa himself—as a person speaking about a communist threat—is not credible.” Naturally, there was a heavy dose of interpersonal antagonism in these attitudes. Accordingly, the PC remained aloof during the second round of the elections, refusing to support Wałęsa even in a head-to-head battle with the post-communist candidate Kwaśniewski.

Post-Solidarity liberals

The UD had won a larger share of the vote in the 1993 elections than any other post-Solidarity party, but it still finished a distant third behind the SLD and PSL. In the aftermath of this defeat, the UD moved quickly after the elections to call for a merger with the KLD, a fellow liberal party that had not even managed to win parliamentary representation. As former allies in the so-called “little coalition” dating back to 1992, the two parties were able to pull off a relatively quick merger. Later in the year, a congress of the KLD approved the move, saying it wanted to join the UD in creating “a party of Polish transformations” that would oppose both “the left wing’s populist promises” and the “pseudo-right wing’s irresponsibility.” While KLD leaders were obviously concerned with the party’s marginalization as a political force following its disappointing performance in the 1993 elections, the proponents of the merger within the party also framed it as a means of creating a strong liberal party that could oppose the plans of the SLD-PSL government. The UD and KLD were formally merged under the new name of Freedom Union (UW) in April 1994.

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325 Rzeczpospolita, 4 October 1993, p.2, FBIS-EEU-93-191, 5 October 1993, 26-27. The UD’s 100-member leadership Council passed a resolution in early October 1993 calling for a merger with the KLD. Only four members of the Council opposed the resolution.
327 Some party members acknowledged this. See the interview with KLD leader Donald Tusk in Gazeta Wyborcza, 12-13 March 1994, p. 10, FBIS-EEU-94-051, 16 March 1994, p. 21, where he said he feared “being pushed out into the fringe.”
But while the merger seemed to create a more pro-market liberal party, internal debates over the party’s identity continued. On the one hand, party delegates to a leadership convention elected Leszek Balcerowicz, the former finance minister famously associated with “shock therapy,” to replace Mazowiecki as leader. On the other hand, delegates voted to support Jacek Kuroń, the former labour minister who had negotiated the social pact with the unions, as the UW candidate for the presidency.

Although Balcerowicz and Kuroń were often perceived as having strongly divergent views on the economic-distributive divide, their endorsements as leader and presidential candidate, respectively, were widely seen as making a UW-SLD coalition even more likely than before. Balcerowicz was widely seen as a pragmatic “technocrat” with an essentially secular liberal outlook who would find it relatively easy to cross the regime divide and join the post-communists in a coalition. For his part, Balcerowicz declined to engage in discussions on a potential coalition with SLD, saying he would support entering any governing coalition in which UW could implement its program “most fully.” At the time, Balcerowicz said it was difficult to “find any coherence” within the post-Solidarity camp as a whole on any plane other than their common roots in the anti-communist opposition, adding that “there seems to be more hostility among certain groups within this [post-Solidarity] camp than between the entire camp and the so-called post-communist formation.”

The rise of Balcerowicz to the leadership and the selection of Kuroń as the UW presidential candidate did not ease the UW’s internal divisions. The decision to go with Kuroń rather than support a joint candidate with the post-Solidarity conservative parties drew public criticism and dissent from the UW’s “rightist” faction led by Jan Maria Rokita. After losing the battle over the UW’s candidate, this group decided to focus its efforts on a public campaign dubbed the “Three-Quarters Initiative” for the purpose of

330 See “Freedom Union’s New Direction,” FBIS-EEU-95-076, 20 April 1995, 16-17; see also Rzeczpospolita, 21 February 1995, 1-2, FBIS-EEU-95-035, 22 February 1995, p. 18, which cites UW Secretary General Bronisław Komorowski as saying Balcerowicz would tilt the party toward “social liberalism” and possibly to a coalition with the SLD.
organizing a negative publicity campaign against the SLD candidate, a move that was criticized by the UW party leadership.332

Following the election, UW leader Balcerowicz moved quickly to expel Rokita from the leadership of the party as punishment for “disloyalty” to the party and for not supporting the party’s candidate Kuroń.333 The move angered the representatives of the right-wing faction in the UW.

Nevertheless, the removal of Rokita from the leadership mirrored the earlier expulsion of Barbara Labuda from the UW caucus in the Sejm. The party had expelled Labuda for violating party policies through her independent activities related to the abortion debate in Poland. She was a prominent member of the party’s social-liberal faction, and following the 1995 presidential election, she crossed the regime divide to work in the office of President Aleksander Kwaśniewski.334 Labuda was not entirely alone in this. Other members of the social-liberal or “leftist” wing of the UW would leave the party in the future, including Andrzej Celiński, who actually joined the SLD in 1999, also crossed the regime divide. Initially an opponent of working with the SLD in a coalition during the early 1990s, Celiński had started to muse about some form of cohabitation between the post-Solidarity UW and the post-communists during the 1993-1997 electoral term.335 But the cases of Labuda and Celiński were relatively isolated. UW members, and the predominant majority of the party’s left-leaning social-liberal faction, continued to be opposed to crossing the regime divide to forge an actual coalition with the SLD.336

At the same time, an increasing number of UW activists from the social-liberal faction of the party actually started to complain out loud that the party had become more “Christian democratic” in nature following the merger with KLD.337 This group had been skeptical about the move to merge with the pro-market KLD, and in the fall of 1994 they

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335 Interview with Andrzej Celiński, July 2005.
337 Władysław Frasyniuk, for example, said: “As a result of the fusion, these two liberal political entities combined to form a new entity of a Christian democratic nature. Maybe this is the kind of chemical process that usually takes place when two parties merge.” *Słowo Polskie*, 11 October 1994, pp. 1 and 13, FBIS-EEU-94-201, 18 October 1994, 30-31.
created an initiative within the party called the Democratic Forum of the UW.\footnote{Ibid; \textit{Glos Wybrzeza}, 11 October 1994, 1-2, FBIS-EEU-94-201, 18 October 1994, p. 30.} The move sparked a heated reaction from the right-wing faction of the party and was eventually declared to be in violation of internal party statutes.\footnote{\textit{Gazeta Wyborcza}, 2 December 1994, p. 3, FBIS-EEU-94-233, 5 December 1994, p. 26.} Some KLD members had been concerned at the willingness of this faction in the old UD to seek a rapprochement with the SLD.\footnote{\textit{Gazeta Wyborcza}, 15 November, p. 3, FBIS-EEU-93-220, 17 November 1993, p. 22.} And there was some truth in this. Some prominent members of the social-liberal wing of the UW, such as Andrzej Celiński, had gradually become advocates within the party of finding a \textit{modus vivendi} with the post-communist SLD or at least with its “moderate” wing led by Kwaśniewski.\footnote{Interview with Andrzej Celiński, July 2005.} This group within the UW felt that the SLD’s performance in government and its stance on socio-cultural issues made it a natural partner for UW.

They were not alone in this. After 1993, a public debate took place on the pages of UW’s internal publications as well as in the broader Polish media about the possibility of a governing coalition between the SLD and the UW.\footnote{The question of whether UW should join SLD in a governing coalition or even in a pre-election coalition surfaced repeatedly in the party’s internal publications during the mid-1990s, particularly in interviews with leading figures of the party. See, for example, “Suchocka w Krakówie” \textit{Biuletyn Małopolski – Unia Wolności}, 7 (30), (1 May 1995), 5; “Kopernik – Rozmowa z prof. Leszkiem Balcerowiczem,” \textit{Warszawski Biuletyn Informacyjny}, 6, (May 1995), 1. For media commentary on the possibility of a UW-SLD coalition, see, for example, \textit{Wprost}, 25 September 1994, p.16, FBIS-EEU-94-187, 27 September 1994, 10-11. See also Andrew A. Michta, “Democratic Consolidation in Poland after 1989,” \textit{The Consolidation of Democracy in East-Central Europe} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 103.} Some members of the UW (and in particular those from its predecessor UD) took to describing such a coalition as the “Hungarian” option, in reference to the decision by the former dissidents of the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) in Hungary to cross the regime divide and form a coalition with the ex-communist party of their country. Others, particularly the faction with conservative leanings within the UD (and later UW) led by Jan Maria Rokita, remained opposed to, or at least skeptical of, working with the SLD.\footnote{See, for example, Ignacy Kopec, Stanisław Kołodziej and Marek Piąt, “Polemika,” \textit{Biuletyn regionalny – Unia Wolności w Katowicach}, 2, (February 1995), 10-12.}
At the same time, on the other side of the regime divide, leaders within the SLD continued to hold out hope for a coalition with the UW, or at least for a split in the UW that would enable the left-leaning social-liberal faction led by Jacek Kuroń and Władysław Frasyniuk to work with the SLD. But the SLD was well aware of the antipathy toward crossing the regime divide that seemed to be present among the predominant majority of UW members, even among some of those who might otherwise advocate a coalition with the SLD for programmatic reasons. This realization prompted one SLD member to comment that “a hand reaching out to [the UW] continues to be regarded as one reaching out to grab them.”

The internal disagreement within the UW over the ideal choice of coalition partners reflected a party that found itself positioned between the post-Solidarity conservatives and the post-communist SLD. Indeed, this “centrist” strategy was the avowed goal of the UW’s leaders. The party’s leaders insisted time and time again, in numerous interviews, that they were striving to create a party of the centre. Nevertheless, although its leaders insisted on projecting a “centrist” image, the UW had in fact become closer to the post-communist SLD than it was to any number of the so-called “rightist” parties of the post-Solidarity camp on the key questions related to decommunization processes, Church-state relations, and increasingly even on economic issues. These programmatic affinities were accentuated by the fact that the SLD-led government had endorsed many draft laws that had been prepared by the outgoing Suchocka cabinet as well as the cooperative relations between the two parties on numerous issues in parliament. Moreover, in 1994, SLD city councillors in Warsaw supported the election of the UW’s Marcin Świeckici to the position of mayor, demonstrating that the two parties could cooperate at the local level and leading to further speculation in the media of a union between the two parties at the national level. Indeed, the increasing closeness between the two parties led many observers of Polish politics at the time in

both the media and academia to declare that an eventual coalition, or even outright union, between the UW (or at least some part of it) and the SLD was inevitable.349

While there were various junctures during the 1993-1997 term at which the UW could have entered a coalition with the SLD,350 the party ultimately decided not to do it. Indeed, many prominent UW activists repeatedly and publicly rejected the possibility of joining a coalition with the SLD during the 1993-1997 term.351 They tended to downplay the programmatic affinities between their party and the SLD and frame the parliamentary cooperation between the two parties as a rational response to law-making. When the Warsaw coalition between SLD and UW was put together, the national UW leadership argued that alliances between the parties at the local level were not applicable to the national level, since “apolitical” alliances were a possibility in municipal politics but not in the national parliament.352

Naturally, there were indeed various policy disagreements between the UW and the SLD during the 1993-1997 term. UW leaders were critical of what they perceived as a needless slow-down in the privatization process, of the government’s fiscal policy and of what they saw as a general “lack of commitment” to economic and social policy reforms.353 Nevertheless, while UW leaders often brandished the existence of “programmatic differences” between the two parties as a key reason for their unwillingness to enter a coalition with the SLD, they often accompanied such statements with rhetorical references to the SLD’s historical roots in the communist regime. In one interview, for instance, the UW’s Jan Lityński said the “fundamental difference” between the SLD and UW was one of “mentality.” While the UW wanted change in Poland, the SLD ministers at the time were, according to Lityński, “doing what ministers before 1989


350 The SLD-PSL coalition went through at least two major crises during which the cabinet was reshuffled and a new prime minister named.


353 Tadeusz Syryjczyk, then deputy leader of the UW, outlined in detail his party’s critique of the SLD-PSL government’s policies in these areas in a long article published in Gazeta Wyborcza, 12 June 1995, 14-15, FBIS-EEU-95-153, 9 August 1995, 48-53.
Finally, the UW’s leaders also often explained their refusal to enter a coalition with SLD by saying that their own voters – “whether leftist or rightist” – simply did not like SLD and would not approve of such a coalition. The UW was thus forced by the regime divide, which was reflected in the attitudes of its own leadership as well as its electorate, into avoiding a coalition with the post-communist SLD despite the evident, and even widely acknowledged, programmatic similarities between the two parties.

The 1995 presidential elections

The presidential elections in November 1995 would represent a major shift in the political landscape for the post-Solidarity parties. In all, there were a total of seven presidential candidates who ran in the first round of the elections on 5 November. When the incumbent Wałęsa emerged from the first round to face off against the SLD’s Kwaśniewski, the post-Solidarity parties of both the conservative and liberal camps had to decide whether to support the current president. Faced with the prospect of a victory of the post-communist candidate, and despite the fact that Wałęsa had alienated many of them, several of the parties in this camp decided to support him in the all-or-nothing second round of the elections. While the conservative leaders Kaczyński and Olszewski as well as the UPR and social liberal UP demonstrated their disagreement with Wałęsa by refusing to support either candidate, the incumbent president’s bid did receive the open endorsement of most of the other post-Solidarity formations in the second round, including the Solidarity trade union, KPN, a number of smaller conservative groups and, most significantly, the UW. Once again, the UW publicly threw its lot in with the post-Solidarity camp despite its evident programmatic affinities with the post-communist SLD, and particularly with Kwaśniewski, who represented the most clearly reformist and moderate tendency in the SLD. In this case, the regime divide became far more important to parties like the UW than any reservations they might have had about Wałęsa.

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The second round of the presidential campaign thus served to accentuate the historic regime divide between the post-Solidarity and post-communist camps, overriding the cross-cutting differences between the parties in each camp on the issues of decommunization, Church-state relations, and the economy. Wałęsa himself accentuated the anti-communist aspects of his campaign.\(^{358}\) The campaign ultimately failed as did Wałęsa’s subsequent attempts to forge a unified post-Solidarity movement to confront the post-communists,\(^{359}\) but it did serve to reinforce the regime divide in Polish party politics.

*Post-Solidarity conservatives*

In the aftermath of the elections, and the subsequent scandal surrounding revelations that the SLD’s prime minister, Józef Oleksy, had maintained ties with the Russian and Soviet intelligence services, the post-Solidarity camp as a whole appeared to become more radicalized. This was particularly so for the post-Solidarity conservatives. The ZChN, for instance, elected a new leader who wanted to foster links with the radical Catholic Radio Maryja station and who ruled out cooperation with the liberal UW on the grounds that the party was too close to the post-communist SLD.\(^{360}\)

The bewildering series of meetings and conferences involving various collections of post-Solidarity parties continued after the presidential elections, producing numerous statements, declarations and initiatives regarding the need to “unite” the former opposition camp. In the span of just a couple of months in 1996, for instance, a conference organized by the “Windsor Group” led to a declaration about the need to unite the right; another meeting in Warsaw led to an initiative dubbed New Poland; and a

\(^{358}\) The division between post-communists and non-communists was a major aspect of the campaign ahead of the first round of the elections as well, [see, for example, Wałęsa’s comments on the need to deal with “red webs” on Radio Zet Network, 2 November 1995, FBIS-EEU-95-213, 3 November 1995, 41-41-44] but it became even more accentuated between the first and second rounds. See transcript of the Wałęsa-Kwaśniewski debate at TVP Television First Program, 12 November 1995, FBIS-EEU-95-219, 14 November 1995, 58-74. See also, Millard, “1995 Polish Presidential Election,” p. 106.


conference organized by the Lech Wałęsa Institute led to more debate on uniting the post-
Solidarity parties.361

In this cacophonous atmosphere, it was Olszewski who initially proved the most
adept at building on the reinvigorated regime divide by creating a new movement to
capitalize on his presidential bid, the Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland
(ROP).362 The new formation’s platform was based on anti-communism, the promotion
of Christian values, and a populist economic program. Key members of ROP included
Jan Parys and Antoni Macierewicz, who had made their names in Olszewski’s 1992
government as proponents of decommunization and lustration. Nor surprisingly,
lustration of individuals in “important political, administrative, and judicial posts” was a
major plank of ROP’s platform. In addition, ROP also called for “economic lustration,”
saying it “would take away from the former nomenklatura lawlessly appropriated
national wealth” and it would conduct a “review of all privatization projects carried out in
violation of the law.” Beyond that, ROP’s economic program pledged significant state
support for the economy including support for Polish industry, cheap credit for young
married couples, students, farmers and other social groups, and a cut in the interest rates
set by the central bank (although it was unclear how this last promise might be achieved
in view of the central bank’s independence).363

An even more successful venture to unite the post-Solidarity conservatives was
formally launched a few months after the presidential election, when the Solidarity trade
union formally announced the creation of the Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS)
movement in June 1996. Although it did not manage to win enough of the vote in 1993 to
gain seats in the Sejm, Solidarity had maintained a looming presence on the political
scene through its involvement in a series of strikes and by drawing up a “Citizens’
Constitution,” for which it secured more than 1.5 million signatures of support.364 For
some time, the Solidarity leadership had seen a role for the union as an “integrator” of the
“right” in Poland and as “the only real force capable of resisting the recommunization of

361 See Czas Krakowskie, 7 April 1996, p. 3, FBIS-EEU-96-112, 10 June 1996, 56-57; Rzeczpospolita, 3
362 Ibid.
the country.”365 In the aftermath of the presidential election, Solidarity leader Marian Krzaklewski managed to pull many of the disparate parties and groups in the post-Solidarity conservative into an electoral coalition under the patronage of the trade union movement. Leading up to the June announcement, the various parties of the conservative camp gradually signed a declaration on the Solidarity initiative, with the PC, KK, and ZChN as well as several other small groups and parties signing on that same month.366

The AWS quickly became the hegemonic party on the right side of the political spectrum in public opinion polls, and it gradually subsumed most of the smaller parties in the post-Solidarity conservative camp. More than 30 organizations ended up joining the AWS. The AWS benefited from the Solidarity trade union’s mass membership, organizational infrastructure and financial wherewithal. Moreover, as Aleks Szczerbiak has pointed out, the AWS was able to subsume so many parties and organizations while maintaining a relatively coherent public image because Solidarity itself assumed a hegemonic role within the movement.367 The union was guaranteed half of the votes on the AWS national council and Solidarity’s Krzaklewski became the leader of the movement. The AWS portrayed itself as a Christian democratic force, emphasizing family values and national traditions, while also clearly identifying itself as the direct heir to the famed Solidarity movement.368

The AWS also engaged in talks with Jan Olszewski’s ROP ahead of the 1997 elections, but the talks failed to produce an agreement because Olszewski, who viewed his party as one of the strongest forces on the right, refused to simply join the AWS and insisted on a coalition of equals.369

The AWS also gained deputies from the BBWR and KPN. The BBWR had struggled to define itself after the 1993 elections. Created as a movement to support

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369 Ibid.
President Wałęsa, it was eventually abandoned by the president. Following the elections, the BBWR went through a process of internal debate on whether to define itself as a standard political party as well as exactly where to place itself on the political spectrum. Ultimately, the party fell apart, and one of its splinters joined the newly formed Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) alliance. The KPN, which traced its roots to the anti-communist opposition but not to Solidarity, began to unravel during this term amid disputes over the party’s internal finances. The disputes led to the expulsion of six deputies in 1994. There was also discontent among members at the KPN’s poor performance in the local elections and the overbearing leadership style of Leszek Moczulski and his son-in-law Krzysztof Krol. Eventually, most of the KPN deputies in the Sejm abandoned the party to join the new AWS faction in parliament. While the split in the KPN was clearly related to idiosyncratic leadership questions, the fact that the bulk of the party’s deputies left to join the one group that seemed capable of uniting the post-opposition conservative forces in Poland follows the logic of the competitive dynamics set in motion by the regime divide. Faced with the prospect of yet another defeat at the hands of the post-communists in the SLD, the KPN deputies were naturally motivated to join with the post-Solidarity conservatives in a last-ditch effort to prevent such an outcome.

Meanwhile, the attitude of the post-Solidarity conservative parties toward potential cooperation with the post-Solidarity liberal UW varied. While some members of the AWS coalition viewed a pre-election coalition with the UW as a possibility, others were adamantly opposed to working with the liberals. Nevertheless, soon after the creation of the AWS, the new coalition’s leader Marian Krzaklewski ruled out a pre-election alliance with UW because of programmatic differences and divergent views on the drafting of a new constitution. In one interview, Krzaklewski said the parties grouped together in the AWS were supportive of Solidarity’s alternative draft constitution, which meant that “they are not libertines as far as moral or ethical issues are concerned. I cannot see room for UW here.” This view was not unique in the AWS.

Marian Piłka, the new leader of ZChN, which was one of the first parties to join the AWS, was also opposed to entering a pre-election alliance with both the UW and UP because of their views on abortion as well as the willingness of the UW to enter into coalitions with the SLD at the local level. Instead, the AWS wanted to sign a non-aggression pact with the UW.

For its part, ROP leaders were clear from the outset that no cooperation with the UW, either before or after the election, was possible, because, in the words of one ROP spokesman, the UW had become the “closest and staunchest ally of the SLD.” The feeling between ROP and UW was mutual, with UW leader Balcerowicz dismissing ROP as a party of the “socialist right wing” that posed a threat to the reforms. While the tensions between large parts of the post-Solidarity conservative bloc, represented by ROP and AWS, was in part due to personal animosities, the main divisions separating the liberal and conservative camps were clearly related to the key competitive dimensions of Polish politics at the time (see figures 6.1 and 6.2).

**Post-Solidarity liberals**

Following the presidential election, the UW carefully joined in the discussions about forming a larger alliance in the post-Solidarity camp. The party pursued a strategy of “opening” to the right. Essentially, the strategy consisted of seeking out coalitions and ties with those post-Solidarity parties from the conservative camp that were closest to the UW in programmatic terms, while steering clear of the more radical parties on the right, such as Olszewski’s Movement for the Renewal of Poland (ROP). The parties that were seen as closest to the UW included the PK of Aleksander Hall, the Christian-Peasant Party, and a few other minor formations. In addition, the UW engaged in various initiatives designed to foster ties with the various opposition parties of the post-Solidarity camp, including signing a general declaration on principles for education policy or signing parliamentary cooperation agreements with the KPN and UP. Ultimately,

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378 The declaration on education policy, which advocated broad principles such as increased budgetary expenditures on education and transferring funds to local governments, was signed by the UW, UP, ROP,
however, the UW’s strategy of seeking out partners and “opening” to the right was a failure, as many of the parties with which it sought to cooperate decided to join the newly formed AWS after June 1996.\footnote{Polityka, 24 August 1996, No. 34, 22-23, FBIS-96-195.} Moreover, once the leaderships of the UW and AWS made it clear that they would not enter a pre-election alliance, the small group of UW conservatived around Jan Maria Rokita finally decided to bolt from the party. Rokita’s group joined two extra-parliamentary groupings to form the Conservative-Peasant Party (SKL), which eventually threw its lot in with the AWS.\footnote{BBC Monitoring Service, citing PAP, 25 January 1997; Kopczyński 130-131. The two extra-parliamentary parties that jointly formed the SKL with Rokita were Aleksander Hall’s Conservative Party and Artur Balazs’s Christian Peasant Party.}

At the same time, the UW continued to resist any suggestions that it would close a coalition deal with the SLD, with some of its leading members suggesting that the SLD’s control of both the government and presidency amounted to a certain danger for Polish democracy.\footnote{See the interview with Bronislaw Geremek in Wprost, 10 December 1995, 17-18, FBIS-EEU-95-241, 15 December 1995, 30-31.} This attitude was hardened by the scandal that broke around revelations of SLD Prime Minister Józef Oleksy’s contacts with the Soviet and then Russian intelligence officers between 1983 and 1995.

This scandal, coming on the heels of the SLD presidential election victory, added fuel to the argument that the regime divide was not only relevant but that it superseded other issue divides. Some UW members started to call for the removal of the SLD from government and its replacement with a coalition of UW, UP, PSL, and possibly with the support or even membership of the KPN and BBWR.\footnote{Officially, the UW reacted to the Oleksy affair by calling for the SLD-PSL coalition to be replaced with a non-partisan government led by former foreign minister Władysław Bartoszewski.} Such a coalition would bring together partners of very diverse policy preferences, [see figures 5.1 and 5.2] especially considering the move of the PSL toward an increasingly socially conservative position after the 1993 elections. Various prominent UW members, including Tadeusz Syryjczyk, called for the creation of two post-Solidarity blocs around UW and the Solidarity trade union itself to balance the power of the SLD. Syryjczyk acknowledged that the creation of such blocs, which would presumably work together in a future coalition government,
would undermine the identity of the UW but added that such a price had to be paid. In other words, all other considerations, including the wide policy differences on substantive public policy issues, had to take a back seat to the goal of opposing the post-communist SLD. One of the few UW members raising a voice against the logic of the regime divide in the aftermath of the Oleksy affair was the party’s former presidential candidate Jacek Kuroń, who, together with Karol Modzelewski, co-authored an article in the daily Gazeta Wyborcza questioning the wisdom of forming a coalition government for the sole purpose of removing the SLD from power. But their letter was greeted with open dismay from some quarters inside the UW, who accused Kuroń of “defending our opponents.”

Nevertheless, the UW continued to work with the post-communists in the Sejm in a number of policy areas related to the economic dimension of political competition, such as social and health insurance reform. The SLD relied on votes from the UW to pass a controversial law liberalizing regulations on the sale of land to foreigners or companies with foreign capital, a measure that was opposed by the PSL. In 1996, the UW also supported the SLD’s privatization law, which was opposed by the other post-opposition parties in parliament. The new law guaranteed shares for employees of privatized companies but also eliminated the power of employee councils to object to the privatization of a company.

At least part of the UW parliamentary club supported the SLD and UP in sending the country’s restrictive law on abortion back to the Sejm for amendments to liberalize it. Marek Balicki of the UW was the main rapporteur in the Sejm for the introduction of amendments aimed at liberalizing the abortion law by permitting the termination of pregnancies up to the 12th week for “social” reasons. Nevertheless, like the UD before it, the UW was divided on the issue of abortion and part of the parliamentary club opposed the amendments. The Sejm did approve the amendments, by a vote of 208 to 61 and 15 abstentions; deputies from the SLD, UP and part of the UW parliamentary caucus voted

389 Ibid, p. 50.
for the changes, while deputies from the PSL, BBWR, KPN, and part of the UW caucus voted against them.\footnote{Kronika Sejmowa, Nr 132 (255), II Kadencja, Posiedzenie Sejmu, Nr 87 (28 - 30 sierpnia 1996 r.) <http://kronika.sejm.gov.pl/kronika/ps-132.htm#a3>}

Once again, the UW found itself torn on the issue of abortion, unable to present a united front on either side of the issue. This split approach to the abortion issue was in line with the party’s strained efforts to avoid adopting a strident position on the socio-cultural dimension of competition. While the UW contained a significant social-liberal contingent both from the former UD and KLD, it was also home to a significant group of moderate Christian democrats. This split necessitated a middle ground approach on these issues. In fact, UW leader Balcerowicz characterized the rest of the parties in Poland at the time as proponents of either “clericalism” or “anti-clericalism,” and added that “both of these "-isms" are basically fundamentalist.” The UW, by contrast, was for people who “desire moderation in politics rather than warfare.”\footnote{See interview with Leszek Balcerowicz in \textit{Polityka}, 24 August 1996, No. 34, 22-23, FBIS-96-195.} The emphasis on moderation and the portrayal of both the “left” and “right” sides of the socio-cultural dimension as radicals suggested that the party did not lean toward either side on this dimension. It was free, in other words, to form coalitions with either the post-Solidarity conservatives or the post-communist SLD on socio-cultural issues.

Finally, one significant parting of ways did emerge between the UW and SLD over the issue of decommunization. Although the UW’s main predecessor, the UD, had found common ground with the post-communist SLD before 1993 in opposing the attempts of the post-Solidarity conservatives to pass strong decommunization and lustration measures, this changed after the victory of the post-communists in 1993. The leaders of the UD (and then UW) became convinced that some form of lustration law was needed as a means of putting an end to the various “leaks” of secret police files and public accusations of collaboration coming mainly from various politicians in the post-Solidarity conservative camp. In addition, some UW members had a change of heart on the issue following the victory of the post-communists in the 1993 election.

For the SLD, however, the issue of lustration was definitely not a priority, and early efforts of UD politicians to push for a law on the issue in 1994 went nowhere. Eventually, however, the Oleksy affair convinced even SLD politicians that some kind of
lustration law might be necessary, if for no other reason than as a means of preventing such destabilizing revelations in the future. A special Sejm commission with deputies from SLD, PSL, UW and UP—but conspicuously not including deputies from the BBWR or KPN—was set up to address issue. This time, however, an agreement between the principal post-communist and post-Solidarity liberal parties—SLD and UW, respectively—was not in the offing. The SLD began to retreat from its earlier support for a lustration, and the actual draft law was put together by the PSL, UW and UP. The law called for elected office-holders or candidates for such offices, as well as judges, procurators and heads of public media to submit written declarations on whether they collaborated with the secret service or not. These declarations were then to be verified by a judicial tribunal. Anyone found to have submitted false declaration would be banned from holding public office for 10 years.392

The *ad hoc* coalition of PSL, UW and UP managed to get the law through parliament over the opposition of SLD deputies. Kwaśniewski signed the bill into law despite his misgivings about it and the opposition of his party to it. Obviously, the divergence between the SLD and UW on this key issue was a significant instance of disagreement between these two parties. Nevertheless, the UW’s push for the lustration law did not necessarily bring it closer to the post-Solidarity conservative parties. Indeed, those parties criticized the law as insufficient and excessively narrow in scope. In pushing for a moderate lustration law that was criticized by both the post-Solidarity conservatives and the post-communist SLD, the UW was true to its oft-repeated self-characterization as a “centrist” political force. This did not mean, however, that the decommunization dimension of competition had been eliminated, nor did it mean that the UW now found itself in complete agreement with the post-Solidarity conservatives on the issue. Decommunization was to remain a factor in Polish politics, although it did evolve in a more complex direction, as will become evident in the next section on the electoral campaign.

Finally, there was also one more high-profile area in which these two parties found themselves in an alliance of sorts against the post-Solidarity conservatives. This was the referendum on Poland’s new constitution. The constitution was a compromise

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392 For details on the law, see Szczerbiak, “Communist Past.”
锤炼出由议会宪法委员会在数年时间里确定的宪法草案。最终版本获得了SLD、PSL、UW和UP的政党支持。作为妥协的产物，该宪法反映了这些和其他政党的关切，无论是在议会内还是在议会外。序言包含了对国家、上帝和波兰的基督教遗产的参考，以及对“那些不分享这一信仰”的人的参考。393 它还提供了基于“尊重它们的自治权”的教会-国家关系。在机构方面，宪法减少了总统的权力，使众议院更容易推翻总统的否决，并撤销了总统任命外交、国防和内务部长的权力。

尽管试图在不同的宗教和世俗愿景之间找到妥协，后团结保守派阵营坚决拒绝了该宪法草案。ROP和AWS，即支持团结工会贸易工会的“公民草案”，在全民公投运动中呼吁否决议会草案。后团结保守派政党呼吁宪法基于教会的社会教导。394 它们组织了反对议会草案的示威活动。最终，宪法在全民公投中以52.7%得票率获得通过，尽管投票率仅42.9%。

情绪化的全民公投运动进一步加剧了后团结保守派阵营和自由派阵营之间的分歧。再一次，这一基本论点发现了UW和UP与他们从前的反共主义同事SLD的分歧。关于宪法的辩论包含了各种维度，但最突出的分歧之一是关于教会参与公共生活的作用。后团结保守派阵营的保守阵营决定在这些议题上动员起来，这进一步加剧了宗教-世俗维度上的政治分化。同时，也存在历史维度。新宪法被许多后团结保守派阵营的人视为1989年圆桌会议协议的新版本，因此又是一个与国家内的共产主义力量妥协的版本。

393 关于序言辩论的细节，参见Elżbieta Hałas，“构建民族国家的身份：序言对波兰第三共和国宪法的象征性冲突”，《波兰社会学评论》，1(149)，2005，49-67。
In sum, UW did find itself closer to the SLD on many of the laws and policies related to the key competitive dimensions of Polish politics, with the partial exception of the lustration and abortion debates, as well as on the crucial question of the new constitution. Moreover, the UW’s leaders continually insisted on framing the party as a “centrist” formation, which by definition should have meant that it was open to the potential for joining a governing coalition with the SLD. Finally, the departure of the Christian democrats around Rokita also suggested that the party now should have had even less in common with the conservative side of the political spectrum inhabited by AWS and ROP.

