Polish Party System: 
Institutionalization --Political Representation – Issue Structuring

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to depict and explain the mechanisms contributing to the Polish party system development. There are many ways one can accomplish this task. My approach concentrates on the phenomenon of its institutionalization, considered by many to be the crucial issue in passing from fragile to stable democracy. Among closely associated with institutionalization phenomena one usually finds concepts of party system crystallization or its structuring, if you will. The latter, less common in political science usage, refers less than the former to patterned relationship between parties themselves and more to the relationship between masses and elites, the effectiveness of the signaling game between the two and compatible party system structures they co-create. Finally, since there is little disagreement as to the "followers-in-nature" status of the current transformations in East Central Europe, recently constrained not only by simple cultural diffusion-driven mechanisms, but by "institutional seducing" – entering EU, due attention will be devoted to the cosmopolitan/integrative/globalization dimension in the Polish party system.

The paper consists of several broad sections. The first focuses on different aspects and indicators of party system institutionalization and dwells into its manifestations in Poland. Section two concentrates on the issue of political representation; mostly on the relationship and correspondence between mass and elite perceptions of party positions as well as its consequences. Comparative approach is at work in this part; both, links between the two levels of party position perceptions are juxtaposed as well as three facets of subjective political representativeness are being discussed. Section three turns to the party system "shape" – its polarization, issue structuring and space of competition it delineates. Special attention is devoted to the cosmopolitan—parochial/national dimension. In section four I discuss the issue of democratic consolidation and more particularly I focus on empirical problems arising from measurement of the diffuse political support phenomenon. Disentangling the notion, tracing the net, unblurred system legitimacy and diffuse support phenomena in Poland is expected to shed light on this problematique. In the fifth section, a glance at the meaning and salience of the left-right semantics is proposed. Finally, in the concluding part I try to interpret the overall relationship between the discussed phenomena and their particular manifestations.

The design of the paper is comparative in nature; testing certain hypotheses equally needs diachronic and synchronic approach. Comparisons are thus both: in time (for Poland 1991-97) and in space (mainly within ECE region, but with glances at stable democracies as well). Comparison between the empirical reality of Poland and be it ideal models or real-existing ones is discussed when necessary. For a clearly 'followers' polity the latter comparison serves as an indication how far from desirable state it currently is located.

Polish party system -- institutionalization or fragility?

(a) Party system institutionalization -- its manifestations and indicators

Before I move to the discussion on the conceivable indicators of institutionalization, one caveat seems to be due. Right from the beginning of the "post-communist" transformations there has been an enormous pressure to dwell into the problem of their stability at the expense of scrutinizing the interactive effects of "triple" transformations' complexities (Offe 1991); the latter remained downplayed. Most scholars and commentators did expect immediate stability of the political and party system in particular, right after the collapse of the ancien regime. This intellectual naivete looks still viable and calls for empirical testing. To be clear: what I am critical of, is the initial, for Eastern Europe 1989-92 period of artificial search for political and party system stability among experts of the region. I will refer to this topic in the followings.

In this paper the starting point in conceptualizing party system institutionalization is Mainwaring and Scully's (1995) proposal. In their introductory chapter they submit four indicators -- constitutive elements of an institutionalized party system: (i) stability in interparty competition, (ii) existence of parties with stable roots in society, (iii) acceptance of parties and elections as the legitimate means by which publics determines who governs,  

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1 For my critical opinion on the plausibility and applicability of the "post-communism" notion see my chapter-contribution entitled "From Opposition to Incumbents and back: Polish SLD in the '90s", in: Andras Bozoki (ed) Socialists in Power in East Central Europe (Budapest: Central European University Press) [forthcoming]. Shortly, it is a classical sartorian concept overstretch applied to vastly different areas and cultures, highly undertheorized, operationally underdeveloped.
and (iv) existence of party organizations with stable rules and structures. Finally an important remark is being made that "institutionalizing a party system is important to the process of democratic consolidation" (p.4). This point will be discussed in the remainder of this paper quite frequently.

There are other approaches to party system institutionalization. Morlino prefers to talk of "party system structuring" (1995: 316 ff), nevertheless uses as well the notion of "party system stabilization". He enumerates several broad indicators of the structuring – electoral volatility, experiencing critical elections and extent of stabilization of the political class, especially at the outset of democratic instauration. This general proposal is further disentangled into several detailed indicators-phenomena; apart from indicators of volatility and critical elections, fragmentation of the system, effective number of parties as well as measures of disproportionality are being proposed. In addition, factors indicative of both elite and mass level stability are taken into account: the level of party identification and elite continuity being the crucial ones. Finally Morlino submits – just as Mainwaring and Scully do - to include indicators of parties’ (as separate entities) institutionalization, stabilization as indicators of party system institutionalization.

I disagree with the latter proposal. In brief, I find unconvincing the direct link between parties’ stabilization and system stabilization. The relationship between the two is far from that simple and deterministic. In some instances parties’ institutionalization, organizational stability and continuity might be conducive to party system institutionalization in other instances not necessarily; in newly born democracies in particular. In the latter case need for flexibility and adaptability to rapidly and dramatically changing environment might prove more efficient than stable organizational structure.

To conclude: when analyzing institutionalization of a party system, one has to avoid relying on the static parameters of the subsystems’ (i.e. parties) and should concentrate on the functions their outputs perform for the system as a whole, irrespectively whether deliberate or unintentional. This proposal should not be treated as springing from pure functionalist dogma, it is aimed rather at securing heuristic and empirical utility. There are many other ontological and theoretical problems with operationalization of the institutionalization phenomenon, lack of space restricts me from dwelling into those, but certainly some are worth mentioning. First of all, confusion stems from ambiguity derived from mutual entanglement of two analytically different phenomena: an institutionalized (state/statics) and institutionalizing (process/dynamics) party system. Secondly, among the enlisted factors believed to be indicators of institutionalization categorically different ones are intermixed: some are clear determinants, other are simply more or less conducive correlates, yet others might be considered outcomes of institutionalization. Thirdly, the mentioned above problem of equaling the phenomenon of party institutionalization with party system institutionalization calls for in-depth scrutiny.

In the paper I will however refrain from systematic tracing the puzzles mentioned above. I will comment on it in a separate paper. What follows then is in line with the current state of the field, only marginally departing from the main stream approach.

Back to Mainwaring/Scully's proposal.
Concerning the first manifestation and indicator of party system institutionalization -- stability in the rules and nature of interparty competition -- authors claim that the system "must manifest some regularity, which is not to suggest that these patterns become 'frozen’" (p.5). Indeed, for party system institutionalization this expectation is crucial, I submit here, however, that for democratic consolidation it is not or might even prove unconducive. The point discussed in detail later on.

The problem with the notion of "stable roots of parties in society” is that it might mean several different phenomena, among them the following: (a) intensity aspect -- the strength of citizens attachment to particular parties, (b) cognitive aspect --public's ability to (correctly?) identify party positions, (c) organizational aspect -- existence of linkages between organized interests and parties, and (d) temporal dynamics --parties are believed to be more consistent over time in their ideological positions. Authors do not clarify what kind of attachment is on their mind, neither whether the ability to identify party positions refers only to the party they vote for or all parties in the system, finally - what does ideological consistency of party stances really mean when related to their societal rooting?

In addition on a more operational level one may add following concerns: when we talk of "strong societal roots", do we mean: (a) the same individuals throughout their life cycle to be attached to the same parties; (b) the same proportions of particular social groups to vote for particular parties (and how do we control for the changing...
proportions of 'social segments' within a given social structure); (c) changing social support for parties to be interactively relevant to the changing social structure?

Unfortunately the description of particular Latin American politics doesn't help clarify the above problems as is poorly grounded in empirical public opinion data, so one can not test the relationship between citizens and parties. Authors are fully aware of this limitation (Mainwaring, Scully 1995:11). And even though there is some survey data for some countries to unveil subjective attitudes towards parties, the overall interpretation - as I see it - is problematic: low aggregate total voter volatility tells us only about changes in generalized and relative party support. We are faced with two problems: the first is a general one -- Pedersen's volatility index ignores the (sometimes considerable) electoral turnout changes. It is easily conceivable that at two consecutive elections the aggregate voters volatility might approximate zero, nevertheless if the turnout decreases by, say, 15-20 percent, we are facing qualitatively different situation. It might prove negligible for those interested in particular parties' political fate or even party systems, the way votes are transferred into seats and the like institutional issues, it however can not be ignored when the issue of social roots of parties is being discussed. The second problem with the aggregate, net volatility is that it tells us nothing about individual level, net volatility; to be precise it tells us nothing when the aggregate index is low, about zero. Again, and ignoring the first caveat, it is imaginable that a zero aggregate volatility is coupled with extremely high, though counterbalancing, switches at the individual level; in brief, a situation in which parties enjoy the same support, though by different individuals.

The links with organized interests is a complex issue: on the one hand, it is plausible to expect that in an institutionalized party system, these interests have strong connections with parties, on the other, that they are controlled by parties. Sounds nice, yet balancing friendly cooperative links with pure control turns out problematic in reality most of the time.

(b) Voters volatility in Poland


At the beginning several caveats: first, I find it plausible to distinguish between general aggregate volatility (disregarding of parties going out and into political business), and citizens' volatility (i.e. volatility index which accounts for the elites' deeds -- the changing "party offer" of the system: merges, dissolutions, etc)². Second, party mergers and their name changes force us to qualify some of them as direct continuities of previous political entities (details to follow).

The aggregate general volatility between 1991 and 1993 did amount to 34.9%, the citizens -- to 22.7%. These figures were obtained under following assumptions: (a) among "other parties" contesting only one of the two elections are: ChD, BBWR, KdR, Samoobrona and numerous irrelevant, marginal parties running in the 1991 election in particular; (b) WAK of '91 is treated as the political equivalent of KKW 'Ojczyzna' of '93 as is 'Solidarność Pracy' for UP.

Students of Polish volatility are faced with more acute problems when it comes to comparing the 1993 with 1997 vote, primarily because of the new political entity - AWS (Solidarity Election Action), which turned out to be the definite winner of the latter election with 33.8 percent support. There are many cons and pros for considering AWS a direct heir of numerous rightist-"Solidarity" parties, yet for most competent commentators the pros are more pervasive, not only because excluding 1/3 of the vote doesn't make sense, but essentially because there seems to be a clear ideological, organizational and personal continuity between 1993 (and earlier) and 1997³. And even though the fate of AWS and its transformation into a unitary political actor is still debatable, here the volatility calculation is based on the assumption that AWS is in fact a direct heir of those parties. If so, the general aggregate volatility in the 1993/97 period goes down to 22.1% and citizens' -- to 15.0% (for details see Markowski 1998)⁴.