But the regime divide was as relevant as ever in advance of the 1997 elections. And so, at the UW’s January 1997 congress, Balcerowicz announced that his party was ready to cooperate with the AWS in order to defeat the SLD-PSL government. He emphasized the common roots of the UW and AWS in the “post-August camp” a reference to the establishment of the original Solidarity trade union in August 1980. At the same time, however, the UW leadership noted that it would not give up its criticism of “extremist” tendencies within the AWS.\(^{395}\)

The UW’s dilemma was that it was caught between the need to find political partners to work with on the pressing issues of the 1990s and the pressures of its legacy as a successor to the anti-communist Solidarity movement. Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, a former member of the KLD and later of the UW, has summed up this dilemma by suggesting it was easier to work with the post-communist SLD on the issues of the day, but relations were difficult because of the past. By contrast, relations with the Christian conservatives were facilitated by the past, but it was impossible to work with them on the issues of the day.\(^{396}\)

**Party switching**

Following the model outlined in chapter 4, an examination of party switching in the 1993-1997 electoral term should reveal a difference from the 1991-1993 period in terms of the numbers of post-Solidarity legislators that switched as well as in the level of

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396 Interview with Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, July 2005.
consolidation of the post-opposition political scene. This is because the incidence of switching should increase when a post-opposition party is forced by the regime divide into a governing coalition with another post-opposition party with widely divergent policy preferences, as happened in Poland before 1993. But when the post-opposition party or parties are in opposition together, as they were between 1993 and 1997, party switching should be less frequent in the absence of the need to agree on specific policies and bills. In fact, if the post-communist party is in power, then the post-opposition parties may even exhibit a tendency to coalesce in an effort to mount a united front against the “communists.” Coalescence is facilitated in this case because, while in opposition, parties do not need to commit to and defend major policy initiatives, as they do when in government. Policy considerations, and their consequences for party switching and cohesion, are more prominent when the post-opposition parties are in government together.

And an examination of the post-opposition parties in this period does show that the strategic landscape of the 1993-1997 Sejm had an impact on both the extent and nature of party switching during this period. A total of 46 Sejm deputies from the post-opposition camp switched places during the 1993-1997 session of parliament, while only nine deputies from the post-communist SLD and their coalition partner PSL switched during the same period. These numbers are substantially lower than the comparable figures for party switching during the much shorter session of parliament between 1991 and 1993.397

Moreover, a substantial number of post-opposition parliamentarians who did switch in 1993-1997 were making moves aimed at consolidating the post-Solidarity bloc of parties rather than forming new splinter groups. Out of the 46 Sejm party switchers in the post-opposition camp, 18 of them made moves that can be interpreted as aimed at the consolidation of the post-Solidarity conservative bloc ahead of the 1997 elections by joining the newly formed, hegemonic coalition of the AWS.398 Furthermore, the trend

397 The numbers for 1993-1997 do not include the 64 deputies who started out the term as UD members and finished it as UW members. The change in their party caucus was not a result of party switching, but rather the outcome of a merger with the extra-parliamentary KLD.
398 This number includes three of the four deputies who formed the PP-SwW, which later became part of the AWS coalition. The fourth member of this group, Tadeusz Gąsienica Łuszczyk, did not join the AWS, preferring to throw his lot in with the Party of Renters and Pensioners.
toward consolidation in the post-Solidarity bloc was not limited to the parties inside the Sejm. The formation of the AWS under the auspices of the Solidarity trade union served as a magnet for many of the numerous extra-parliamentary parties in the post-Solidarity conservative camp. In addition, the extra-parliamentary KLD of the post-Solidarity liberal camp also got in on the consolidation trend by joining forces with the UD to form the UW.

In that sense, the trend toward consolidation in the post-Solidarity camp during the 1993-1997 electoral term, both inside and outside parliament, was clear. The crucial differences between the two sessions of parliament were the results of the elections. First there was the fact that the post-Solidarity camp had suffered two back-to-back electoral defeats in 1993 and 1995 that had thrown many of them into the extra-parliamentary wilderness. Second, those elections produced a post-communist government in 1993 and a post-communist president in 1995. The shock of those back-to-back election defeats at the hands of the post-communist SLD spurred a consolidation drive in the post-opposition camp. These motivations for the unification of the AWS and UW have been widely noted in various academic and journalistic assessments of this period.

Equally important, however, are the differing challenges that the problem of coalescence poses for new parties that are in a governing as opposed to an opposition role. While they were in government during the 1991-1993 parliamentary session, the various post-Solidarity parties were engaged in the regular policy compromises that make up the day-to-day business of coalition governments. These coalitions brought together an ideologically heterogeneous set of post-Solidarity parties that were united only by their joint history in the pre-1989 anti-communist opposition movement; the new parties in those coalitions were bound to be undermined by such policy compromises. In contrast, once they were all in the opposition, even in the non-parliamentary opposition in some cases, they were no longer required to engage in such compromises. Instead, the post-Solidarity parties, now in opposition once again, could concentrate on the fact that they were all united by their desire to remove the post-communists, now in power once again, from the government.

Nevertheless, even in opposition, the post-Solidarity camp was not capable of rallying together into a single, common electoral coalition to confront the post-
communists in the 1997 elections. Most of the parties and individuals in the post-
Solidarity conservative camp rallied around two formations, the ROP and the AWS,
while the post-Solidarity liberal camp became concentrated in the UW and UP. Still,
these four groupings represented a substantial degree of consolidation for a political
space that was previously occupied by more than a dozen different groups and parties.
Furthermore, the division between the conservative ROP and AWS on one side, and the
liberal UW on the other, reflected real programmatic differences between the
conservative and liberal wings of the former Solidarity movement. In that sense, the
Polish party system had by 1997 increasingly come to reflect the key economic and
socio-cultural competitive dimensions of Polish politics. It was clear that the post-
Solidarity conservatives and liberals increasingly shared only their common past in the
anti-communist opposition but were divided by a number of differing policy preferences.

Table 5.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party factions 1993</th>
<th>No. of deputies 1993</th>
<th>Factions into which deputies switched (-)</th>
<th>Factions from which deputies switched (+)</th>
<th>No. of deputies 1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLD</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>PPS (-3)</td>
<td>PSL (+1)</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UP (-1)</td>
<td>UP (+1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSL</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>UW (-1)</td>
<td>SLD (-1)</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent (-3)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>UD</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>UW (-64)</td>
<td>KL (-8)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent (-2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>ND (-3)</td>
<td>SLD (+1)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SLD (-1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Seats</td>
<td>Members</td>
<td>New Parties and Factions Created During 1993-1997 Sejm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>KPN</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>AWS (-12)</td>
<td>UW --  UD (+64) 65</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBWR</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>AWS (-3)</td>
<td>AWS --  KPN (+12) 15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>MN</td>
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<td>MN 4 - - 4</td>
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New Parties and Factions Created During 1993-1997 Sejm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>New Parties and Factions Created During 1993-1997 Sejm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UW</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>UD (+64) 65</td>
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<td>PSL (+1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AWS</td>
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<td>KPN (+12) 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BBWR (+3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KL</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>UD (+8) 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP-SwW</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>BBWR (+3) 4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>KPN (+1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPS</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>SLD (+3) 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>UP (+3) 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Archiwum Danych o Poslach, II kadencja 1993-1997

Acronyms:
SLD – Democratic Left Alliance
PSL – Polish Peasant Party
Hungary 1994-1998

The 1994 elections

Ahead of the May 1994 parliamentary elections in Hungary, the former opposition parties were aligned in the following way: MDF, which had lost many members as well as popularity, retained its national-conservative profile; SZDSZ remained a liberal and pro-market party, but with a significant social liberal and social democratic wing; Fidesz remained a liberal party but had gradually started to move toward a more conservative position.

The graph comparing the overall policy positions of the parties based on their manifestos indicates that all three ex-opposition formations had moved further to the “right” of the political spectrum, with the MDF and the ex-communist MSZP close to each other in the “centre” position, while Fidesz and SZDSZ were quite far to the right (see Figure 5.3). But a narrower focus on the socio-cultural divide in Hungary, which was becoming the dominant cleavage in the country, indicates that the two liberal parties, SZDSZ and Fidesz, were close to the ex-communist MSZP on questions of culture and individual autonomy. The MDF, on the other hand, had far more in common with the revived “historical” parties on cultural issues, emphasizing national-populist or national-conservative views.399

In this case, however, the party manifestoes served to cover up other important factors that drew the SZDSZ and MSZP closer together, as will become evident in the next section on government coalition negotiations. For one, the MSZP had an influential, and at this stage ascendant, liberal wing with ideas and opinions on the economy that

399 See Kitschelt et al. Post-Communist Party Systems.
mirrored those of the SZDSZ. In addition, the two parties were thrown together in their opposition to the strident nationalist and xenophobic rhetoric of Csurka’s MIÉP.

Figure 5.3
Hungary 1994 – Party positions on Left-Right scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MDF</th>
<th>MSZP</th>
<th>Fidesz</th>
<th>SZDSZ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>22.70</td>
<td>28.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KDNP</td>
<td>-0.72</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.28</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FKgP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Klingemann et al. 2006

Figure 5.4
Hungary 1994 – Party positions on economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MSZP</th>
<th>Fidesz</th>
<th>FKgP</th>
<th>SZDSZ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>20.48</td>
<td>34.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
<td>-6.59</td>
<td>4.35</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Klingemann et al. 2006

The SZDSZ was well aware of its commonalities with the MSZP, and the new leadership under Iván Pető as well as the party’s designated candidate for prime minister, Gábor Kuncze, increasingly refused to rule out a coalition with the ex-communists.400 During internal discussions within the SZDSZ in 1993, the party’s leaders concluded that

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while Fidesz was a key strategic partner, a future coalition with MSZP might be necessary to keep the MDF and other rightist parties out of power.\textsuperscript{401}

At the same time, the SZDSZ also had a pre-electoral agreement with Fidesz and two other smaller liberal formations, which would see the parties support each other during second-round voting in the single-member constituencies. The pact between the four parties was meant to increase the possibility of a liberal coalition government after the 1994 elections. Fidesz, for its part, rejected any possibility of forming a coalition with the MSZP, as did the MDF. In fact, in January 1994 Fidesz suggested the three post-opposition parties join the KDNP in a grand coalition that would exclude both the post-communist MSZP and the internally divided FKGP. The idea was rejected by both the SZDSZ and MDF.\textsuperscript{402}

\textit{Government coalition talks}

The 1994 elections saw the MSZP score a major victory, coming within a hair’s breadth of 33 per cent of the party-list vote. Under the country’s mixed-member electoral system, this already strong result was magnified, and the party won an absolute majority of seats in parliament. The SZDSZ finished in second with just under 20 per cent of the vote, while the MDF took third place with a little less than 12 per cent. For Fidesz, which had been far and away the most popular party in the polls as recently as the previous year, the election was a fiasco; the party won only 7 per cent of the vote.

\textsuperscript{401}Pető, “Az MSZP-SZDSZ.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>% Party List Vote</th>
<th>Total Party List Seats</th>
<th>1st Round Single-Member (%)</th>
<th>2nd Round Single-Member (%)</th>
<th>Single-Member Seats</th>
<th>Total Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)</td>
<td>32.99</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31.27</td>
<td>45.16</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ)</td>
<td>19.74</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>18.62</td>
<td>28.51</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)</td>
<td>11.74</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12.03</td>
<td>14.93</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Smallholders’ Party (FKGP)</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>5.91</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP)</td>
<td>7.03</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ)</td>
<td>7.02</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.70</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers’ Party (MP)</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Köztársaság Part (KP)</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.36</td>
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<td>Agrarian Alliance (ASZ)</td>
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<td>2.45</td>
<td>0.34</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>1.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Smallholders Party (EKGP)</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberal Civil Alliance-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>0.80</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Entrepreneurs Party (LPSZ-VP) & 0.52 & - & 0.60 & - & - & - \\
National Democratic Alliance (NDSZ) & 0.16 & - & 0.09 & - & - & - \\
Hungarian Green Party (MZP) & - & - & 0.17 & 0.22 & 1 & 1 \\
ASZ-SZDSZ joint candidate & - & - & 0.12 & 0.18 & 1 & 1 \\
ASZ-FIDESZ-LPSZ-SZDSZ joint candidate & - & - & 0.09 & 0.13 & - & - \\
KP-SZDSZ joint candidate & - & - & 0.02 & - & - & - \\
FIDESZ-LPSZ & - & - & - & - & - & - \\


*Post-communist parties are indicated in red; post-opposition parties in blue.*

While the MSZP could have governed on its own, the party’s strategists had made it clear for some time that they wanted a coalition partner. For a party of ex-communists, a coalition with a post-opposition party would send a signal of reassurance and reconciliation to domestic and international observers who might be concerned at the return to power of the former communists.\(^{403}\) Immediately after the election, the MSZP turned to SZDSZ and sent indirect signals to Fidesz as well via the SZDSZ leadership.\(^{404}\) While Fidesz quickly rejected the coalition offer, the SZDSZ decided after a couple of days of internal debate to enter talks with the ex-communists.

The decision by SZDSZ leaders to accept the offer came despite the party’s pre-election warnings that such cooperation might not be possible if MSZP were to win a majority in parliament. In fact, there is evidence that immediately after the elections,


\(^{404}\) Pető, “Az MSZP-SZDSZ.” Earlier in the year, the MSZP had also suggested that it would be open to a coalition with the KDNP provided that the Christian Democratic party got rid of its “extremist tendencies.” Budapest Kossuth Radio Network, 16 May 1994, FBIS-EEU-94-095, 17 May 1994, p. 16.
some SZDSZ leaders were convinced that there would be no coalition with the ex-communist MSZP because of that party’s majority victory. In fact, as soon as it became clear that the MSZP had won an absolute majority in parliament, one leading SZDSZ politician reportedly purchased new patio furniture for his garden, “believing that it would be a peaceful summer.”

But the SZDSZ attitude quickly changed within days of the election following a sharp internal debate within this party founded by ex-dissidents. The party formally endorsed the idea of entering coalition talks with the MSZP by a vote of 562 to 187 at a party congress on 5 June.

The arguments for and against this move to cross the regime divide largely reflected both strategic and tactical considerations. Nevertheless, the significance of the regime divide, as shallow as it may have been in Hungary as compared to Poland, was never too distant from the considerations of SZDSZ members.

Proponents of the coalition presented a number of arguments in favour of crossing the regime divide. First, they pointed to indications at the time that much of the broader public’s perceptions of this divide had undergone a change. Those who backed the step within the SZDSZ could, and did, point to public opinion polls, which showed expectations among the public that a coalition government between the former liberal opposition and the former communist party would be formed as well as a public preference for a coalition over a single-party MSZP government. One week before the elections, 40 per cent of SZDSZ supporters and 80 per cent of MSZP voters expected such a coalition. After the election, public support for an SZDSZ-MSZP coalition grew even stronger. Miklós Haraszti, an ex-dissident from the Democratic Opposition and a founding SZDSZ member, confirms that the “public mood” was a crucial factor in the coalition decision. “The mood was measured,” he notes. “And the mood was that you

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405 Pető, “Az MSZP-SZDSZ.”
406 Pető, “Az MSZP-SZDSZ.”
408 Pető, “Az MSZP-SZDSZ.”
have to make [the coalition].” Otherwise, he adds, the SZDSZ would not be living up to the mandate it received from its voters, many of whom apparently expected the party to join the MSZP in a coalition that would replace the MDF-led rightist government.409

A second argument for joining the coalition held that the SZDSZ could serve as a kind of guarantor for a necessary set of legal and economic reforms facing the country. The country was facing a major fiscal and economic crisis. Years of borrowing on the foreign financial markets had taken its toll on the Hungarian balance of payments. The current account deficit had run to almost $4.3 billion, or 11 per cent of GDP, by the end of 1993. While economic growth was finally starting to pick up in 1994 after declining precipitously during the first years of the 1990s, it had still declined 0.6 per cent in 1993.410 The SZDSZ presented this crisis as a key reason for joining the coalition dominated by the MSZP. Despite their lack of government experience, the SZDSZ leaders portrayed themselves as experts who could help the MSZP make the right decisions in government. Gábor Fodor, a Fidesz founder who had joined the SZDSZ ahead of the 1994 elections, puts it this way:

“I saw, and the greatest part of the SZDSZ also saw, that the country is in great trouble. The Socialists won the elections and a Socialist government without the SZDSZ is an absolute disaster for the country because they won’t be able to solve the economic problems, they won’t be able to solve the social problems.”411

Nevertheless, even this statesman-like reasoning was inseparable from the regime divide. The SZDSZ leaders were in effect arguing that they had to cross the regime divide precisely because of the communist-era roots of the MSZP. With the country in the throes of a major fiscal crisis, the argument went, the support of foreign creditors and countries was absolutely essential. This in turn required a strong government with a lot of international credibility. And a majority post-communist MSZP government, no matter how well reformed, would have trouble supplying that key ingredient – or so the

409 Interview with Miklós Haraszti, 22 May 2006.
411 Interview with Gábor Fodor, May 2006.
argument of the SZDSZ went. “It was only four years after the change of the regime,” notes Fodor. “I knew what kind of message was going out to the foreign countries.” That message, by the estimation of Fodor and much of the SZDSZ leadership, was that the “old-fashioned communists” were “coming back.”

In this context, the SZDSZ argued that their participation in the MSZP-led coalition government was essential as a means both of reassuring foreign creditors and partners in the West and of ensuring that the MSZP itself would follow the “right” policies to stabilize the country.

The latter dimension of this argument reflected the widespread perception in the SZDSZ that there was a significant albeit embattled liberal wing within the MSZP. Certainly, various SZDSZ figures noted at the time that the MSZP as a whole had undergone a major reform process and had shed much of its communist-era baggage. SZDSZ representatives even stated unequivocally that the new MSZP could not be identified with its pre-1989 predecessor, the MSZMP.

Nevertheless, they were also wary of certain wings within the party that appeared to have been less than reformed, or whose history under Kádár made them seem suspicious in the eyes of the former anti-communist opposition leaders. There was also concern about the influence of Sándor Nagy, a trade union leader and MSZP member, on the party’s economic policies. Supporters of a deal with the MSZP stressed that a potential coalition hinged on whether the ex-communist party would fully back its finance critic, László Békesi, and his economic reform proposals, which emphasized balanced budgets, cuts in public spending and an acceleration of privatization. “He was on the same wavelength, economically speaking, as SZDSZ was,” notes the ex-dissident and founding SZDSZ member Miklós Haraszti. “Mr. Békesi was absolutely a liberal,” adds Fodor. “[Like] Mr. [Leszek] Balcerowicz in Poland. Békesi was absolutely the same. Sometimes he was more liberal than the SZDSZ,” says Fodor. Békesi himself tended to underscore the philosophical similarities between his party and the liberal

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412 Interview with Gábor Fodor, May 2006.
416 Interview with Miklós Haraszti, Vienna, 22 May 2006.
SZDSZ. Following the first round of the 1994 elections, he noted in reference to a post-election coalition between MSZP and SZDSZ:

“We need not make very great efforts for our parties to cooperate. […] The major features of our programs can be harmonized even if experts have disagreements on minor issues. However, these can be bridged. We have complete agreement on the essential issues, for example that etatism has to be eliminated: the ‘withdrawal of the state,’ or deregulation is one of the most important tasks.”

And it was not just Békesi. Other important members of the MSZP liberal wing at the time included Iván Vitányi and Judit Csehák. “At that time, the liberal persons in the MSZP were very influential,” adds Fodor. For its part, the liberal wing of the MSZP supported a coalition with the SZDSZ as a means of counter-balancing the influence of trade unions and other less than pro-market forces within their own party.

The MSZP acquiesced to the SZDSZ demands respecting Békesi and his program by tapping him to serve as finance minister. Later, as part of the governing coalition, the SZDSZ was able to push for the appointment of György Surányi, another liberal-minded economist, to the post of central bank governor. And even when Békesi was later compelled to resign his post as finance minister in January 1995, his replacement was Lajos Bokros, another liberal economist. Bokros was formally a member of the MSZP, but he had long cultivated close ties with the founders of the SZDSZ and had contributed to the Democratic Opposition’s samizdat journal Beszélő.

In this way, the SZDSZ was able to support the ascendancy of this pro-market liberal wing within the MSZP during the mid-1990s. This, in turn, brought the two parties very close together on economic issues. At the outset of the coalition in 1994, they shared a common overall approach to the economy with some differences over certain issues, such as the speed of privatization. Put together with their obvious programmatic

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418 Interview with Gábor Fodor, May 2006.
419 See, for instance, the interview with Békesi in Magyar Hírlap, 3 June 1994, p. 10, FBIS-EEU-94-109, 7 June 1994, p. 18.
420 Interview with Haraszi.
affinities on the socio-cultural dimension of competition, this meant that the SZDSZ and MSZP were close to each other on both central dimensions of competition in the Hungarian political space.

A third argument employed by supporters of the coalition within the SZDSZ was based on the party’s political prospects. By 1994, the founding members of the SZDSZ from the dissident Democratic Opposition movement had been playing an oppositional role for 24 years – four years in the post-communist era and 20 years as the anti-communist opposition – although there were obvious differences in the role across those two eras.422 Haraszti notes the party was being criticized as a group of “anti-political people who are not for real politics,” in an evident twist on the famed “anti-political” approach of many East-Central European dissidents in the communist era.423 Moreover, the party had also attracted a new cadre of members who joined after the change of the regime and had never been part of the anti-communist opposition. These new members, who were present in the party’s parliamentary caucus as well as in municipal politics, were pushing for a chance to serve as the governing party. Many of these members who were facing municipal elections later that year were concerned that the SZDSZ might be punished by voters if it went against the preferences of voters, as expressed in the public opinion polls, for a coalition of MSZP and SZDSZ.424 “They wanted to have a position, they wanted to lead the villages, the cities, they wanted to be part of the game,” says Haraszti.425

Moreover, the 1994 elections seemed in the eyes of many SZDSZ members like the best possible opportunity for the SZDSZ to move into government at the national level. The party had already failed to make it into government in 1990, when the wave of support for anti-communist opposition figures was strong, and now it had failed once again as a liberal opposition party. The prospects for a liberal majority in the 1998 elections seemed uncertain, and even unlikely.426 The pendulum had swung from national-populist conservatives to the Socialists between 1990 and 1994, and there was

422 Interview with Haraszti.
423 Ibid.
424 Ibid.
425 Ibid.
426 Pető, “Az MSZP-SZDSZ.”
no way to say for certain that it would not swing back to the national-populists by 1998. Many members of the leadership felt that the SZDSZ could join the coalition, and abandon it ahead of the next elections if it veered too far away from liberal policies or once the key economic and legislative reforms had been pushed through.  

This, it was believed, would secure the party’s liberal credentials while also demonstrating a certain willingness to work with other parties to achieve important reforms.

For their part, opponents of the coalition within the SZDSZ presented three central arguments against the move. First, they suggested that SZDSZ would be risking its popularity with the voters. The coalition government would have to implement unpopular measures to deal with the dire state of the economy. The MSZP was in a better position to distance itself from such measures as a “socialist” party and by arguing that the measures were “forced” on it by the liberal SZDSZ.

Second, opponents of the coalition stressed that any form of governmental cooperation with the former communists would damage the SZDSZ identity. This, it was argued, would undermine the party’s credibility as a potential dominant governing partner at some future election, condemning it to the status of a second-rung party destined to serve as a junior coalition partner.

Third, they also pointed out that the party would not be in a strong enough position to push through its will because of the small size of the SZDSZ caucus, the party’s lack of experience in government and the connections that the MSZP still enjoyed within the state because of its communist-era history. In other words, the deck was stacked against the SZDSZ since the MSZP had a majority in parliament and so would be able to steam-roll its program over any junior coalition partner.

In a sense, the last two arguments are related to the regime divide. A coalition with MSZP would damage the SZDSZ identity in part because that identity was based to a large extent on a principled liberal opposition to the previous regime. Likewise, the MSZP’s communist-era connections were obviously a reminder of the role many of its leading figures, including MSZP leader Gyula Horn, played in the previous regime.

427 Interviews with Haraszti and Fodor.
428 Pető, “Az MSZP-SZDSZ.”
429 Pető, “Az MSZP-SZDSZ.”
Many of the coalition’s opponents did have misgivings about working with a party that still featured so many former communist-era apparatchiks in its upper ranks.

Gabriella Beki, a key SZDSZ member, says she opposed the coalition in part because she believed the MSZP in 1994 was “still carrying the burdens of the previous regime,” primarily in terms of the people and networks that had been associated with the Kádár era. The Beki example is instructive because it highlights the fact that opponents to the coalition with MSZP came from both the left- and right-leaning wings of the SZDSZ. Beki, along with Imre Mecs, was a founder of the centre-left social-liberal faction within the party in the early 1990s. Although she opposed the coalition and still believed it to have been a mistake more than a decade later, she nevertheless acknowledges that the alliance with MSZP was ideologically closer to her own position than any other coalition would have been. And despite her opposition to the coalition, Beki did not leave the SZDSZ and remained an SZDSZ deputy in parliament (although she did leave the party’s executive body in October 1994). Describing herself as a “born liberal,” Beki says that as long as a social-liberal line continued to exist within the SZDSZ, she had no reason to leave. “What Fidesz represents in social politics is unacceptable,” she adds. In that sense, then, the MSZP was the closest ideological partner for her party in the Hungarian party system, and despite her misgivings about crossing the regime divide in 1994, these feelings were less important than finding a compatible ideological ally.

Another group within the SZDSZ that opposed the coalition did so for both historical and ideological reasons. Gyula Tellér, a representative of the social conservative wing of the SZDSZ, opposed what he describes as the “drift” of the party toward the post-communist MSZP as well as its espousal of “neo-liberal” politics. Tellér joined a group of SZDSZ members who supported the reinstatement of Péter Tőgyessy as leader of the party in 1994. Failing to achieve this goal and to stop the coalition with MSZP, Tellér and a number of his SZDSZ allies from the social conservative wing quit the party in the fall of 1994. Tellér eventually joined the

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430 Interview with Gabriella Beki, 23 May 2006.
431 Ibid.
433 Interview with Gyula Tellér, 6 June 2005.
434 Ibid.
increasingly conservative Fidesz. Tölgyessy, for his part, remained within the SZDSZ for another two years despite his initial vocal opposition to the MSZP coalition. Adopting what some have described as a position of “passive resistance,” Tölgyessy served as a backbencher until, in 1996, he left the SZDSZ as well. Like Tellér, Tölgyessy later joined Fidesz.

The choices made by Beki and Tellér underscore the relative weakness of the regime divide in Hungary and the importance of other socio-cultural and economic competitive dimensions. Beki, despite opposing the move to join the MSZP-led coalition, decided to stay in the SZDSZ in part because of her social-liberal beliefs. Tellér, in contrast, opposed the move in part on ideological grounds and left the SZDSZ to join Fidesz, a party with a program that was closer to his own political beliefs.

In that sense, the move by the SZDSZ forced activists within the party to reconsider their position in the political spectrum. The departure of Tölgyessy, Tellér and others between 1994 and 1996 effectively stripped the party of many of its conservative members as well as those members who believed that the party should have maintained an independent liberal position closer to Fidesz. Over the next four years, the party would assume a position on the political spectrum that was much closer to the MSZP and much further away from Fidesz and the conservative parties (see figures 6.3 and 6.4).

The SZDSZ membership declined from 35,018 in 1994 to 32,300 in 1997, and plummeted to 16,000 in 1999, after a bad showing in the 1998 elections. Nevertheless, the core of the SZDSZ, which included some of the most active ex-dissidents in the Democratic Opposition, remained loyal to the party, as did almost the entire caucus in parliament. In fact, Fodor suggests that the relative shallowness of the regime divide in Hungary was a factor that enabled the coalition between SZDSZ and MSZP, noting that the regime was not as harsh as in other countries and it contained some “real reform-

435 Interview with Beki.
437 It is difficult to determine how much of this decline in membership was due simply to the decision to join the coalition with MSZP. Nevertheless, a number of SZDSZ members interviewed for this study estimated the decline in membership that resulted from the coalition decision to have been even more precipitous than these numbers indicate. Those estimates range anecdotally from one-third to one-half of the SZDSZ membership. It may be that large numbers of SZDSZ members did abandon the party because of the coalition, and that this outflow was partially compensated by an inflow of new members drawn to the party after 1994 because of the coalition and its role in government.
thinking persons." This enabled the MSZP to overcome the basic lack of trust that many members of the SZDSZ, including Fodor, still harbored with respect to the ex-communists.

In the end, although the decision to form the coalition had been widely viewed as possible, perhaps even likely in some corners, it was still viewed as a “historical compromise” inside Hungary. Around the post-communist region, it became known as the “Hungarian compromise.” Its effect on the Hungarian political system was to be swift, profound and long-lasting.

Post-opposition liberals

The coalition talks between MSZP and SZDSZ wrapped up in June. The two parties endorsed a 144-page coalition agreement and created a coalition coordination or reconciliation council as a mechanism to resolve any issues that might arise between them. Under the agreement, the two parties agreed to take joint responsibility for the government and major decisions required the approval of both parties, giving the smaller SZDSZ caucus a significantly larger role than its sheer numbers in parliament would warrant.

The SZDSZ had three ministers in the coalition government—interior, transport and culture and education—while the MSZP had 11. Crucially, from the perspective of SZDSZ, the MSZP tapped Békesi to be minister of finance, suggesting a liberal approach to the economy in line with the SZDSZ platform.

Nevertheless, from the beginning, the SZDSZ adopted a cautious approach to the coalition. SZDSZ leaders reasoned that they needed a reserve strategy of breaking away from the coalition if and when the government became too unpopular or if the SZDSZ started to be cast in the role of a helpless junior member of the cabinet. Indeed, there were discussions within the SZDSZ on whether, and if so when, to abandon the

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438 Interview with Fodor.
439 Ibid.
442 Interview with Haraszti.
coalition. In the end, though, it remained loyal to the cabinet, but not without dissension.

The coalition government set itself a series of key tasks at the outset of its mandate. In addition to constitutional reform and changes to parliamentary procedure, the government aimed to conduct a budgetary review and an overhaul of the approach to privatization. It also aimed at securing a “social pact” between employers, unions and government to cover wages, social security, unemployment, taxes and social benefits for the full four-year term in office of the coalition.

As with any coalition, the MSZP and SZDSZ occasionally were at loggerheads over policy issues. Disputes ranged from disagreements sparked by the public pronouncements of one or another member of the coalition to more substantive policy disagreements. The SZDSZ, for its part, was often frustrated at the public policy musings of Prime Minister Horn. The SZDSZ also took to publicly declaring its policy differences with the Horn government. Iván Pető, the SZDSZ chairman who did not have a cabinet seat, generally acted as the critical voice of the SZDSZ in these public declarations, leaving the SZDSZ ministers to act with somewhat more loyalty to the government.

Pető would, for instance, make a declaration that his party disagrees with the MSZP’s approach on the media law. Those public declarations acted as a form of safety valve for the SZDSZ, a way that the party could announce its differences on a particular piece of legislation without having to actually leave the coalition. “We cannot take every issue to a political breakup,” noted Pető. Such disputes were also handled by the Coalition Coordination Council, which was meant to serve as a forum for representatives of the two parties to discuss current issues and head off any potential disputes.

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443 Interview with Miklós Haraszti, May 2006.
444 As early as August 1994, the coalition reconciliation council had to deal with differences over Horn’s announcement in a speech that he supported some form of property tax, a position that was immediately rejected by the SZDSZ. Népszabadság, 22 August 1994, pp. 1, 5, FBIS-EEU-94-163, 23 August 1994, p. 21; Kossuth Radio Network, 22 August 1994, FBIS-EEU-94-163, 23 August 1994, p. 22.
446 Ibid, p. 18.
MSZP members would "occasionally complain about excessive attempts by the SZDSZ to drive the government’s policy agenda in its own preferred direction rather than seeking a compromise."448

The coalition parties also saw some of their initiatives fall apart amid disagreements, including, for instance, their effort to bring in a new constitution by using a consensus-based approach with the opposition parties.