² In both instances Pedersen's (1974) volatility index is being used; half the sum of absolute vote percentage differences received by each party in two consecutive elections. The distinction between "general" and "citizens" volatility lies in that in the second percentages of votes for parties which contested only one election are simply subtracted form the "general" one.

³ The following parties and interest organizations of 1993 comprised the 1997 AWS: KKW 'Ojczyzna' (in fact, ZChN), NSZZ 'S', PC, PK, SLCh and PL as well as dominant parts of KPN and BBWR; plus some minor sofa parties.

⁴ Other assumptions of the above calculation are: (a) ROP is the political equivalent of KdR; (b) UW -- of UD and KLD; (c) among the most important "other" parties are: KPEiR, BdB, KPEiR RP and few completely marginal groupings.
In newly democratizing politics, especially those which undergo a multi-dimensional change as those re-emerging from communism, there is good reason to look at the process of parties’ consolidation and consequently voters volatility through party families lenses. In the followings I display voters volatility figures for as much as ten party families, in order to avoid too broad artificial aggregations that would obscure rather than clarify the party system development. Before I move to data presentation, let me emphasize why I find it reasonable to look at volatility via ‘families’ support perspective. Firstly, at the beginning of the transformation for majority of the population, the numerous (especially Christian-democratic, religious-nationalist) sofa parties were hardly distinguishable. Many voters were unable to indicate which party actually they voted for, pointing simply that it was ‘Christian’, ‘nationalist’ or ‘liberal’ (data not shown). Secondly, these small sofa parties never (with few exceptions) really contested an election alone, usually they did form a coalition, though rarely twice with the same partner(s). Thirdly, between elections many of them changed names, leaders, coalitions. Fourthly, the picture is (was, in fact) even more complicated because the merges, splits and disappearance of certain political entities in and outside the parliament did not match. In some instances continued presence of a given parliamentary faction or club coexisted outside the parliament with its disappearance or merge with another... Finally, if we look from the 1997/98 perspective many of the parties belonging to the same ‘family’ did in reality merge and currently their formal status is one of an unitary actor.

In table 1 below I present some of the important indicators of volatility:
(a) the Total Volatility (TV), with the additional distinction between (i) general and (ii) citizens' one, explained above;
(b) 'between-party-families' Total Volatility (FTV), with the above (i) and (ii) distinction;
(c) block volatility (BV);
(d) within-block volatility (WBV).

Two caveats are due at this point: first, in the first two rows the TV and FTV accounts for empirical reality of 1997 -- namely the occurrence of AWS and their ancestors; second, the computations of BV and WBV – presented in rows 3 and 4 -- are thus based on 'party families' grouping (left column of each period) as well as particular parties (right column).

T A B L E 1 about here

How we interpret table 1 data, depends solely on the way we treat AWS. If - as I am inclined to do - one follows the real-politics and regards AWS as a follower of those who have constituted it, then almost all (save WBV) volatility parameters have improved dramatically since 1991/3. The WBV equaling 6.72 for 1993/97 is due to a considerable shuffle within the 'leftist' block, and this is the only increase in presented volatilities.

Now, since we lack any theoretical guidance as to which of the two components of the total volatility -- the 'block volatility' (BV) or 'within-block volatility' (WBV) is more significant and in what respect for party system institutionalization, we have to speculate a little.
First, here I return to the topic mentioned in the introductory part: I do (as I did few years ago) disagree with those expectations that newly emerging post-communist democracies immediately after the installation phase can reasonably be expected to reveal symptoms of stability. If I may pretend for a while to be a narrowly oriented, say, functionalist I would ask the following: why are we expecting stability in political subsystem while the remaining ones (social, economic, cultural) are undergoing revolutionary ample change. In other words, why a dramatic change in labour market structure (from virtually none employed in the private sector to about 70 percent, in some countries), fast growth of the middle class, disappearance of say, state workers in the agriculture, reemergence of owners/capitalist class and many other substantial structural transformations is being neglected. Why the changing social context is ignored when we think of party system. If the party system is, what is expected of it, to play an intermediary role in interest representation and since these interests have changed so dramatically, is it reasonable

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8 The ten families are: (1) socialist, (2) social-democratic, (3) conservative, (4) christian-democratic, (5) nationalistic, (6) religious, (7) ethnic, (8) liberal, (9) agrarian, (10) radical-populist.

8 By taking care of empirical reality I mean that looking from the 1997 perspective one can either follow pure 'party family-driven' perspective and assume that the equivalent of AWS/97 are only parties deemed "Christian-democratic" in 1993 (namely: PC, NSZZ "S", and BBWR) or follow the reality and assume that all 'AWS-constitutive' parties, from Christian-democratic, national and religious families, are the direct ancestors of AWS. The latter solution seems more plausible as all parties form these family groups have joined AWS.
to expect party system stability?... And so on. The point is that in the initial phase of transformation in order to arrive at the end at consolidated democracy and democratic stability, at times exactly the opposite is necessary -- considerable, if need be, adaptive changes in the party system aimed at assuring the stability of the whole socio-politico-economic system. What form this change takes is another matter, the point is that if we witness a 50% growth in private sector employment, it is reasonable to expect that interest of this new strata is being represented either by a new party, adaptive changes in programs (and policies) of existing parties, or/and merges of parties whose stands and policies are close to being representative of this new strata. One can not have a 'frozen' party system when an enormous change takes place in the social system.

Stability of a party system can not - in my view - be artificially implemented at the beginning of the transformation when crucial changes of the whole social order are still under way. This leads us to the question, how long the 'fruitful fluidity' should last? The issue could be reworded in a following way: how long the adjustment between the new social re-positioning of individuals, which on aggregate level is a process of re-constructing the social structure and simultaneous attempt on the side of parties in search of their 'relevant' electorate via signaling game between elites and masses, should be treated as conducive to the ultimate stability of the system? This sort of questions, if correct per se, can be answered only empirically, as the 'out-of-communism' democratizations are new phenomena.

Utilizing different manifestations of voters volatility and the above described problem of transforming societies, I submit that:
(a) after the initial phase of high volatility, as consolidation progresses and party system institutionalizes, its decreasing tendency is awaited;
(b) among the two major components of total volatility (TV), temporary first we should witness a decline in 'block-volatility' (BV), because what comes first in new polities is broad ideological orientation of individuals, say their personal preference for liberal, corporatist, socialist or populist solutions as relevant for their (new) social position. This process takes a while, until individuals become able to clearly identify their long-term interests derived from the respective labour market position.
(c) Only then, after a longer time-span necessary for deeper, more detailed comprehension of individual interest and the working of cultural factors (socialization, inheriting political preferences) a distinct identification with particular party can reasonably be expected.

If so, lets have another glance at table 1. Indeed, the total voters volatility is going down; moreover, so does the volatility calculated via 'party families' approach and so does the 'block-volatility' (BV). In brief, Polish party system between early 90s and 1997 did change towards stability and institutionalization. This came about - as I'm inclined to believe - because in 1997 the average Polish voter was able to identify more clearly his/her interests with particular ideological orientation. This institutionalization however did not, yet, reach the level of sound party identification as the growing 'within-block-volatility' (WBV) is in place. Still, worth emphasizing is that the 6.72% of WBV, is due totally to the volatility within leftist block of the formerly incumbent PSL/SLD coalition. And again, if one dwells into this particular within block volatility from the party system institutionalization perspective, it becomes apparent that the decrease in PSL and increase of SLD support resulted from ademocratic tendencies, populist and irresponsible policies of the former party. Thus we have the following picture, the leftist block has retained almost the same support in 1997 as in 1993, accompanied by a huge shift between the weight of the two former coalition partners. The paradox is that the shift, indicative of volatility and consequently of weak party system institutionalization (and, as many tend to claim, logically -- of democratic consolidation) did occur exactly because voters decided to prevent ademocratic, populist tendencies visible in policies of one of the parties. Thus, this contradiction proves the relationship between party system institutionalization and democratic consolidation to be much more complex and indirect than some tend to believe7.

Finally it seems worth looking at Polish volatility from the global perspective. The mean Western European volatility has been calculated at 8.4%, for the 1960-89, but if one concentrates on the more comparable figures for the new Southern European democracies in their first ten years or so, these are: 18.4 for Greece 1974-85, 13.6% for Spain 1977-87 (Mair 1997: 182). Lack of qualitative difference between Polish volatility figures and some of the Latin American fragile democracies in the 70s and 80s are also visible; apart from stable Uruguay and Colombian figures (around 9 percent), Argentina, Chile, Venezuela and Costa Rica display similar to Polish levels of volatility.

7 Along the same lines, see persuasive argument of Toka (1997).
– between 12.7 and 18.2 percent, not to mention the astronomic figures for Peru, Brazil, Bolivia or Ecuador, 54.4, 40.9, 33.0 and 32.5, respectively (Mainwaring, Scully 1995: 6-8). Voter volatility figures for the neighboring countries East Central European countries, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia are: 28.3, 25.7 and 23.5 percent.

There are still other parameters of party system format and its institutionalization which will help us understand Polish developments.

(c) Fragmentation and deviation from proportionality

All newly established democratic party system face an uneasy institutional choice -- the decision concerning the electoral rules, in particular between embarking on a more representative or more accountable system. In reality the choice need not be treated as a mutually excluding alternative, nevertheless hardly anybody would question clearly different merits and consequences of both, PR and plurality, electoral designs. Wide, pure representativeness in most instances proves to be at the expense of governability, accountability and in the long run stability of the system as well as levels of participation. All these is mediated by the mechanism of higher 'decisiveness of elections' (voters choose single parties able to form majoritarian governments) and 'clarity of responsibility' (voters know who ought be credited for implemented policies and their consequences). Contrary, in PR systems, in particular those with no or low entry thresholds: numerous parties are forced to form a coalition in order to arrive at majoritarian configuration, a process accompanied by many compromises and horse-trading. The result: multiparty coalitions, with random distribution of ministerial portfolios between coalition partners make it uneasy for an average voter to accurately perceive who is really responsible for what.

Very soon the democratic political practice called for altering these rules of the game, as within 1991-93 there were several, all unsuccessful, attempts at creating stable governmental coalition. A really demanding task, provided that - realistically - at least seven parties were needed to achieve this goal. Rae's (1967) Index of Fractionalization calculated for the Polish elections of 1991, 1993 and 1997, equals (.92), (.90) and (.78), respectively. The important message from these figures is that introduction of the new electoral rules in 1993 -- thresholds: for parties 5% and for coalitions - 8% (+ qualifying for the National List at 7%), did not work automatically and immediately. Numerous small parties, mainly of rightist, religious-national and Christian-democratic orientation, renown for their approval of rationality and empirical proof, did not believe unanimous messages from public opinion centers indicating they have a reasonably low support to consider coalitional pacts and did decide to contest the election alone. The result -- almost 35% of the vote wasted. The Index of Deviation from Proportionality (Taagepera & Shugart 1989) jumped from 12.01% in 1991 to astronomic 37.34% in 1993. This high disproportionality can certainly be enumerated among the causes of the 1997 turnout decline by some 5 percent; a mechanism widely debated and accepted in the literature and well entrenched in the rational choice approach. Nevertheless, the lesson of 1993 has been digested accurately by both elites and masses. The numerous rightist parties did contest the 1997 election under the umbrella logo of "Solidarity"; the result -- the Index went down to 18.5%. Still high, mainly because of one leftist party (UP) which fall short by 0.27% to qualify for the distribution of parliamentary seats, nevertheless approximating what realistically a multiparty system with three important dimensions of competition can arrive at.

(d) Party identification and elite continuity

For Hungary the figure is obtained for only one measurement 1990-94, for the other two countries three first elections are taken into account.
According to Barnes (1998: 129) only 17 percent of Poles answered positively the classical party ID question in January 1991. Barnes recalls Converse’s statement that “stable partisanship should increase with experience with democratic electoral politics”, yet moves smoothly to express his astonishment with the low Polish figure. A remainder thus: in January 1991 free parliamentary election was still ahead of Poles, there existed barely 3 real parties and the post-revolutionary public mood was strongly anti-partist. More generally, the whole public debate and underlying discourse has been strongly axiological, apragmatical, anti-sectoral. Only after the 1991 parliamentary elections and its extreme fragmenting consequences, inability to form effective and accountable government, reoriented both elites and voters to opt for a less proportional, less representative-friendly electoral design. The 1993 election introduced relatively high thresholds and resulted – due to electorate's lack of experience with their mechanical effects and tactical voting – in high deviation from proportionality. Certainly a clear example of a trade-off between political representation and accountability. Since this experience, parties had become the major political actors of Polish politics. Consequently, the PID figures for December 1995 and October 1997 are: 43.5% and 64.3%.

Elite continuity is conceived in the literature in many ways, one frequently used indicator -- the reelection ratio of “incumbent” MP’s looks convincing at first glance, if we are ready to pretend we see no vicious paradox in its application. The paradox is that the more frequently elections are being called, the more likely one finds personal continuity for simple life-cycle reasons. In brief, what supposedly is expected to be an indicator of an stable institutionalized party system is dependent upon (correlated with) its structural instability and lack of institutionalization. In Poland the two first terms of the Parliament, one of which had not been elected under purely democratic law⁹, have lasted only two years each, the third, 1993-1997, is a full term. The percentage of MP’s who are first-comers to the parliament amounts to 91.7, 72.8 and 63.0 percent, respectively for the 1989-91, 1991-93 and 1993-97 terms.

In brief, if one believes these particular indicators to be reliable indicators of party system institutionalization, a clear trend towards it is in place in Poland.

(e) Stable social roots of party affiliations

This is a very short part for several reasons: (a) I do believe this topic deserves an in-depth longitudinal or panel designed study of the social structure transformations in this part of the world linked to the changing political and economic context; (b) beginning and mid '90s seems too early to apply cleavage semantics in this part of the world, as the process of social re-structuring has not been accomplished; the new social structure and labour market positioning has been still in the making, not to mention the adaptive, delayed social identities of individuals; (c) political elites' cognitive accuracy of reality has been limited as well, contributing thus to unconstrained political entrepreneurship, confusing the already complicated party system market..

The simple topic I want to address here is whether it is true, as many East European scholars, followers of their Western colleagues tend to believe, that there is very weak association of social class or/and social position with party preferences. In table 2, data on these associations are presented. The entries are uncertainty coefficients as the most relevant indicators for reliable comparison of cross-country data.

| TABLE 2 about here |

From the paper's focal theme -- party system institutionalization and democratic consolidation -- I do agree with Mainwaring and Scully that, normally, that is in socially stable systems it is plausible to expect clear, strong and logical (i.e. based on rational links between parties' policies and social groups' preferences) association between party preferences of active voters and social structure. Taking into account the divergent patterns of social structures and their 'class' composition (not only between the ECE countries and the Western cases, but also within the latter group) and in order to make the comparison design more reliable, the huge social aggregates like classes were disaggregated into several important social background parameters depicting the social position of an individual. Of course, some of the, parameters cover in fact groups which might be considered being a class (i.e. farmers, workers), most of them however does not.

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⁹ Even though proved to be more accountable and consensus-seeking than the next one, democratically elected in 1991.
The data shown in table 2 point to the following conclusions:

/a/ No indication of stronger links between social position of an individual and party preferences are found among stable Western polities as compared to ECE countries; clearly the opposite is true.

/b/ Among the Western democracies only Germany - in case of educational attainment, age and church attendance - displays similarly strong association as some of the ECE polities. The other comparable case is Britain's famous class cleavage: indeed 'white-collar' or working class status is strongly associated with party preference; no other country enlisted in table 2 comes close to this magnitude, the only exception being Poland '91 (for white-collars).

/c/ Other class-related parameters indicate that Poland unveils strong both rural--urban and farmers--non-farmers divide. Yet, Poland is clearly exceptional in that all -- ascribed, achieved and class -- factors seem to be strongly associated with party preferences. In the other ECE countries if any divide occurs it is unrelated to class distinctiveness, rather has to do with ascribed factors: religion and age as well as some instances of achieved status factor -- education (Slovakia and Hungary).

/d/The dynamics of temporal change for Poland shows however that with the democratic consolidation and party system institutionalization progress (were we to believe the hard data indicators presented before) the strength of association between the socio-demographic background variables and party preferences is declining, with one exception -- the religious factor10. Why this one? Again just a hypothesis, although grounded in some unsystematic empirical evidence: the salience of the religious dimension (in fact, more accurately -- in its manipulative potential for elites) derives from the on-going blurring effects of the re-shaping of the social structure. In other words, it is the least costly vehicle of transparent communication between elites and masses, in case of complicated, (still) uncomprehensible, for majority of the population, new labour market and social repositioning and their inability to correctly identify the relevant representatives of their socio-economic interests. Religious labels simplify the world, even though religious issues become less important for the Polish public.

To conclude: the stability of social roots of party support is unlikely as long as the social structure re-shaping is under way. In fact, I guess there might be a long way until we arrive at a stronger than, say the Polish 1991-93 relationship between social status and political preferences. Simply because what is ahead of us -- growth of diffuse, numerous, slowly post-materializing middle class, accompanied by remnant legacies of the transformative phase -- does not seem to be conducive to the clarity of the discussed relationship. Nevertheless, the message for those disseminating misleading news about the blurred socio-political relationship in East Central European polities is clear: such speculations have no empirical ground. Anyway, as of early-mid 90s, the association between socio-demographic factors and political preferences is much more pronounced in ECE countries that in all polities falling into the 'stable democracies' basket11.

(e) Political representation

I Manifestations of political representativeness on the mass level

The concept of political representation occupies a central place in political science and contemporary democratic theory. Representative government -- from a historical perspective a relatively new device -- irrespectively of its' varying subtypes, is the main 'organizational tool' of modern polities. In general terms it is about the relationship between citizens and political institutions; in more detail -- it is about citizen-elite linkage, creation of a sound signaling game and feedback circles of accountability and responsiveness that bring about congruence of policy stances between parliamentary elites and their electorates. It is quite astonishing thus that it has not yet been systematically linked to the party system institutionalization topic. In fragile democracies in particular the political representation can serve as sensitive tool evaluating the scope of democratic consolidation as well as the level of party system institutionalization.

Elsewhere (Markowski 1997c; 1998) I have dwelled into this relationship in more details utilizing mainly mass survey data from a longitudinal project of four Vyschrad countries. The approach aimed at linking various subjective evaluations of party representativeness with perceptions of party positions and their aggregate

10 This result fits very well and confirms other data presented in this paper, especially in the section on polarization, dimensions of competition, which indicates that indeed in the Polish 1997 parliamentary election the politization of the religious divide by elites was extremely polarizing.

11 What I mean here is that apart from the four Western polities displayed in table 2, all other show equally weak association between the two analyzed phenomena.
manifestations so that their specific configuration becomes indicative of party system institutionalization. Briefly, the approach was clearly based on subjective evaluations of electoral constituencies.

Before I move now to present some alternative data, a short summary of the aforementioned analyses.

Firstly, among the independent factors influencing certain patterns of political representativeness, I did control for the following: (a) civilizational/socio-cultural differences, (b) transformative legacies of particular ECE countries, (c) institutional design chosen, and partly derived from the latter two – (d) life cycles and duration of governments, (e) the impact of external factors.

On the other side of the equation three general notions and empirical manifestations of political representativeness were submitted: (i) the first, partisan representativeness, a simple measure of representativeness evaluation of voters' own party, i.e. the one they choose to vote for; which on the aggregate level served as basic indicator of political representation not only for the whole polity or particular parties, but important socio-professional, ethnic and other groups. (ii) The second, labeled system representativeness, based on the same responses though differently designed, was aimed at displaying a sort of generalized, diffuse party system representation performance, i.e. indicating whether the system as a whole has lower or higher potential to represent. (iii) Finally, subjective congruence, a more complex indicator of the fit between subjective perception of goals pursued by a party one votes for and her/his own preferences/attitudes concerning the same issues.

Among concluding remarks on the above manifestations of political representation and its links with party system institutionalization and democratic consolidation, the following seem worth reiterating:

(1) General prediction based on many meta-factors pointed at the Czech polity to reveal the type of political representativeness which would plausibly be considered as indicator of party system institutionalization, and Slovakia -- being the least likely case. The prediction proved partially correct: indeed the Czech polity unveils many characteristics -- high partisanship representativeness, logical links between first-preference and alternative parties' representativeness, to name the crucial ones. Many objective data logically fit into this picture: low voters volatility, higher than elsewhere in the region electoral participation etc.

The prediction however failed for Slovakia, which displays many positive signs of party system institutionalization, presented and discussed above, even though at the time this particular country's democratic merits were broadly considered highly suspicious. Nevertheless, both polities fit to Strom's (1984), Dalton's (1985) and Powell's (1989) expectation that incumbency should enhance representativeness. Both polities display high partisan representativeness, their voters are less likely to freely choose on the party market.