Nevertheless, despite these failures and the posturing of party elites, the two parties actually found common ground on the key policy issues, and as a result, the coalition hung together. Following one coalition crisis in the fall of 1995, Tamás Bauer of SZDSZ noted the similar policy preferences of the two parties as a key factor holding the coalition together: “Neither party could find a more suitable partner than the current one. For the foreign policy line […] the current parliament has no other partner for the SZDSZ. We also have similar views on economic stabilization, on the withdrawal of the state, continuing privatization, and on preparing Euroatlantic integration. All these provide a solid basis for the coalition.”449

Socio-cultural dimension

Soon after the election, the MSZP and SZDSZ appeared closely aligned on one of the key socio-cultural issues in Hungary – the Hungarian minorities living in neighboring countries. With the government’s foreign policy coordinated by both Foreign Minister László Kovács of MSZP, and István Szent-Iványi of the SZDSZ, who served as political state secretary at the ministry, the two parties both supported a platform aimed at improving relations with neighboring countries.450 This would be achieved in part through the signing of bilateral treaties with Romania and Slovakia that would recognize both the inviolability of borders and guarantees for the rights of national minorities.451

Indeed, aside from some differences in emphasis, the two parties were closely aligned on foreign policy.452

The approach to relations with Slovakia and Romania represented a turning away from the strident declarations of support for the Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries that had become a hallmark of the parties in the national-populist bloc, including MDF and increasingly Fidesz as well. The MSZP and SZDSZ approach to this issue sought to defend the rights of those minorities and achieve autonomy for them primarily through better relations with the governments of the neighboring countries.453

“We regard the issue of Hungarians living beyond our borders as very important, just like the previous government did,” noted Csaba Tabajdi, the political state secretary for minority affairs in Prime Minister Horn’s office. “But we want to use different methods in dealing with this issue, and we want to present this issue in a different way.”454 The MDF declared the coalition’s approach on this issue to be “extremely dangerous,” further clarifying the divide between the MDF on one side and the SZDSZ and MSZP on the other with respect to their policy stances on the ethnic Hungarian minorities.455 And when the Slovak-Hungarian basic treaty was set to be signed in March 1995, the MDF, Fidesz and KDNP leaders issued a joint statement calling on the government not to sign it. Accusing the government of giving up on Hungarian national interests, the opposition party leaders noted that the treaty did not contain a reference to the fact that the ethnic Hungarian minority in Slovakia was a “part of the Hungarian nation in a cultural sense.”456 The split between the former anti-communist opposition parties was confirmed during the parliamentary vote to ratify the treaty in June 1995: all of the SZDSZ deputies and all but one of the MSZP deputies voted in favour of ratification, while the Fidesz deputies abstained and the MDF deputies either abstained or voted against ratification.457

Similarly, when the Basic Treaty with Romania was concluded in September 1996, the

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452 One difference, for instance, was the MSZP’s support for a referendum on NATO membership. The SZDSZ was able to agree to this given the MSZP was not actually opposed to membership in the alliance. *Magyar Nemzet*, 13 October 1994, p. 11, FBIS-EEU-94-200, 17 October 1994, p. 15.


454 Ibid.

455 See, for example, the interview with the MDF’s György Csoti in *Uj Magyarország*, 28 October 1994, FBIS-EEU-94-211, 1 November 1994, 13-14.


457 All but one of the MSZP deputies voted in favour of the treaty, Kossuth Radio Network, 13 June 1995, FBIS-EEU-95-114, 14 June 1994, p. 11.
opposition was vociferous in its criticism. The public debates over the treaties revealed the deep split between the post-opposition parties on this key issue of central importance to the socio-cultural dimension of party competition in Hungary; the SZDSZ was clearly closer to the post-communist MSZP than it was to its erstwhile anti-communist opposition allies MDF and Fidesz.

_Economic-distributive dimension_

The positions of the coalition parties on economic issues were more complex, but once again the differences between the SZDSZ and MSZP on one side and the MDF and Fidesz on the other were clear. This difference was clear despite tensions between the SZDSZ and certain wings of the MSZP over fiscal policy.

While the SZDSZ was closely aligned with Finance Minister Békesi on the need for fiscal restraint, both found themselves in conflict with other ministers and wings of the MSZP, including the trade unions. The supplementary budget for 1994, for example, was less fiscally restrictive than the SZDSZ would have preferred and the privatization law was delayed by ongoing negotiations over its form. SZDSZ was also frustrated that the social pact talks with employers and employees were focused not only on wages, prices, taxes, pensions and welfare benefits, but also on privatization and exchange rate policy.

When Békesi resigned from his post as finance minister in January 1995, the SZDSZ publicly voiced “concern” over whether the government would stick to the Békesi economic program. Békesi noted it had become clear to him that there was “a rather wide difference between the prime minister’s ideas” on his own economic policy. In particular, he was concerned about the commitment of the prime minister to Békesi’s austerity plan, privatization and the authority of the finance minister over

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economic policy in general.462 This was all in the context of Hungary’s “spiraling debt” situation.463

The concerns over Békesi’s departure dissipated quickly after Lajos Bokros was tapped to replace him. The chairman and CEO of Budapest Bank since 1991, Bokros arrived at the Finance Ministry declaring that, “without institutional changes, we are facing either insolvency or endless economic depression.”464 The package included: civil service job cuts; a move away from universal social security payments and toward a narrower needs-based approach; and tax reforms that included reductions in corporate social security contributions of companies. Borkros also moved to privatize the oil, gas and electricity companies, as well as banks, agricultural businesses and manufacturers. Finally, within days of his arrival at the ministry the central bank, led by his friend György Surányi, devalued the forint by 9 per cent.465

The Bokros package had an impact on the internal cohesion of MSZP but not to the extent of breaking up the party. Some within the MSZP would have preferred to tackle the country’s fiscal and economic crisis with an approach aimed at increasing the demand side of the economy through stimulus spending rather than the austerity route adopted by Bokros.466 Even before the package was unveiled—but after Bokros had already given indications of the direction in which he wanted to go—Sándor Nagy, the trade union leader and MSZP parliamentarian, resigned from his post at the head of an internal party working group on economic issues.467 (Later, in 1996, he resigned from his post at the head of the Confederation of Trade Unions MZOSZ, but he never gave up his seat in parliament as an MSZP deputy.) Two cabinet members, Welfare Minister Pal Kovács and Minister for Civilian Secret Services Béla Katona, resigned from the government immediately after the Bokros package was announced. Still, neither resigned their seat in parliament at the time, nor did they leave the MSZP.468 Six MSZP deputies voted against the package in parliament, while two others abstained. Once again, though,

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465 “Hungarian Finance Minister Bokros Explains His Package,” Beyond Transition, 6 (5-6), May-June 1995.
none of them decided to leave the party. Later in the year, Labor Minister Maria Kosa Kovács resigned from her post in protest against the government’s sick-pay deal with employers.469

In light of the sweeping nature of the Bokros measures, this internal dissension within the MSZP was rather mild. Moreover, the unity of the MSZP-SZDSZ coalition indicated the two parties were in agreement on the measures.470 While it is true that the MSZP leadership framed the Bokros package as a “necessity” in the face of Hungary’s precarious debt situation,471 and therefore not as a policy the Socialists would have adopted in other circumstances, the fact that the MSZP and SZDSZ were both in agreement on the measures needed to confront the economic crisis was in effect another indication of policy alignment on the economy. In fact, Prime Minister Horn noted at the time that the package had had a “positive effect” on relations between the two parties.472

The coalition parties were even able to work together to craft a legislative response to the Constitutional Court’s rulings that some of the measures in the Bokros package were unconstitutional.

Unsurprisingly, the opposition lined up against the Bokros package and unanimously voted against it in May 1995. The joint criticism of Fidesz and KDNP was telling in this regard. Declaring that the measures could bring about “South American conditions” in Hungary and lead to a “dramatic decrease in the Hungarian population,” they declared that they would reinstate child-care benefits if they came to power.473

The governing coalition also passed a new privatization law aimed in part at achieving a “rational acceleration in reducing state-owned property” in 1995.474 While disagreements within the coalition contributed to a delay in the passage of the law,475 the two parties were able to come to an agreement on it within a year of the election.

The coalition even withstood the various political maneuvers of Prime Minister Horn, such as his effort to expand the size of the cabinet and install trade union leader Nagy into a newly created deputy prime ministerial post for coordinating economic

470 Budapest MTV Television Network
policy. The SZDSZ opposed the move in part out of concern that it would undermine the authority of Bokros and endanger his reforms, and in part out of disagreement with Nagy’s left-leaning approach to the economy.\textsuperscript{476} In the end though, Horn was compelled by the opposition of the SZDSZ and some groups within the MSZP to back down from the move.\textsuperscript{477}

\textit{Decommunization dimension}

The decommunization dimension of competition saw some tension rise between the two governing parties. In the end, though, parliament passed a revised lustration law in July 1996 that introduced a new, milder screening process, reducing the number of persons to be screened from several thousand to a mere 600. Under the new law, only public officials who were required to take an oath before parliament or the president would be screened. The screening process was to ascertain if the officials had served as officers or informers for the former internal counterintelligence III/III division or its predecessors.\textsuperscript{478} A sunset clause was also inserted in the law to have it expire in the year 2000. Although discussions over the law led to some jockeying between the two parties, a resolution was eventually found. To be sure, a group of SZDSZ parliamentarians did file a challenge against the new law with the Constitutional Court in September, calling on it to examine whether the law should be broadened beyond just the III/III to apply to all of Hungary’s former communist-era secret services.\textsuperscript{479} But the differences between the SZDSZ and MSZP over the lustration law were evidently not strong enough to spark a break-up of the coalition or even a major split within the parties.

\textit{Crisis management issues}

The MSZP-SZDSZ coalition also weathered a number of crises over the course of their mandate, none bigger than the so-called Tocsik scandal. In 1996, it came to light that the State Privatization and Property Funds agency had paid out more than 800 million Forints


\textsuperscript{479} Szilágyi, “Country Update.”
to a lawyer named Marta Tocsik to help settle some property issues involving the local level of government. The enormous sum led to suspicions that kickbacks for both governing parties had been involved and the resulting scandal led to the resignation of Tamás Suchman, the minister responsible for privatization, as well as the heads of the privatization agency.\textsuperscript{480}

In response to the scandal and the involvement of their own party, a small number of SZDSZ parliamentarians who had been active in the Democratic Opposition resigned their seats in protest. The party’s leader, Iván Pető, also stepped down from his position, and was replaced by Interior Minister Gábor Kuncze.\textsuperscript{481} While this proved to be a blow to the SZDSZ, the number of parliamentarians who resigned was small, and the coalition with the MSZP remained in place. There was no mass exodus of deputies from the party and no attempt to create a new party. In a sense, there was nowhere for SZDSZ parliamentary deputies to go. Their only ally in policy preferences was the MSZP and there was no space to create a new party between the consolidating conservative bloc of opposition parties and the social-liberal MSZP-led government.

\textit{Post-opposition conservatives}

Rather than eliminate the regime divide or reduce its relevance, the decision of the post-opposition SZDSZ to join the ex-communist MSZP in a coalition actually served to accentuate the divide with a new dimension of significance.\textsuperscript{482} Now the remaining ex-opposition parties that had not crossed the divide (Fidesz and the MDF) could enhance their anti-communist credentials. Not only could they trace their origins to the anti-communist opposition from before 1989, but they had also refused to compromise with the newly reformed ex-communist party.

The two post-opposition parties framed the MSZP-SZDSZ coalition government as a “return” to the “old system.”\textsuperscript{483} The former dissidents in the SZDSZ, according to the narrative of MDF and Fidesz, had simply returned to their roots as socialists, Trotskyites


\textsuperscript{481} Ibid.


and reform communists. This was a reference to the past of several SZDSZ founders as members of the MSZMP or proponents of the New Left tendencies of the 1960s.484

Fidesz, in particular, made use of this new dimension of competition. The departure of SZDSZ across the regime divide and Fidesz’s refusal to follow suit served to restructure the competitive dimensions of the Hungarian political scene. The self-described liberal parties of the political spectrum—consisting up until that time of SZDSZ and Fidesz—were now separated by the regime divide. Shortly after the election, Fidesz leader Viktor Orbán himself declared that “on the basis of the voters’ judgment” the idea of creating a “liberal-centre” bloc involving SZDSZ, Fidesz and other smaller liberal formations had proven “unsuccessful.”485 Instead, the line dividing the left from the right in Hungarian politics now separated the SZDSZ and Fidesz, as did the regime divide. Orbán’s rhetoric clearly made use of the regime divide: “Since 1989, every party had five years at its disposal to find itself and formulate its values. The time of truth arrived on May 29, 1994. The SZDSZ crossed the Rubicon of the change in the regime. Voluntarily, and, according to the parliament’s mathematical logic, uselessly, the SZDSZ joined a postcommunist government.”486

Meanwhile, the right side of the spectrum, consisting of the national-populist and national Christian segments of the party system, was in disarray. The governing coalition of the MDF, KDNP, and FKgP had lost the election, and all of them had been racked by internal disputes. Compared to the cohesive parties of the new social-liberal governing coalition, the opposition ranks appeared quite fragmented.

Nevertheless, despite their ongoing internal disputes, the opposition parties were making moves toward greater cooperation soon after the elections. There were talks among the MDF, KDNP and Fidesz (and even FKGP) over cooperation in the local elections of December 1994.487 There was even talk of forging a union of MDF, KDNP and Fidesz in the long run.488 The MDF’s Péter Boross declared that the country was headed toward a “bipolar system” with the MDF, Fidesz and KDNP on one side and the

484 Interview with László Kövér 2006; interview with Zsolt Németh, 2006.
SZDSZ and MSZP on the other.\textsuperscript{489} Periodically, there were also reports in the media of rumoured talks between the KDNP and the Socialists about joining forces—a move that would have seen the MSZP abandon its coalition with the SZDSZ in favour of a new one with the KDNP. Nothing came of this, and the KDNP leadership tended to deny such rumours.\textsuperscript{490} Instead, the gulf between the opposition parties and the MSZP-SZDSZ coalition deepened.

Fidesz, for its part, would now focus on reconstructing a new opposition alternative to the socialist-liberal coalition government by grouping together the disparate shards of the former national-populist and conservative parties. Fidesz’s new strategy consisted of repositioning the party within the national-conservative segment of the political spectrum, a place once occupied by MDF and its allies in the first coalition government. After 1994, Orbán began to call for a re-organization of party politics in Hungary around “two major forces” featuring a centre-right and a centre-left.\textsuperscript{491} Fidesz had already been moving increasingly in a national conservative direction since late 1992 or early 1993. Moreover, the party had remained radically critical of communism and the legacy of the previous regime, and had remained distant and even hostile toward the reformed ex-communist MSZP.\textsuperscript{492} At the same time, however, Fidesz had held open the possibility of a liberal coalition with the SZDSZ. By 1994, MDF leader Lajos Für described Fidesz as “a liberal party that has very strong national affiliations, which can in many respects be compared to the stance of the KDNP and the MDF.”\textsuperscript{493} The 1994 elections and the establishment of the SZDSZ-MSZP coalition put the final nail in the coffin of a “liberal bloc” in Hungarian politics.

Instead, the conservative elements of the Fidesz approach would now be enhanced. Fidesz leaders increasingly used the word \textit{polgári}, which can be loosely translated as “civic,” to describe the kind of government they advocated.\textsuperscript{494} Over the course of the mid-1990s Fidesz leaders and intellectuals close to the party developed a

\textsuperscript{491} \textit{Magyar Hírlap}, 26 October 1995, p. 6, FBIS-EEU-95-213, 3 November 1995, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{494} For an analysis of this Fidesz idea, see Brigid Fowler, “Concentrated Orange: Fidesz and the Re-making of the Hungarian Centre-Right,” in Aleks Szczepaniak and Seán Hanley, eds., \textit{Centre-Right Parties in Post-communist East-Central Europe}. (Routledge: New York, 2006), 80-114.
party program that espoused social conservatism, support for the middle-class and small business, welfare programs primarily targeted at young families, a rigorous defense of national interests, especially with regard to ethnic Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries, and a strident form of anti-communism, which was targeted both at legacies of the old regime in Hungarian society, as well as at the MSZP-SZDSZ coalition. Fidesz re-defined its earlier liberalism, with Orbán describing it in 1995 as a “broad-minded liberalism” representing “the conservative approach to the individual, the liberal tradition that respects and supports the collective” or a kind of “modern liberal politics, based on Hungarian traditions.” The party was clearly moving strongly toward a national conservatism. By contrast, Orbán described the SZDSZ as a party of “leftist liberalism, the social-liberal direction.”

Some aspects of Fidesz’s new policy program, such as the party’s anti-communism, were not new. But with their erstwhile liberal allies now in a coalition with the ex-communist MSZP, Fidesz’s stance on the issue gained a new dimension.

In any case, the various new and old elements of Fidesz’s program were packaged under the “civic” heading. Essentially, though, the change represented a rejection of many of the party’s earlier pro-market and socially liberal policies, and the adoption of an increasingly socially conservative and Christian-national position. In April 1995, the party formally altered its name to Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party to reflect its changing ideological position.

Cooperation among the opposition parties began in the campaigns for the local elections in late 1994. Fidesz cut a deal with the MDF and the KDNP to run several joint local candidates. The three-party coalition’s success in those elections prompted discussions about further cooperation, with Orbán suggesting that they form a common “Civic Alliance.” Fidesz was not the only party in the opposition that was attempting to draw together an alliance of national conservative parties. The more radically populist Independent Smallholders party (FKGP), led by the erratic József Torgyán, also wanted

495 See, for example, the interview with Viktor Orbán in Magyar Nemzet, 14 March 1995, pp. 1, 5, FBIS-EEU-95-088, 8 May 1995, 9-13. Orbán here discusses the importance of a commitment to the nation, of Hungarian culture, of family bonds. He likewise decries the fact that the “Left in parliament” tends to mock such commitments and describes the governing SZDSZ-MSZP coalition as leftist.
496 Ibid.
497 For a different analysis see Fowler, Concentrated Orange.
to play the hegemonic role on the right. Torgyán dismissed the Fidesz project as a “liberal alliance that calls itself a civic alliance,” and the FKGP launched its own effort to unite the national-conservative opposition parties in a National Alliance.\footnote{Népszabadság, 11 July 1995, p. 9, FBIS-EEU-95-135, 14 July 1995, 13-15.} Between them Fidesz and FKGP split and consolidated the other rightist parties into moderate and radical blocs.

In 1995, Fidesz, MDF and KDNP jointly backed the presidential bid of Ferenc Mádl, a former education minister in József Antall’s government.\footnote{MTC Television Network, 15 June 1995, FBIS-EEU-95-116, 16 June 1995, p. 5.} While the incumbent Árpád Göncz was re-elected with the backing of the MSZP and SZDSZ, the fact that the MDF and Fidesz (as well as the KDNP) agreed to support a common candidate further underscored the coalescence of the emerging post-opposition conservative bloc.

The task of realigning the opposition was eased by the turmoil within the two remaining parties in the group, the MDF and the Christian Democrats. The split in the MDF once again reflected personality conflicts, but could also be interpreted as the final division of the remaining national-liberal supporters of Antall from the remnants of the national-populist founders of the party. This divide was in evidence during a vote on the leadership in September 1994. While Lajos Für was re-elected MDF leader, he won by only 35 votes over former Finance Minister Iván Szabó, who was seen as a more “liberal” candidate.\footnote{MTV Television Network, 11 September 1994, FBIS-EEU-94-177, 13 September 1994, p. 16.} Less than two years later, in March 1996, a group led by Iván Szabó, would break from the MDF to form the Democratic People’s Party, while the poet and populist Sándor Lezsák assumed the leadership of the MDF. The Szabó group fashioned itself as a national-liberal formation continuing the legacy of Antall, and initially it was closer to Fidesz than the MDF under Lezsák. But the new formation failed to make headway in the public consciousness and found itself mired at around 1 per cent in the polls throughout its existence.\footnote{Interview with Géza Jeszenszky, June 2005.}

Later that year, Fidesz signaled another step in its steady move toward the national-conservative right by engaging in talks with Lezsák’s MDF that eventually led to the signing of an electoral alliance in 1997. During the same year, the Christian Democrats imploded in the midst of heated internal disputes. While one radical faction

decided to form a new party, the moderate Christian-conservative leaders of the KDNP joined Fidesz. Similarly, a group of Smallholders, who had bolted from their own party in protest at Torgyán’s leadership of their party had also joined Fidesz.

Fidesz’s success in drawing much of the centre-right spectrum into an alliance reflected the widespread and much-discussed understanding among the parties in the opposition that only a united front would be capable of defeating the MSZP-SZDSZ governing coalition in the next elections. Orbán himself publicly acknowledged the electoral strength of the SZDSZ-MSZP alliance and stressed that this was why Fidesz needed to cooperate with the MDF and other “Christian democratic” forces ahead of the election.502 This discussion, in turn, accentuates the idea that the SZDSZ was now viewed by all parties in the opposition, including Fidesz, as irrevocably untouchable in terms of future electoral alliances. This understanding was given an ideological spin by all parties in the opposition. The goal, as presented to the public, was to remove the ex-communists and their social liberal allies from power.

But the fact that the opposition alliance took the form of a Fidesz-led initiative reflects to a certain extent that party’s rejuvenation in the polls. After winning only 7.02 of the popular vote percent in the 1994 elections, Fidesz had gradually recovered in the polls to outpace the Independent Smallholders as the leading opposition party by 1996. While Fidesz benefited to some extent from the weakness and disarray among the ranks of the MDF and KDNP, the consolidation of the conservative opposition around Fidesz would probably not have proved possible had the party not repositioned itself ideologically. By the mid-1990s, Fidesz had refashioned its program in such a way as to bring it closer to the earlier positions of the MDF, KDNP and even part of the Smallholders. This is not to say that Fidesz’s transformation took place overnight or that it was a simple affair. Indeed, as late as 1997, the party was still viewed in parts of the media and among some in the Christian-conservative parties as significantly more “liberal” than the MDF on a range of social questions, with some suggesting the alliance between Fidesz and the MDF was more a “marriage of convenience” than a coalition of like-minded parties.503 Such remaining doubts in the media and among Fidesz’s new

partners on the right reflect the difficulties Fidesz faced in reinventing itself. To that end, not only did Fidesz leaders work on altering the party’s program, but they also engaged in crucial confidence-building measures with the other parties in that part of the spectrum.\footnote{Fowler, “Concentrated Orange, p. 106.} Between 1994 and 1998, Fidesz and other parties in the Christian-conservative camp developed groups of intellectual societies in which activists and intellectuals close to the parties discussed ideological and political issues.\footnote{Ibid.} These measures contributed to the development of common understandings among members of Fidesz, MDF, and the Christian Democratic Alliance (which had emerged out of splits in the Christian Democratic camp). Fidesz’s leading position in the polls increasingly enabled it to steer the new alliance among the conservative parties and to frame those common understandings with a new “civic” ideology. At the same time, Fidesz embraced common cause with the other conservative opposition parties on crucial “national” questions of the right. In 1997, for instance, Fidesz joined an MDF initiative calling for a referendum on the coalition government’s proposed new land law that would have enabled foreigners to acquire land in Hungary.\footnote{Gabriella Ilonszki and Sándor Kurtán, “Hungary,” \textit{European Journal of Political Research}, 34, 1998, p. 417.} These and other similar instances solidified Fidesz’s legitimacy as a champion on the national conservative side of the political spectrum.

\textit{Party switching}

Following the model outlined in chapter 4, an examination of party switching in the 1994-1998 electoral term should reveal more stability and less party switching among the post-opposition parties than in the 1990-1994 period. This is because the incidence of switching should decrease once the post-opposition liberals decide to cross the regime divide and join the post-communist party on the basis of policy preferences as the SZDSZ did in 1994. Unlike in Poland, Hungary’s post-opposition liberals and conservatives were not forced by a deep regime divide to enter into awkward, ideologically heterogeneous coalitions with each other. The model indicates that this should facilitate coalescence of the post-opposition liberal and conservative parties. The creation of separate conservative
and liberal-socialist blocs in parliament should enable the consolidation of programmatically clear and cohesive parties.

The 1994-1998 parliament saw 23 deputies from post-opposition parties switch parties or move to sit as an independent. The predominant bulk of this total resulted from the disintegration of the MDF, as the party split into Sándor Lezsák’s MDF and Iván Szabó’s Hungarian Democratic People’s Party (MDNP). The turmoil within the MDF was in part connected to the process of a reorganization of the conservative side of the political spectrum, which ultimately led to an electoral alliance between MDF and Fidesz. The rest of the party switching involved only four deputies leaving the SZDSZ, a remarkable degree of stability given that the post-opposition and one-time strongly anti-communist party had crossed the regime divide to join a coalition with its erstwhile enemies in the post-communist MSZP. The low incidence of switching underscores the fact that the SZDSZ and MSZP actually shared a number of key policy preferences and were further united in their stance against many of the policies espoused by the post-opposition conservatives in the MDF and the reinvented Fidesz.

Indeed, the stability of the 1994-1998 parliament marks a contrast with the party switching that took place in the previous 1990-1994 parliament, further underscoring the clarity brought to the party system with the SZDSZ decision to put its current policy preferences ahead of its historical anti-communism and cross the regime divide.

Other explanations

Alternative explanations have been offered for the increasing consolidation and stability of the Hungarian political party system from the mid-1990s onward. Some scholars have suggested that the country’s rather complex mixed member system of electoral rules contributed to the stability of the party system and to its consolidation around two blocs. While mixed systems tend to promote multipartyism, the argument in the case of Hungary is that the linkages between the single member district and proportional representation components of the system, along with the two-round runoff in the former
component, have encouraged a consolidation of electoral competition around two main parties.\textsuperscript{507}

Certainly, the specific incentives of the Hungarian electoral system are likely to have had some impact on the strategic choices of parties over time. Nevertheless, as in the Polish situation discussed in Chapter 3, the electoral rules of the game in Hungary resulted from the bargaining and preferences of the parties that were involved in the transition negotiations. The key parties involved will be familiar by now – along with the communist party itself, they included the MDF, SZDSZ and Fidesz. In that sense, the electoral rules were, as in the Polish case, to some extent at least, a reflection of the power dynamics and nascent party structures that already existed before the rules were adopted. Recent studies of the impact of electoral rules on party systems have emphasized the importance of the political, social, and economic contexts of the countries within which the rules exist, and how those contexts shape the linkage between the electoral rules and outcomes.\textsuperscript{508} In the case of post-communist transitions, a number of scholars have pointed to the weak initial impact of institutions on the behaviour of political parties in post-communist countries, in part due to the fact that political actors and voters are unfamiliar with the incentives embedded in those institutions.\textsuperscript{509}

It was in this early phase of party competition that the SZDSZ made its momentous decision to cross the regime divide and join the MSZP in a coalition government. Prior to that decision in 1994, and right up to the 1994 elections, the SZDSZ had been working with its fellow post-opposition party Fidesz, having even set up an agreement with that party for the 1994 vote. But, as we have seen, the SZDSZ actually shared many policy preferences with the post-communist MSZP. After the 1994 elections, given the shallow regime divide, the SZDSZ was able to follow those preferences and work with the MSZP.

But once the SZDSZ had crossed the divide, it could not go back. The move by SZDSZ gave Fidesz the space to pursue a change in its identity that would eventually


enable it to become the dominant force on the conservative side of the spectrum, further deepening the policy divides between the erstwhile anti-communist opposition partners. It also had the effect of enabling the SZDSZ and Fidesz to further solidify their organizational cohesion. In that sense, the unbridgeable chasm that opened up between the SZDSZ and Fidesz after 1994 resulted from the competitive dimensions of politics in Hungary and the nature of the regime divide, rather than from the electoral rules. The electoral rules may have solidified cooperation within Hungary’s existing two dominant blocs after the mid-1990s, but it did not create those blocs. Even under the incentives created by Hungary’s electoral system, it is difficult to imagine the SZDSZ, Fidesz and the other conservative parties working together in a coalition. The policy differences between them were too substantial.

To be sure, there were also changes to the Standing Orders of parliament in 1994 designed to reduce the incidence of party switching. The new rules made it even more difficult to form official party factions in the legislature. Under them, members of parliament from the same party would only be permitted to form one official faction in parliament, and MPs could only be a member of one faction. These changes were aimed at preventing the proliferation of party factions that had characterized the previous parliament. Another change barred independent parliamentarians from forming factions, reserving that right to political parties only. Finally, the new Standing Orders adopted in 1994 raised the minimum number of members required to gain official status as a party faction in parliament from 10 to 15.510

While these rule changes were certainly aimed at reducing the incidence of party switching and party splitting that had marked the 1990-1994 parliament, they can hardly be used to explain the lower incidence of party switching that marked the 1994-1998 parliament, and in particular the relative stability of SZDSZ and Fidesz. While the latter two parties saw only isolated instances of switching, the rules did not prevent the disintegration of the KDNP and MDF parties during the 1994-1998 term. One would have expected the rules to have the same impact across all parties. Instead, the dynamic is better explained by the new role the regime divide was playing in party politics. Once the

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SZDSZ had crossed that divide to join the MSZP in a coalition, it not only became untouchable for the other post-opposition parties, it also could not return back across the divide. Moreover, the departure of the post-opposition liberal SZDSZ brought clarity to the alignment of the political party system around the key dimensions of competition – the decommunization, socio-cultural and economic dimensions. Now the parties closest to each other on these competitive dimensions could align themselves together without concerning themselves with the regime divide. The move of the SZDSZ had effectively brought the regime divide in line with the other competitive dimensions.

Finally, the disintegration of the MDF and KDNP was also part of the consolidation of the conservative forces around Fidesz. United by a common set of national conservative policy preferences – particularly after Fidesz had reinvented itself – they were joining together to mount a stronger challenge against the post-communists and their SZDSZ allies. In that sense, the patterns of party switching that marked the 1994-1998 parliament were more a result of the change in the competitive dynamics of the post-opposition parties than a result of changes to the Standing Orders of parliament.

Table 5.4

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Party factions</th>
<th>No. of deputies 1994</th>
<th>Factions into which deputies switched (-)</th>
<th>Factions from which deputies switched (+)</th>
<th>No. of deputies 1998</th>
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<tr>
<td>MSZP</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>Independent (-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>204*</td>
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<tr>
<td>SZDSZ</td>
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<td>Independent (-4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>65*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Neppart-MDF (-15)</td>
<td>KDNP (+1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fidesz (-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent (-3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Party</td>
<td>Seats</td>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Seats</td>
<td>Change</td>
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<td>-------</td>
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<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FKGP</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Independent (-4)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KDNP</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Fidesz (-11)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>MDF (-1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Independent</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(-10)**</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fidesz</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>KDNP (+11)</td>
<td>32*</td>
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<td>KDNP (+10)</td>
<td>23</td>
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**New Parties and Factions Created During 1994-1998 Parliament**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Change</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Neppart-MDNP</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>MDF (+15)</td>
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<tr>
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* These figures reflect changes in the size of parliamentary factions that did not involve switching, such as cases where deputies resigned their seats or passed away while in office. They also reflect the results of by-elections for single-member constituencies.

** KDNP members who did not abandon the party after it fell apart but were forced to sit as independents since they no longer had the minimum 15 members necessary to form a faction.

**Conclusions**

The 1993-1997 parliamentary term in Poland and the equivalent 1994-1998 term in Hungary both brought to the fore the problem of coalescence. In each case, though, the context was different. In Poland, the post-Solidarity liberals and conservatives found themselves in the opposition ranks together, following the decision of the former to avoid crossing the regime divide and forego a potential role in government with the post-communist SLD. The regime divide was too deep in Poland to enable the post-Solidarity liberals to take advantage of their evidently shared policy preferences with the SLD and join them in a coalition. On the other hand, the significant differences in policy preferences between the post-Solidarity liberals and conservatives prevented them from mounting a common movement or party against the post-communist SLD. Instead, they
coalesced around separate liberal and conservative formations, the UW and the AWS, respectively.

In Hungary, the decision of the post-opposition liberal SZDSZ to cross the regime divide and join the post-communist MSZP reflected a common set of policy preferences between the two parties. Moreover, the regime divide was shallow enough for the SZDSZ to cross and take advantage of those common policy goals with the MSZP. The remaining post-opposition parties, the MDF and Fidesz, were then faced with an opportunity to coalesce around a common conservative platform. This was facilitated by a shift in Fidesz away from liberalism and toward a more national conservative platform. In that sense, the shallow regime divide gave Fidesz an opening to make a strategic decision to forge an alliance with the other post-opposition conservatives.

In both the Polish and Hungarian cases, coalescence took place while parties were in opposition and without the burden of actually having to govern. The key difference was that in Hungary, the regime divide was no longer forcing post-opposition liberals and conservatives to work together. In Poland, the newly created liberal UW and conservative AWS were still very much on the same side of the regime divide and yet quite distant from each other on some of the key policy dimensions. They would soon discover how hard it would be to hold their parties together once they were forced to govern together.
The previous chapter examined how the historical regime divide between the post-opposition and post-communist parties was breached in Hungary but remained a seemingly impassable chasm in Poland. The difference, as noted in Chapter 2, could be traced back to the events of the “late communism” period of the 1970s and 1980s in each country, as well as in the relationship between the opposition movements and the regime during that period.

This chapter will examine how the differences in the regime divide in each country and the reactions of post-opposition parties to it structured political party competition in each country and affected the cohesion of the post-opposition parties. As long as the post-communist parties in each country remained strong, the historical regime divide would play a role in politics. In Hungary, the decision of the post-opposition SZDSZ to cross the regime and govern with the post-communist MSZP in 1994 contributed to a realignment of the Hungarian political party system along more clearly defined policy dimensions of competition. In Poland, the decision by the post-opposition UD to turn down a coalition offer from the post-communist SLD in 1993 would maintain the distorting impact of the regime divide on policy-based competition in the years that followed. This chapter will examine how these two dynamics played out in Hungary and Poland through the 1990s and into the 2000s.