(2) This seemingly clear message is blurred by the dynamics of the phenomenon: submitted hypothesis linked the incumbency status and its duration with - at least potentially - ability to guarantee representation. The trend though turned to be negative, i.e. political representativeness of opposition parties tends to exceed governmental ones' as parliamentary terms' time passes by. Subjective congruence generally falls and coefficients depicting the relationship between system and intra-governmental parties' representativeness have decreased, in both former Czechoslovak republics, as well as in Hungary.

(3) Hungary is an interesting case for yet another reason: many meta-factors and institutional design seemed to be conducive to political representativeness. Apart from the already mentioned factors which might have contributed to the reverse (such as weak programmatic party system structuring), other macro-economic factors: relatively low economic growth and related poor public's mood indicators seem to be of some relevance.

(4) Finally, the Polish case. At the beginning of the transformation Polish polity displayed absolutely and relatively worst indicators; the real change occurred in 1994/95. Just like in all other countries of the region, the longer the transformational time the more second-most-representative party becomes more representative. Worth noting is the higher system representativeness in Poland (as well as in Hungary) which can be attributed to the lack of distinct 'representative divide', which might be indicative of lack of tough cleavage in general. Conceivable party alternatives in those two polities are more numerous and the party attachments less pronounced; in brief, the system is more 'open', political entrepreneurs seem to have more demanding task encapsulating particular segments of the electorate. This trend has contributed to the institutionalizing mechanisms which became clear only in the 1997 Polish election. This rosy picture has to be amended by still troublesome phenomena: extremely low, though constant, level of electoral participation, rapidly decreasing but still high voters volatility, unfortunately highly determined by elites' shifts and the like. In addition, apparent instability of alternative party representativeness might enhance doubts about party system institutionalization in Poland.

(5) Apart from a generalized relationship between political representativeness and democratic stability, it is worth distinguishing the different facets of representativeness and worth submitting that they are linked to particular aspects of democratization in a systematic way. I would argue that partisan representativeness is crucial for party system institutionalization, system representativeness -- conducive mainly to enhancement of regime legitimacy
and diffuse political support and subjective congruence to the normative vision of representative democracy, effectiveness of the signaling game between masses and elites and via this to transparency of the policy preferences and outcomes.

An exercise in linking particular polities with these expectations might help:

(a) among the four probably Hungary and Poland are the ones which democratic consolidation is least questionable and exactly they exert the highest party system representativeness, both absolutely and relatively; in addition in Poland the temporal change is positive.

(b) In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, hard data on party system institutionalization, i.e low: volatility, deviation from proportionality, fragmentation, and high: participation and stability of incumbents, and (in Bohemia/Moravia) stable logos of all relevant parties (until 1998), are accompanied by absolutely highest levels of partisan representativeness. The same logic explains why in 1997 in Poland growth of partisan representativeness is in place.

(c) If the subjective congruence is to be linked mostly with enhancing the ideals of the working democratic system -- effective exchange between voters and parties, clarity of policy stances for the public and accurate perceptions of party stances, then Hungary may serve as a negative example as the most fuzzy, blurred party system among the four. Czech Republic on the other hand displays the reverse pattern (lack of comparable elite data restricts us from classifying Slovakia): high subjective congruence is related to high parameters of the above mentioned indicators of effectiveness and transparency of the relationship between elites and masses (see Kitschelt, Mansfeldova, Markowski, Toka 1999).

II Para-objective political representation: elite – mass linkages

Now we move to a more classical approach to political representation (Miller, Stokes 1963; Converse, Pierce 1986 and others), linking the elite stances on salient public issues with voters preferences. A piece of evidence about ECE's and Polish political representation around 1993/94 has already been compiled and presented (see Kitschelt, Mansfeldova, Markowski, Toka 1999, chapter 9). From the institutionalization perspective, we assume that the higher the representational fit on salient policy issues the more institutionalized a system is. And it is not only about the quality of democracy which certainly contributes to the overall stability of the system, but also about technical - or if you will - logistic efficacy of the signaling game. Institutionalized party system must display certain level of effective information flow between the two entities – voters and elites.

The angle of this part of my presentation is synchronic – comparison in space in 1993/94 period and in time – change in the parameters of representation in the Polish party system between the above point in time and 1997/98. In comparison with the other regions’ polities, the peculiarities of the Polish case can be summarized as follows:

(1) In terms of absolute representation – one aimed at depicting the fit between mean elite and voters' positions – Poland, contrary to the other three Eastern European polities, does not reveal weak absolute representation on socio-cultural issues (role of the Church and civic liberties versus authoritarian conservatism). The closer pattern of absolute representation is accompanied by a peculiar phenomenon indicating that - again contrary to other countries - voters support limiting Church's influence in public life to a considerably higher extent than elites. Resemblign pattern occurs when one looks into the voter-elite relationship concerning the libertarian/individualist versus authoritarian/conservative divide; again Polish elites are less in favor of liberal values. One has to remember we are talking of 1993/4 period, when the policy of the Polish Catholic Church did have a straight transmission belt over governmental policies; last effect of the role of the Church in the Polish transformation. This is not however the case anymore in 1997/8.

Polish polity did not differ from the other three in case of average voter—elite positioning on socio-economic policies: voters were much more reluctant to accept economic reforms, especially when designed by pro-market liberals. This phenomenon and the "shock therapy" legacy in Poland contributes probably most to another specific trait, i.e. parties subscribing to liberal ideals are much less absolutely representative of their voters than the socialist, protectionist anti-market parties.

(2) In terms of relative representation, which from many angles should be more important for both voters' choice and efficient elite-voter linkage, as the absolute proximity of all relevant parties is in a way highly abstract phenomenon. On economic issues Polish party system did display relatively clear relative representation (associated with weak absolute one), just as did the Bulgarian and Czech systems, and contrary to blurred relationship between voters and elites in Hungary. In the latter country and Poland the socio-cultural issues have...
played in 1993/4 a greater role in structuring the dimensions of party competition: parties in these two countries show greater responsiveness on such issues.

With respect to civic libertarianism vs authoritarian conservatism ideological divide, in Poland (as well as Hungary) it cross-cuts economic divides, however small spread along this issue limits politicians abilities to attract the electorate by manifesting clear polar positions. Finally, the nationalist and prospective integration issue indicates relatively small dispersion among voters and generally positive leaning towards integration, thus of little salience and competitive potential. In fact, elites’ position on it has indicated little responsiveness.

The picture of 1997/8 of elite—mass linkage displays several similar as well as new traits. At this point I restore to data presented in figures 1 through 4.

**FIGURES 1 to 4** about here

On the most divisive dimension – the religious-secular one – the following seems worth emphasizing:
(i) the stretch of this dimension, measured only by mean positions of the four relevant parties\(^{12}\), on both levels shows an increase between the two points in time. The two entities polarizing are the same, even though the main opponent of SLD in 1993/4 has been NSZZ "Solidarnosc", whereas in 1997/8 – AWS. In relative terms, and embarking on salience theory approach, one may say that the elites of the two proved successful in polarizing the electorate as well. This point is even more convincing since the two were the indisputable winners of the 1997 election.

(ii) Almost no change occurred in the pattern of relationship between elites and voters on the economic populism vs liberalism dimension: strongly polarized party elite stances are not matched – in absolute terms – by voters preferences, even under circumstances that further widening of the polar positions on the elite level occurred in 1997/8. In most instances but one, the polar positions are occupied by UW – the liberal, pro-market party and populist Polish Peasant Party (PSL).
(iii) Finally, the cosmopolitan—nationalist divide displays differences both in time and between elites and voters. In 1993/4 this ideological dimension has been clearly undifferentiated by masses and relatively less crystallized than the other two among elites. It changed in 1997/8: the cosmopolitan—nationalist has spread visibly, resembling those characteristic of the economic dimension. It seems plausible to emphasize at this point that also on this dimension parties and voters that differ most are UW and PSL. The reason for reiterating it is that at the mass level of the whole public we note high correlation or - if you will - overlapping preferences between religious—secular divide and cosmopolitan-nationalist one (in reality sometimes the two dimensions are linked so closely that it is hard to speak separately of the two), yet when party competition is at stake the economic liberalism vs populism is strongly associated with cosmopolitan—nationalist issues.

From the party system institutionalization point of view these results prove it progresses: first, there are stable placements of parties on the three issues, both in time and among the two groups; second, growth in elite ideological dimension stretch is being followed by simultaneous adjustive growth among voters (or the other way round, anyway the signaling game seems to be in effect).

Another way of argument in favor of the institutionalization thesis is to look at the mean voters-elite distances/proximities within each party. The underlying hypothesis predicts higher institutionalization to be linked with lower discrepancy between mean voters and elite positions in the ideological space. In other words, one should expect transparent absolute party—voter fit.

**TABLE 12** about here

Entries of table 12 are created on the basis of the data inserted in figures 1 through 4 and are simple differences (distances) in mean positions between elite and voters of a given party; the average score - which we are mainly interested in - for the four relevant parties is shown at the bottom. The overall message leaves little doubt that clear decrease in distances between the two major entities of parliamentary liberal democracies takes place in Poland of the nineties. The change concerning the religious—secular dimension is remarkable, not only because of its

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\(^{12}\) I exclude from the analysis ROP parliamentarians due to the small N. UP elite is missing as well because they simply didn't pass the threshold and are absent from the parliament. Full data including all parties is presented in table 10.
magnitude, but mainly because of spectacular adjustment among the secular leaning parties/constituencies (SLD and UW in particular). In this case however, it is their elites that moved towards more centrist positions, while their electorate - on average - almost retained its 1993 stance. 

Less pronounced switches on the economic and cosmopolitan—nationalist dimensions nevertheless comply with the trend described above. In the former case, the overall mean of distance/proximity did not change a lot, due to two-way changes among parties: in two instances we note increased fit, in the other two — a decline. On the sociocultural issues of cosmopolitan integration versus parochial nationalism the overall growth in the fit between elite and voters is due mainly – again – to effective repositioning of UW and SLD elites, the two cosmopolitan-opening-friendly parties.

Final sketeh to this picture calls for emphasizing that in all instances (in two time points and on all three issues) Polish party system displays quite transparent relative representation with overstatement of electoral preference divergence or - if you will - with centrifugal competition in static terms and drive towards (if one concentrates on the 1993-1997 change) more Downsian centripetal competition. The latter, of course, only in relative terms.

Changes in diffuse political support: satisfaction with democracy and associated phenomena

There is little disagreement as to the importance of institutional and elite factors in democratic consolidation; yet, as long as majority of the public does not support whatever democratic design is installed and approved by elites, the democratic success is far from being legitimized and remains fragile. It is about legitimacy, i.e. a belief that in spite of certain shortcomings the existing political system is better than any other that conceivably might be established. "Legitimacy is granted and withdrawn by each member of society day in and day out. It does not exist outside the actions of individuals" (Linz 1991: 17). The literature is full of distinctions between different objects of legitimacy: government, parties, parliament. But apart from this 'particular' political support, there exist the 'diffuse' political support which is more persistent and stable than the former one; still the interaction between the two is an important phenomenon which can not be neglected.

The CEU longitudinal data (as well as the Polish NES '97) reveal that: (a) support for particular incumbents and regime diffuse support is far from deterministic; it mainly fluctuates along the turnovers in incumbency--opposition parties' composition; and (b) the diffuse political support is highly sensitive to economic conditions, its' subjective evaluations in particular (for details, see Toka 1995).

Now, lets turn to the 'consolidationist' perspective. The main question is: how to approach the phenomenon of diffuse political support as plausible indicator of democratic consolidation? It seems reasonable to assume that the higher the aggregate support of this kind the more likely the democratic consolidation is under way. In nascent democracies, in particular. Among them the absolute and relative, compared to stable democracies', level of this kind of support is low. I submit here, however, that in order to claim democracy to be consolidating, one needs to prove it is an autonomous phenomenon: relatively independent from economic trends and particular political configuration.

The above design and set of relationships was operationalized in the following way: the main and sole indicator of diffuse political support is the Eurobarometer question about 'satisfaction with democracy'.13 The operational version of the idea I suggest here is: the more consolidated the democracy the following complex relationship should occur: satisfaction with democracy should be positively correlated with: (a) political efficacy and (b) electoral participation and either unrelated or negatively related with (c) the economic fortune and (d) support for winning (incumbent) or losing (opposition) parties. In addition, I expect a complex relationship with electoral volatility: on the one hand, satisfaction with democracy may stem, among volatiles, from exercising political choice—shifting preferences due to changing social context. Yet, equally plausibly one may argue this satisfaction to derive from standpatterns' stable affiliations and predictable preferences.

To test the above hypothetical complex relationship one needs diachronism -- additional dynamic comparison in time: if the democratic consolidation is under way then, as time passes by, higher correlation between satisfaction with democracy and (a) and (b) above, as well as decreasing correlation with (c) and (d). This is a simple first step of testing a bi-variate relationship in time. In addition, I investigate the presented above logic in a multivariate

13 The wording of the question is: "On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Poland?"
design -- regression analysis aimed at revealing the net effects of the set of independent variables (related phenomena). In this instance I assume that the higher the satisfaction with democracy the less of a direct impact of (c) economic factors and (d) political ones. In other words, diffuse political support is expected to be more autonomous, independent -- from short-term economic and party configuration factors -- phenomenon in consolidated setting than in a fluid one.

Before I discuss the results of these analyses, a presentation of the simple distribution and overall dynamics (till 1997) of the proposed indicators is due.

First, diffuse political support -- its' operationalization is the satisfaction with democracy item --reveals that in the early '90s, the satisfied Poles accounted for no more than 20-22% of the adult population, they have doubled between 1993 and 1996 to about 40+ percent, and finally reached 54% of satisfied with democracy in the aftermath of the 1997 parliamentary election. Thus, many would claim this simple approach indicates democratic consolidation to be in place. The problem is that in Poland this trend as early as 1992/93 is accompanied by economic recovery and its socio-political consequences, booming consumer optimism, increasing households’ wealth and many accompanying attitudinal changes.

Some of these data are worth recalling: 1992 was the first year of positive change in GDP, by almost 3%, in 1995 the overall GDP growth, if compared to 1990 (= 100), was estimated at 112% (see World Bank 1996), which means that adding the over 6 % increase in the next two years (1996-97) the cumulative result is 127%. As of 1998 only Slovenia among the countries of the region approaches currently 100% of the 1990 GDP output.

New Democracies Barometer shows that this trend was accompanied by both clear increase in disapproval rates of the communist regime (between 1991 and 1995, by 9%) and approval of the new political regime by 24%. In both instances, the biggest change among 10 countries under scrutiny (see Rose and Haerpfer 1996)14. The same study shows it was accompanied in Poland by a huge increase in new economic system approval (by 37%), and disapproval of the socialist economic system (by 5%). In both instances the change is highest among the ten Eastern European countries, out of which in six an increase in favor of socialist economy was registered (Rose, Haerpfer 1996: 45-7).

The interesting part of the story on Poland starts when one draws attention to the 'particular' political support indicators -- support for parties and parliament as well as for a hypothetical 'strong leader'. In 1995, as many as 33% of adult Poles do not exclude supporting 'strong leader's and 'getting rid of Parliament'; a relatively high figure compared to the other countries, save Belarus and Ukraine (p.35-7).

In table 8 I show simple approval rates of selected attitudes from the CEU longitudinal series for Poland. The almost tripling of the diffuse political support item is related with decreasing (though fluctuating) 'particular' support -- satisfaction with incumbent governments. This is, of course aggregate level comparison, nevertheless such a discrepancy between the two, does not permit us even to suspect that individual level analysis might prove the contrary (it anyway will be presented later).

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Indicators of 'political efficacy' A, B, J and L15, show that - taking into account their temporal change vis a vis satisfaction with democracy - they are rather a result of the general diffuse political support than its cause. Finally, subjective evaluation of 'chances of getting ahead' are improving again at a temporal interval from satisfaction with democracy, and at a slower pace.

This simple aggregate level juxtaposition of political support's different dimensions (aspects), hints at apparently autonomous developments in diffuse political support.

To prove the above claim one has to resort to slightly more sophisticated analysis: focus on individual level relationships and embark on multivariate analysis, tracing direct effects of particular factors. Result of this effort is presented in table 9a and 9b.

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14 In the same period the approval of the communist regime has gone up in Bulgaria, Croatia, Ukraine, Belarus, Slovakia by 28, 21, 20, 17 and 8 percent, whereas disapproval for the new regime has declined in Romania and Hungary by 9 and 7 percent, respectively, in Croatia, Bulgaria and Belarus no visible change occurred.

15 Full wording of the four items see Table 8; in the further regression analysis, the 'political efficacy index' was based on items A and J only.
The data is only for 1993 and 1997, as some of the variables - dynamic in nature - were senseless if applied for pre-93 period, i.e. voters volatility, party affiliations' winners and losers, in particular. Entries in part "a" of the table show simple bi-variate correlations between satisfaction with democracy and five other indexes. The multidimensional hypothesis goes as follows: in a more consolidated polity one expects stronger correlation between satisfaction with democracy and political efficacy and electoral participation; on the other hand, and simultaneous weaker correlation with economic success/failure and political affiliation; finally, electoral volatility has been left as empirically open question. The results confirms that Poland 1997 as compared to 1993 turns out to be a polity with stronger efficacy/participatory impact on diffuse political support. And clearly, the second part of the hypothesis is confirmed as well: the link between the individual economic success and satisfaction with democracy is becoming weaker as does belonging to the politically winning or losing party camp (the correlation of .04 is statistically insignificant). Let's turn now to tracing the net, direct effects and explanatory power of these sets of independent variables on satisfaction with democracy. And again the comparison is solely between 1993 and 1997. The models chosen for presentation are selected from numerous attempts of finding the most plausible equation of the discussed relationship. The empirical message is transparent and in line with the aggregated data analysis: as time passes by democracy in Poland consolidates, because the diffuse political support is becoming less dependent on economic and political factors (model 1) and slightly more determined by participation and political efficacy (model 2). The overall influence of both sets of factors (model 3) unveils that satisfaction with democracy is becoming more autonomous. In short, diffuse political support, believed to be a strong component of democratic consolidation, has been presented from four angles: (i) the overall satisfaction with democracy has tripled, (ii) simple distributions of related phenomena, by many believed to be its covariates, change in the same direction, though the pace is slower, (iii) other factors believed by many to be troublesome correlates blurring the 'pure' diffuse political support seem to be unrelated to the dynamics of satisfaction with democracy, (iv) both simple bi-variate correlations and multivariate regressions display the same picture: on the individual level the hypothesis discussed above is confirmed -- in 1997 the diffuse political support is less dependent on economic as well as political fortune factors. Finally, the explanatory value of the cosmopolitan—nationalist divide has been checked by adding it to the model, to test whether, as predicted, cosmopolitan/integrative leaning enhances satisfaction with democracy in a "followers" society and polity. The result proved disappointing – the net effect (after controlling for the impact of the individual fate in the new system and of the political status vis a vis incumbents) of cosmopolitan/integrative factor adds to model 1 only 1% of explanatory value, down from 2% of gross effect. Briefly, favorable attitudes towards European integration and economic, pro-market-opening does not contribute to satisfaction with democracy in Poland, even though the "direction" of this minor effect fits the prediction.

**Party system shape, ideological dimensions, dimensions of competition, polarization and party system institutionalization.**

Party systems are being described in many ways; looking at its 'shape' -- the issue-content of dimensions on which parties compete, the absolute distance between parties on these issues -- is one of the most common. Recently I have dwelled into this problematique elsewhere, though in a static (one-point-in-time) fashion (Markowski 1995, 1997; Kitschelt, Mansfeldova, Markowski, Toka 1999). A brief introductory remark, a summary of the previous research is due at this point. In comparative East-Central European perspective Polish party system unveils following features: its ideological space is defined by two major policy dimensions - economic 'left-right' and religious vs secular divide. An important note: both dimensions are independent, though at times blurred by a third -- authoritarian/nationalist vs libertarian/cosmopolitan -- one, which usually overlaps with the religious-secular. In 1993/94 the system was more than moderately polarized on both important dimensions, and different from the Hungarian and Czech, which revealed polarization only on one dimension, religious/nationalist vs secular/cosmopolitan and economic left-right, respectively.
The ideological\textsuperscript{16} dimensions are important bases for identifying party positions, they form a kind of issue-universe in which certain syndromatic clusters occur and on which politicians find it relevant to compete or not. They are usually defined by logically clustered salient unsolved issues, policy stances and/or value preferences derived from belief systems of the population. As such they are created on the basis of general publics' perception of the most important societal problems. They should not be confused with cleavages, even though some of ideological dimensions have the capacity to freeze along social group lines and entrap part of the population into protracted identification with one party or block.