While those dynamics were to dominate the politics of Budapest and Warsaw for several years, a dramatic shift altered the political landscape in both countries during the first decade of the new millennium. The political dynamics established in Poland in the early 1990s were dependent on the post-communist party remaining a powerful contender for power. Without a strong post-communist party, the regime divide would be a less significant divider of the political spectrum as more space became open for other combinations of parties to form majority coalitions. If the post-communist party were to see its popularity seriously eroded or disintegrate, the electoral stakes would be radically altered.

This turn of events was to occur in both Hungary and Poland in the 2000s bringing the trajectory of the two countries closer into line. In Hungary, however, this not
a significant change in terms of the cohesiveness of the dominant post-opposition party Fidesz, since that party had benefited from the political space to establish itself following the SZDSZ’s game-changing move to cross the regime divide in 1994. In Poland, however, the collapse of the post-communist SLD in the 2000s, enabled the country’s fractious post-Solidarity liberal and conservative wings to finally develop separately and without the need to undermine their internal cohesion by forming divisive, ideologically disparate coalitions. The long sought-for stability had finally come to the post-Solidarity parties only after the regime divide was rendered irrelevant for coalition purposes by the implosion of the post-communist SLD.

For years, scholars had endeavoured to explain the fractiousness of the post-Solidarity parties by referencing the country’s electoral institutions, the lack of a coherent elite and close-knit elite leadership, the actions of individual politicians, various historical factors or the institutional structure of the post-Solidarity parties themselves. Likewise, scholars had used various institutional characteristics, elite leadership factors or historical arguments to explain the relative stability of Hungary’s post-opposition parties from the mid-1990s onward. What was overlooked was how the regime divide and the coalition choices it forced on (or made available to) post-opposition politicians had affected the internal cohesion of their parties. The shift in the regime divide variable that occurred in Poland in the 2000s effectively enabled the most significant remaining post-Solidarity parties to resolve many of the internal tensions that had racked their predecessors.

Poland – 1997-2001

The 1997 parliamentary elections

The 1997 election campaign took place under the shadow of the regime divide. The AWS and UW ran campaigns that emphasized the roots of the parties in the anti-communist opposition and the original Solidarity movement. The AWS adopted a socially conservative stance, presenting itself as a defender of Christian values and Polish traditions, and came out strictly in favour of restricting abortion. It also called for a “break with the past” and suggested that it was time to “finish the revolution.”

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contrast to its relatively clear stance on such socio-cultural issues, the AWS coalition tended to downplay economic issues, which were a source of internal division for the numerous groups within the coalition. The AWS economic platform contained a mish-mash of proposals, including a raft of state support and credits for various sectors and a pledge to reduce the tax burden. The ROP campaigned on broadly similar grounds as AWS, although the party actually strove to mute its anti-communist radicals somewhat during the course of the campaign in an apparent effort to broaden its appeal.

The UW, which found itself programmatically balanced between the post-opposition and post-communist camps, made a clear effort to align itself with the post-opposition camp well in advance of the elections. As early as January 1997, some nine months before the election, UW leader Balcerowicz had made it clear that the party’s preference was for groups from the “post-August” camp to replace the SLD-PSL coalition government. In the candidate selection process, a number of the UW’s left-leaning candidates, some of whom had suggested the need for a rapprochement with the SLD, did not receive good positions on the party’s electoral lists. During the election campaign, the UW also adopted a strategy of seeking out support from people who had an “anti-communist outlook” and who were uncomfortable with the SLD. As the election approached, leading UW officials insisted that they were not intending to pursue a coalition with the SLD.

The SLD, for its part, continued to view the UW as a potential coalition partner after the elections, in part because of the common effort of the two parties in support of the new constitution. The post-communist formation ran a campaign that appealed broadly to many different social groups and emphasize the SLD’s secular and moderate character. In contrast, the SLD attempted to characterize the more socially conservative post-Solidarity parties as promoters of Church interference in politics, socio-economic division and “an endless war at the top.”

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518 See comments by the UW’s Olga Krzyzanowska, PAP, 8 September 1997, FBIS-EEU-97-251.
The UW pursued a strategy of maintaining its self-avowed “centrist” political image while at the same time attempting to position itself as part of the “post-Solidarity” bloc (and therefore as a partner for the AWS and an opponent of the SLD), despite the evident programmatic similarities it continued to share with the SLD. As a social-liberal party, the UW found itself closer to the SLD (and the leftist UP) on socio-cultural questions than it was to the more conservative AWS (see Figure 6.1). On economic questions, the UW did appear closer to the AWS than to the SLD, but the results of a content analysis of party manifestos in Figure 6.2 shows the UW, AWS, ROP and SLD closely grouped together on the pro-market side of this competitive dimension. Indeed, only the small UP placed itself firmly on the interventionist side of the economic dimension of competition in 1997. In that sense, with relatively little space between the AWS and SLD positions on economic policy questions, both parties represented potential policy-based coalition partners for the UW. On the other hand, if a more traditional left-right scale is used to represent a broad swathe of issues, as depicted in Figure 6.3, the post-communist SLD actually appears between the post-Solidarity formations of AWS and UW. On this scale, virtually any minimum connected winning coalition would have required either the UW or the AWS to cross the regime divide, or the AWS to enter a coalition with the peasant-based PSL (a move tantamount to crossing the regime divide for many AWS members, who could not forget the PSL’s roots in the communist satellite party ZSL). Nevertheless, as indicated in the discussion of party pre-election strategies above, both the AWS and the UW leaderships had decided to frame their parties as post-Solidarity formations that were bent on unseating the SLD-PSL government.

521 The scale used in Figure 6.3 is based on the standard left-right measures employed by the Manifesto Research Group for European parties without any adjustments to incorporate characteristics attributed specifically to post-communist polities. An in-depth explanation of the data used for all scales depicting party positions on all competitive dimensions is included in the appendix.
Figure 6.1
Poland 1997 – Socio-cultural positions of parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLD</th>
<th>UP</th>
<th>AWS</th>
<th>ROP</th>
<th>PSL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-2.21</td>
<td>-1.58</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Libertarian -1.99

Traditionalism

Source: Klingemann et al. 2006

The parties that emerged from the former Solidarity movement are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; other parties in black.

Figure 6.2
Poland 1997 – Party positions on economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UP</th>
<th>PSL</th>
<th>SLD</th>
<th>ROP</th>
<th>UW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-5.26</td>
<td>7.64</td>
<td>12.87</td>
<td>14.94</td>
<td>20.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Planning 14.36

Market

Source: Klingemann et al. 2006

The parties that emerged from the former Solidarity movement are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; other parties in black.

Figure 6.3
Poland 1997 – Party Positions on Left-Right Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UP</th>
<th>UW</th>
<th>SLD</th>
<th>AWS</th>
<th>PSL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-13.16</td>
<td>-1.99</td>
<td>9.19</td>
<td>17.02</td>
<td>30.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Left

ROP

Right 8.12

Source: Klingemann et al. 2006

The parties that emerged from the former Solidarity movement are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; other parties in black.
The AWS scored a major victory in the elections, not only finishing in first but also winning a larger proportion of the vote than any other political formation had managed to win since the partially free elections of 1989. The post-communist SLD also did well in the election, boosting its vote share in comparison with the previous election (which it had won) but nevertheless finishing more than six percentage points behind the AWS. The only other parties to clear the 5 per cent threshold were UW, PSL and ROP. The elections thus served to further consolidate the political scene. The SLD and PSL had remained stable, and the previously chaotic post-Solidarity camp had consolidated into four parties, with three of them entering parliament. The fourth, the UP, narrowly missed the threshold, a failure that would spark a crisis in that party.

### Table 6.1 – Poland – 1997 Parliamentary elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS)</td>
<td>33.83</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)</td>
<td>27.13</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom Union (UW)</td>
<td>13.37</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Peasant Party (PSL)</td>
<td>7.31</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland (ROP)</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Union (UP)</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Party of Pensioners and Retirees (KPEiR)</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union of the Republic’s Rightists</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Alliance of the Pensioners and Retirees of the Polish Republic (KPEiRR)</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Christian Democratic Bloc for Poland (NChD-BdP)</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Minority (MN)</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Defense Alliance</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish National Community of the Polish National Party (PWN-PSN)</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Post-communist parties are indicated in red; post-opposition parties in blue.*

Source: Obwieszczenie Państwowej Komisji Wyborczej z dn. 25 IX 1997 r., Monitor Polski, Nr 64, poz. 620.
The results of the election narrowed the options of the parties in parliament in terms of putting together a majority government. The AWS had the obvious option of creating a minimum winning coalition with the UW. But the latter party’s secular stance on socio-cultural questions and its aggressively pro-market approach were not popular with a significant portion of the AWS coalition’s member-parties. On the other hand, a coalition with the PSL and ROP would have been unacceptable to some of the liberal-conservative elements of the AWS, including the former UW member Jan Maria Rokita and his Conservative-Peasant Party (SKL) party. This is perhaps why a number of AWS members started to openly support the idea of a “large coalition” that would bring together the AWS, UW, ROP and PSL. Some in the AWS thought such a coalition would serve to “isolate” the post-communist SLD and enable the government to override any vetoes by the post-communist President Kwaśniewski.\(^{522}\) Inviting the ROP and PSL into such a coalition would also have bolstered the social conservative element of the government.

The UW also found itself boxed in. As a party that prided itself on emphasizing its “centrist” credentials, the UW should have been open to a number of possibilities. As far as policy preferences were concerned, the UW certainly had at least as much in common (if not more in common) with the post-communist SLD as it did with the post-Solidarity AWS. Nevertheless, a coalition with the SLD would not have controlled a majority of the seats in parliament and would have had to rely on support from another party, perhaps the PSL, to remain in power. The PSL, with its emphasis on state support for the countryside and social conservative attitudes, shared little in the way of policy preferences with the UW. In fact, the UW and PSL were two of the parties in the new Sejm that had the least in common with each other in programmatic terms. It is difficult to say what the UW leaders would have done had they had the option of forming majority coalition with the SLD alone. It seems likely, however, that the UW would have had a very difficult time crossing the regime divide to openly form a coalition with the SLD.

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\(^{522}\) Various members of the AWS coalition supported such an alternative, including the leader of the ZChN, see PAP, 28 September 1997, FBIS-EEU-97-271, 1 October 1997. The leader of the Peasant Independence Coalition (KL-N), another AWS member, also supported it, see PAP 3 October 1997, FBIS-EEU-97-276, 7 October 1997.
after having run a campaign aimed at removing the SLD-PSL coalition from power and bringing a “post-August” or “post-Solidarity” government into power.

In the end, then, the UW’s decision to enter coalition talks with the AWS made sense both in terms of parliamentary mathematics as well as in terms of the UW’s self-promoted public profile as a post-Solidarity formation. And so, despite significant policy differences with the AWS the UW quickly decided to enter coalition talks with the AWS. The two parties may have been on different sides of the key socio-cultural divide in Polish politics, but they were on the same side of the regime divide. Nevertheless, there was a limit to how far the UW was willing to bend its programmatic principles in order to form a government. UW leader Leszek Balcerowicz quickly ruled out any possibility of entering a coalition in which the PSL or ROP would play a role. Ultimately, the AWS accepted this condition of the UW and abandoned its consideration of a large coalition. The coalition with the UW simply made more strategic sense in the parliament. It was a coalition with only one partner and it provided the government with a comfortable majority of 31 seats. A coalition with the ROP and PSL would have given government a razor-thin majority of just three seats. In a situation in which the AWS could hardly be sure of the loyalty of its own members, who still represented their own parties and organizations within the AWS, let alone those of the ROP or PSL, the stability of such a governing coalition would have been too uncertain. The logic of the situation thus compelled the AWS to seek a coalition with the UW despite the evident programmatic differences. Even some stalwart opponents of the UW within the AWS acknowledged this much. Marek Kempski, who also served as the Silesian regional head of Solidarity and had earlier been opposed to working with the UW, outlined the situation in this way: “AWS voters are basically against the UW, but political logic points towards an alliance.”

The coalition talks dragged on for a few weeks and the AWS and UW leaders did not sign the actual coalition agreement until the first half November. The final agreement saw 17 cabinet posts go to the AWS, five to UW and one to an independent. AWS leader Marian Krzaklewski followed what was becoming a tradition in Polish politics by

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refusing to take on the role of prime minister, which was given to Jerzy Buzek. The UW had received a relatively small but important set of ministerial portfolios, securing the posts of deputy prime minister and finance minister for Balcerowicz as well as justice, foreign affairs, and defense.

And with that, the post-Solidarity conservatives and post-Solidarity liberals were thrust back together in a coalition government despite their significant policy differences and their history of fractious disputes with each other. Not surprisingly, the cracks did not take long to appear. In fact, dissension was apparent in the AWS even before the coalition agreement was signed. Marian Piłka, the head of the ZChN, quit the AWS coalition negotiating team in October in protest at what he saw as the excessive concessions his side was making in the talks, particularly with respect to ministerial portfolios. Several other members of the Christian-conservative forces within the AWS joined in, saying they were opposed to granting the UW control of so many key ministries and unhappy in particular to see the UW’s Hanna Suchocka as justice minister. Many also grumbled at the fact that Balcerowicz, who was widely seen as excessively liberal on the economy, would serve as finance minister or that Bronisław Geremek would be foreign affairs minister. Several Christian-conservative deputies in the AWS issued a statement declaring that their voters would be unhappy to see an AWS-led government hand over such power to “forces, which have little to do with the program of a free and Christian Poland.”

AWS-UW Government

The AWS-UW coalition government set itself a series of major reform tasks. In what it presented as a four-pillar reform effort, the Buzek government aimed to revamp Poland’s regional administration structure as well as the country’s pension, health care and education systems. The reforms were to modernize and render more effective these systems, which still in large part reflected communist-era institutions.

527 Quote taken from PAP, 29 October 1997.
At the same time, each coalition partner also had other priorities. Various groups within the AWS pushed for the fulfillment of their campaign promises focused on a tougher approach to decommunization, the introduction of pro-family policies, a more restrictive law on abortions, the so-called mass enfranchisement of the Polish people, and strict provisions aimed at cracking down on crime. The UW, for its part, saw Balcerowicz’ tough new macroeconomic stabilization program, which foresaw wage restrictions and tight fiscal discipline as a key priority for the government.

The disconnect between the hard budget constraints advocated by the UW and some of the ambitious social policies manifested itself in disputes between Finance Minister Balcerowicz and the chief economic expert of the AWS, Jerzy Kropiwnicki, who headed the government’s Centre for Strategic Studies. While Balcerowicz advocated fiscal restraint and a monetarist approach to the economy, Kropiwnicki pushed for greater state involvement in stimulating economic growth, particularly when the Polish economy started to slow significantly after 1999. Kropiwnicki was a member of the ZChN, a party within the AWS that had been uncomfortable with Balcerowicz’s appointment as finance minister from the beginning.

The disputes over economic issues within the AWS-UW coalition were legion. There were chaotic votes in parliament in which groups of AWS deputies broke party discipline to vote against economic measures proposed by Balcerowicz and backed by the government or in which some AWS deputies struck out on their own to support opposition-backed economic measures such as zero VAT rate on unprocessed farm produce. As in the latter case, the lack of party discipline within the AWS often reflected preferences for policies that would benefit their perceived constituencies, although they often argued that those policies were in line with the AWS program.

Tax policy in general was a major issue of contention between the AWS and UW. One of Balcerowicz’s marquee proposals involved the phasing in of a simpler income tax plan, which was vigorously criticized by members of the AWS and Kropiwnicki in particular. The AWS, for its part, pushed for tax benefits to families with two or more

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529 PAP, 12 May 2000, BBC Monitoring Service.
530 AWS deputies who voted in favour of the zero VAT rate on farm produce said they did so in the interests of farmers and in line with the AWS program. PAP, 12 May 2000.
children, a policy that was in turn criticized by the UW. Although this tax dispute seemed to lend itself to a compromise solution, such a resolution only came about after Balcerowicz threatened to resign and pull the UW out of the government. In the end, however, as with many other governmental measures, President Kwaśniewski vetoed the changes, and the coalition failed to come up with enough votes in the Sejm to override the veto.

The AWS and UW also had differing preferences in terms of privatization with the former supporting a quick move to transfer state property to private control, while the latter preferred a method of selling off public enterprises to investors with enough capital to restructure the firms. As in other policy areas, there were also differences within the parties related to privatization that created tensions between the coalition partners. In 1999, for instance, a group of AWS lawmakers, including two AWS cabinet ministers, joined the opposition in supporting amendments that would have empowered the prosecutor general’s office to veto privatization decisions of the Treasury Ministry. This lack of party discipline in the AWS incensed the UW, which argued that the amendments would slow down the entire privatization process. The UW this time called on the president, a former post-communist SLD leader, to veto the amendments, which he did. The UW also opposed one of the key planks in the AWS economic program, the mass property rights enfranchisement plan. The plan would have enabled Polish tenants of state-owned housing and cooperatives to take ownership of their units and it would have offered compensation to people who already owned their homes.

The differences between the coalition partners over privatization also manifested themselves the struggle over the Treasury Ministry, which had responsibility for privatization. Although the treasury minister, Emil Wąsacz, was a member of the AWS, he became a lightning rod for criticism from some of the parties within the AWS ranks because of his support for the sale of stakes in various strategic companies to foreign investors as well as for failing to push through the mass enfranchisement plan. On these issues, Wąsacz appeared to be closer to the UW, which was generally supportive of foreign investment and opposed to the mass enfranchisement plan. It was on these

532 Ibid.
grounds that a group of AWS deputies submitted a motion for a no-confidence vote in the minister in December 1999. Wąsacz narrowly survived the vote in which several AWS deputies joined the SLD in voting no-confidence in the minister. The UW backed Wąsacz and voted against the motion.

Ultimately, a mass enfranchisement program was passed through the Sejm only after the UW had abandoned the coalition in mid-2000 to sit as an opposition party. The UW joined the SLD in voting against the scheme, with the UW’s Balcerowicz denouncing it as “grotesque and absurd” and a “triumph of populism.” The legislation passed with the support of AWS and PSL. It was never implemented, however, because President Kwaśniewski vetoed it in yet another instance of the post-communist president supporting the approach of the UW over that of the AWS.

There was also discord on socio-cultural issues. The abortion issue had already surfaced before the elections, when, in May 1997, the Constitutional Tribunal ruled that the more liberal abortion law passed under the SLD-PSL government was unconstitutional. Soon after the 1997 election, the Sejm voted to affirm the court’s decision and reinstate the earlier, more restrictive abortion law from 1993, which permitted abortions only in cases of pregnancy resulting from sexual assault, danger to the health or life of the mother, or irreversible damage to the fetus. The outcome mirrored previous votes on the issue, with the post-Solidarity conservatives in the AWS supporting the restrictive abortion law, the post-communist SLD opposing it, and the post-Solidarity liberal UW split on the issue with 13 of the UW deputies voting against it. A similar vote aimed at eliminating provisions for sex education in schools was likewise supported by almost all of the AWS but saw the UW divided again, with 20 of its deputies voting in favour of the elimination, 16 opposing it and 12 abstaining from the vote. The UW’s divided voting record on such issues reflected the fact that the leadership refused to enforce discipline on its parliamentarians when it came to votes on socio-cultural issues or “matters of conscience” (in sharp contrast to votes on economic issues, where strict discipline was enforced). Once again President Kwaśniewski vetoed the bill, and once

534 This law permitted abortions in cases when women found themselves in “difficult conditions or difficult personal situations.”
536 Ibid.
again the coalition failed to muster enough votes to override the veto due to opposition within the UW as well as seven deputies from the AWS. Not even the support of deputies from the increasingly socially conservative PSL was enough to override the veto. The failure of this bill, which was a significant one for the Christian-conservative groups in the AWS, created tensions in the coalition.

The tensions between the AWS and UW finally came to a head in May 2000. Significantly, the crisis erupted when the UW decided to form a coalition in the city government of Warsaw with the post-communist SLD. This was far from the first time that a coalition had been formed at the local or regional level between a post-Solidarity party and the post-communist SLD. Indeed, Warsaw itself had already witnessed a coalition of the post-Solidarity UD and SLD in the 1990s. This time around, however, the AWS leadership had made it clear that it wanted to avoid coalitions with the post-communist SLD at the local level as much as possible. Beyond this stipulation, the central Warsaw district was viewed as a particularly valuable political prize.\(^{537}\)

Nevertheless, it was the AWS councillors in Warsaw who had refused to support the re-election bid of Warsaw Mayor Paweł Piskorski, a prominent young star in the UW. In response, Piskorski had forged a coalition with the SLD and this coalition proceeded to take steps to remove the AWS councillors from key positions in the municipal structures of the city. This led to a crisis between the two coalition parties and the intervention of the regional governor, who was an AWS member, and of Prime Minister Buzek himself, who used his authority to suspend the Warsaw city council and install an administrator.\(^{538}\)

The UW accused Buzek and the AWS of acting brashly, and, declaring this to be the last straw in the numerous internal coalition squabbles, the UW leadership announced that it was abandoning the coalition government. This sparked a series of crisis talks between the AWS and UW that went on for several days. In the end, though, the UW’s Balcerowicz led his party out of the troubled governing coalition once and for all. He


\(^{538}\) Although the SLD and UW questioned the legality of Buzek’s intervention, the State Tribunal later upheld the move.
framed the decision to leave the coalition as a response to the long-term difficulty in coming to agreements on policies with certain AWS parliamentarians:

“A coalition is an agreement to work together with a joint program. The existence of a coalition cannot be limited to the government. What happens in parliament is no less important. In our case, for many months, parliament featured a coalition different from that in the government. A group of Solidarity Electoral Action deputies regularly voted against government bills—in the same way as the Democratic Left Alliance and the Polish Peasants Party. As a result, some of the bills already approved by the government had to be re-negotiated. These unending and inconclusive talks were the main problem in our relations with AWS.”

Balcerowicz also laid part of the blame for the dysfunctional AWS-UW coalition with AWS leadership, saying it “tolerated practically any form of opposition within the caucus” and that Krzaklewski himself had sponsored and pushed through bills that ran “contrary to the [coalition] government’s position.” He listed several specific policies supported by Krzaklewski with which the UW, and even many within the AWS, did not agree, including the mass property enfranchisement plan, pro-family tax breaks and a shorter workweek.

At the same time, Balcerowicz insisted that his party’s problems with the AWS did “not mean that we are closer to the SLD in terms of programs.” While he did say that at one point he had hoped to “persuade the SLD to support reasonable government ideas in the economy,” he added that the post-communist party had the same “populist” tendencies that were evident in parts of the AWS. At the same time, Balcerowicz accused the post-communist SLD of voting against the government out of “spite.”

In these comments, Balcerowicz framed the UW’s dispute with the AWS—or at least with a substantial number of its parliamentarians—in clearly programmatic terms. And yet, even in the midst of another collapse in cooperation with the post-Solidarity

540 Ibid.
conservative forces, he was also careful to underscore the UW’s ongoing reluctance to consider an alliance with the post-communist SLD at the national level.

Following the departure of UW from the coalition, Prime Minister Buzek set up a minority government and replaced the five departed UW ministers. Although there were signals that at least a part of the AWS wanted to renew the coalition, this was not to happen. In fact, once in sole control of the executive, the AWS attempted to push through legislation that had been opposed by the UW leadership, such as the law on mass property enfranchisement.

The next major development was the fall 2000 presidential elections. The incumbent Kwaśniewski, backed by the SLD, had been leading in the polls for some time, and there appeared to be little hope that a post-Solidarity candidate would be able to dislodge him from the office. While the AWS decided to put forward Krzaklewski as its candidate, the UW decided in the end to back no candidate. This meant that Andrzej Olechowski, the former BBWR leader who had announced his candidacy on a pro-market platform and had sought the backing of the UW, was forced to run alone. A former Wałęsa ally, Olechowski had briefly served as a finance minister in the Christian-conservative government of Jan Olszewski and later as an independent foreign minister hand-picked by Wałęsa to serve in the post-communist SLD-PSL coalition government. This decision by UW reflected internal divisions within the party. While Balcerowicz’s camp within the party wanted to back Olechowski, other wings in the party were skeptical of him, in part because of his admission that he had cooperated with the communist-era secret services. Moreover, some of Balcerowicz’s opponents in the UW were intent on pushing him to run for the presidency as a means of easing him out of the party leadership.

In the end, the SLD incumbent won the presidential elections handily, securing more than the required 50 per cent of the vote in the first round. Olechowski finished a distant second, but his showing was widely viewed in the post-Solidarity camp’s liberal circles as signaling strong electoral potential for his pro-market and moderate liberal-conservative platform. Disgruntled liberals in both the UW and AWS began to eye Olechowski’s electoral potential with increasing interest. Finally, Krzaklewski’s third-

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place finish served to deepen the divide within the AWS between its Christian-conservative and liberal-conservative wings. In effect, the presidential elections served to speed up the process that had begun unraveling the AWS and UW while they were still in a stormy coalition government together. The next section will examine in detail the party switching that resulted from this tumultuous electoral term for the post-Solidarity parties.

**Party Developments 1997-2001**

One of the earliest examples of party switching involving the post-Solidarity parties during this electoral term took place outside of parliament, when a group of UP members led by the famed Solidarity activist Zbigniew Bujak abandoned their party to join the UW. The move by the Bujak group was spurred by a dispute within the UP on the party’s future following its failure to clear the threshold for parliamentary representation in the 1997 election. The disappointment increased calls within the party for a *rapprochement* with the SLD. In turn, this drift of a part of the UP toward the post-communist SLD prompted the party’s post-Solidarity faction to bolt from the party. Around this time, the UW had issued a membership invitation to disgruntled members of the UP, and some of them took up the invitation and threw their lot in with the UW, a move that was applauded by the daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*, an influential newspaper among post-Solidarity liberals. The move by the UP activists to join the UW was clearly motivated by the regime divide. The UP had more in common with the SLD in programmatic terms, but the post-Solidarity members of the UP preferred to throw in their lot with another post-Solidarity party because, as *Gazeta Wyborcza* put it, they “remained determined to build a democratic leftist formation in clear opposition to the pre-1989 heritage.”

Meanwhile, party discipline had broken down within months of the formation of the AWS-UW coalition, when 38 AWS deputies and seven UW deputies refused to support the government’s bill on restructuring the regional state administration units. As a result, Jan Lopuszanski and Adam Słomka, were expelled from the AWS caucus on the grounds that this was not the first time they had broken ranks and voted against a bill

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backed by the AWS leadership. Nevertheless, the expulsion of Lopuszanski and Słomka prompted six other AWS deputies to quite the caucus themselves in protest. This group of deputies had formed the so-called AWS Program Group within the AWS as a means of pushing the government to remain faithful to the AWS electoral platform. Critical of the AWS-UW coalition from the moment of its inception, this group argued that the government’s agenda was being steered by the UW and that the electoral promises of the AWS were being systematically overlooked. After leaving the AWS, some members of the group followed Lopuszanski in forming the Polish Accord (PP) group in parliament. Słomka, whose party, the Confederation for an Independent Poland-Patriotic Camp (KPN-OP) was also no longer part of the AWS coalition, established a KPN-OP caucus in parliament.

It was in the fall of 2000—after the disastrous showing of the AWS candidate for the presidency and the failure of the UW to nominate a candidate—that the two coalition parties really started to unravel. In the aftermath of the presidential vote, the two parties went through parallel internal crises and power struggles. These crises ultimately resulted in the splintering of the AWS and UW. Renegades from the UW and AWS came together in January 2001 to create a new movement called the Citizens’ Platform (PO). This move quickly touched off a wave of defections from the UW and AWS. In the ensuing months, as the AWS continued to unravel, another group of AWS members broke off to form a second significant movement known as Law and Justice (PiS). The following section analyzes the political dynamics that drove these developments.

In the case of the UW, the brewing crisis within the party emerged out into the open with the departure of Balcerowicz from the leadership. As pressure mounted on him from within the party following the presidential elections, he finally decided to quit politics, and with the backing of his party and the AWS, assumed the post of central bank chief. The UW leadership congress in December 2000 then turned into a major clash between the party’s pro-market liberals and its social-liberals. The fight was in part a

546 KPN-OP emerged in 1996 following the split in the original KPN. The KPN-OP, which was also joined by some former members of the BBWR, became a part of the AWS before the 1997 elections.
reflection of the 1994 merger between the Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD) and the Democratic Union (UD), which had led to the creation of the UW. The pro-market liberals in the UW were largely associated with the former KLD, while the social-liberal faction, along with a moderate Christian-democratic group, could trace their roots, for the most part, to the UD. At the congress, the pro-market liberals put up former KLD member Donald Tusk for UW leader, while the social-liberal side backed the candidacy of former UD member Bronisław Geremek. Geremek came out on top, defeating Tusk by a vote of 338 to 261. Then, although the leadership race had demonstrated a substantial degree of support for Tusk within the party, the UW delegates voted the next day to include only two members from the ranks of Tusk’s supporters in the former KLD on the 100-member UW National Council.\footnote{Polish News Bulletin, 21 December 2000, citing \textit{Rzeczpospolita}, 18 December and 19 December.} Tusk’s supporters suggested that the vote seemed to cast doubt on assurances from the new UW leadership about party unity, despite efforts by Geremek to offer him an olive branch by suggesting he take up the position of deputy leader. The vote also marked a strong resurgence of the social-liberal wing, which had been pushed to the background under the pro-market liberal leadership of Balcerowicz.\footnote{Kopczyński, “The Formation of Post-Solidarity Political Parties,” p. 130.}

In one sense, the creation of the PO certainly appeared to be an effort to revive the fortunes of the broadly defined “centre-right” political forces of the country by abandoning the troubled governing coalition parties and capitalizing on Olechowski’s relatively successful presidential bid. It is difficult to dispute that many who joined the PO were motivated by the desire to secure votes in the next parliamentary elections, which were only a few months away at this stage.

On the other hand, there were policy-based motivations as well, which were noted by various PO members. The PO and UW were undoubtedly close to each other in the policy space, but they were not identical. Under Balcerowicz’s leadership, the party had sharpened its pro-market profile while at the same time entering a coalition with the less pro-market and more socially conservative AWS. After three years in this coalition, many UW activists from both the pro-market and social-liberal wings of the party had grown restless under Balcerowicz’s leadership. The pro-market wing of the party was frustrated.
that the party had failed to nominate a candidate for president or at least support the candidacy of the pro-market Andrzej Olechowski. Following the election, they were further alienated by the failure of the UW leadership to effect some form of cooperation with the Olechowski team. Finally, the crushing victory of the social-liberal faction at the party leadership convention in the fall of 2000 seemed to underscore the fact that there was no longer a place for the pro-market liberal wing of the party in the UW leadership. For their part, the social-liberal wing of the party had also become alienated by the coalition with the AWS. Even before the 1997 elections, Balcerowicz’s strategy of positioning the UW squarely in the post-Solidarity camp with an eye toward cooperating with the AWS, despite the many programmatic differences between the parties, had driven away several members of the UW’s social-liberal wing.\footnote{Kopczyński, “The Formation of Post-Solidarity Political Parties,” p. 130.} Those who remained, continued to oppose certain policies espoused by the AWS, especially policies related to the socio-cultural policy dimension. When Balcerowicz finally decided to resign from the UW leadership in 2000, many of these remaining social liberals supported Geremek’s bid for the leadership of the party.\footnote{See Marek Matraszek, “Changing of the Guard,” \textit{Warsaw Business Journal}, 9 November 2000.}

The victory of Geremek’s faction in the internal party struggle touched off a mass departure of many pro-market liberals from the UW in early 2001, a development that altered the position of the UW in the spectrum. The new PO drew in a large portion of the UW’s pro-market liberal wing, including former KLD members, much of the party’s youth wing,\footnote{Polish News Bulletin, 22 January 2001, citing various sources.} and the Economic Forum of the Freedom Union. The latter group was an affiliated organization created by some 400 entrepreneurs who were members of the UW or who openly supported the party.\footnote{Polish News Bulletin, 19 January 2001, citing Rzeczpospolita and Zycie, 19 January 2001.} Among the prominent ex-KLD members who left the UW to join the PO were Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, the former prime minister; Janusz Lewandowski, a former privatization minister; Jacek Merkel, a key organizer in the UW; and Paweł Piskorski, the mayor of Warsaw. Speaking for many of them, Bielecki cited ideological reasons for his decision to quit the UW: “I do not want to make any more ideological compromises. I do not want to be a member of a party that is liberal, conservative and social-democratic. Politics require a clear-cut program, otherwise it
amounts to playing cat and mouse with voters.”\textsuperscript{553} Many of them saw the departure of Balcerowicz, and the rise to the top of Geremek’s group, as a defeat for pro-market liberalism and a return to prominence of the party’s ex-dissident intellectuals of a moderate social-liberal tendency.