In depicting party system's shape, dimensions of competition and polarization in particular, it is important to control for these ideological dimensions, nevertheless it is not enough. They do exist independently from elites creative skills and active voters responses. In brief, in the followings when I refer to ideological dimensions I have in mind autonomously existing clustered policy packages seen as such by the whole adult population. When I switch into 'dimensions of competition' and polarization semantics, I concentrate on the same issue universe, yet differently constructed: first, they result from interactive games between elites and masses (in this presentation derived from active voters' perceptions of the issues/policies, not the whole population as in case of 'ideological dimensions'); second, the particular issue composition of each clustered dimension of competition is obtained by maximizing the between-electorates differences on a given dimension\textsuperscript{17}

Since we need some theoretical justification for focusing on party system shape, its' constitutive dimensions and polarization, let me start with a 30-year-old observation of Huntington (1968: 416 ff), that even though moderate fragmentation and cross-cutting cleavages might be conducive to democratic stability, yet in the initial phase of political system formation polarization might be a more desirable phenomenon as it helps establish programmatically based relationship between elites (parties) and masses. In other words, it provides unsophisticated electorate with a better clarity of policy goals parties pursue and consequently contributes to the belief that democratic rules matter for policy outcomes, which ultimately stimulates participation.

Were we to follow this idea, the logical question is: how long is the "initial phase", when does it start and when does it end? It is about the time span of democratic life cycle and the "curvilinearity" of the relationship between political time and consensus/polarization continuum. History helps only marginally; what we know from post-World War II democratizing regimes is that indeed in the first decade or so they developed a rather polarized polities. In our other study (Kitschelt, Mansfeldova, Markowski, Toka 1999), we compare four East European polities and arrive at a conclusion that for programmatic structuring, clarity of electorate's perception of party positions and effectiveness of the signaling game between the two, (as of 1993/94) the Czech one-dimensional and - though to a slightly lesser extent - Polish two-dimensional polarized system are clearly superior to Hungarian consensual politics, at least on the salient macro-economic issue dimension. Vagueness of Hungarian politics on this dimension creates many problems not only for static interpretation of which parties stand for what, but also for the dynamics of the information exchange between elites and masses.

This leads us to another aspect of the discussed topic, namely that democratic consolidation is dependent upon the ideological dimension on which polarization takes place. It seems obvious that 'indivisible (non-distributive) goods', first of all ethnic identities, but religious values as well, if politically polarized might impede democratic consolidation more effectively than comparable polarization concerning economic policies. Finally, if the different ideological dimensions overlap, are polarized and reinforce single division line, the prospects for democratic consolidation might be more obscure than otherwise.

\textsuperscript{16} I refer here to one of the possible usage of the term 'ideology'; one which takes into account both the descriptive and normative aspects of human's world-view. It is based on cherished values and beliefs and provides individuals with the reality as it is and as it should be. In technical terms it is a crude simplification of the world, turning its complexity, multiple interrelations into something comprehensible and relatively simple. In our case it is about simplification of policy stances on issues as categorically different as privatization policies, abortion provisions, nationalism and preferences concerning redistributive policies. The 'ideological dimension' is an empirical construct, created on the basis of individuals' values, attitudes and preferences, derived from survey responses. In operational terms it is a result of factor analysis of a set of attitudinal/opinion items covering the whole array of modern policy domains. Empirical clustering of the items unveils societal perception of certain syndromatic policy packages, logically (from the grass-root perspective); these 'ideological dimensions' are both: within-cluster rationally linked policy domains and, at the same time, differentiated from other clustered packages (factor analysis Varimax rotation applied).

\textsuperscript{17} In statistical algorithm terms it is discriminant analysis that is being applied to arrive at 'dimensions of competition', contrary to factor analysis which served as a tool for creating 'ideological dimensions'}
Now, back to reality: Polish system reveals two, sometimes three, clear ideological dimensions, none of them however is based on ethno-cultural divisions. Instead, an apparent religious--secular ideological dimension is in place, which - because of its' non-redistributive nature - if polarized might prove conflictual and destabilizing.

The following set of hypotheses concerning the relationship between democratic consolidation, party system institutionalization via crystallization and ideological as well as competitive dimensions is being tested. First, it is plausible to expect that in a consolidated European democracy, the dimension of competition that will dominate politics will be the economic one; it is to say (i) that irrespectively of the starting point, as democratic consolidation progresses the socio-cultural ideological dimensions should become less important for political competition, and (ii) that the "left-right" semantics will become both better explained by the universe of ideological dimensions as well as linked stronger to the economic dimension (i.e. that the direct, net effect of economic issues will relatively increase).

Second, after the initial phase of chaos, party system polarization should increase: (i) in general, (ii) on the economic dimension in particular.

Third, in a two-dimensional party system for democracy to work two conditions must be met: (i) the two dimensions ought be independent, and (ii) all four quadrants of the political space should - more or less - equally be condensed by both parties and voters. In other words if a two dimensional party system reveals full overlap of the two dimensions it is bad news for party system institutionalization and democratic consolidation. If however, this comes about, it should follow the Western clustering, i.e. in which secular-libertarian-cosmopolitan pole is linked with economic leftist, redistributive one and the conservative-national-religious is linked to the pro-market, economically liberal policies (see Kitschelt 1992, about the main axis of competition in new and stable democracies).

Table 10 is relevant for checking some of the above suppositions. The general message enables us to claim the following:

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1) Polarization of the Polish party system increases; (a) in general, (b) on both dimensions, (c) more spectacularly on the religious-secular [RS] than economic protectionist-liberal market [EC] one. Between '95 and '97 a slight decline of economic dimension polarization is visible. Another approach, analysis of one-dimensional space indicates quite the same phenomenon -- the polarization index increases in the four points in time: from .30, via .41, .56, to .69. It does so because the artificially created one-dimensional space is anyway dominated by the religious-secular dimension.

2) The stretch of the system -- the distance between two parties located at polar placements -- delineating the borders of the political space, if tested against on one dimensional space (data not shown) goes down from 2.19 in '92 to 1.70 in '97. If, however the space is depicted by two dimensions, there are two different messages for two conceptualizations of the political space. When the "universe stretch" is considered, the data in column 2 shows following dynamics: (a) the RS dimension, fluctuates though remains almost the same, whereas (b) the EC dimension, which fluctuates as well, goes up from .66 to 1.17. When we concentrate on the message from column 3, the one depicting developments of the "competitive stretch" (for clarification see footnote # 26) of the party system, we note that RS dimension decreases dramatically from 2.22 to 1.57, whereas EC -- increases considerably. What is notable however is that the parliamentary election years (1993 and 1997) boost the EC dimensions, be it the 'universal' or the 'competitive' and reduce the stretch of RS dimensions. Generally however, if one focuses on the one-dimensional simplification, the message is: parties in Poland '97 have competed within a much more "compressed" political space than before.

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18 The term 'universe stretch' is reserved for political space which is determined by perceptions of political reality (issue stances, policy preferences and attitudes) by all adult Poles, independently of their party identification and political participation, i.e. non-voters are included in delineating and shaping this universe. On the other hand, the term 'competitive stretch' is applied when the political space is defined solely by electorates of particular parties and the reality is determined by an imposed expectation as to maximizing the differences (distances) between parties. In a way the distinction is between a para-objectively existing reality, as defined by the polity as a whole, without the effects of party elites influences and , in the second case, reality which is defined by parties' electorates location, those who participate (i.e. non-voters are excluded) and react to the competitive game launched by elites. Statistical method aimed at creating the former is factor analysis, whereas the latter -- discriminant analysis.
3) Finally, its worth controlling for the overall salience of these political dimensions, which is presented in columns 6 and 7. And gain we see that the RS universal/ideological dimension remains almost the same throughout the years covered, whereas its ‘competitive’ dimension salience increases. In case of the EC dimension, the former decreases slightly and the latter remains almost constant.

Following conclusion from this three-angle presentation seems plausible: the importance of the RS divide for the Poles at large seems constant, it is the efforts of political elites that create competitiveness and growing religious-secular polarization. The polarizing potential of economic policies, on the other hand, seem to decline slightly, and even though this dimension's stretch grows considerably between 1995 and 1997 (see columns 2 and 3) its polarization decreases. In other words, it seems that there are two temporal paces at which Polish party system institutionalizes: in economic terms there seem to be much more of an consensual agreement in 1997 than there was in 1993, when both the stretch of this dimension among the public as a whole was highest (column 2) and its universal/ideological salience as well (column 4).

Quite the reverse story unveils when data on the religious-secular dimension is being analyzed: even though the stretch of this dimension is declining, the major actors of the political game find it desirable to launch antagonist appeals that advance polarization as well as competitive salience (see columns 1 and 5 respectively) considerably.

The cosmopolitan--nationalist dimension in structuring the Polish party system space

Since globalization and integration processes are - like it or not - anyway ante portas of all new democracies, it is plausible to suspect they influence fragile party systems. It is believed that in some instances the constraints of these external factors determine particular countries policies and might contribute to blurred voters—elite relationship. In our case the cosmopolitan--nationalist dimension or ideological proxy for related phenomenon is composed of three variables taping attitudes/preferences toward: (a) prospective NATO and EU membership, (b) acceptance of foreign capital operation in Poland, and (c) pace and mode of privatization policies. The result of factor analysis reveals following factor loadings for the three issue stances: .63, .64, .65 on the mass level and .82, .77, .61 on the elite level. From the ideological space angle – where the political reality is defined by all competent observers -- a considerable consistency is visible both between the two levels and within each of the two groups. Briefly, Poles perceive the cosmopolitan-nationalist dimension as multi-faceted, complex phenomenon, even though notably less salient than the religious-secular and economic ones. When openly asked about the importance of the these issues Poles tend to perceive NATO and EU membership more important than the other two constituting the cosmopolitan-nationalist cluster, still less important than two other issues on our list considered to be the most important – crime and unemployment. By comparing the factor loadings magnitude, "eigenvalues" and the percentage of the explained variance one may claim that even though elites seem to display more coherence among factors depicting the discussed dimension (with clear constitutive component being attitude towards NATO and EU membership), on the mass level this dimension seems to be slightly more important if compared to the remaining two. Finally, its ideological stretch is twice as high on the elite level; in other words elites are polarizing the space. In both cases the polar points are occupied by pro-European Freedom Union (UW) and anti-European Peasant Party (PSL). Compared to the ideological stretch of the other two dimensions (see table 10) the European dimension does not seem to generate a lot of potential polarization.