The PO immediately promoted itself as a pro-market liberal party with promises to implement a flat tax while at the same time tapping into voter frustrations with the AWS-UW government by pledging to crack down on corruption. The new party was also careful to reassert, in an almost ritualistic fashion, its connection to the legacy of Solidarity by staging its first major public meeting in the same Gdańsk hall where the legendary trade union had held its first congress in 1980. While none of this marked a radical break from the program or historical roots of Balcerowicz’s UW—which had put the flat tax on the country’s political agenda and had even talked of the need to deal with corruption—it clearly outlined the PO’s place in the political spectrum. Moreover, now that Balcerowicz had left the UW and many of the UW’s prominent pro-market liberals had joined the PO, the UW had more or less ceded this territory to the PO.

This change in UW’s position on the Polish political spectrum even led to speculation in some quarters that the party might finally be open to a post-election coalition with the SLD, which was surging in the polls by the second half of 2000. Although such voices were even apparent within the UW itself,\textsuperscript{554} the new leader made an immediate effort to reassert the ongoing significance of the regime divide. Declaring that he did not “envisage” a future coalition with the post-communist SLD,\textsuperscript{555} Geremek also declared that anyone who felt the UW had moved toward the left should “see an ophthalmologist and correct their eyesight.”\textsuperscript{556}

Meanwhile, the AWS also experienced a crisis during the winter of 2000-2001. Although efforts to unify the coalition into one coherent party-like organization finally led to an agreement to create a federative structure in the late fall of 2000, the changes came too late to placate the disgruntled members of the AWS coalition. The disappointing performance of AWS leader Krzaklewski in the 2000 presidential elections

\textsuperscript{555} PAP, 17 January 2001, BBC Monitoring Service.
\textsuperscript{556} Beata Pasek, “Poland’s reform-oriented party says it won’t align with ex-communists,” Associated Press, 17 December 2000.
had emboldened his liberal opponents within the coalition, although displeasure with Krzaklewski’s leadership had been evident before the election as well.\textsuperscript{557} This group, represented chiefly by Rokita’s SKL but also including another group around Maciej Plażyński, were pushing for the party to move away from its focus on anti-communism and social conservatism. Instead, they wanted to re-position the AWS as a moderate and pro-market force.\textsuperscript{558} The relative success in the presidential vote of Olechowski, who ran on just such a platform, added fire to this dispute within the AWS. Płażyński and Rokita eventually forced the issue of Krzaklewski’s leadership and the future of the AWS by attempting to reorganize the movement through a new entity called the Federation of Solidarity Electoral Action (FAWS). The founding members of the FAWS signed on to an accord that clearly outlined their efforts to refashion the AWS on a new and more moderate basis. “We do not approve of the way in which the present AWS chairman is pursuing policies […] We do not approve of extremist ideologies that disregard the views of most Poles.”\textsuperscript{559}

The crisis was finally resolved in December when Krzaklewski agreed to cede the leadership of the movement to Buzek. In addition, the constituent groups of AWS agreed that the movement would be restructured as a somewhat more cohesive federation with the ultimate goal of establishing a unified party after the 2001 elections. But the liberal-conservative parties in the FAWS quickly abandoned this deal, which effectively blocked their leadership ambitions and would have forced them back under the same roof with the Christian-conservatives in Solidarity and ZChN. Instead, Płażyński, as outlined above, elected to form the Citizens’ Platform with Olechowski and Tusk.

Ultimately, the creation of the liberal-conservative PO was the result of a confluence of parallel events that unraveled both the UW and AWS. Each of the latter parties had significant wings of pro-market, secular and moderate activists who saw

\textsuperscript{559} Excerpts from the accord published in \textit{Polityka}, 18 November 2000, FBIS-EEU-2000-1116, 17 November 2000. Not all of AWS leader’s opponents were in this liberal camp. The pro- and anti-Krzaklewski camps actually cut across the lines of the parties that made up the AWS coalition. For instance, Krzaklewski also had opponents in the Christian-conservative ZChN, a party that refused to join Płażyński’s FAWS. As for Krzaklewski’s supporters, they were largely concentrated in the Solidarity trade union, which he led, but he also had supporters in the AWS Social Movement and among middle-ranking activists in some of the other parties.
themselves either as either “liberals” or “liberal-conservatives.” It is noteworthy that these two groups of liberals had worked closely together before, either within the KLD and UD or within the UW. There were differences between them, ranging from the more liberal-conservative approach of Jan Maria Rokita or Aleksander Hall560 to the more strictly secular brand of liberalism espoused by many of the former KLD activists. Nevertheless, in the context of the political scene in 2001, the differences between them seemed much smaller than the differences between them and the other wings of their parties at the time. Within the coalition government of AWS-UW, these two liberal groups had been forced to compromise either with social conservatives or with those who favoured greater state intervention in the economy. This dynamic had been growing more acute in the midst of the economic downturn of 2000-2001 and the fact that Solidarity was becoming more militant as a new round of collective bargaining approached in 2001.

In this context, the presidential election was not so much the cause of the splits in the AWS and UW as it was an opportunity for these two increasingly disgruntled liberal groups to seize the initiative. The elections, they thought, indicated relatively strong demand in the Polish electorate for a moderate and pro-market political party. In response to this signal, then, the liberal wings in the AWS and UW each attempted to seize control of their parties or at least a portion of their parties. When these attempts failed, they elected to exit those parties in order to form a new party that would give them the unfettered freedom to promote their ideas and capitalize on what they saw as the political success of Olechowski’s candidacy.

The departure of the liberal-conservative wing of the AWS was not the end of the splintering for AWS. Buzek and Krzaklewski continued to struggle for influence in AWS. Added to this was the return to politics of former Interior Minister Janusz Tomaszewski, who had resigned in 1999 when he was accused of lying about collaborating with the former communist secret service in violation of the 1997 lustration law. Tomaszewski, who had managed to clear his name in court, returned to the AWS in the winter of 2001 and made a bid to take control of the movement.

Ultimately, though, Buzek retained the leadership of the AWS after talks in May 2001. Solidarity announced that same month that it would withdraw from politics after

560 Rokita’s SKL actually ended up joining the PO as a party, retaining a separate membership.
the elections, while Tomaszewski left the AWS to establish an electoral committee called the Christian Democratic Civic Forum (FOChD).  

Buzek’s leadership position in the AWS was formalized with the recreation of the movement as the Solidarity Electoral Action – Right (AWSP), a revamped conservative coalition of four parties including Buzek’s own AWS-RS, the Christian-conservative parties ZChN and PPChD, and the anti-communist ROP.  

Buzek also faced a challenge for the leadership of the conservative coalition from the Kaczyński brothers. Since his appointment as justice minister in June 2000, Lech Kaczyński had become a popular figure in the public opinion polls thanks to his vocal anti-corruption campaign. It was in this context that Lech and his brother Jarosław Kaczyński created a new political movement called Law and Justice (PiS). They then attempted to reunite the AWS group under Lech Kaczyński’s leadership in talks with Buzek, but the AWS leader refused to agree. Failing in their attempt to create a joint electoral list with AWS, the Kaczyński brothers decided to contest the election alone. Several deputies from the AWS joined the PiS, including a group of parliamentarians who had formed a conservative movement called the Right Alliance (PP). The PP included former members of Rokita’s SKL who did not agree with that party’s decision to merge with the PO as well as several former ZChN members.  

The creation of PiS and the fact that it was joined by a large number of AWS members underscored the frustrations of many conservative politicians with the AWS-UW coalition government and with the AWS leadership. The Kaczyński brothers initially framed PiS as a law and order movement that would crack down on corruption. This agenda distinguished the new party from the AWS, which was not only awash in corruption scandals but which also had never emphasized the issue of law and order. Many former AWS members who joined PiS had been frustrated with the policies of the AWS-UW government, which they perceived as conceding too much to the liberals of the UW and failing to reflect the concerns of the conservatives in the AWS.  

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561 In the end, FOChD did not run any candidates in the 2001 Sejm elections and put forward a handful of candidates for Senate seats, including Tomaszewski. None of them won seats.  
562 ROP later abandoned the coalition ahead of the 2001 elections.  
563 “Poland Politics – AWS Crumbles Into Insignificance,” Economist Intelligence Unit, 20 June 2001  
Finally, the last major new player to emerge from the party switching of 1997-2001 was the League of Polish Families (LPR), which created a new home for the more radical Christian-conservative renegades from the AWS. This party—founded ahead of the 2001 elections by two small extra-parliamentary formations called the National Party (SD) and the National-Democratic Party (SND)—became a magnet for those disgruntled Christian-conservatives who had abandoned the AWS to create their own parties in protest at the policies pursued by the AWS-UW coalition government. The LPR allowed the members of these conservative micro-parties, such as the Polish Accord (PP), the Alliance for Poland (PP), the Catholic-National Movement (RKN),565 to run on the LPR ticket in the 2001 parliamentary elections.

*Party switching*

Following the model outlined in chapter 4, an examination of party switching in the 1997-2001 electoral term should reveal a difference from the 1993-1997 period in terms of the numbers of post-Solidarity legislators that switched. This is because the incidence of switching should increase when a post-opposition party is forced into a governing coalition with another post-opposition party with widely divergent policy preferences, as happened to AWS and UW after the 1997 elections. Post-opposition parties are able to consolidate their organizations while they are in opposition, as the AWS and UW were before 1997, when they need not engage in policy compromises with each other. But once forced to govern together, the differences between their policy preferences should come to the fore, causing a spike in party switching by deputies who disagree with the inevitable policy compromises that come with coalition government.

The return of the post-Solidarity parties to government during the 1997-2001 electoral term did indeed see a rise in party switching. A total of 84 deputies from the post-Solidarity parties crossed the Sejm floor during this period while only two deputies from the post-communist SLD and one deputy from the PSL switched places. In terms of the post-opposition camp, this represents an almost 100 per cent increase over the rate of party switching in the previous 1993-1997 Sejm, when the post-Solidarity parties were

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565 The Polish Accord was founded by Jan Lopuszanski and other party switchers from AWS; Alliance for Poland was founded by Gabriel Janowski after he left AWS; the Catholic-National Movement was created by Antoni Macierewicz after he left the AWS.
sitting in the opposition benches. Moreover, this time, in contrast to the previous Sejm, none of the cases of party switching in the post-opposition camp could be described as integrative or aiming at the consolidation of parties in the post-Solidarity camp. To be sure, deputies from different parties did join together to form the new Citizens’ Platform (PO), but they did this by abandoning—and undermining the cohesion of—their own post-Solidarity parties.

In that sense, the trend in the post-Solidarity camp during the 1997-2001 Sejm was toward disintegrative party switching, serving to fragment existing parties while creating new proto-party entities. Four new post-Solidarity caucuses were created in the Sejm during the term, while another group of deputies who left their parties to sit as independents participated in the creation of a fifth new political movement, the Citizen’s Platform (PO). This does not include other parties that were joined by members of the Sejm who abandoned the caucuses of AWS or ROP to sit as independents, including the Polish Raison d’Etat (PRS), which was formed by defectors from ROP, and the Alliance for Poland (PP), formed by Gabriel Janowski after he left the AWS. Nor does it include defectors from the AWS who left that coalition along with their parties, such as Adam Słomka of the Congress for an Independent Poland-Patriotic Camp (KPN-OP). The picture, then, is one of the fragmentation of both of the post-Solidarity parties in government and the creation of at least seven new political party formations.

Once again, the crucial difference between the two sessions of parliament in 1993-1997 and 1997-2001 was the strategic position of the post-Solidarity parties following the elections of 1993 and 1997. Whereas the post-Solidarity camp found itself in opposition to a post-communist government in 1993-1997, the subsequent Sejm found the post-Solidarity AWS and UW in a coalition government together. In the first case, a movement toward consolidation was enabled by the absence of governmental responsibility and the fact that the post-Solidarity parties were united by the common goal of dislodging the post-communist party from government. In the 1997-2001 Sejm, by contrast, the post-Solidarity conservatives in the AWS and the post-Solidarity liberals in the UW found themselves in government together because neither of them was willing to cross the regime divide to work with the post-communist SLD. Almost immediately, the differences in the policy preferences of the AWS and UW were invoked by deputies
who decided to vote against bills sponsored by the governing coalition or to outright quit their parties. The coalition government was marked by numerous policy disagreements that not only pitted the parties against each other, but also pitted the cabinet against many of the coalition’s backbenchers. All through the existence of this coalition, which lasted from the fall of 1997 until the spring of 2000, various coalition deputies chose to break party discipline and vote against the government bills, openly oppose ministers from the cabinet or launch initiatives that were opposed by the government. After almost three years of this, the coalition itself fell apart in 2000, just a few moths before the presidential elections.

The coalition government aggravated and sharpened the policy differences within the post-Solidarity camp as a whole, as well as within the two parties of the coalition, the AWS and UW. Although these two parties had emerged to a certain extent as a result of the consolidation of the post-Solidarity conservative and liberal camps, there were still differences within these parties. The UW was still split between pro-market liberals and social-liberals, while the AWS split in a number of ways, exhibiting Christian-conservative, national-conservative and liberal-conservative wings.

After nearly three tumultuous years in the AWS-UW coalition, the leaderships of the two parties had exhausted their political capital and new challengers were rising in each party to seize the initiative. In both cases, these leadership struggles ended in defeat for the pro-market liberal or liberal-conservative orientation. In the case of the UW, the pro-market liberals were thrown out of the leadership, while the liberal-conservatives in the AWS failed to seize control of that party. The result was the departure of these two wings from their respective parties and their coalescence in the newly formed Citizens’ Platform. With their moderate or secular orientations on socio-cultural issues and their clearly pro-market stance on economic issues, these two groups were relatively close to each other in the policy space. The AWS then continued to unravel, as the national-conservatives formed the Law and Justice (PiS), some Christian-conservatives left to join the newly created League of Polish Families, and the Solidarity trade union packed up and abandoned the political scene altogether.

Finally, for all of the party switching going on among the post-Solidarity group of parties, there was not a single case of a post-Solidarity Sejm deputy crossing the floor to
join the post-communist SLD. The regime divide ensured once again that the fragmentation of the Polish political scene was contained within the post-Solidarity bloc of parties.

Table 6.2
Party switching in Polish Sejm (1997-2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party factions</th>
<th>No. of deputies 1997</th>
<th>Factions into which deputies switched (-)</th>
<th>Factions from which deputies switched (+)</th>
<th>No. of deputies 2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AWS</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>SKL (-18)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PiS (-17)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP (-5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A (-4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ROP (-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent (-22)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLD</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>Independent (-2)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UW</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Independent (-13)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSL</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Independent (-1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROP</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>PiS (-1)</td>
<td>AWS (+1)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent (-3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Parties and Factions Created During 1997-2001 Sejm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PiS</th>
<th>--</th>
<th>AWS (+17)</th>
<th>18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ROP (+1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 2001 elections were held in the atmosphere of an economic downturn in Poland and the 11 September terrorist attacks in the United States, which overshadowed the second half of the electoral campaign. Although there were a handful of new parties that had emerged to challenge the existing parties in the Sejm, the campaign tended to reveal relatively clear-cut programmatic distinctions among the competitors. It was clear ahead of the vote that the post-communist SLD-UP coalition was headed for a major victory—only the scale of that victory was in question. The well-organized SLD benefited from the disarray in the governing AWSP and its former coalition partner UW. The two parties were unable to shake the unpopularity of the Buzek government. Meanwhile, the new parties quickly established themselves on the scene through criticism of the current government and emphasis on specific platform promises. The PO framed itself as a strongly pro-market force, emphasizing its flat tax promise and de-emphasizing socio-cultural questions; PiS adopted a clear law-and-order profile, a more socially conservative stance on socio-cultural questions and an economic program favouring more

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state intervention and placing it to the left of the post-communist party on such economic issues; LPR was clearly the most socially conservative party in the country with its emphasis on Church values while it also presented itself as opposed to EU membership; and finally the SO framed itself as a protest party fighting for the interests of farmers, and thus challenging the PSL for the rural constituency.\footnote{567}

In the end, the SLD-UP won a crushing victory, taking a larger proportion of the vote than any other party had done since 1989. The elections also saw the elimination of both the AWSP and UW from parliament, with both formations failing to clear the threshold for coalitions and parties, respectively. In a flashback to the mistakes committed by the conservative post-Solidarity parties in 1993, the AWSP would have made it into parliament if it had reorganized itself as a unitary political party rather than as a coalition of three minor parties. In their place, the PO, PiS, LPR and SO entered the Sejm in this election.

Despite their massive victory, the results were something of a disappointment for the SLD-UP coalition. The post-communist coalition had failed to win a majority of seats in the Sejm, meaning they would either have to set up a minority government or find a coalition partner. While the SLD-UP leaders quickly indicated a preference for a coalition, finding a suitable partner in the new Sejm was not as simple as it might seem. The SLD was loathe to join the PSL in a reincarnation of the coalition governments of 1993-1997, which had not been stable and had

Table 6.3 – Poland – 2001 Parliamentary elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)</td>
<td>41.04</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Platform (PO)</td>
<td>12.68</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Defense of the Polish Republic</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law and Justice (PiS)</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Peasant Party (PSL)</td>
<td>8.98</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\footnote{567} Although both the post-Solidarity liberal and conservative groups had once again divided into separate parties competing for similar electorates, they did manage to form a coalition for the Senate elections, with AWSP, UW, PO and PiS agreeing to support a joint list of candidates called the Blok Senat 2001.
League of Polish Families (LPR) 7.87 38
Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) 5.6 -
Freedom Union (UW) 3.1 -
Alternative Social Movement (ARS) 0.42 -
German Minority (MN) 0.36 2
Polish Socialist Party (PPS) 0.10 -
Polish Economic Union (PUG) 0.06 -
German Minority of Upper Silesia 0.06 -
Polish National Community (PWN) 0.02 -

Post-communist parties are indicated in red; post-opposition parties in blue.
Source: Obwieszczenie państwowej komisji wyborczej z dnia 26 września 2001 r. Dziennik Ustaw, Nr 109, poz. 1186.

witnessed recurring struggles with the PSL over programmatic priorities. Aside from the PSL, the new Sejm contained two populist parties, the SO and LPR, that were anathema to the SLD leadership either due to incompatible policy preferences or an excessively skeptical attitude toward EU membership. This left a coalition with the PiS or PO. A coalition with the former was ruled out due to the anti-communist attitudes of PiS leaders as well as programmatic differences.

A coalition with the PO was another matter entirely. Both parties were solidly pro-European and both had similarly moderate views on socio-cultural questions (see Figure 6.4). Even on economic questions, it seemed that the two parties might have been able to come to an understanding, despite the apparently sharp divergence in their pre-election programs (see Figure 6.5). Various business and employers associations, including the Polish Business Council, the Business Centre Club, and the Polish Confederation of Private Employers, issued a joint call to the SLD-UP and PO to work together for the good of the economy. Marek Goliszewski of the Business Centre Club even described the SLD-UP and PO as the parties in the Sejm that were “in essence, pro-market forces.” Moreover, some members of the newly created PO had spoken in favour of joining the SLD-UP in a governing coalition.

This was reciprocated by the SLD, which did make overtures to the PO about a possible coalition. Some prominent members of the SLD, acknowledged the existence of similarities between the economic programs of the SLD and PO. SLD deputy leader Marek Borowski said there were “similarities and differences” between the two parties’ approaches to public finances, and that most of the differences were political.569

In the end, however, PO leaders decided unequivocally against such a coalition. Even before the election, the PO’s Maciej Płażyński, had spoken against any post-election alliance with the post-communist SLD, saying his stance went beyond programmatic considerations, and that deeper issues of “values and principles” were involved.570 Nevertheless, as if acknowledging the potential similarity in policy preferences between the two parties, the PO leaders did allow that they were willing to play the role of constructive opposition, supporting an SLD-UP government if it adopted a program similar to its own.

Figure 6.4
Poland 2001 – Socio-cultural positions of parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLD SO</th>
<th>PSL</th>
<th>PS</th>
<th>LPR</th>
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<td>3.42</td>
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<td>18.67</td>
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</table>

Libertarian 0.0
Traditionalism

Compiled from data contained in Klingemann et al. 2006.

Figure 6.5
Poland 2001 – Party positions on economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLD-UP</th>
<th>LPR</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>PO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-0.65</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>8.77</td>
<td>11.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Planning -1.17 0.85
Market

Compiled from data contained in Klingemann et al. 2006.

* The parties from the former Solidarity camp are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; other parties in black.

570 BBC Monitoring, citing a 12 September interview on Polish TVP1, 28 September 2001.
In this way, the 2001 elections once again upheld the regime divide in Polish politics despite assertions by academics and politicians that the vote marked the death knell of the division between post-Solidarity and post-communist forces in the country. First, both the PO and PiS were led by former Solidarity activists and boasted memberships that included many former members of Solidarity or post-Solidarity parties, including such stalwarts as the Kaczyński brothers, Donald Tusk and Jan Maria Rokita. In that sense, the PO and PiS were merely the latest successor organizations to the Solidarity tradition, just as UW and AWS had been before them. Second, the PO decided clearly and unequivocally to avoid a coalition with the SLD-UP group even before the elections despite the fact that it shared many policy positions with the post-communist coalition, which was acknowledged by members of both parties as well as outside observers. Instead, the PO chose to remain in opposition, flanked by other opposition parties such as the PiS and LPR with which it had even less in common in terms of policy preferences.

These factors indicate clearly that the regime divide was alive and well after 2001, even if PO leaders made an effort to avoid specifically anti-communist rhetoric and chose not to trumpet their ties to the Solidarity heritage. In fact, in some ways, the PO’s attempt to grab hold of a moderate “centrist” or “centre-right” position tended to evoke the earlier stance of the post-Solidarity UW.

In that sense, contrary to the assertions of various observers at the time, the 2001 elections did not do away with the regime divide. It was there still, separating the successors to the Solidarity movement from the successors to the communist party. This time around, the post-Solidarity camp was represented by the PO and PiS, with both of them sitting in the opposition benches against the post-communist SLD.

\[571\] For the argument that the 2001 election did away with the divide between the post-Solidarity parties and post-communist SLD, see Frances Millard, “Elections in Poland 2001: electoral manipulation and party upheaval,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 36 (2003), 69-86, especially p. 85.

\[572\] One notable exception was obviously the PO’s Andrzej Olechowski, an economist who had not been a part of Solidarity, and who had even sat on the PZPR side of the roundtable talks in 1989.

\[573\] Like UW before it, the PO also had internal divisions between advocates of a “centrist” position and supporters of a “centre-right” position. See Maciej Płażyński’s comments on this in PAP, 29 November 2002, FBIS-EEU-2002-1130, 2 December 2002.
Political developments 2001-2005

The SLD-UP and PSL coalition government was a tumultuous one—just as the previous governing coalition between these two parties had been in the mid-1990s. The government began the term with a strong majority in parliament and a mandate to complete Poland’s EU membership negotiations. It also set itself the task of undoing or altering some of the reforms introduced by the previous AWS-UW administration. Nevertheless, the government was hobbled by internal bickering between the SLD-UP and PSL as well as by a series of major corruption scandals that engulfed the post-communist SLD and eroded the party’s unity.

The coalition fell apart in early 2003, less than a year and a half after the elections. Relations between the SLD-UP and PSL had begun to quickly deteriorate over the latter’s less than enthusiastic attitude toward EU membership and criticism of the government’s handling of the membership negotiations. The PSL was particularly critical of the EU negotiations over matters dealing with land ownership and agriculture, key issues for the party’s rural constituency. Then, at the beginning of March 2003, when the PSL did not support the government on a road tax bill, SLD leader Leszek Miller took the initiative and expelled the party from the coalition.574

The collapse of the coalition left SLD and UP (which had each set up separate parliamentary caucuses despite having run together in the election) backing a minority government and searching for potential coalition partners.575 Once again, the SLD attempted to reach across the regime divide to draw PO into a coalition.576 Once again, PO refused to cross the divide. Even the SLD’s suggestion that it would support a flat-tax rate—a key policy plank in the PO’s program—failed to draw in the post-Solidarity liberals.577 There were also suggestions that a three-way SLD-PO-PSL coalition should be formed to tackle the issue of public finance reform.578 These moves on the part of the

575 The SLD-UP government did manage to secure the support of the small People’s Democratic Party (PDL) faction, which was founded by a group of deputies who had left the SLD earlier in the term, but that still left the government in a minority position. Later in the term, the PDL transformed itself into the Economic Party (SG).
578 President Kwaśniewski, for instance, raised the need for such a coalition, Rzeczpospolita, 27 May 2003, FBIS-EEU-2003-0528, 29 May 2003.
SLD suggest that the party was willing to move much closer to the PO on economic issues than its electoral platform (as depicted in Figure 6.5) might indicate. Indeed, the PO, along with the PSL, appears to have been one of the SLD’s preferred coalition partners in 2003. The other post-Solidarity party in the Sejm, was even more steadfastly opposed to working with the post-communists, and the other parties in parliament were less palatable because of their opposition to the EU and other programmatic reasons. Moreover, some in the PO, such as Senator Robert Smoktunowicz, openly acknowledged that the SLD was closest to their party in policy preferences. Nevertheless, the PO leadership, like that of the UW before it, preferred to strike a deal with the SLD to support public finance reform but not to enter a governing coalition. The message appeared to be that it might be possible to overcome programmatic differences with the SLD but not to enter a governing coalition with it.

And so, the SLD minority government was able to rely on support from PO deputies for several legislative initiatives that were opposed by the more conservative or nationalist parties in the opposition, including the post-Solidarity PiS. These included, for instance, a law covering the referendum on accession to the European Union, a law on national minority rights, and certain key laws related to the government’s fiscal austerity plan (known as the “Hausner plan” after Economics Minister Jerzy Hausner), which the PO selectively backed despite its criticism of the overall plan as “illusory.”

Nevertheless, despite such legislative cooperation across the regime divide, the divide itself remained in place and the PO sought instead to prepare the ground for a coalition with the post-Solidarity conservative PiS. Once again, as in the case of the AWS and UW in the mid-1990s, this coalition between two parties with a shared history in the Solidarity movement but significant differences in policy preferences was framed as a

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579 Ibid. The SLD’s Józef Oleksy, for instance, named the PO and PSL as potential coalition partners in 2003.
580 Ibid.
582 Ibid.
583 Dudek, Historia Polityczna Polski, 423-424.
584 Polityka, 30 April 2005, World News Connection.
means of removing the post-communist SLD from office. Declaring that “the Civic Platform (PO) and the Law and Justice (PiS) are the only groups capable of effectively competing with the left and winning,” the two parties ran together on joint lists called POPiS in the local elections of 2002.587 In the run-up to the 2005 elections, there were widespread expectations in the media and among observers of the political scene that the PO and PiS would form a coalition government.588 This generally held belief persisted despite the parties’ disagreements on a number of policy issues, including attitudes toward the EU.

The expectations that the PO and PiS would be in a position to form the next government were fueled by the precipitous decline in the fortunes of the SLD. A flurry of corruption scandals combined with Poland’s ongoing economic malaise and stubbornly high unemployment rate to throw the post-communists into what appeared to be a terminal tailspin. The corruption scandals not only implicated various SLD functionaries but even reached up to Prime Minister Leszek Miller himself, although many of the allegations were not conclusively proven in court at the time.589 The result was turmoil in the government and within the SLD itself. Miller was forced to resign in 2004 and was replaced by Marek Belka. The same year, the SLD fell apart when a group of Sejm deputies from the SLD and UP abandoned their parties to establish the Social Democracy of Poland (SdPl).590

Another group in the SLD took part in the first major attempt to bridge the regime divide since the failed UP project. The leaders of the UW and several key members of the SLD decided to join together to create the Democratic Party (PD). Promoting itself as a “centrist” formation, the PD was led by Władysław Frasyniuk and Tadeusz Mazowiecki of the UW along with Jerzy Hausner of the SLD. While the party’s creation represented a milestone of sorts, the decision was still marked by strong reticence on the part of many

590 This group included Andrzej Celiński, the former Solidarity activist who had joined the SLD in the 1990s.
in the post-Solidarity UW camp. UW activists insisted on a very selective approach to admitting former post-communist SLD members into the new party, and suggested that they would abandon the project if certain post-communists were allowed into the PD. The PD was, after all, not a merger of the post-communist SLD, which continued to exist as a separate party, and the post-Solidarity UW. Rather, it was a bid to create a new party involving some centrist elements of the former communist SLD. The bulk of the party consisted, in fact, of former UW activists. In any case, the new party had an immediate impact on the political scene, registering a strong 12 per cent support in an early opinion poll released a week after the party was publicly launched.

The PD’s creation was greeted with cool hostility by the other post-opposition parties, with Jarosław Kaczyński of the PiS describing it as a “cabaret with sad overtones” and the PO’s Jan Maria Rokita saying “the more of [the SLD Prime Minister] Belka’s ministers join the Freedom Union [UW], the deeper and gloomier will be the UW’s crisis.” This is not surprising, considering the fact that the new party was perceived as vying for some of the same liberal segments of the electorate as the PO in particular, and that it was attempting to break down the regime divide which was still serving the post-Solidarity PO and PiS well in defining their agenda as opposed to the governing post-communist SLD. Moreover, there were reports that some disgruntled PO members at the local level were drifting into the newly formed PD, reportedly out of frustration at their party’s drift to “the right” and toward a post-election coalition with the conservative PiS. Nevertheless, the unity of the PO’s upper ranks and parliamentary caucus appeared to be largely unaffected by the creation of the PD in 2005, with relatively few incidents of party switching during this period.

**Party switching**

Following the model outlined in chapter 4, an examination of party switching in the 2001-2005 session of parliament should reveal a decline in the incidence of party

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591 Polish News Bulletin, 8 March 2005. One UW member, for instance, said: “If President Kwaśniewski fills in the declaration and is admitted, I will have to leave.” Another was quoted as saying: “This party will not serve as a lifeboat for the Democratic Left Alliance.”
594 Ibid.
switching among the post-Solidarity parties. With the divergent conservative and liberal
post-opposition parties in opposition together, as they were between 1993 and 1997, and
now once again between 2001 and 2005, party switching should be less frequent in the
absence of the need to agree on specific policies and bills. In fact, if the post-communist
party is in power, then the post-opposition parties may even exhibit a tendency to
coalesce in an effort to mount a united front against the “communists.” Coalescence is
facilitated in this case because, while in opposition, parties do not need to commit to and
defend major policy initiatives, as they do when in government. Policy considerations,
and their consequences for party switching and cohesion, are more prominent when the
post-opposition parties are in government together.

An examination of the numbers indicates that while there were numerous cases of
party switching in the Sejm during the 2001-2005 session of parliament, for the first time
since 1991, the vast majority of them did not involve members of the post-Solidarity
parties. Out of the total 129 Sejm deputies who switched their affiliation during the
session, only 11 were originally elected on the ticket of the two post-Solidarity parties,
PO and PiS.\textsuperscript{595} Out of those 11 cases of party switching, nine came out of the post-
Solidarity liberal PO camp and two left the post-Solidarity conservative PiS camp. All
but one of the cases of switching in the PO involved a group of former SKL members
who decided to abandon the party soon after the elections. Coming early in the electoral
term, this incident of collective switching was framed by its initiators as an effort to form
a new unifying project for the post-Solidarity “centre-right.” The fact that this effort came
early in the term reflects the uncertainty surrounding the new PO, and to a certain extent
PiS, immediately after the 2001 elections. At this point, they were both relatively new
post-Solidarity formations facing a powerful and popular post-communist SLD. It was
not entirely clear that PO and PiS would be able to construct a strong enough alternative
or pair of alternatives to the SLD, despite their respectable showing in the 2001 elections.

\textsuperscript{595} The total of 129 party switchers in 2001-2005 does not include the 148 deputies who remained in the
SLD after the departure of the UP deputies from the group, even though they are recorded in the table as
having “switched” from the SLD-UP coalition into the SLD. These deputies essentially remained in their
party, the SLD. A similar argument might be made about the 11 UP deputies who decided to set up a
separate faction in parliament despite having run on the SLD-UP ticket in the 2001 elections. Nevertheless,
in the latter case, the decision to create a separate UP faction in the Sejm is closer to the act of switching
out of a pre-existing faction and those 11 deputies have therefore been included in the total number of party
switchers for the 2001-2005 Sejm session.
Later, however, as both PO and PiS started to rise in public opinion polls, and as the SLD began to unravel in the face of corruption scandals, the position of these new post-Solidarity parties strengthened. This is reflected in the fact that there were no further significant cases of party switching out of either the PO or PiS before the 2005 elections.

A closer examination of two cases of party switching that affected PO in the early portion of the 2001-2005 session of the Sejm further illustrates this point. First, soon after the 2001 elections, the PO went through an internal debate between its liberal-conservative and liberal wings. In the course of these discussions, Maciej Płażyński, a former AWS member who represented a more conservative approach, stepped down and the leadership was assumed by Donald Tusk, a former leader of the Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD) known for his pro-market liberal views. While Płażyński eventually left the PO to sit in parliament as an independent member, these internal difficulties did not trigger a bout of party switching, demonstrating Tusk’s ability to unite the party as a central platform for challenging the post-communist SLD’s hold on power.