The above is only part of the story to be told. Apart from the ideological space one has to look at the space of competition, i.e. the space delineated and constructed by the participants of the electoral game – the active voters expressing their preferences in supporting particular political (party) option. The empirical question here is: to what extent the European dimension is important for the party system "shape" and modes of competition? For this purpose discriminant analysis has been applied (as for the remaining data presented in table 10). In this case the European dimension is comprised of slightly different set of factors. At the mass level its components' weights (standardized discriminant function coefficients) indicate first of all that competition in the Polish party system is dominated by agricultural policy issues. In other words, among a considerable portion of Polish electorate the salient and constitutive element of the meta-attitude towards European integration/cosmopolitan opening has to do with choices concerning agriculture and privatization in the first place and these two are linked with EU/NATO membership and foreign capital. In general thus a clear European dimension is missing (see the extremely weak eigenvalue and explained variance).

19 This configuration of issues is a result of a factor analysis run on eleven salient issues of Polish politics. In other instances (when discriminant analysis is used) and in case of elites, agricultural policies are associated with the above mentioned three-dimensional syndrome.
This dimension is even more blurred among the elite; in this case EU/NATO membership and stands on privatization are dominated by the salience of two other issues: the role of the Church and policies towards crime. Such a composition of this cluster makes it even hard to claim it is still an European dimension we are dealing with. Even though there are some arguments to link the Polish secular—religious fundamentalist divide with cosmopolitan/integration matters, one is on much weaker grounds trying to explain the crime policy issue to be a constitutive element of the discussed dimension.

The overall result points however to the following: the polarization index of the cosmopolitan—nationalist dimension on the mass level is substantially lower than for the other two dimensions, which together with negligible figure of competitive salience and non-impressive one for ideological stretch (see columns 5 and 2 of table 10, respectively) supports the conclusion of the lack of competition in contemporary Polish party system on this dimension. But that need not be a permanent state; comparable - to the other two dimensions - figures of ideological salience and competitive stretch indicate a potential for polarization and party competition.

The spurious contradiction between the polarization index and competitive stretch in particular, can be interpreted by pointing that this configuration indicates in fact the following phenomenon: as the transformational time passes by the Polish party system becomes more institutionalized in the sense that the many small, some of them radical, parties with diffuse issues stances are being replaced by few bigger with crystallized positions on major ideological dimensions.

**The left-right superdimension**

It has been submitted that in a more institutionalized party system one should expect more transparent relationship between the "left--right" spatial semantics and the ideological, issue-clustered dimensions.

** TABLE 11**

First, as predicted, with the passing of the transformational time the explained variance of "left-right" identifications by joint economic and socio-cultural ideological dimension, i.e. the RS and EC ones, is growing considerably between 1992 and 1995, when it triples and then rapidly declines in 1997. Second, it is clear as well that the overall salience of these two dimensions and their relation to each other did not change a lot among the general public; except for 1993, in all other points in time the salience of the religious-secular dimension is higher by about a half. Yet, the magnitude of the direct effects ( regression standarized 'beta' coefficients) and their proportion (relative relationship) differs over time considerably: the religious-secular issue domain explains almost all of the variance in 'left-right' self-identities in '92 and '95, in the remaining two years both issue domains contribute to the left-right identities almost equally. Third, in all points in time the standarized regression coefficients ('betas') are identical (with two minor exceptions) with bi-variate correlations. This leads us to claim that the overlapping influence of the socio-cultural religious vs secular and economic protectionist/redistributive vs market/liberal domains and attitudinal preferences is virtually nonexisting. In other words, these two policy domains are autonomous and independent, in spatial rhetoric one would say -- orthogonal.

The overall interpretation of these results from the party system institutionalization perspective is complicated mainly because of the 1997 result. On the one hand the direct effect of the two dimension this year is for the first time equal, which encourages to speak of decreasing influence of the residual socio-cultural factors in favor of economic ones as carriers of party competition. On the other however, the impact of the two on the 'left-right' self-identities becomes negligible, yet still independent. What is for sure is the latter point: the Polish party system space remains two-dimensional, is clearly structured by these two independent policy domains and no signs of blurring overlap between the two occur. This enhances the hope that clarity of perceptions and party system crystallization for the public grows.

Moreover, we do know that the above phenomena take place in an increasingly - as compared to 1992/93 - polarized party system, on both dimensions, which leads us to believe the party offer distribution in the four quadrants of the space to be relatively balanced.

**Spaces of competition, left-right ideological dimension and European integration**
Since we assume that in institutionalized party systems the universal "left-right" ideological proxy is expected to first, reveal some issue-content and, second, be determined mostly by economic issues. As mentioned before the political space in Poland is dominated by two dimensions and - moreover - they are relatively independent. The third dimension, up to now omitted, clearly covers attitudes, stances and preferences towards European integration and the external world. Elsewhere I referred to it as authoritarian-nationalist vs libertarian-cosmopolitan divide and its components should be treated as content equivalents of the dimension under scrutiny. In addition one can plausibly expect some coherence between mass and elite level above relationships.

**TABLE 11a**

The empirical message, presented in table 11a, is complex:
First, at the elite level the "left-right" semantics displays much more substantive, issue content, but it is mainly, though not exclusively, religious—secular issues that explain most of it. Second, on the elite level the socio-economic issues contribute to the left-right self-identification and exert virtually no influence on the mass level, even though among the three ideological dimensions it is this particular composition of the socio-economic populism vs market liberalism reveals relatively high salience. Third, the cosmopolitan—nationalist divide or European integration dimension is of virtually no importance for left-right semantics on both levels, save minor effect among masses. Fourth, the more specific analyses (data not shown) of particular issues' direct (net) impact on the left-right reveal that none of the three composites of the cosmopolitan-nationalist dimension helps explain left-right placements and identifications, with the exception of the privatization issue among elites. But again the major explanatory is the nomenclatura issue -- a single most important one, and next - in order of the magnitude of direct effects - the abortion provisions, tax policies, privatization and the role of the Church. On the mass level the story closely resembles the one for the masses, with nomenclatura and the role of the Church issues being even more important than among elites.

Another way of looking at and explaining the impact of ideological leanings towards cosmopolitan opening or national parochialism on party system institutionalization is to reveal the extent to which party affiliations vis a vis other socio-economic and socio-political variables. The hypothetical (open to epistemological criticism) expectation is that in case of an institutionalized system, there should occur a systematic relationship between social background variables, party support and cosmopolitanism/nationalism. In more operational terms the reasoning should be reworded as follows: in such a case one should reveal considerable impact overlap of those categorically different independent variables on the dependent one. In other words, the overall explained variance of the whole model should be - due to the plausible overlap - considerably lower than their constituent parts. I distinguish five broad groups of factors indicative of individuals': (1) ascribed status, (2) achieved status, (3) organizational/professional affiliation, (4) political participation, (5) party preference (vote). The result of their separate impact shows us the following picture:

(a) Among the five meta-factors, two the ascribed and achieved status explain most of the cosmopolitan—nationalist ideological dimension, 8 and 7 percent respectively. Separately however the three variable chosen to represent the latter status display highest bi-variate correlations with our dependent variable, but exactly due to high colinearities – overlapping effects of education, position and income -- the overall impact is comparable to the ascribed status, which component parts reveal relatively independent influence.

(b) The party preference - which is of utmost importance here - explains about 4%, the participation and affiliation – 3 and 5 percent, respectively.

(c) Now, the overall model - including all component parts - explains 16% of the cosmopolitan-nationalist divide and the added effect of the party preference group adds negligible 2 percent.

The conclusion: after controlling for basic socio-demographic variables there is little room for parties' influence in relation to cosmopolitan—nationalist issue discourse.

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20 Compare the overall explained variance of the models – 68% for elites and 26% for masses. In both cases the religious—secular ideological divide is crucial; it explains 60% and 25% of the left-right dimension among elites and masses, respectively.

21 By "this particular composition" I mean the difference between the socio-economic dimension presented in table 11 and 11a; in the latter the dimension includes stances on agricultural policy and taxes and thus proves to be more salient than a dimension composed only of privatization, unemployment and redistributive policies.

22 In this case I do not compare the effects of single factors (i.e. education, gender etc.), but five broader groups of factors because of strong colinearity between variables constituting each broader group (i.e. between income, professional position and education).
One final caveat is due: of course not all parties are resistant to the impact of integration/globalization/cosmopolitan opening factor. Support for the liberal UW and populist PSL is dependent on this factor to a higher extent than on the religious—secular one and in case of PSL, even more important than the economic populism vs liberalism. The three ideological dimension explain among PSL elite 8% of their voters support, out of which the direct effect of the cosmopolitan-nationalist dimension amounts to almost 7%. For the mass level the model including all three dimensions in case of PSL does not explain anything. For UW elite the regression model explains 29% of the variance, out of which 22% can be attributed to the economic dimension impact, 6% to the cosmopolitan-nationalist and only 1% to religious secular divide. The popular support for the remaining two major parties, AWS and SLD (the regression models explain as much as 64 and 63%, respectively!), is completely independent from the impact of cosmopolitan-nationalist divide on the elite level and almost completely independent on the mass level. What matters in the case of these two parties is the socio-cultural divide dominated by religious secular dispute, associated with the regime divide issue (i.e. policy towards nomenclatura).

At the end back to the data presented in tables 10 through 12 and figure 4 on the left-right ideological proxy. Several conclusions are justified: (a) it is the left-right dimension that reveals the highest polarization potential on both elite and mass level; (b) the ideological content of the left-right semantics is dominated by the socio-cultural issues, and only marginally influenced by economic debate on the elite level; (c) among the many spatial dimension presented above, it is the left-right placement of parties and voters that hints at transparent signaling game between elites and voters, in both absolute and relative terms (see figure 4); (d) all this leads us to claim that even though the religious-secular divide can "substitute" part of the abstract left-right positioning and discourse, a substantial part nevertheless remains uncovered. This residual content is worth depicting since the dimension is so consequential for political competition in Poland. This task however exceeds the objectives of the presentation.
CONCLUSIONS

The major aim of this presentation has been to describe and explain the peculiarities and mechanisms of the development of the Polish party system. The underlying assumption and heuristic concept was its institutionalization. Numerous hard and survey data point clearly to the following:

1) Both in absolute and relative to other cases terms the Polish party system did move along the road of institutionalization; its major indicators coincide and simultaneously change in the expected direction, save few contradicting facts.