The other major case of party switching that afflicted PO during this period involved a larger number of deputies but nevertheless also ended up underscoring just how unified the party was to become as the chief representative of the post-Solidarity liberal wing. As noted above, eight deputies representing the former SKL decided to bolt from the PO to form their own parliamentary faction soon after the 2001 elections. Later, in January 2002, this group joined forces with the non-parliamentary Polish Accord of Christian Democrats (PPChD). Together these two formations established a new entity called the Conservative-People’s Party-New Polish Movement (SKL-RNP). Led by Artur Balazs, a political traveler who had run on the ticket of numerous post-Solidarity formations since 1990, the new SKL-RNP promoted itself as a party that would “unite the centre-right.” Like other such efforts in the past, this latest post-Solidarity unification project proved to be a failure. The inability of SKL-RNP to get off the ground was a testimony to the strength of PO and PiS as the chief new representatives of the two liberal and conservative strands of the former Solidarity movement. Indeed, many former SKL activists, such as Rokita, refused to join Balazs’s project on the grounds that they

had already committed to PO, while others who had joined him would later return to PO or join PiS. These developments underscore the fact that both PO and PiS had relatively large and united factions in parliament following the 2001 elections. They were thus able to fill the post-Solidarity political space and reap the rewards of the SLD’s implosion while in government between 2001 and 2005.

Table 6.4
Party switching in Polish Sejm (2001-2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party factions 2001</th>
<th>No. of deputies 2001</th>
<th>Factions into which deputies switched (-)</th>
<th>Factions from which deputies switched (+)</th>
<th>No. of deputies 2005</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>SLD (-148)</td>
<td>SRP (+2)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>SdPl (-32)</td>
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<td>UP (-11)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>56</td>
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<td>MN</td>
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New Parties and Factions Created During 2001-2005 Sejm

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<td>-</td>
<td>PO (+5) 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RKN</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>LPR (+4) 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>LPR (+3) 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROP</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>LPR (+3) 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RP</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>SRP (+2) 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LPR (+1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>SLD-UP (+21) 37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SRP (+9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LPR (+3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PO (+3)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PiS (+1)</td>
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Acronyms:
SLD-UP – Democratic Left Alliance-Labour Union
PO – Civic Platform
PiS – Law and Justice
PSL – Polish People’s Party
SRP – Self Defense of the Polish Republic
LPR – League of Polish Families
SKL – Conservative-People’s Party
DO – Native Home
RKN – Catholic-National Movement
PP – Polish Accord
ROP – Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland
RP – Patriotic Movement
MN – German Minority coalition
The 2005 elections

The electoral year of 2005 was unusual in Poland in that both parliamentary and presidential elections were held the same year and just a few weeks apart. Public opinion polls had shown for many months ahead of the September 2005 parliamentary vote that PO and PiS would be the two dominant winners in the elections. PO, in fact, had led in opinion polls since the end of 2003, with PiS rising to challenge it for the top spot in the spring of 2005.\(^{598}\) It was also widely expected in the media and among observers of Poland’s political scene that these two latest incarnations of post-Solidarity politics would form a coalition government after the fall elections.\(^{599}\) Leading officials from both parties repeatedly and publicly confirmed their intentions of forming a governing coalition together. Just two days before the September parliamentary elections, for example, PO’s Donald Tusk said he could not imagine that PiS and PO would not form a coalition after the vote.\(^{600}\) In that sense, the two parties were determined to re-create the post-Solidarity coalitions of previous years. Indeed, the parties ensured that their Solidarity roots were on full display in 2005, which happened to be the 25\(^{th}\) anniversary of the foundation of the original Solidarity trade union movement in 1980. The leading figures of both parties took part in the celebrations and Tusk even published a book that year called *Solidarity and Pride*.

In addition to their common roots and their stated intentions of forming a governing coalition together, PiS and PO also shared a number of important policy preferences. Both parties, for instance, opposed changes to the abortion law and the introduction of civil unions for gay couples.

Nevertheless, there were significant differences, both in policy substance and political style. PiS had fashioned an image for itself as a fighter against what it characterized as the oligarchy of interests that had ruled Poland since the Roundtable Talks in 1989. Promising to smash this network of business and political groups that had supposedly perpetuated the interests of the former communist *nomenklatura*, PiS pledged

to introduce profound changes that would launch the Fourth Republic of Poland.\textsuperscript{601} To that end, the party promised to toughen lustration laws, crack down on corruption, vigorously enforce measures aimed at outlawing gambling and prostitution, hold a referendum on whether to reinstate capital punishment, and strengthen the state.\textsuperscript{602} PiS also presented itself as an advocate of a “social” Poland, calling for increases in social and family benefits. Finally, it sought to appeal to religious social conservatives. As mayor of Warsaw, for example, PiS presidential candidate Lech Kaczyński banned a gay rights demonstration in 2005.\textsuperscript{603} These moves gained PiS the support of the radical Catholic broadcaster Radio Maryja. Crucially, the party was also supported by the Solidarity trade union.\textsuperscript{604}

While PO also promised changes that Tusk said would be so important that “historians in the future will perhaps call this the transition from the Third to the Fourth Polish Republic,”\textsuperscript{605} it adopted a far less radical stance than PiS toward the post-1989 era. PO was essentially a liberal party advocating less state involvement in the economy, a flat tax, the rapid privatization of some of the key assets and industries remaining in state hands, and means-tested social policy.\textsuperscript{606} PO was also not as radically focused on the decommunization issue, although PO’s Rokita did advocate the opening of all former communist secret service files.\textsuperscript{607}

While there were certainly areas of programmatic agreement between PiS and PO, PiS also shared a number of policy preferences with the SRP and LPR despite the apparently more radical approach of those two parties. PiS, SRP and LPR shared a tendency toward more active state intervention in the economy through social policy as well as a push for a new constitution granting increased powers to the presidency. Furthermore, PiS and LPR shared an emphasis on Christian values and more thoroughgoing decommunization measures. At the same time, the LPR and SRP adopted

\textsuperscript{601} “Lo, a New Republic?” Transitions Online, 26 September 2005.
\textsuperscript{603} Millard, “Poland’s Politics,” p. 1023.
\textsuperscript{604} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{605} Rzeczpospolita, 22 August 2005, World News Connection.
\textsuperscript{606} See the table of party positions on these and other issues during the 2005 election campaign in Millard, “Poland’s Politics,” 1018-1021.
\textsuperscript{607} Ibid, p. 1017.
an openly hostile attitude toward the European Union, which extended far beyond the milder Euro-skeptic approach of PiS.\textsuperscript{608}

In the elections, voters seemed to swing toward the parties promising a more radical break with the recent past, allowing PiS to outpace the more liberal PO and win a solid victory in the elections. In addition, the relatively strong showing of the LPR and SRP indicated that the Sejm would feature a more radicalized political atmosphere (see Table 6.5).

Following the elections, PiS and PO launched negotiations on a potential coalition government, but any real decision on a future cabinet was effectively put off until after the presidential election, in which the PiS and PO candidates were also the front-runners. PiS did decide, however, to nominate Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz to the post of prime minister rather than PiS leader Jarosław Kaczyński. This was done in order, it was said, to avoid damaging the chances of Kaczyński’s twin brother, Lech Kaczyński, in the presidential campaign. The presidential campaign accentuated the programmatic and rhetorical divide between the post-Solidarity conservative PiS and the post-Solidarity liberal PO.\textsuperscript{609}

The first round of the presidential vote (held just two weeks after the parliamentary elections) saw PO’s Donald Tusk emerge as the leader with 36.3 per cent of the vote, followed by PiS candidate Lech Kaczyński with 33.1 per cent. For the run-off between the top two candidates, however, Kaczyński managed to secure the backing the SRP and PSL. Riding this wave of support and voter demand for a radical break, Kaczyński prevailed in the second round, winning 54 per cent of the vote compared with 46 per cent for Tusk.

With PiS now in control of the presidency as well as the largest faction in the Sejm, the political landscape seemed to change. Despite their previous stated intentions and ongoing negotiations between PO and PiS on a coalition government, the two parties were unable to come to an agreement. In the Sejm, PiS refused to support the PO candidate for speaker, preferring instead to push one of its own members into the post with the help of other parties in the lower house. Later, PiS also blocked the election of a

\textsuperscript{608} Ibid, 1018-1022.
PO member to the deputy speaker’s position in the Senate. The PO leadership accused PiS of quietly forging a coalition with the SRP and LPR.\footnote{PAP, 26 October 2005, World News Connection.} Added to these problems were disputes between the two parties over cabinet posts.

Although much of the tension between PiS and PO seemed to be related to power politics and the uneven standing of the two parties following the elections, the parties also pointed to deep divisions over policy as a sticking point in the talks. One of the PO’s leading economic experts, former central bank charwoman Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, pointed to sharp differences between the parties over the budget, taxation, the status of the central bank, health care, decentralization and even the European Union, adding that it would take a “superhuman effort” to overcome those differences and find a “compromise program.”\footnote{Polish Radio 1, 28 October 2005, World News Connection.} But PO leaders remained unconvinced that the PiS leadership wanted to work on finding such a compromise.

Of course, policy differences between the post-Solidarity liberal and conservative wings—now represented by PO and PiS—had always existed.\footnote{In the past, in fact, they had been somewhat deeper. The UD, and its successor the UW, had both pro-market liberal and social liberal dimensions, whereas the PO emphasized only the former dimension. What had happened, of course, was that the social liberal wing had remained in the UW when the PO was formed. By 2005, that social liberal wing had transformed itself into the Democratic Party (PD), which had not managed to clear the threshold in the 2005 elections.} And yet, in the past, the post-Solidarity predecessors to the PO and PiS had always found some way of cobbling together governing coalitions in the face of a large and influential post-communist SLD. What had changed in 2005, of course, was that the once-powerful SLD had been reduced to the status of a minor party in the Sejm. Moreover, the success of the interventionist SRP and the socially conservative LPR had opened up new possibilities for the post-Solidarity conservatives in the Sejm. No longer did the post-Solidarity conservatives feel forced to enter into a coalition with the post-Solidarity liberals as a means of countering a large post-communist formation. Instead, PiS now had the political space as well as the potential allies in parliament to back the longstanding legislative goals of the post-Solidarity conservatives, including a thoroughgoing decommunization, an \textit{etatist} economic program, and a social policy based on Christian values. And for the first time since the collapse of communism, these initiatives could be achieved without the
necessity of compromising with the post-Solidarity liberals. In other words, the post-Solidarity conservatives, led by the Kaczyński brothers and their allies from the former ZChN, were finally masters in their own government.

The PO, for its part, found itself confined to the opposition benches, despite having achieved the best electoral result to date for the post-Solidarity liberals. For the first time since the early 1990s, one part of the post-Solidarity movement was in opposition together with the post-communist SLD. The failure of the party to win in either of the two elections of 2005 fueled speculation that it might fall apart as previous incarnations of post-Solidarity parties had done in the past. Party activists debated whether the PO should try to reach out to the PiS once more or whether it should focus on the next elections and fashion itself as a clear liberal alternative to the PiS. Beyond that question, the PO also found itself needing to clearly differentiate its position from that of the post-communist SLD. Once again, like post-Solidarity liberal formations before it, PO leaders underscored the existence of a “historical division” between itself and the post-communist SLD. But while the regime divide was still there, it no longer defined the political landscape. The post-communist SLD was no longer a force to be reckoned with. Instead, the focus was now on the competition between the governing PiS and the opposition PO. For the first time since the brief and ill-fated Olszewski government of 1992, the post-Solidarity conservative and liberal streams were not in government or opposition together. They could now focus on shoring up their support and developing separate programmatic profiles.

Table 6.5 – Poland – 2005 Parliamentary elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law and Justice (PiS)</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Platform (PO)</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Defense of the Polish Republic (SRP)</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

613 The fleeting Olszewski government of 1992 was also a post-Solidarity conservative administration, but unlike PiS in 2005, it did not have potential partners in parliament to create majority backing for specific conservative legislative initiatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>League of Polish Families (LPR)</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Peasant Party (PSL)</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Democracy of Poland (SdPL)</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party (PD)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janusz Korwin-Mikke Platform</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic Movement (RP)</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Labor Party</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Minority (MN)</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish National Party (PPN)</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native House (DO)</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrum</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-Poland Civic Coalition (OKO)</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Initiative of the Republic of Poland</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Confederation - Dignity and Work (PK-GiP)</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Rebirth of Poland (NOP)</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Minority of Silesia (MNS)</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Party (SP)</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Rescuers (SR)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Post-communist parties are indicated in red; post-opposition parties in blue.*  
Source: Obwieszczenie państwowej komisji wyborczej z dnia 26 września 2001 r. Dziennik Ustaw, Nr 109, poz. 1186.

*The PiS governments 2005-2007*

The PiS minority government under Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz formally assumed the reins of power toward in November 2005. Most of the ministries went to PiS members, but a number of independents were also given cabinet posts, including a couple of individuals who were close to the PO. Nevertheless, the PO, along with the post-communist SLD, voted against the government’s investiture. Instead, the PiS minority government was brought into existence with the support of votes from PSL, LPR and SRP.
But this government was to prove short-lived. The cabinet’s difficulties in getting its first budget through parliament a few weeks later convinced PiS that it needed a stable source of support in the Sejm. This led, first, to a “stabilization” pact with the LPR and SRP in February of 2006, and later that year, to an outright governing coalition with those two parties. Initially, PiS had invited all of the opposition parties in the Sejm—with the exception, naturally, of the post-communist SLD—to sign a sort of temporary political ceasefire agreement to enable the government to push through certain key pieces of legislation. This offer, however, was rejected by the PO, further underscoring the deterioration in relations between the two post-Solidarity parties. Then, once the PSL had also declined to sign on to the deal, PiS found itself relying on the two extremist formations in the Sejm for support.

Nevertheless, the pact afforded little stability to the government, leading PiS to invite the LPR and SRP directly into a governing coalition in the spring of 2006. The leaders of the two smaller parties were each appointed as deputy prime ministers in the new coalition cabinet, with LPR leader Roman Giertych gaining the additional post of education minister and SRP leader Andrzej Lepper taking agriculture and rural development.615

The coalition of PiS, SRP and LPR was to be a stormy one. By the summer of 2006, PiS leader Jarosław Kaczyński moved into the cabinet to replace Marcinkiewicz as prime minister. Marcinkiewicz was widely seen as a member of the “moderate” wing of PiS and he had been emerging as a popular politician in his own right. Observers posited different theories about his removal,616 but if nothing else, the switch in the prime minister’s office signaled a more direct role for the PiS leader in cabinet politics.

In any case, the coalition government’s time in power, whether under Marcinkiewicz or Kaczyński, was marked by numerous resignations and intra-coalition disputes. Lepper, for example, was removed from cabinet in 2006, only to be re-invited back in when it became apparent that the government would fall without his party’s support.

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615 SRP also received two other ministries and LRP one other ministry. See Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz, “Poland,” 2007, for details on the cabinet.
616 Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz (2007) see it as a natural result response from PiS at the fact that the leaders of the other two coalition partners were already in cabinet; Szczerbiak (2008) argues that it resulted more from Kaczyński’s reaction to Marcinkiewicz’s growing popularity and political power.
Despite these ongoing internal tensions, the PiS governments of 2005-2007 vigorously pursued the party’s agenda of decommunization and anti-corruption measures. The government and Sejm passed a lustration law that dramatically expanded the scope of vetting in the country, including all public officials, academics, schools principals, board members of majority state-owned companies, judges and lawyers, and journalists from both public and private media. People in these designated categories, numbering an estimated 700,000 people, had to submit an affidavit confirming whether they had collaborated in any form with communist-era security forces. Refusing to submit it or lying on an affidavit would result in dismissal. The government also established the Central Anti-corruption Bureau and revamped the military intelligence service.

Some initiatives failed, however, such as a move spear-headed by a group of parliamentarians from PiS and LPR to enshrine an article that would have prevented abortions in the constitution. The government also had to deal with strikes and demonstrations by unions, as well as a Constitutional Tribunal decision to strike down various elements of its lustration law. Members of the government also had to step down amid insinuations or allegations of corruption or communist-era collaboration.

Ultimately, though, the tumultuous government finally met its end in the summer of 2007, when Prime Minister Kaczyński dismissed all of the SRP and LPR members in his cabinet. Since the minority PiS government could not possibly secure enough support in the Sejm to continue governing, the Sejm voted to dissolve itself (with the support of deputies from PiS, as well as PO, SLD and PSL), and new elections were called for October 2007.

The PiS governments 2005-2007 – policy issues
Since the PO represented only part of the post-Solidarity liberal camp, and also included a number of prominent liberal-conservatives, the differences between it and the post-Solidarity conservative PiS seemed somewhat less marked along the two key socio-cultural and decommunization dimensions of competition. On socio-cultural issues, for instance, PO tried to cultivate ties to the Catholic Church, favoured the existing

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617 The more socially liberal representatives of this tradition had stayed in the UW, which had transformed itself into the PD before the 2005 elections.
restrictions on abortion, and opposed civic unions for gay couples; on decommunization, likewise, the PO was in favour of instituting a more thorough lustration process.

Nevertheless, differences between the PO and PiS did exist in these areas and they emerged during the course of the 2005-2007 Sejm. In 2007, for instance, when the LPR pushed for a vote in the Sejm on a constitutional amendment that would have enshrined the protection of life from the moment of conception, the PO and PiS leaders found themselves on opposite sides of the debate. While Kaczyński had doubted the wisdom of opening up the issue—on the grounds that it would polarize society and benefit the liberal left—he publicly supported it. The PO’s Tusk, on the other hand, took the stand that the existing legal “compromise” on the issue was sufficient and recommended that his party not support the proposed constitutional changes. While both the PO and PiS were internally divided on the issue, most of the PO’s members supported their leader’s stand.618

In general, the PO’s social conservatism tended to be of a moderate, if not muted, character. The party tended to decry the “fundamentalism” of Radio Maryja, which supported the LPR and PiS. Instead, the PO attempted to cultivate public ties to liberal sections of the Church.619

While these differences were certainly not dramatic, they nevertheless had the effect of highlighting the differing historical roots of PO and PiS, in which the former was widely seen as the inheritor of the post-Solidarity liberal mantle. In fact, various observers framed the difference as an “organic” one between visions of a liberal Poland (as represented by PO) and a Poland of social solidarity (as represented by PiS).620

These differences were somewhat more in evidence on economic issues, with PO publicly favouring a smaller, fiscally prudent role for government against the PiS preference for a more interventionist government.621 Nevertheless, by the time of the 2007 early elections, PO had adjusted its image even in this area, adopting what some

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618 PAP, 13 April 2007, World News Connection.
620 This characterization is mentioned in Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz, “Poland,” p. 1244.
621 See, for example, the article by Mariusz Janicki and Wiesław Władysław Polityka, 4 December 2006, World News Connection.
observers termed a more catch-all profile. The change was evident in the party’s differing approaches toward the two budgets of the PiS-led governments. While the PO staked out an opposition position by voting against the first budget for 2006 (along with the post-communist SLD), it opted for a more pragmatic approach the following year, offering to support the 2007 budget in exchange for early elections. By 2007, then, the PO’s profile had altered from that of a programmatically pro-market liberal formation to that of a broad-based tent under which both pro-market and more socially oriented policy proposals could be advanced.

Indeed, in an analysis of the 2007 elections, Markowski found that even though PO was among the most pro-market parties in the Polish Sejm, the bulk of its voters placed themselves on the socialist/redistributive side of this competitive dimension. Markowski’s analysis of the Polish electorate show that voters of all parties had moved toward the socialist/redistributive side of the spectrum. In this context, then, PO still represented the most liberal of the options, even though the bulk of its electorate was located closer to the socialist/redistributive than the pro-market liberal side of this competitive dimension. It is also telling that in both 2005 and 2007, the post-communist SLD was the closest party to the PO on the economic dimension in 2005. In 2007, the LiD coalition, which was formed by the SLD and PD, was also very close to the PO on the economic dimension. This suggested that the old programmatic affinity between the post-Solidarity liberals and the post-communist SLD was alive and well in the 2000s, at least in the eyes of their electorates.

Nevertheless, the SLD was still behind the regime divide and was further discredited by the corruption plagued SLD-led governments of 2001–2005. And so, despite the potential commonalities between SLD and PO, the latter party’s strategic approach to national politics still involved steering clear of the post-communist SLD. During the 2006 mayoral contest in the city of Kraków, for instance, several leading PO members surprised observers by coming out in favour of the PiS candidate against an independent candidate associated with the LiD. Despite the animosity between PO and

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PiS leaders, then, the fact that the LiD coalition included the post-communist SLD was too much to take for the PO.\textsuperscript{624}

There were rumblings from in and around the PO that the leadership of the party was “leaning ever more clearly toward a coalition” with SLD after the next elections. These observations were propagated by former Senate Speaker Maciej Płażyński, a former PO member and founder of the party, and reportedly also Jan Maria Rokita from within PO, as a means of testing the waters for a potential splinter party.\textsuperscript{625} Polls cited by the daily \textit{Rzeczpospolita} even suggested such a new party had the potential to attract a substantial number of supporters.\textsuperscript{626} Nevertheless, the gambit did not work this time. First, PO did not in fact move toward crossing the regime divide and forming a coalition with SLD. Second, the PO was not in a coalition with an ideological opponent such as PiS and therefore did not have to make uncomfortable programmatic compromises as its predecessors in the UW had done with AWS. Instead, it was the largest opposition party in parliament with the potential of forming the next government. Under such conditions, PO was a better bet for post-Solidarity politicians of a liberal or moderately conservative bent who were interested in the potential of forming a government. And PiS had cornered the market for the more nationally conservative politicians. In fact, Płażyński ended up abandoning the project of creating yet another new post-Solidarity party to run for the Senate on the PiS ticket in 2007.

\textit{Party switching}

With the post-opposition conservatives in government and the post-opposition liberals in opposition, the model would suggest that the incidence of party switching would be relatively low during the 2005-2007 period. In the absence of the need to form a coalition government together and engage in the kinds of policy compromises that had led to spikes in party switching by disgruntled deputies during the previous post-Solidarity coalition governments, the two camps with divergent policy preferences should be able to coalesce into relatively stable political formations.

\textsuperscript{624} Polityka, 4 December 2006, World News Connection.
And, indeed, the 2005-2007 Sejm witnessed less party switching than any other electoral term in the post-communist history of Poland. This may be in part attributable to the fact that the term was cut in half by early elections, and so there was less time for party switching. In that sense, it is difficult to compare the 2005-2007 term to any previous term except for the first two terms after 1989.

Nevertheless, although it is impossible to say what might have happened had this Sejm lasted until regularly scheduled elections in 2009, the lack of party switching is still striking. After their tumultuous time in office between 2001 and 2005, the post-communist SLD and the PSL seemed to settle down after 2005, with none of the deputies from those two parties opting to switch allegiances—an almost unheard of feat for a party in Poland.

The post-Solidarity parties, for their part, saw a continuation of the trend from the previous electoral term as relatively few of their deputies chose to switch places. The benefits of a clear opposition stance were evident for PO, with only three of its deputies changing places. Even PiS, which had to manage an unruly coalition government for much of this period proved remarkably stable by Polish standards, as only eight of its Sejm deputies left the party. The results for these two parties match the trend from the previous Sejm session. Once again, as in 2001-2005, the post-Solidarity conservative (PiS) and post-Solidarity liberal (PO) were not in a coalition together. Moreover, for the first time since the brief government of Jan Olszewski in 1992, the post-Solidarity conservative and liberal forces were on opposite sides of the Sejm, with the former in government and the latter in opposition. Finally, after more than 15 years, the programmatic divisions between these two groups were reflected in the division of governmental and opposition roles in the Sejm.

For all its troubles in government, PiS managed to remain remarkably cohesive. This is even more striking given the unusually large size of the PiS faction in parliament. While there were some opponents of the PiS leadership’s decision to form a governing coalition with SRP and LPR, the party did not witness the kind of debilitating defections that previous post-Solidarity formations had experienced when ideologically
heterogeneous coalitions were formed with post-Solidarity liberals. PO, for its part, was even more stable in its role as the only post-Solidarity force in the opposition.

The chaotic nature of the PiS-SRP-LPR coalition was responsible for some of the switching. One example was the small group of disparate deputies from SRP, LPR, PiS and PO who set up the conservative Peasant National Movement (RLN). This fledgling party—led by one Jan Bestry who was declared to be the second worst deputy in the Sejm by the weekly *Polityka* in 2007 for failing to attend sessions or participate in voting—was formed in part by deputies from SRP who were frustrated with Andrzej Lepper’s leadership of the party. The one deputy from a post-Solidarity party who ended up in the RLN was Krzysztof Szyga, who had been expelled from the PO two days before the 2005 elections after he was convicted on charges of libel.

The most significant instance of switching to affect the post-Solidarity parties involved six deputies who left PiS to form the Republican Right (PR). This group, led by Marek Jurek, a former leader of the Christian conservative ZChN, left PiS immediately after the Sejm failed to pass a constitutional amendment that would have banned abortions. Jurek argued that PiS had not fully backed the proposed amendment and that it would no longer be possible to pursue pro-life policies inside the party.

There were individual instances of deputies crossing the floor between the post-Solidarity parties. The PO’s Andrzej Sośnierz and Piotr Cybulski were critics of their party’s stance on the possibility of a PiS-PO governing coalition. Sośnierz, who had been touted as a leading candidate for the post of health minister in a potential PiS-PO government, was expelled from the party after he criticized the PO leadership for not closing a coalition deal with PiS. He later joined PiS and was appointed to head the National Health Fund. Cybulski, a member of the more conservative wing in the PO, left the party and spent the rest of the Sejm session moving back and forth between membership in PiS and RLN.

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630 PAO, 10 October 2006, Word News Connection.
Another separate instance of defection from the PO involved local causes. Czesław Fiedorowicz left the PO to sit as an independent because of a dispute over personnel policies in his local PO organization in Lubuska region.\textsuperscript{631}

PiS also saw some of its deputies abandon it during the 2005-2007 term. Antoni Mężydło, a former member of the dissident KOR organization, left PiS in 2007 to sit as an independent, suggesting the party was under the influence of radical Father Tadeusz Rydzyk.\textsuperscript{632} Mężydło later ran on the PO ticket in the 2007 elections. Stanisława Okularczyk, a deputy minister of agriculture in Marcinkiewicz’s government, left the PiS and later joined the PO, complaining that lobbyists and interest groups were affecting the work of the ministry.\textsuperscript{633}

Another PiS deputy, Ryszard Kaczyński, was removed from the PiS parliamentary caucus after he was charged with drunk drinking in May 2006.\textsuperscript{634} He later joined RLN but finished the term as an independent.

Taken together, these individual cases of party switching demonstrate how much the post-Solidarity political landscape had changed. The fact that there were so few instances of party switching reflects the changes brought on by the new political reality that enabled PiS to run the government, while PO remained in opposition.

Table 6.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party factions</th>
<th>No. of deputies 2005</th>
<th>Factions into which deputies switched (-)</th>
<th>Factions from which deputies switched (+)</th>
<th>No. of deputies 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PiS</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>PR (-6)</td>
<td>SRP (+4)</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PO (-1)</td>
<td>PO (+1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent (-2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{631} “Czesław Fiedorowicz - Poseł złota rączka,” \textit{Gazeta Lubuska}, 18 March 2009.
\textsuperscript{632} „Mężydło o odejściu z PiS: Nie zapisywał się do partii o. Tadeusza Ryzyka,” \textit{Gazeta Wyborcza}, 8 September 2007.
\textsuperscript{633} PAP, 10 March 2006, Word News Connection.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PO</strong></td>
<td>133</td>
<td>RLN (-1)</td>
<td>PiS (+1)</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PiS (-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent (-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SRP</strong></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>PiS (-4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RLN (-3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PSL (-2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent (-6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SLD</strong></td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LPR</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>RLN (-3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent (-2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PSL</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>SRP (+2)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MN</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**New Parties and Factions Created During 2005-2007 Sejm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RLN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>SRP (+3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LPR (+3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PO (+1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PR</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>PiS (+6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>SRP (+6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LPR (+2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PiS (+2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PO (+1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acronyms:
PO – Civic Platform
PiS – Law and Justice
SRP – Self Defense of the Polish Republic
SLD – Democratic Left Alliance
LPR – League of Polish Families
PSL – Polish People’s Party
RLN – Peasant National Movement
PR – Republican Right
MN – German Minority coalition

### Table 6.7 – Poland – 2007 Parliamentary elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civic Platform (PO)</td>
<td>41.51</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law and Justice (PiS)</td>
<td>32.11</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left and Democracy (LiD)</td>
<td>13.15</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Peasant Party (PSL)</td>
<td>8.91</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Defense of the Republic of Poland (SO)</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>League of Polish Families (LPR)</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Labor Party (PPP)</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Party (PK)</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Minority</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic Self-Defense (SOP)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post opposition parties are indicated in blue. The Left and Democracy coalition was composed of both post-opposition parties (Democratic Party) and post-communist parties (Democratic Left Alliance and Social Democracy of Poland).

Hungary

The 1998 parliamentary elections

The approaching May 1998 elections saw the Hungarian political scene becoming increasingly crystallized around two main options.

On one side stood the post-communist MSZP, which was leading in the polls and hoping to set up a government on its own without having to rely on the support of SZDSZ to form a majority. The post-opposition SZDSZ, for its part, declared that it would not enter into a coalition with the MSZP again if the latter won a majority on its own. Nevertheless, despite such attempts to distance themselves from each other, the two parties did run some joint candidates in the single-mandate races and could be expected to form a coalition government after the vote if necessary. The MSZP emphasized its economic record and the stabilization of Hungary’s fiscal situation.

On the other side, stood the post-opposition conservative parties – Fidesz-MPP with its ally, the MDF. In an ideal world, Fidesz was hoping to win enough seats to be able to form a two-party coalition with the MDF. In addition, some members of the Christian Democratic Alliance ran on the Fidesz-MPP ticket. Fidesz promised a number of socially oriented policies to ease the burden of transition, such as lowering taxes, restoring the universality of child benefits and eliminating university tuition. The party also pledged support for small business and said it would better defend ethnic Hungarian minorities in neighboring states and the “national interest” in membership talks with NATO and the EU. Fidesz-MPP’s campaign slogan calling for “more than a government change but less than systemic change” was targeted at breaking what it described as the post-communist elite networks that were present in the economy.

By the time of the 1998 elections, then, the erstwhile regime divide separating the ex-opposition parties from the ex-communist formation had now been replaced by a new division pitting a social-liberal group of parties against a conservative group, and in fact, separating the former opposition parties from each other in the issue space. Nevertheless, Fidesz and MDF continued to politicize the regime divide in an effort to assume the mantle of the only truly “anti-communist” portion of the former opposition. In that sense,

636 Ibid.
Fidesz made an effort to refashion the old regime divide as a means of equating the SZDSZ and the ex-communist MSZP, while reinventing itself and its allies as the “real” anti-communist opposition. Thus, the divide between the formerly allied liberal parties of Fidesz and SZDSZ now seemed just as gaping as the old regime divide. In the run-up to the elections, the leaderships of both parties had ruled out the possibility of any coalition between them after the 1998 vote.637

To be sure, aside from these two big blocs, there was a third option – the Smallholders. While the Smallholders and their populist leader József Torgyán had faded from their earlier popularity in the polls, they were expected to clear the 5 per cent threshold to enter parliament. As a populist conservative movement, the Smallholders were potential allies for Fidesz, but the latter party sought to dispel suggestions that they would form a coalition with Torgyán’s party.

In the end, Fidesz-MPP came out on top, thanks in large part to a particularly strong showing in the second round of the single-mandate races (see Table 6.2). Fidesz also received backing from all of the parties on the conservative side of the spectrum in the second round. The Smallholders withdrew a number of their candidates in the second round to back Fidesz and the far-right Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP) also supported Fidesz.638

638 Lomax, “The 1998 Elections,” p. 121. In the elections, MIÉP managed to cross the threshold to enter parliament for the first time. Despite gaining only 14 seats, one short of the minimum for forming an official faction in parliament according to the Standing Orders, the Constitutional Court ruled that restriction invalid and MIÉP was permitted to set up a faction.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>% Party List Vote</th>
<th>Total Party List Seats</th>
<th>1st Round Single-Member (%)</th>
<th>2nd Round Single-Member (%)</th>
<th>Single-Member Seats</th>
<th>Total Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)</td>
<td>32.25</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>29.82</td>
<td>43.04</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIDESZ-Hungarian Civic Union</td>
<td>28.18</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>12.86</td>
<td>24.07</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIDESZ-MDF joint list</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>21.17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Smallholders’ Party (FKGP)</td>
<td>13.78</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10.21</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ)</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP)</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers’ Party (MP)</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Democratic Peoples’ Party (KDNP)</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Democratic Peoples’ Party (MDNP)</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USZM</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Smallholders Party (EKGP)</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Civil Alliance-Entrepreneurs Party (LPSZ-VP)</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Democratic Alliance (NDSZ)</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Green Party (MZP)</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASZ-SZDSZ joint candidate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASZ-FIDESZ-LPSZ-SZDSZ joint candidate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP-SZDSZ joint candidate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIDESZ-LPSZ</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Post-communist parties are indicated in red; post-opposition parties in blue.