2) Indicators of party system institutionalization and associated correlates widely believed to be of "hard" nature that explicitly confirm presence of such a development are: (a) declining voter volatility and the temporally patterned and sequenced change of its components, (b) growing party identification among electorate and clearer elite continuity in the parliament, (c) decreasing fragmentation and deviation from proportionality as well as the number of effective parties.

3) The detailed analysis of the party system polarization, dimension of competition and relevance of the left-right ideological divide shows that indeed Polish party system - as transformative time passes by - becomes more polarized and conducive to clearer voter——elite cognition of issue stances. Left-right ideological meta-dimension shows transparent, in absolute and relative terms, mean positioning of parties. Still, some of the results question this rosy picture: relative salience of the religious—secular dimension in creating and dominating the party arena is one of those convincing obstacles, even though we can prove it is - in a way - "artificially" created by elites for purely electoral purposes. On the other hand, at least up to 1997, the declining significance of the socio-cultural content of the left-right semantics and relative growth of the socio-economic input seemed to be conducive to party system institutionalization. The 1997 data leaves however little doubt that due to the growing polarization and re-creation of the religious-secular and retrospective regime divide issues by the elites of the main and victorious parties has contributed both to blurring the economic discourse and its growing significance as well as to increase of residual influences associated with left-right discourse, not covered by the three meta-dimensions.

4) Temporally systematic and comparatively designed juxtaposing of relevant data on party system institutionalization and democratic consolidation shows that there is remote, far from deterministic relationship between the two. The postulate that the former is an important determinant or even prerequisite of democratic consolidation is far from being confirmed and calls for additional empirical inquiry. Comparison of Slovakia with the rest of the ECE polities is quite telling. The coinciding of party system institutionalization and democratic consolidation in Poland is troublesome for yet another reason: both phenomena are accompanied by impressive - by regional standards - economic growth. The effort at disentangling the democratic consolidation meta-indicator – the diffuse political support -- was aimed exactly at controlling the blurring impacts of factors believed to be likely correlates of this phenomenon, but which do not count for its constitutive elements. The result: as time passes by the diffuse political support becomes more autonomous from both economic and short-term political phenomena, whereas simultaneously its links with political efficacy and participation become more prominent.

5) Polish party system, viewed via three facets of political representativeness unveils progress towards institutionalization, which fits the message derived from changes in hard data parameters. In particular, the timing of particular manifestations of voters volatility fits adequately to the picture sketched by political representativeness indicators and their systematic interactive configurations. Subjective congruence of constituencies' preferences with policies parties' they support pursue become more obvious and associated phenomenon of growing partisanship representativeness, all indicate party system acquires more structured shape.

6) Para-objective approach to testing the political representation phenomenon ought to be summarized as follows: on the most divisive dimension – the religious-secular the competitive stretch has been polarized due to deliberate effort by the elites and the competitive stretch delineated by the four major relevant parties has gone up compared to few years ago, even though for the whole system (including other minor parties) it has in fact declined. In a way
thus, it is the 'responsiveness' of voters to elites constructivism that has contributed to the above phenomenon. As a result one may claim the representation on the RS dimension has improved considerably. The economic divide proves more complicated; the improvement in elite-voter fit has been only marginal and moreover two major parties with heterogeneous constituencies occupy close central positions and overlap considerably. On average SLD's electorate is closer to AWS' elites than to their own (see figure 2).

Generally however the message political representation data sends is conducive to party system institutionalization, in particular in the long run. Less parties with clearer position on a more 'stretched' issue-dimensional space, accompanied by a centripetal - and thus contributing to parties' stance transparency - behavior of elites seems to be a promising structuring development.

7) The impact of the third meta-dimension, the cosmopolitan—nationalist one, shows little structuring and competitive power in general. This does not mean that in certain circumstances and for particular parties this dimension is negligible. The 1998 results indicate that in fact it is becoming more important, especially for two parties which occupy on the most salient religious-secular divide central positions – liberal UW and populist PSL.

8) General conclusion: if one controls for temporal changes in particular indicators of party system institutionalization and democratic consolidation, little doubt remains that the causal link in Poland runs from the economic success and subsequent consumption growth to satisfaction with democracy and only then to party system institutionalization. Certainly not the other way round.
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Toka, Gabor (1995) ‘Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in East Central Europe’, *Studies in Public Policy* #279. (University of Strathclyde, Glasgow)
Table 1: Aggregate voters volatility in Poland 1991 - 97

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>91/93</th>
<th>93/97</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TV</strong> (general) (citizens)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22.1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FTV</strong> (general) (citizens)</td>
<td>18.52</td>
<td>12.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.01</td>
<td>12.16</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.54</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WBV</strong></td>
<td>FWBV</td>
<td>FWBV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>9.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TV** – total volatility  
**FTV** - ‘family’ total volatility  
**BV** - block volatility  
**WBV** - within-block volatility  
**FBV** - ‘family’ block volatility  
**FWBV** - ‘family’ within-block volatility  
**PBV** - party block volatility  
**PWBV** - party within-block volatility
Table 2: Strength of association between party preference and selected social background variables in Poland 1991 – 97 and other countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Church Attendance</th>
<th>White collar</th>
<th>Worker</th>
<th>Farmer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poland 91</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland 93</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland 97</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech R.</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.01</td>
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<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Britain</td>
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<td>.01</td>
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<td>.00</td>
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<td>.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<td>na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explanation:  
(1) table’s entries are ‘uncertainty coefficients’
(2) the ‘na’ data are due either to too small N or to recoding problems which unable comparison
(3) data for Poland 91 and other East Central European countries come from comparative project entitled *Political Consequences of Dismantling Social Safety Net in East Central Europe* initiated and financed by Institute for East – West Security Studies (New York--Praha)
Data for Poland 93 and other East Central European countries are from longitudinal comparative project *The Development of Party Formation and Electoral Alignments in East Central Europe*, initiated and financed by Central European University
(4) the remaining data are from ISSP series on the *The Role of Government*, Distributor: Zentralarchive, Köln
Table 8: Percentage magnitude of selected statements’ approval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SATDEM</th>
<th>SATGOV</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SATDEM - EUROBAROMETER question on ‘satisfaction with democracy’
SATGOV - satisfaction with incumbents
A - “In election in Poland voters have a real choice”
B - “Generally speaking, those we elect to Parliament lose touch with the people pretty quickly”
J - “People like me have no say in what government does”
K - “The way things are in Poland people like me and my family have a good chance of getting ahead in life”
L - “Parties are only interested in people’s votes, but not their opinions”
Table 9a: Correlation between satisfaction with the functioning of democracy and selected variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>SATDEM 93</th>
<th>SATDEM 97</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POLEFF</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOLATPRT</td>
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<tr>
<td>WINLOS</td>
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<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTWINL</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOTER</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p=[.00] [.00] [.00] [.00] [.17] [.00] [.00] [.07] [.00]

Table 9b: Determinants of satisfaction with democracy (results of regression analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Explained Variance of:</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Explained Variance of:</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Explained Variance of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 %</td>
<td>PARTWIN</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>POLEFF</td>
<td>17 %</td>
<td>WINLOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>corr. (.13)</td>
<td></td>
<td>corr. (.20)</td>
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<td>corr. (.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>beta (.09)</td>
<td></td>
<td>beta (.20)</td>
<td></td>
<td>beta (.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>WINLOS</td>
<td></td>
<td>VOTER</td>
<td></td>
<td>POLEFF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>corr. (.39)</td>
<td></td>
<td>corr. (.04)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>beta (.38)</td>
<td></td>
<td>beta (.04)</td>
<td></td>
<td>beta (.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>PARTWIN</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>POLEFF</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>WINLOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>corr. (.04)</td>
<td></td>
<td>corr. (.23)</td>
<td></td>
<td>corr. (.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>beta (.03)</td>
<td></td>
<td>beta (.21)</td>
<td></td>
<td>beta (.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td></td>
<td>WINLOS</td>
<td></td>
<td>VOTER</td>
<td></td>
<td>POLEFF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>corr. (.33)</td>
<td></td>
<td>corr. (.12)</td>
<td></td>
<td>corr. (.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>beta (.33)</td>
<td></td>
<td>beta (.08)</td>
<td></td>
<td>beta (.14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

POLEFF - political efficacy index
VOLATPRT - voter’s volatility in the last elections
WINLOS - index of winners / losers of the transformation
PARTWIN - respondents party preference: for winning or losing parties
VOTER - participation in the last election
Table 10: Polish party system: polarization, “stretch”, dimensions and salience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Polarization index</th>
<th>Universe/ideol. stretch</th>
<th>Competitive stretch</th>
<th>Ideological salience</th>
<th>Competitive Salience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>RS. 30</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC. 31</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LR. 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>RS. 38</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC. 38</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LR. 51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>RS. 44</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC. 52</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LR. 69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>RS. 62</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC. 41</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LR:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MASS</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ELIT</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CN:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MASS</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ELIT</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11: Direct effects on / and explained variances of “left – right” placement by religious vs secular and economic protectionism vs market liberal dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years:</th>
<th>92</th>
<th>93</th>
<th>95</th>
<th>97</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS %</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS$_{beta}$</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC %</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC$_{beta}$</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Entries are:
in row $R^2$ - explained variance of the regression model
in row % - explained variance of a given dimension, a result of factor analysis
in row ‘beta’ - the magnitude of net, direct effect of the dimension on “left – right” self-placement

Table 11 a. Model of ideological content of the left – right dimension in Poland 1997/1998 (results of regression analysis, where the left – right placement is the dependent variable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions:</th>
<th>ELITES</th>
<th>MASSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Variance Explained</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious – Secular</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic liberalism vs Socialism</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmopolitan vs Nationalist</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = .68$  
$R^2 = .26$
Table 12. Mean voters-elite distances / proximities in two points in time on three ideological dimensions (four relevant parties).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DIMENSION RS</th>
<th>DIMENSION EC</th>
<th>DIMENSION CN</th>
<th>LR - identification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93/94 97/98</td>
<td>93/94 97/98</td>
<td>93/94 97/98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLD</td>
<td>0.60 0.24</td>
<td>0.20 0.54</td>
<td>0.46 0.04</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSL</td>
<td>0.12 0.02</td>
<td>0.70 0.37</td>
<td>0.37 0.70</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UW</td>
<td>0.48 0.21</td>
<td>0.36 0.59</td>
<td>0.52 0.14</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWS</td>
<td>0.15 0.20</td>
<td>0.76 0.21</td>
<td>0.24 0.24</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mean:</td>
<td><strong>0.34 0.17</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.51 0.43</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.40 0.28</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>