The field of possible coalition partners that faced Fidesz after its victory in 1998 was relatively clear as far as policy preferences are concerned. They also confirmed the seemingly irrevocable parting of ways between the post-opposition parties, with Fidesz and MDF on one side and SZDSZ on the other.

By any measure of party platforms, Fidesz and SZDSZ were now on opposite sides of the ex-communist MSZP, while the MDF was quite firmly on the “right” side of the spectrum (see figures 6.6 to 6.8).

At the same time, the figures seem to indicate a striking closeness in the relative positions of the post-communist MSZP and Fidesz, particularly on economic issues but also on socio-cultural issues. In fact, the Fidesz electoral platform in 1998 was less pro-market than that of the post-communist MSZP (see Figure 6.7). To a certain extent, this reflects Fidesz’s move toward support for universal social benefits especially targeting middle-class families, as well as the party’s gradual abandonment of its earlier liberal stance on questions of individual autonomy. Finally, the Independent Smallholders (FKgP), while quite distant from the other parties on the economic dimension, did occupy a position close to Fidesz on the socio-cultural dimension.
The placement of parties on the socio-cultural dimension suggested that the obvious policy-based coalition would bring together Fidesz, MDF and FKGP. While MDF was not needed to form a minimum coalition, the electoral alliance between Fidesz and MDF, as well as the former party’s ultimate aim of integrating the conservative parties, meant that inviting MDF in to the coalition was a given. The economic dimension of competition made the picture muddier given FKGP’s significant policy distance from the rest of the parties as well as the fact that Fidesz was closer to MSZP on economic issues than it was to FKGP. Nevertheless, given the antipathy between the MSZP and Fidesz as well as the fact that the socio-cultural divide was the dominant dimension of electoral competition in Hungary, the coalition of Fidesz, FKGP and MDF made the most sense.

The fact that the regime divide had been breached by the SZDSZ in 1994 also eliminated that party from the Fidesz calculus regarding coalition partners, and significantly simplified the choice. While the FKGP was somewhat unpalatable and unpredictable as a coalition partner, a Fidesz-MDF-FKGP coalition at least had the benefit of a coherent national conservative narrative.

Figure 6.6
Hungary 1998 – Socio-cultural positions of parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SZDSZ</th>
<th>MSZP</th>
<th>MDF</th>
<th>MIÉP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-6.13</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>10.84</td>
<td>19.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Libertarianism  Fidesz  FKGP  Traditionalism
8.13 11.20

Source: Klingemann et al. 2006

The parties that emerged from the former anti-communist opposition are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; other parties in black.

Figure 6.7
Hungary 1998 – Party positions on economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>FKGP</th>
<th>Fidesz</th>
<th>MSZP</th>
<th>SZDSZ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-5.14</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>8.20</td>
<td>14.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>MDF</th>
<th>MIÉP</th>
<th>Market</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>10.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Klingemann et al. 2006

The parties that emerged from the former anti-communist opposition are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; other parties in black.

Figure 6.8
Hungary 1998 – Party positions on Left-Right scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>SZDSZ</th>
<th>MSZP</th>
<th>Fidesz</th>
<th>MDF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-2.93</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>7.71</td>
<td>19.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Left

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>FKGP</th>
<th>MIÉP</th>
<th>Right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>22.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Klingemann et al. 2006

The parties that emerged from the former anti-communist opposition are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; other parties in black.

By June 1998, Fidesz was able to form a coalition government with the MDF and Smallholders. Fidesz took 12 seats in the new cabinet, while the Smallholders got four and the MDF one. In exchange for their support, the Smallholders were given the authority to nominate a candidate for the next presidential elections, but Fidesz reserved the right of a veto over nominations. 640

The increasingly consolidated division of Hungarian politics into two poles pitting the MSZP-SZDSZ against Fidesz-MDF and their conservative allies was reflected in the local elections later that year in October 1998. Coalitions formed at the local level tended to fall into one of those two camps. In other words, the SZDSZ was finding it easier to work with the MSZP at the local level as well, just as Fidesz now found it easier to forge alliances with conservative parties at the local level.

Decommunization dimension
The approach to decommunization had become quite different between the post-opposition SZDSZ and Fidesz, confirming a yawning gap between the two parties on this key policy dimension. When Fidesz came to power in 1998, it framed itself as intending to achieve “more than a change in government” and this meant, in part, what its supporters described as the need to end the “post-communist structures” that had remained in place throughout the 90s. A former aide to Orbán described the whole process as an effort to “expunge the post-Communist set of values and start anew” by instilling a “new set of values,” which “would involve a certain degree of conflict.” Gyula Tellér, an erstwhile member of SZDSZ who had bolted to Fidesz in the mid-1990s, was somewhat more colourful when he framed it as an attempt to dissolve the “clotted structure.” This logic supported some of the Fidesz-led government’s efforts to centralize state control over different aspects of the economy and state administration, and institute a thoroughgoing changing of the guards.

The government also moved to alter the provisions of the screening law passed by the MSZP-SZDSZ government in 1996. The law was to have lapsed in 2000 but the Fidesz-led government extended it for another four years. It also expanded the number of

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641 Ibid, p. 418.
people who needed to be screened from less than 1,000 to some 17,000, including even local-level political party leaders.646

**Socio-cultural dimension**

The Fidesz-led government embarked on a number of major symbolic initiatives related to national identity. Among these were a series of initiatives connected to the millennial celebrations of the founding of Hungarian statehood in 1000. The government had the historic Hungarian Crown transferred from the national museum to the parliament building. It also attempted to amend the preamble to the Constitution to make reference to the Crown, but the opposition blocked the move. Instead, the government pushed a special law through parliament on the Crown.647

More serious changes involved the Fidesz-led government’s more assertive approach to the question of Hungarian-speaking minorities in neighboring countries. In 2001, the government introduced the Status Law, which offered ethnic Hungarians living in neighboring states access to some benefits within Hungary. The law gained the support of all parties in parliament except the SZDSZ, which opposed on the grounds that it was anti-European.648 While this law indicated a split in approach on a key question between the post-communist MSZP and the post-opposition SZDSZ, it once again confirmed the policy gulf on the socio-cultural dimension of competition between the SZDSZ and Fidesz. Moreover, the split on the Status Law between the MSZP and SZDSZ occurred while they were both in opposition, a time when the coalitional problem of coordination was not present.

**Economic-distributive dimension**

On the economy, the Fidesz-led government promoted a stronger role for the state. László Kövér, a leading member and founder of Fidesz and a minister in the 1998-2002 government, has argued that a post-communist state requires a degree of state

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intervention.\textsuperscript{649} To wit, the government fulfilled Fidesz’s promise to re-establish child benefits and eliminate tuition fees for university.\textsuperscript{650} In the spring of 2000, it also embarked on a grandiose-sounding effort called the Szechenyi plan, which was a “national development project” that was aimed at supporting and spurring “motor-way construction, housing construction, innovation, tourism, small and middle-size firm development, promotion of Hungarian enterprises’ contribution to international firms, regional development, and information technology.”\textsuperscript{651} The plan involved both public and private sector input.

\textit{Party developments}

The Fidesz-led coalition government of 1998-2002 was thus able to launch a number of significant initiatives to implement its pro-family, etatist, conservative and nationally oriented program. And while, not all the parties in government were free from internal turmoil, the task of governing went relatively smoothly from a policy perspective. The coalition government even secured the support of the far-right MIÉP for a number of its initiatives.

What internal conflict there was within and between the governing parties tended to reflect other issues. They were also not damaging to the unity of either post-opposition parties, Fidesz or MDF. The MDF elected a new leader, Ibolya Dávid, who was also a minister in the Fidesz-led government. Dávid launched an effort to create a common Christian-conservative platform with some of the conservative extra-parliamentary parties: the Hungarian Democratic People’s Party (MDNP)—the faction that had broken away from MDF in 1996—and the two splinter parties that had emerged from the old Christian Democrats (KDNP).\textsuperscript{652} Her efforts were not to meet with success, however, and the MDF remained within the orbit of Fidesz.

One interpretation in the literature has held the MDF’s decision to re-consider this initiative and remain loyal to Fidesz was related to its low standing in the public opinion polls and the unlikelihood of the MDF breaching the 5 per cent threshold to get in to

\textsuperscript{649} Interview with László Kövér, June 2006.
parliament in 2002 without riding on the coat-tails of Fidesz. More or less in line with this argument, others have suggested that the withering of electoral prospects for the smaller parties in Hungary (such as MDF) were in fact tied to the effects of the Hungarian electoral system and the power of the prime minister’s position.

While such arguments may certainly have played a role in the political calculus of individual parties or leaders, such as MDF and Dávid, the explanation ultimately cannot account for the dynamic competitive environment within which those decisions were made. The MDF was confronted with this decision in the context of a political party system that had been transformed by the SZDSZ decision to cross the regime divide in 1994, freeing up competitive space on the centre-right. This decision had also shaped the environment within which Fidesz continued and concluded its transformation into a conservative party.

Beyond this consideration, explanations of Hungarian politics that rely on public opinion poll support for parties or institutionally created difficulties for small parties fail to offer a convincing explanation for the actions of small parties that did attempt to run on their own. The MDF under Dávid might have decided in 2001 not to go it alone without Fidesz because of the dim prospects for the party, but why did the MDNP, MIÉP, Centrum and other such parties insist on attempting to go it alone? Some, such as MIÉP did make it into parliament in 1998 and others, such as Centrum, came awful close in 2006.

In addition, Fowler’s comparison of MDF and Fidesz relations during the 1998-2002 parliament with the disintegration of the Polish post-Solidarity parties, AWS and UW, in 1997-2001 is flawed. In the first place, the comparison is not between like entities. MDF and Fidesz were distinct parties in an electoral alliance. Neither of them fell apart or unraveled during 1998-2002. The disintegration of UW was the split of one distinct party, while the collapse of AWS amounted to the unraveling of a structured umbrella group that had many features of a distinct party.

In the end, the MDF and Fidesz did not fall apart nor did their coalition break up in part because they were in broad agreement in terms of policy preferences and in part

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653 See, for instance, Fowler, “Concentrated Orange,” p. 91.
because their alternative coalition choices were extremely limited. The Hungarian political party system had been restructured in such a way as to eliminate the distorting effects of the regime divide. Granted, it was still politicized, but the divide itself no longer cut across post-opposition parties with disparate policy preferences and it therefore no longer forced them to work together. The exact opposite was true in Poland, where the regime divide continued to compel post-Solidarity parties to partner with each other in ideologically incompatible coalitions. The tumultuous period in government of AWS and UW reflected that incompatibility and contrasted sharply with the relatively more compatible partnership of Fidesz and MDF. The low levels of party switching by Fidesz and MDF during the 1998-2002 period are a reflection of this as well (see Table 6.9).

As for the Smallholders, their fate mirrored that of their earlier period in government between 1990 and 1994. The party fractured when its leader, József Torgyán, was forced to resign from his post under pressure from the prime minister and amid a police investigation of his political secretary. Later, he was expelled from the party, taking some loyalists with him. Nevertheless, despite the fragmentation of the Smallholders, the remaining members of the party in parliament and cabinet continued to support the Fidesz-led government, as did some who had left the party. This underscored the nature of the dispute within the Smallholders as a leadership issue revolving around the volatile persona of Torgyán rather than a policy-based dispute with Fidesz. In fact, it was speculated that Fidesz had orchestrated the demise of Torgyán to solidify its own dominance as the linchpin on the conservative side of Hungarian politics.656


On the opposition side, the 1998-2002 electoral term saw a series of changes in the leadership of MSZP and SZDSZ, as they both responded to losing the 1998 elections and prepared for the 2002 vote. The SZDSZ went through a number of leaders over this period. There were periods in which some SZDSZ figures, such as Gábor Demszyky, wanted to position the party more firmly in the centre between the two big Fidesz and MSZP poles of Hungarian politics.657 But this phase ran in to opposition from within the party as well as the substantial differences in policy preferences between the SZDSZ and
Fidesz. By the end of the electoral term in 2002, the SZDSZ remained close to the post-communist MSZP for all intents and purposes.\(^{658}\)

As in the case of its post-opposition counterparts MDF and Fidesz, SZDSZ experienced almost no party switching in the 1998-2002 parliament, losing only one deputy during that period.

The low numbers of party switching confirm the stability of the Hungarian political party system in this phase, as the three post-opposition parties benefited from being able to present coherent policy preferences that were undistorted by the regime divide.

Table 6.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party factions</th>
<th>No. of deputies 1998</th>
<th>Factions into which deputies switched (-)</th>
<th>Factions from which deputies switched (+)</th>
<th>No. of deputies 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fidesz</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>MSZP (-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>143*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent (-3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSZP</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>Fidesz (+1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>136*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MIÉP (+1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MIÉP (-1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent (-14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FKGP</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Fidesz (-2)</td>
<td>MIÉP (+1)</td>
<td>33*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SZDSZ</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Independent (-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDF</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2002 parliamentary elections

The 2002 parliamentary elections saw the tension between the main parties of Hungary’s increasingly bipolar political party system reach new highs. The rhetoric and symbolic politics increased in intensity, with MSZP politicians warning of the potential for a “right-wing dictatorship” while Fidesz attempted to frame the election as akin to the 1990 vote that had ushered in the regime change from communism to democracy.659

Aside from their efforts to present the election as a stark choice, the two parties brought out familiar policy proposals. Fidesz cast itself as a defender of the national interests and promised state support for families with children as well as for infrastructure investment. MSZP promised improvements to the social security system and an end to what it described as the divisive politics of the Fidesz government years.660

The other two post-opposition parties were in essentially the same position as they had been in 1998. Once again, while the SZDSZ ran alone in the election, it was seen as aligned with the MSZP. It fiercely attacked Fidesz and was expected to join a governing coalition with the MSZP if possible.661 The MDF ran in an electoral alliance with Fidesz.

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The far-right MIÉP created a stir when its leader, István Csurka, promised to support Fidesz candidates in the second round of the single-mandate races. The initial lack of a clear response from Fidesz on whether it would consider joining forces with MIÉP after the election led to fierce criticism of extremism from the SZDSZ and MSZP.

A new party called Centrum also emerged. Created by a group of former members of the KDNP and MDNP after the latter two parties had failed to gain representation in the last parliament. The MDNP had emerged as a splinter party from the MDF and so the Centrum had some connection to the post-opposition parties. The leader of Centrum was Mihaly Kupa, who had served as finance minister in the MDF-led coalition government of the early 1990s. Another new party formed by an ex-MSZP member, Matyas Szuros, also ran in this election for the first time.

In the end, only Fidesz-MDF, MSZP and SZDSZ won seats in parliament, with the extremist MIÉP failing to cross the threshold by a hair’s breadth. The joint Fidesz-MDF ticket actually won the most seats in parliament, but the combined seat total of MSZP and SZDSZ was larger, opening the way for a return to power of those two parties. The coalition choice was even more obvious than it had been in 1998, when Fidesz had set up a government with MDF and FKGP. Indeed, András Bozóki has noted that the two parties had never before seemed “so close spiritually and emotionally, despite their contrary origins.”

On 26 May, just slightly over a month after the second round of the elections, the MSZP-SZDSZ coalition government under Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy received the parliament’s seal of approval.

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Table 6.10 – Hungary – 2002 Parliamentary elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>% Party List Vote</th>
<th>Total Party List Seats</th>
<th>1st Round Single-Member (%)</th>
<th>2nd Round Single-Member (%)</th>
<th>Single-Member Seats</th>
<th>Total Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIDESZ-Hungarian Civic Union- MDF Joint list</td>
<td>41.07</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>39.43</td>
<td>49.97</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)</td>
<td>42.05</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40.50</td>
<td>45.77</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ)</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.77</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP)</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrum Party</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers’ Party (MP)</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Smallholders Party (FKGP)</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Left Party (ÚJBAL)</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallholders Reform (RKGP)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Democratic Party (SZDP)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Roma Party (MRP)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Entrepreneurs Unity (MVEP)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallholders Association</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Smallholders Party (KGP)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>---------------------------</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MSZP and MSZDP joint candidates</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MSZP and SZDSZ joint candidate</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Green Party (MZP)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Party of Interest (AMÉP)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joining the Alliance’s Survival (OFM)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Pensioners Party (MNYP)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party (MSZMP)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Hungarian Democratic Party (FMDP)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Corruption Civic Democratic Party (KPDP)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Democratic Roma Party (DRP)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Post-communist parties are indicated in red; post-opposition parties in blue.*

Figures 6.9 and 6.10 indicate that the MSZP sat somewhere between Fidesz and SZDSZ on both the socio-cultural and economic-distributive dimensions of competition. The SZDSZ and Fidesz were particularly far apart on socio-cultural issues, which
continued to form part of the dominant competitive dimension in Hungarian politics. The economic dimension indicates that SZDSZ had moved to the left on this scale as compared to its pro-market tendency in the 1990s. The fact that the parties are very close to each other on economic issues underscores the significance of the socio-cultural dimension as a means of differentiating the parties in front of their voters.

Eight years after the SZDSZ had crossed the regime divide, the Hungarian political party system had developed into a stable and clear competition between two opposing camps. And the same three post-opposition parties continued to win parliamentary seats, albeit in the case of the MDF only thanks to its alliance with Fidesz.

**Figure 6.9**
**Hungary 2002 – Socio-cultural positions of parties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SZDSZ</th>
<th>MSZP</th>
<th>Fidesz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Libertarianism</td>
<td>-5.28</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditionalism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Klingemann et al. 2006*

The parties that emerged from the former anti-communist opposition are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; other parties in black.

**Figure 6.10**
**Hungary 2002 – Party positions on economy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SZDSZ</th>
<th>Fidesz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSZP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Klingemann et al. 2006*

The parties that emerged from the former anti-communist opposition are designated in blue; the post-communist party in red; other parties in black.
Decommunization dimension

The decommunization dimension of competition immediately surfaced with a vengeance after the 2002 elections, when it came to light that the new prime minister, Péter Medgyessy, had worked for the counterintelligence Department III/II when he was employed at the Finance Ministry between 1977 and 1982. The revelation briefly rocked the coalition, with the SZDSZ initially calling for the prime minister’s resignation, although the party quickly backed away from that stance. Instead, the coalition launched a new attempt to revise the screening law. The aim was to expand the law to include all divisions of Department III (rather than just the III/III which was covered by the existing law). Fidesz, for its part, called for an even more sweeping, Czech-style screening law, once again underscoring its divergence from the SZDSZ and MSZP on this key dimension. In the end, MSZP efforts to water down the final version of the draft bill ensured that neither the opposition, nor even the SZDSZ voted in favour of it.664

The government also launched a parliamentary commission of inquiry in connection with this issue. Headed by SZDSZ MP Imre Mécs, the commission was to examine how many former ministers and undersecretaries had served as secret policy agents. The commission eventually reported that every cabinet since 1990 had featured such former agents, but its work was hampered after the opposition quit the commission.665

At the end of the day, the Medgyessy revelation and the debates over the screening law did not undermine the unity of the SZDSZ-MSZP coalition and in fact further underscored the gulf between the governing parties and Fidesz.

Socio-cultural dimension

The socio-cultural dimension of competition continued to be a central battleground between the SZDSZ-MSZP coalition and Fidesz in 2002-2006. In response to criticism from abroad, and in particular from the European Union, the governing coalition moved

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to amend the controversial Status Law passed by the previous parliament. The amended version of the law that was passed in 2003 watered down the language and many provisions of the original Status Law to make it more palatable to the EU and neighboring states. Passed with the backing of both the SZDSZ and MSZP, the amended version was opposed by Fidesz and MDF, confirming the gulf between the two poles of Hungarian politics on the delicate questions of ethnic Hungarian minorities in neighboring states and accommodating external pressures in return for membership in the EU.

Another development also underscored this division. In response to a petition launched by an extra-parliamentary group calling itself the World Alliance of Hungarians (MSVZ), a referendum was held in December 2004 on whether all ethnic Hungarians, including those permanently residing in neighboring countries, should be granted Hungarian citizenship along with their existing citizenship. Fidesz supported the initiative, while the SZDSZ and MSZP opposed it. Once again, a gulf was exposed between the conceptions of Fidesz and SZDSZ-MSZP regarding nationhood and ethnic Hungarians living abroad.

Economic-distributive dimension

On the economic policy front, the MSZP-SZDSZ coalition government initially brought in a number of measures to fulfill some campaign promises from 2002, including enhanced benefits and a rise in public sector wages. Later in its term, however, the government was faced with a slowing economy and a widening fiscal deficit. In response, it revised and restricted the housing policy introduced by Fidesz and agreed to a devaluation of the currency in coordination with the central bank.

Among the most telling examples of a division between Fidesz and the SZDSZ-MSZP government occurred with yet another referendum. Initiated by the radically communist and extra-parliamentary Workers Party, the referendum asked voters if they

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wanted a law on the privatization of hospitals repealed. Although parts of this
government plan had already been declared invalid by the Constitutional Court, the
referendum went ahead at the same time as the citizenship plebiscite in December 2004.
Fidesz supported the initiative, once again aligning itself with a conception of a strong
state and in opposition to the pro-market tendencies of the SZDSZ-MSZP government.
This stance fit the Fidesz characterization of the post-communist MSZP (and by
extension of its SZDSZ ally) as a party of “Finance Capital and Big Capital.”

The persistence of a significant budgetary deficit spurred the coalition
government to launch its 100 Steps Program as a means of beginning to introduce needed
economic reforms.

Party switching

The incidence of party switching during the 2002-2006 parliament – both in terms of the
sheer number of switchers as well as which parties were affected by switching – confirms
in most respects the stability of the Hungarian political party system more than a decade
after the SZDSZ had crossed the regime divide. The governing coalition parties of the
MSZP and SZDSZ experienced no party switching at all during the term (see Table 6.3),
underscoring the loyalty of the coalition MPs to the government despite the switch in
prime ministers mid-way through the term. The MSZP and SZDSZ were close on policy
issues and had grown accustomed to governing together.

On the opposition side of the house, Fidesz also exhibited stability even as it
sought to expand and establish itself as an umbrella movement for all of the disparate
rightist forces in the country, both within and outside of parliament. In the immediate
aftermath of the party’s 2002 election loss, Fidesz moved to organize thousands of extra-
parliamentary “civic circles” to mobilize public opposition to the reappearance of the
MSZP-SZDSZ government. In 2003, the party formally renamed itself as the Fidesz-
Hungarian Civic Alliance and underwent an internal re-organization that permitted dual
party membership. Orbán, who had always been the de facto head of Fidesz, formally
returned to the position of official leader in 2003 after having ceded it to a trusted deputy

670 Bozoki, “Consolidation or Second Revolution?” p. 211.
while he served as prime minister between 1998 and 2002. Fidesz had managed to integrate much of the disparate conservative forces in the country, including former members of the KDNP, into its ranks.

When it came to the MDF, however, things were thornier. MDF leader Ibolya Dávid was determined to assert her party’s organizational independence, despite the fact that the party had won seats in parliament as part of an electoral alliance with the much stronger Fidesz. Dávid sought to position the MDF in the centre of the political spectrum, between the MSZP and Fidesz. She resisted calls from Fidesz for a closer alliance ahead of the European Parliament elections in 2004. Her efforts drew the ire of Fidesz leaders who insisted that only a unified stance by the conservative forces of the country could secure victory against the MSZP-SZDSZ coalition. The strained relations between the Fidesz and MDF leaderships created internal tensions within the smaller party, leading to the departure or expulsion of a number of MDF parliamentarians. Several of these defectors ended up joining Fidesz. Another group left the MDF faction to sit as independents, but in the 2006 elections most of this group ended up running as candidates on the Fidesz ticket. These defections left the MDF with just eight deputies in parliament, but thanks to a ruling by Parliamentary Speaker Katalin Szili, they were permitted to constitute themselves as the MDF faction despite not having enough members for a formal designation under the Standing Orders.

In one sense, the party switching associated with the MDF struggle with Fidesz can be viewed as integrative switching. After all, the majority of the deputies who left the MDF faction in parliament ended up joining Fidesz or running for it in the 2006 elections. In another sense, the disagreements between the Fidesz and MDF leaderships also reflected policy shifts on the part of the two parties. Fidesz had increasingly drifted toward a populist brand of conservatism focused on national identity, a strong state, and support for families with children and small enterprise. The MDF, by contrast, had increasingly moved toward a brand of conservatism that emphasized the need to lower corporate taxes, promote private enterprise, and free up the economy. This was a policy shift that had drawn the MDF – under the leadership of Ibolya Dávid – closer to

673 Umut Korkut, The 2006 Hungarian Election: Economic Competitiveness versus Social Solidarity, Parliamentary Affairs, 60 (4), 6 August 2007, p. 685
the SZDSZ and MSZP on economic questions. In fact, the shift in the MDF’s stance drew the attention of observers who suggested that the party might be willing to join an “anti-Orbán coalition” with the MSZP and SZDSZ.674

In that sense, the tension between Fidesz and MDF during the mid-2000s fits an analysis based on policy preferences. The Hungarian political party system had grown stark and stable in the two alternatives that it offered both to voters and to political entrepreneurs. So stark and stable, in fact, that it offered little room for alternative political or policy visions. The efforts of the MDF can be seen as an attempt to undermine this starkly bipolar world. That it failed to make headway in the 2006 elections, simply underscores the manner in which the early clarity brought to the political scene by the SZDSZ decision to cross the regime divide in 1994 had enabled extremely strong and stable political parties to develop along the country’s key dimensions of electoral competition.

Table 6.11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party factions</th>
<th>No. of deputies 2002</th>
<th>Factions into which deputies switched (-)</th>
<th>Factions from which deputies switched (+)</th>
<th>No. of deputies 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSZP</td>
<td>178</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>177*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fidesz</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>Independent (-2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>168*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MDF (-1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDF</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Fidesz (-7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent (-9)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SZDSZ</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

674 Népszabadság, 16 June 2005, World News Connection.
These figures reflect changes in the size of parliamentary factions that did not involve switching, such as cases where deputies resigned their seats or passed away while in office. They also reflect the results of by-elections for single-member constituencies.

** Six of the nine MDF members who were listed as independents during the 2002-2006 parliament ended up running on the Fidesz ticket in the 2006 elections; one of them ran for KDNP in 2006; and one of them ran for FKG in 2006.

The 2006 parliamentary elections

The 2006 elections would usher in a tumultuous period for Hungarian politics. At first, though, the elections fit the pattern that had been established in earlier polls. Once again the elections pitted the two major blocs of Hungarian politics against each other. On one side, Fidesz launched a campaign filled with the rhetoric of nation and national renewal. On the other, MSZP promoted what it described as its economic achievements and a European future for Hungary. Once again, it was taken as given that MSZP would form a coalition to govern with SZDSZ, if possible. As noted earlier, there was speculation that MDF would join SZDSZ and MSZP in an anti-Orbán coalition, but this did not materialize despite the evidently pro-market turn of the MDF. In the end the 2006 elections were the first to bring an incumbent government back to power as MSZP and SZDSZ managed to score an even stronger victory than in 2002.

This time, however, was to be different. In September, a speech by MSZP leader and Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány to his caucus was leaked to the public. In it, Gyurcsány declared that the party had been lying to the public about the state of the country’s economy and fiscal situation. Almost immediately, demonstrations broke out against the government. The protests brought together a disparate array of people, including extremist far-right groups. Fidesz backed the demonstrators as well and called on the government to resign. At times, the protests turned violent.

The leaked speech, the protests and the deteriorating economic situation of the country continued to dog the MSZP-SZDSZ government throughout its term in office.

Policy issues

In this environment, tensions arose within the coalition between the MSZP and SZDSZ but also within the MSZP itself. The SZDSZ push to implement tax reforms was shelved.
An effort to reform the health care system led to further tensions between the coalition partners. The SZDSZ wanted full privatization of the health insurance scheme but had to settle for a compromise in the face of opposition from within the MSZP as well as the broader public. This climb-down spurred the resignation of the SZDSZ health minister.

This compromise health reform package, which included user fees for patients, sparked stiff protest from the opposition ranks. Opposed to the user fee approach, the Fidesz and KDNP pushed for referendums on the health care fees as well as on the question of tuition fees at publicly funded universities. Three referendums were held on these issues leading to a victory for Fidesz and KDNP with voters rejecting both the hospital and tuition fees. The referendums confirmed the gulf between the etatist Fidesz position and the more pro-market orientation of SZDSZ and MSZP. Caught between the failure of the health care reforms in the referendum and opposition to them from within his own party, Gyurcsány fired the health minister, who was a member of the SZDSZ. In response, the SZDSZ walked out of the coalition.

It was the first time a dispute had ripped apart an SZDSZ-MSZP coalition. Nevertheless, despite the collapse of the coalition, the SZDSZ backed the MSZP in a vote of confidence and later on the budget.\(^{675}\) Indeed, rather than an interpersonal dispute or an irreconcilable policy disagreement, the break-up of the coalition appeared to have been caused by the prime minister’s loss of credibility following the leak of the post-election speech and the untenable political situation that had developed as a result of it. Nor did the disintegration of the governing coalition lead to the disintegration of either party in parliament. Both parties remained remarkably stable in parliament despite the apparent political and economic storm engulfing them.

Eventually, faced with the storm of the 2008 global financial crisis, which was hitting Hungary particularly hard, and lacking a majority in the legislature, Gyurcsány announced in March 2009 that he was stepping down. In testimony to their reliance on each other, the MSZP and SZDSZ once again worked together to select a prime minister for a new government, despite opposition calls for new elections. Eventually, the two parties agreed on Gordon Bajnai, who had served as national development and economy minister in the Gyurcsány cabinet. The new cabinet framed itself as a crisis management

government and Bajnai said he would not run for election in 2010. It managed to institute a number of tax and pension changes amid a swirling financial and economic crisis and an increasingly ugly political atmosphere.

**Table 6.12 – Hungary – 2006 Parliamentary elections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>% Party List Vote</th>
<th>Total Party List Seats</th>
<th>1st Round Single-Member (%)</th>
<th>2nd Round Single-Member (%)</th>
<th>Single-Member Seats</th>
<th>Total Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)</td>
<td>43.21</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>40.26</td>
<td>46.63</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIDESZ-Hungarian Civic Union-KDNP joint list</td>
<td>42.03</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>41.99</td>
<td>46.65</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ)</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.31</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP)-Jobbik joint list</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workers’ Party (MP)</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrum Party</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCF-Roma United Party (MCF-ROP)</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Countryside and Civic Party (MVPP)</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Party (ZOP)</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Democratic</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-------</td>
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<td>-------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Christian Centre (KDP)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Smallholders National Unity Party (FKNEP)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Smallholders party (FKGP)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance of Hungarians in Each Other (MESZ)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hungarian Workers’ Party 2006 (MUP06)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association for Somogy (SOME)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>0.18</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.43</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Élölánc Hungary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Pensioners Party (MNYP)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Democratic Party (SZDP)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Democratic Alliance (ZDSZ)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People Living Below the Poverty Line and the Mainstream Democratic Party (Letalap)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDF-Fidesz-KDNP joint candidate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSZP-SZDSZ joint candidate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SZDSZ-MSZP joint</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Party developments

The stability of the Hungarian parliament in the face of economic and political turmoil is remarkable. The incidence of party switching was still relatively low in the 2006-2010 parliament despite the collapse of the coalition government, the installment of a caretaker government, and fierce internal disputes within some of the parties. This is testimony in part to the inadmissibility of deputies crossing party lines in the polarized political atmosphere and in part to their unwillingness to establish new parties.

Nevertheless, this period brought significant internal conflicts for the post-opposition SZDSZ and MDF. The SZDSZ was racked by internal leadership struggles between Gábor Fodor and János Koka. This played out against the party’s decision to abandon the coalition with the MSZP under Koka, and its later decision to support the MSZP and the caretaker government of Gordon Bajnai. The party was hammered in the European Parliament elections in 2009, a death blow given the circumstances. When Attila Retkes took over the leadership reigns, he tried to steer the party to a “national liberal” orientation and disowned the parliamentary faction, which had continued to support the Bajnai government installed with the help of the post-communist MSZP. The parliamentary faction refused to budge from its positions or leave the party. Eventually, the SZDSZ leadership attempted to salvage itself by agreeing to run some candidates on an MDF list.\(^{676}\)

The internal problems of the SZDSZ (as well as those of the post-communist MSZP) reflected in part the extraordinary crisis that swept through the Hungarian

\(^{676}\) Népszabadság, 6 April 2010, World News Connection.
economic and political system in the late 2000s. Hungary was hit by a credit crisis beginning in the summer of 2008, which was staved off only by a $25 billion bailout package from the International Monetary Fund and other global institutions. This, in conjunction with the infamous leaked speech of Gyurcsány, created a political storm that engulfed the two governing parties.

In this context, the SZDSZ made a strategic decision to formally abandon the governing coalition in 2008. Given the polarized political structure that had been created in part by the SZDSZ decision 14 years earlier to cross the regime divide and join the MSZP in a coalition, the SZDSZ had few alternatives to working with the MSZP. The disastrous decline in its popularity and the inevitability of a Fidesz victory in any early election compelled it to keep the MSZP from losing a vote of confidence in parliament.

As the crisis continued and its own popularity wallowed well below the 5 per cent threshold, the SZDSZ became consumed with internal squabbling over the decision to support the caretaker Bajnai government. This, coupled with the party’s poor showing in the European Parliament election, led to the fracturing of the party. An open war of words erupted between the new party leadership under Retkes and the parliamentary faction, and a group including some party veterans announced they were forming an alternative group called the Liberal Civil Association.

The demise of the SZDSZ was brought about by the massive economic crisis and the political crisis it had sparked. This was what spurred the SZDSZ to make the strategic move of leaving the coalition. While the SZDSZ did have some policy disputes with the MSZP over health care policy, these were not of the order that would merit a departure from the coalition. Moreover, the SZDSZ and MSZP were still closer to each other on the key dimensions of competition than either was to Fidesz. In fact, some observers have noted that the party may have been better off remaining in the coalition with the MSZP rather than leaving it. In leaving the MSZP coalition, the SZDSZ found that it had to decide between agreeing to let the Gyurcsány government fall, triggering early elections, or supporting that government without being a part of it.

In other words, it was not the coalition between the MSZP and SZDSZ that destroyed the latter party. Rather, it was the economic and political crisis that forced it to make fateful strategic decisions that led to its demise. In the end, after almost 20 years, the stable political party system ushered in by the SZDSZ’s decision to cross the regime divide in 1994, had run its course in the face of the biggest financial crisis since the Depression and a political crisis of confidence in Hungary. These crises directly preceded the decisions that spurred the demise of the party.

The MDF also went through internal party squabbling and leadership disputes that led to defections in 2008 and 2009, effectively stripping the party’s parliamentary faction of its official status in parliament. Since the ascent to the MDF leadership of Ibolya Dávid, the party had been trying to carve out a separate ideological profile for itself in the face of Fidesz dominance on the conservative side of the spectrum. This profile had become increasingly pro-market and had drawn the MDF closer to the SZDSZ and MSZP. Then, in the midst of the country’s political and economic crisis, Dávid touted Lajos Borkros as the party’s lead candidate for the European Parliament elections and then for prime minister. Dávid said Bokros would be a guarantor of a sober, reform-oriented path. The decision to nominate Bokros, who had served as finance minister in the MSZP-SZDSZ government of the 1990s and was known as a liberal economist, stirred opposition from within the party. The MDF leadership board approved the Bokros candidacy by a narrow vote of 48-44. In response, MDF deputy Andras Csaky left the party, depriving it of the minimum number of MPs required for official faction status in the parliament. Amid these internal disputes, some of the party’s old guard from the days of József Antall also abandoned the party, including Antall’s successor as prime minister in the early 1990s, Péter Boross. In that sense, the turmoil within the MDF came about as a result both of Dávid’s attempts to alter the party’s policy profile, maintain its independence in a political landscape dominated by Fidesz and MSZP, and find a strategic response to the political and economic crisis engulfing the county in 2009.

In the end, neither the SZDSZ nor MDF fell apart due to the kinds of unwieldy coalitions that the Polish post-Solidarity parties were regularly forced into by their regime

divide during the 1990s. Instead, they fell apart in the context of an economic and fiscal crisis that played out against a fiercely polarized party system dominated by two large parties. Both the MDF and SZDSZ had been a presence on the Hungarian political scene for 20 years. Their demise signaled that the stable political party system put in place by the SZDSZ decision to stick to its policy preferences and cross the regime divide in 1994 had run its course.

Still, the relative stability of the Hungarian parliament during this tumultuous electoral term is remarkable. Party switching was relatively infrequent in the parliament, given the internal agony of some of the parties (see Table 6.13). Moreover, even in the case of the MDF, which saw some of its deputies leave as a result of internal turmoil, the bulk of its deputies remained loyal to the party.

Fidesz continued to gather strength throughout this period, scoring a major victory in the 2009 European Parliament elections. By the time of the 2010 parliamentary vote, Fidesz was poised to seize a majority of the seats in parliament. This is what happened in the end, marking the second time in Hungary’s post-communist history that a single party was able to win a majority in parliament (following the MSZP’s majority win in 1994).

Table 6.13
Party switching in Hungarian Parliament (2006-2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party factions</th>
<th>No. of deputies 2006</th>
<th>Factions into which deputies switched (-)</th>
<th>Factions from which deputies switched (+)</th>
<th>No. of deputies 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSZP</td>
<td>190</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>188*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fidesz</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>Independent (-2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KDNP</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDF</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Independent (-11)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SZDSZ</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDF</td>
<td></td>
<td>+10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fidesz</td>
<td></td>
<td>+2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SZDSZ</td>
<td></td>
<td>+1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These figures reflect changes in the size of parliamentary factions that did not involve switching, such as cases where deputies resigned their seats. They also may reflect the results of by-elections for single-member constituencies.

Conclusions

Poland and Hungary entered the post-communist phases of their national histories in 1989 with many broad social, political and historical similarities. Among their differences, there was one that would create different opportunity structures for their anti-communist opposition movements of the two countries as they moved to take part in the creation of a pluralistic political party system where previously there had been none. The character of the regime divide in each country varied from the deep chasm of Poland, marked as it was by the very recent experience of martial law, and the shallower divide of Hungary, which had seen decades of Kádárism communist. As noted in earlier chapters, it was this divide, more so than the institutional factors, idiosyncratic actions of individual politicians or other factors cited in the literature that determined the extent to which the post-opposition forces would be able to form stable and cohesive political parties.

The shallow regime divide in Hungary enabled the post-opposition movements to create relatively stable political parties very early on in the 1990s despite the momentous political, economic and social changes that accompanied the transition from communism. In contrast, faced with a political party competition that was distorted by the depth and ongoing relevance of the regime divide, the Polish post-Solidarity parties proved unable to resolve the problem of coalescence. As long as the regime divide remained a significant dimension of competition in politics, the conservative and liberal parties of the
former Solidarity movement were forced to work together in ideologically dissonant coalitions that undermined their efforts to maintain unity within their ranks. It was only once the significance of the regime divide had been reduced by the implosion of the post-communist SLD in the first half of the 2000s that the post-Solidarity parties suddenly had the political space to stabilize. No longer forced to work together in fractious coalitions, the post-Solidarity liberals and conservatives could build their identities separately from each other. This brought on the longest period of stability among post-Solidarity parties since the collapse of communism.

It is tempting to assert a parallel between the collapse of the SLD in Poland and the decline in the fortunes of Hungary’s post-communist MSZP. While the difficulties of the MSZP in Hungary certainly helped Fidesz regain power, the Hungarian and Polish stories in this regard are not the same from the vantage point of this study. The collapse of the post-communist SLD in Poland was a catalyst that reduced the relevance of the regime divide in that country and thereby finally enabled the post-Solidarity forces to build more cohesive parties. This had already happened in Hungary long before thanks to the decision by the post-opposition SZDSZ to reduce the significance of the regime divide by crossing it in 1994.

The similarity between the two cases does not revolve around the ill fortunes of their post-communist parties in the first decade of the 2000s but rather around the regime divide. The reason the Hungarian post-opposition parties were able to achieve a striking degree of cohesiveness very early on in the transitions was the elimination of the regime divide as a relevant competitive dividing line in politics in the early 1990s (despite efforts by Fidesz politicians to emphasize its ongoing relevance in later years). The reason the post-Solidarity parties finally achieved some degree of cohesiveness in the 2000s was because the regime divide was likewise eliminated as a relevant competitive dividing line in politics during the first half of the 2000s. The difference is that Hungary’s post-opposition liberals were able to overcome the regime divide in the 1990s because it was shallow enough to cross. In Poland, the depth of the regime divide meant it could not be overcome by the post-Solidarity liberals and could only be eliminated by the implosion of the post-communist party itself.
The next, concluding, chapter will examine the relevance of these findings to the literature and whether they are applicable to the broader universe of post-communist cases as well as other countries emerging from authoritarian regimes. It will also suggest avenues for new research on the impact of the differing trajectories of the Polish and Hungarian post-opposition parties over the 1990s and 2000s on policymaking, political discourse and the quality of democracy in the two countries.
Chapter 7

Conclusions

The Polish and Hungarian cases illuminate how the regime divide affected the consolidation and cohesiveness of the political parties that had emerged out of the pre-1989 anti-communist opposition in both countries.

In Poland, the deep regime divide forced the ideologically diverse remnants of the former Solidarity movement to work together in coalitions time and time again throughout the 1990s and into the early 2000s. This in turn undermined efforts to stabilize the nascent post-Solidarity conservative and liberal parties, as members of each were continually tempted to defect from their parties amid serious policy disputes. In Hungary, by contrast, a relatively shallow divide enabled the post-opposition liberals to follow their policy preferences and work with the post-communist party rather than the post-opposition conservatives. This enabled both post-opposition forces to consolidate into stable political parties that lasted throughout the 1990s and well into the 2000s.

By the mid-2000s, however, the collapse of the post-communist SLD finally removed the barrier of the regime divide in Poland. With the post-communist party reduced to a fraction of its former number of seats in the Sejm, the main post-Solidarity liberal and conservative parties were able to form majority governments without having to enter into divisive coalitions with each other. This enabled them to consolidate and stabilize as political parties.

The model adds to theories about the regime divide in post-communist countries and demonstrates how this characteristic of party competition in such countries can provide an explanation for differences in party fragmentation across certain types of East-Central European democracies. It helps to illuminate the manner in which the divisions bequeathed to the new democracies of the region as a historical legacy of authoritarian regimes can continue to shape and define party-based competition for years after the demise of the regime. More narrowly, the model illustrates how the regime divide creates certain constraints that have a discernible impact on the kinds of parties that emerge out of the former anti-communist opposition and the role they will play in the development of post-communist party systems.
The regime divide model also contributes to the literature on coalition politics, by reversing the traditional focus in the literature on how and why parties choose certain governing coalitions, examining instead how the choice of coalitions can affect intra-party politics. In doing this, it also avoids one of the key assumptions in the literature on coalition politics, according to which parties are treated as unitary actors. While this assumption makes sense if one is trying to explain the creation or dissolution of particular types of governing coalitions, it is of little use for examining the internal pressures that are brought to bear on parties when they enter certain kinds of coalitions. The unitary party assumption also emerged out of the literature on Western European parties and Western parties in general, where it served as useful shorthand for theories attempting to explain the behaviour of political parties that tended to exhibit a significant degree of stability and internal cohesion. It is far less useful for explaining party developments in East-Central Europe during the 1990s and even into the 2000s.

Switching the focus of the literature on coalitions has potential uses beyond the region of post-communist Europe. The approach adopted in this study can be used to help explain party behaviour in other regions or countries with weakly institutionalized political parties. In that sense, the model also contributes to the growing literature on party switching by exploring the behaviour of legislators in weakly institutionalized parties, which in turn are competing in weakly institutionalized party systems. This study has demonstrated how particular aspects of party competition in newly democratized countries have the potential to encourage party switching, and thereby seriously undermine the establishment of stable and institutionalized parties. Beyond this, the approach of examining how coalition choices can impact intra-party dynamics and cohesion has potential implications for the study of more stable party systems as well. It could provide for a better understanding as to how the internal power structure of a party can be impacted and altered by coalition choices, leading to leadership and/or programmatic changes.

Scope of the model
An explanatory model based on the depth of the divide between a set of post-authoritarian and post-opposition parties would seem to be ideally suited for
generalization. An examination of other cases in East-Central Europe suggests that it plays a role but may interact with other variables in interesting ways.

The two countries examined in this study share a number of important characteristics while differing on the key independent variable of the regime divide. The former characteristics include their common histories as “national-accommodative” communist states with relatively strong and developed anti-communist opposition movements in the 1970s and 1980s. In both countries, those opposition movements came to power as their respective communist regimes crumbled in 1989-1990. In addition, of course, Hungary and Poland share similar histories as Central European countries.

Does the regime divide model still work in the absence of one or more of the common characteristics shared by the Polish and Hungarian cases? A quick examination of two other representative cases suggests the answer may not be a simple one but also indicates the potential for an intriguing new research agenda.

**Czech Republic**

The Czech Republic shares a number of characteristics with Poland and Hungary, including an anti-communist opposition movement that came to power in 1989 as the Czechoslovak communist regime crumbled.

The repressive authoritarian Czechoslovak regime bequeathed a deep regime divide to the Czech Republic. The relatively harsh repression of dissent in the country following the 1968 Soviet invasion meant that the dissidents grouped around the Charter 77 movement were small in number.

Nevertheless, a late 1980s surge in public protest culminated in the creation of the Civic Forum movement in November 1989, following the harsh suppression of a student demonstration in Prague. The movement brought together the dissidents of the 1970s and 1980s with a group of technocrats of the so-called grey zone of the country (neither communist party members nor dissidents). It quickly fell apart into three main successor parties – the centrist Civic Movement (OH) and the right-leaning Civic Democratic Alliance and Civic Democratic Party (ODS). In contrast to both Hungary and Poland, no distinctly conservative party emerged out of the anti-communist opposition movement,
although the ODS had conservative members\textsuperscript{680} and stylized itself as a “conservative and liberal” party.

In further contrast to the Polish and Hungarian cases, the Czech communists did not develop into a moderate and dominant party on the left, retaining much of their ideological rhetoric and even maintaining the communist moniker in their party’s name – the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM). This effectively restricted the party’s vote-getting potential. Against this backdrop, the historical Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) became the strongest leftist party in the country.

The lack of an electorally powerful communist party altered the situation significantly. The KSČM was unable to mount a serious challenge for power, both because it was unable to win enough votes at elections\textsuperscript{681} and because it remained isolated behind the regime divide, with all of the other parties refusing to consider it a potential coalition partner. The deep regime divide still kept the party isolated but the KSČM’s lack of electoral potential meant that it had a different impact on the Czech party system.

In contrast to Poland or Hungary, where post-opposition parties of liberal leanings were forced to consider whether to work with a reformed and popular post-communist party, the Czech parties were able to ignore the relatively weak and less than reformed Czech Communists. Instead, some former left-leaning dissidents eventually joined the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD), while others opted for the Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People’s Party (KDU-ČSL), another historical party. This enabled the strongest right-leaning successor party to the Civic Forum, the ODS led by Václav Klaus, to establish itself as the dominant force on the centre-right.

To be sure, the successor parties to Civic Forum had their internal difficulties, but these did not follow the dynamic of the Polish case. The post-opposition liberal OH failed to gain seats in parliament in the 1992 elections and, over the course of the next few years, gradually faded into obscurity. The ODA succumbed to financing scandals in the 1990s, and eventually vanished as well. The ODS had its own financing scandal that led

\textsuperscript{680} The small and conservative Christian Democratic Party (KDS) founded by the Catholic dissident Václav Benda merged with the ODS in the early 1990s.

\textsuperscript{681} The party generally was able to win 10-15 per cent of the vote at elections. Its best relative performance came in the 2002 elections, when it won 18.51 per cent of the popular vote.
in 1998 to a split in the party, when former dissident Jan Rumí led a group of defectors out of the ODS to create the Freedom Union (US). These difficulties did not result from fundamental disagreements in policy but rather reflected inter-personal conflicts and party financing scandals. The US eventually vanished from the political scene, while the ODS has remained.

The key effect of the regime divide in the Czech Republic was to narrow the political field for coalition creation. Since the KSČM would typically win a block of seats in the lower house of parliament that were “untouchable” for coalition-building purposes, there were less seats available to cobble together a majority. This led to a series of coalition governments with razor-thin majorities; the infamous “opposition agreement” by which the minority Social Democrats were kept in power thanks to an agreement with the ODS in parliament; and one “hung” parliament in which the right-leaning parties held the exact same number of seats as the left-leaning parties.

Overall though, despite the difficulty in establishing a majority government, the Czech political party system exhibited very little party switching between the mid-1990s and into the 2000s. While some post-opposition parties have vanished, the post-Civic Forum ODS and the ČSSD (which attracted a number of former Civic Forum members) remained and continue to play key roles in the Czech party system today.

The Czech post-Civic Forum parties were not torn apart by the kinds of ideological debates that racked the post-Solidarity parties in Poland. The lack of a need to unite against a strong and reformed post-communist party enabled the key figures of the Civic Forum movement to join parties that reflected their preferences, with the conservatives and pro-market liberals joining the ODS and ODA, while the social liberals and social democrats joined the OH and ČSSD. Those parties were then able to consolidate without the necessity of cutting compromises in an ideologically heterogeneous coalition.

There was, of course, the so-called opposition agreement between the governing ČSSD and the opposition ODS between 1998 and 2002. While this involved cooperation between the two parties in a number of areas, it was not a coalition. Members of the ODS

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682 In the second half of the 2000s, the incidence of party switching increased amid the turmoil following the 2006 elections, which produced a “hung” parliament.
and ČSSD were not required to sit in a cabinet together, agree on all aspects of a government program together and defend that stance in public. In fact, while the two parties did agree to jointly support some significant pieces of legislation, they also made an effort to underscore their differences in public. This enabled members of both parties to maintain publicly different stances on any number of policies and to vote accordingly, something which would not be available to them in a true governing coalition.683

The Czech case thus demonstrates that a deep regime divide will not necessarily have a major impact on the consolidation of the post-opposition parties if the post-communist party is unable to become a major electoral force in the country. In order to undermine the consolidation of post-opposition parties a regime divide must be deep and the post-communist party must be able to win enough votes to become a major force in the party system.

Slovakia
The Slovak case is illustrative of a number of countries in the post-communist world that emerged as newly (or renewed) independent states during the tumultuous early 1990s. This had an impact on the dimensions of political competition in those countries, and as such, impacted the manner in which the regime divide affected the post-opposition parties and the party system as a whole.

While the Czech Republic likewise emerged out of the split of Czechoslovakia at the end of 1992, the impact on Czech politics was muted. Out of all of the countries that became independent in East-Central Europe during this phase, the Czech Republic was perhaps least affected by the change. The Czechs, as Deegan-Krause has noted, experienced far less institutional disruption as a result of the split of Czechoslovakia than their Eastern neighbours.684

The difference from the Czech experience does not end there. Grzymala-Busse has noted that Slovakia’s regime divide was shallower than that of its Czech counterpart. This is a reflection of the Czechoslovak communist regime’s somewhat less repressive

683 For an analysis that questions the popularly held belief that the “opposition agreement” was a hidden grand coalition or a non-standard coalition, see Andrew Roberts, “Demythologising the Czech Opposition Agreement,” Europe-Asia Studies, 55 (8), December 2003, 1273-1303.
approach to the anti-communist opposition after 1968 in the eastern part of the country and the real economic and cultural gains Slovakia achieved under communism, as opposed to the Czech experience.685

The founding democratic elections of 1990 in Slovakia brought to power a loose umbrella anti-communist opposition movement. This movement, Public Against Violence (VPN), won the election with more than 29 per cent of the vote but failed to secure a majority of seats in the Slovak parliament. It formed a coalition government with the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), which was led by the former dissident Ján Čarnogurský, and the small Democratic Party.

Within months, the VPN succumbed to internal divisions and fell apart. In March 1992, Vladimír Mečiar led a group of VPN parliamentarians out of the movement to establish their own Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS). Mečiar positioned the HZDS as a defender of Slovak interests with calls for greater Slovak autonomy within Czechoslovakia and argued that the economic reforms of the federal government were damaging Slovakia.

While Mečiar thus effectively combined the economic and socio-cultural dimensions of party competition, it was the latter that was to dominate party politics in the 1990s. The socio-cultural dimension in Slovakia reflected debates over Slovak nationhood and autonomy, the role of religion in public life, and the status of the Hungarian-speaking minority in the country. The national question was dominant in the early 1990s, rising to prominence almost immediately after the collapse of the communist regime in 1989 and dominating political discussions between 1990 and 1992 over the nature of the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks within a common state.

When Mečiar won a resounding victory in the June 1992 elections in Slovakia, while one of the chief proponents of economic liberalization, Václav Klaus, won in the Czech part of the federation, the writing was on the wall for the federation. The two leaders proceeded to negotiate the break-up of the country, which formally occurred at the end of 1992.

Nevertheless, the dissolution of Czechoslovakia did not bring an end to the national dimension of the socio-cultural divide in the political life of the newly

685 Grzymala-Busse, “Coalition Formation,” p. 98
independent Slovakia. Parties continued to be divided disagreements over the manner in which the break-up of the country had been negotiated as well as over relations with the Hungarian minority. The divided pitted Mečiar’s coalition government of HZDS and the nationalist SNS against the KDH, the Hungarian parties and the remnants of VPN, which were no longer in parliament. In that sense, it effectively split the post-opposition camp of parties that could trace their origins to the umbrella anti-communist VPN movement and the KDH, which was founded by former dissident Carnogursky. Later, the national dimension of competition was reflected in debates over the country’s relationship with the European Union. The national dimension of competition was also reinforced in Slovakia by conflict over Mečiar’s heavy-handed style of leadership and his apparent disregard for some of the institutional checks on his authority, which Deegan-Krause has described as a conflict over the “authority” dimension of competition.

The socio-cultural competitive conflict between Mečiar’s HZDS and SNS on one side, and the rest of Slovakia’s party system on the other, became so dominant that it quickly overcame the regime divide. It also led to splits within the HZDS and SNS. Groups of parliamentarians left both parties in the early 1990s and eventually formed the Democratic Union (DU). In 1994, the DU joined the post-opposition KDH, the post-communist SDL, and the Hungarian parties to bring down the Mečiar government. The post-opposition DU and KDH then crossed the country’s shallow regime divide to join the post-communist SDL in a coalition government tacitly supported by the Hungarian parties.

Although this coalition had bridged the regime divide in Slovakia, it was nothing like the coalition government set up in neighbouring Hungary that same year between the post-opposition SZDSZ and post-communist MSZP. In contrast to the SZDSZ-MSZP coalition, the Slovak coalition of 1994 under Prime Minister Jozef Moravčík did not bring together parties that had similar policy preferences. In fact, the Moravčík coalition contained parties with widely differing views on both economic and some socio-cultural questions, including the pace and content of economic reform as well as the role of the Church in the country. Rather, the parties had come together primarily because of their opposition to Mečiar and his stance on questions of nation and authority.
Nevertheless, given that this had rapidly become a fundamental conflict in Slovakia, the fact that the KDH and DU chose to cross the regime divide to form a coalition with the post-communist SDL does follow the expectations of the model. The difference is that, in contrast to Hungary where the economic and socio-cultural dimensions of competition were more closely aligned, the national divide was not in line with the other dimensions of competition in Slovakia. Rather, it was simply more important than those other competitive dimensions.

This split fostered by the national dimension of competition was to endure in Slovak politics for several years. At first, as noted, it cut across other dimensions of competition. The post-communist SDL, for example, was closer to Mečiar’s HZDS on the economic dimension in 1994 than it was to its fellow anti-Mečiar coalition parties.686

Predictably, and in line with the expectations of the model, the differences in policy preferences among the anti-Mečiar parties had an impact on their cohesion. Already in 1994, the post-communist SDL suffered a split, when Jan Luptak led a splinter group out of the party on the grounds that the SDL had betrayed the working class. Later, underscoring the fact that the national conflict had trumped other divisions, Luptak’s far left Association of Slovak Workers (ZRS) proceeded to join the far right SNS and Mečiar’s HZDS in a coalition government after the 1994 elections.

The ideologically heterogeneous Moravčík government was short-lived, losing the 1994 elections to Mečiar’s HZDS. But during the Mečiar government of 1994-1998, the disparate anti-Mečiar post-opposition forces both inside and outside of parliament acted in accordance with the model by coming together to forge the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK). Cooperation among the SDK’s founding centre-right and centre-left parties687 (which included both the KDH and DU) was facilitated by the fact that they were in opposition and shared a common enemy in Mečiar.

The 1998 elections saw Mečiar’s HZDS narrowly defeat the SDK in the popular vote, but the latter was able to build a majority in parliament by setting up a coalition government with the post-communist SDL, the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK) and a new left-leaning formation called the Party of Civic Understanding (SOP). The new

SDK-led coalition government under Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda was ideologically diverse. In line with the expectations of the model outlined in this study, the parties in the Dzurinda government suffered a number of splits and defections amid numerous disputes over policy direction. The SDK fell apart into a number of parties, including the newly created Slovak democratic and Christian Union (SDKÚ). The SDL was racked by internal tension over its role in this pro-market reform coalition government. Robert Fico, who would later become prime minister, broke from the SDL to form his own leftist Smer party. The SDL later endured another split over policy direction within the government. Party switching also reduced the ranks of the SOP.688

The 2002 elections returned Dzurinda to power, this time at the head of a more ideologically coherent government including his own SDKÚ as well as the KDH, SMK and the newly formed pro-market New Citizen Alliance (ANO). While these parties tended to be aligned on the economic dimension of competition, there were tensions between them on the socio-cultural dimension, particularly with respect to Church-state questions. Party switching affected the ranks of the SDKÚ and ANO, as well as the opposition HZDS.689

By the 2000s, the decline of Mečiar’s HZDS and the rise to prominence of Fico’s Smer party, which had built up its political capital by highlighting the social impact of Dzurinda’s far-reaching economic reforms, raised the importance of the economic dimension of competition in Slovakia.

The Slovak case appears to follow the expectations of the model. It represents a case of a country with a small post-communist party (as in the Czech Republic) and a relatively shallow regime divide (as in Hungary). The primary dimension of competition in the country was the socio-cultural divide, reflected most powerfully in questions related to nationhood and minorities. This dimension of competition was reinforced by Mečiar’s tendencies to run roughshod over democratic institutions, giving the struggle between HZDS and its opponents the character of a real battle over the Slovakia’s fledgling democracy and its place in the European Union. In response to this fundamental conflict, the post-opposition KDH and the defectors from HZDS decided to cross the

689 Ibid, p. 155.
regime divide to join forces with the post-communist SDL because they shared a common stance against Mečiar over this central dimension of competition in Slovakia and because the regime divide was shallow.

Further research
The model outlined in the preceding chapters indicated that the impact of the regime divide on the cohesion of the post-opposition parties varies according to whether it is deep or shallow. The cases of the Czech Republic and Slovakia suggest that its impact also varies according to the strength of the post-communist party and the way the divide interacts with other significant cross-cutting divides in a given country.

The Czech case underscores the fact that while a regime divide associated with an electorally weak post-communist party may not have as direct an impact on the cohesion of the post-opposition parties, it can nevertheless have an abiding and significant impact on the party system as such. Further research could focus on the mechanisms that transmit the regime divide over time and enable it to persist for almost a generation after the change in the regime. Certainly, the apparent inability of the Czech post-communist KSČM to adapt and present itself as a “reformed” party have hindered its acceptance by other parties. But the manner in which Czech parties make use of the KSČM to either underscore their anti-communism or accuse others of communist leanings suggests that more is at work here.

The Slovak case provides a different perspective. The relatively shallow regime divide in Slovakia enabled the parties opposed Mečiar over certain socio-cultural questions to bridge the divide and form a united front. Nevertheless, in contrast to Hungary, those parties remained divided on a number of issues related to the economic and socio-cultural dimensions of competition.

This indicates that the act of simply bridging the regime divide is not always the key to a stable realignment of the political party system. The nature of the other cross-cutting divides in a country and where the parties sit on them in relation to each other is critical. That questions of nationhood and the place of minorities in the nation were so important in Slovakia during the 1990s is perhaps a reflection of its recently gained independent statehood. Even the fact that these questions were reinforced by a
fundamental dispute over democratic institutions and the use of authority points to the relative newness of such institutions in Slovakia. In that sense, the particular manner in which the regime divide interacted with the other divisions in Slovak politics may generally reflect the particular political landscape of a newly independent state with a politically significant minority group. This suggests that the impact of the regime divide will be different in a country that has yet to resolve questions of nationhood and national identity.690

The post-communist universe of cases provides a plethora of examples of both newly independent countries with little previous tradition of statehood and countries with relatively substantial histories as independent states. A next step would be to broaden the study of the regime divide to these two groups.

It is unclear if the model outlined here would work beyond the post-communist universe of cases. The focus on political repression in the post-communist cases makes sense given the similarities of the cases along other potentially relevant dimensions of comparison. Generalizing the model to other kinds of authoritarian regimes that were not based on a centrally planned economy would invite questions about economic inclusiveness and how it interacts with political repression.

Further to Hungary and Poland

Returning to the primary two cases examined in this study, it seems that a further note is required. The Polish and Hungarian party systems began their development along different routes. The post-opposition liberals of the two countries made fateful decisions in the early 1990s to either work with the post-communists (Hungary) or to reject the post-communists (Poland). These decisions, as this study has attempted to show, had serious consequences for the ability of both the post-opposition liberals and conservatives in both countries to resolve the problem of cohesion and establish stable political parties. The decision of the Polish post-opposition liberals undermined efforts to resolve those

690 See Deegan-Krause, “Slovakia,” pp. 276-277, where he cites the models of both Claus Offe and Herbert Kitschelt for predicting which issue divides would be dominant in post-communist party systems. Both models, as Deegan-Krause notes, suggest the national divide would be dominant in Slovakia but Offe’s approach is closer in line with Slovakia’s experience.
problems, while the corresponding decision of the Hungarian post-opposition liberals facilitated those efforts.

Twenty years later, though, the two countries seem to have arrived at the same place. Both countries featured at least one relatively stable post-opposition party in the 2000s, thanks largely to the implosion of the Polish post-communists. Still, did the differing trajectories of the Polish and Hungarian post-opposition parties through the 1990s leave them or the party systems within which they operate with differing traits or approaches to politics?

A next step would be to examine the extent to which the instability of the Polish post-opposition parties versus the relative stability of the Hungarian post-opposition parties through the 1990s led to differences in the nature of political discourse in the two countries, in the content and process of policymaking, in the very quality of democracy. Certainly, on the surface, the political conflicts appear similar in the two countries. The struggles between parties representing conservative worldviews and those with liberal worldviews have been intense in both Poland and Hungary. But if we peel back the surface, are there differences underneath?

Scholars have argued that the establishment of stable political parties is a crucial condition for the consolidation of democracy in post-authoritarian countries. This may be so, but the manner in which those parties are established may be significant for the kind of democracy that is ultimately consolidated. It may be that the seeming stability of parties in Hungary during the early years of the transition had served to mask a closed and polarizing political discourse, while the early instability of parties in Poland had actually enabled the development of a vigorous – perhaps even aggressive, but nevertheless open and lively – political discourse.
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Appendix

A note on the Manifesto Research Group data

In order to examine the policy-based motivations behind the coalition choices of the post-opposition parties in Poland and Hungary during the 1990s and 2000s, the relative policy positions of parties ahead of each election were examined along two dimensions using data from the Manifesto Research Group’s (MRG) content analysis of party programs. First, the party’s positions relative to each other were mapped on to a left-right dimension that captures their policies with respect to economic issues. For this dimension, I used the MRG data on party programs to examine the extent to which they tended to support a market economy versus a planned or mixed economy. For this purpose, I used the 19 variables suggested by Klingemann and his colleagues for assessing party stances in this issue area.691 Parties positions on this dimension were determined by comparing the extent to which a party emphasized the need for free enterprise, privatization, free trade, and fiscal restraint versus the extent to which it was critical of privatization and called for government intervention in the economy, a mixed ownership structure, publicly owned industries, the need to protect the domestic economy from foreign competition.

Second, the party’s programs were examined on the basis of their positions with respect to a socio-cultural dimension that separates supporters of libertarian and secular values from those espousing values based on religious beliefs and conceptions of traditional authority. For this dimension, I used a total of eight variables from the MRG dataset. The more a party’s program contained positive references to nationalism, traditional moral values and negative references to multiculturalism and cultural autonomy for the Roma minority, the further along the traditionalism dimension it was classified. The more a party emphasized freedom and human rights, opposition to traditional moral values, support for multiculturalism and cultural autonomy for the Roma minority, the further along the liberal dimension it was placed.

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Using this data, it was possible to determine what kinds of coalitions would be in line with the predictions of spatial models of coalition bargaining. In that context, it is also possible to examine the actual coalition choices party leaders and strategists made and how they justified them.