Domestic aspects of Polish membership in the European Union

Aurelia Wiktoria Trywianska

Iowa State University

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Domestic aspects of Polish membership in the European Union

by

Aurelia Wiktoria Trywianska

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Matthias Kaelberer, Major Professor
Joel Moses
Andrejs Plakans

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This is to certify that the master's thesis of

Aurelia Wiktoria Trywianska

has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy
Dla Najukochańszych Rodziców
z nadzieją o lepszą Polskę
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to explain the domestic politics of Poland’s road toward the European Union membership. Insights into the Polish domestic politics of the European Union membership can, therefore, also help in investigating the EU membership drives of other Eastern European countries. For this thesis, I have selected for analysis few crucial domestic players: political parties, the Catholic Church, trade unions, and the general public.

Chapter two of my thesis presents historical background and the route of Poland towards the EU accession. I present a historical review of the Polish route toward the European Union through association agreements, pre-accession strategies, etc. with the European Union that were negotiated between 1989 and 2001.

Chapter three analyzes the political parties that play a major role in the enlargement process. Due to combination of circumstances and necessities, by the mid-1990s the Polish membership in the EU became a significant objective of Polish political parties. It happened because of the new goals sought by successive Polish governments and changes to strategies employed in order to reach the European Union’s standards. As a result, the chapter starts with the analysis of the dynamics of the transition process toward democracy by discussing major characteristics of political parties. Then, I present three stages of party development on Polish political scene and discuss major differences in political programs among major political parties through the emerging party system.

Chapter four investigates the Polish Catholic Church position toward the European Union enlargement. I portray the historical structure of the Polish Catholic Church since the early 1980s and explain possible future threats and challenges for the Catholic Church in Poland.

Chapter five describes the central role of trade unions in EU membership process. It analyzes present and future challenges by investigating two Polish trade unions that are politically strong in contemporary Polish politics.
Finally, chapter six focuses on the impact of the European Union membership debate on public opinion attitudes. It presents how internal factors influence citizen attitudes toward the EU membership. Also, the chapter examines the changing patterns of support for the EU membership and introduces the possible reasons for the public support decline and its future implications.
CHAPTER 2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Cold War ended rather abruptly with the momentous changes that took place in Eastern Europe in 1989. Central and European countries freed themselves from Soviet hegemony and set out to introduce democratic governments and market economies. Among them there was a Polish state that tried to put on democratic structures and conditions into domestic politics. In this process Poland and other former communist countries turned to the West for assistance and started to seek closer cooperation with western organizations, especially the European Union. This chapter reviews historical aspects of Polish entry into the European Union since 1989.

The first portion of this chapter examines the trade and cooperation agreements with the EU that were negotiated between Poland and the EU at the beginning of their relationship. The second part of this chapter presents the association agreements that took place later in time and created a background for future enlargement. Moreover, the third part introduces Poland's strongest characteristics that would prepare the Polish state and its society for a full membership in the European Union. Also, the broad portion of this part examines the membership and pre-accession strategies that has been developed between Poland and the EU during 1998-2000.

1. Cooperation and trade agreements as a first step toward integration process

The process of transformation of the Polish system into democratic structures and Polish economy to market system in the 1990's was accompanied by the opening up of that country towards Western European structures. This phenomenon was justified by expectations of increasing security and stability of democratic institutions, creating conditions for overcoming the economic and technological gaps as well as accelerating forms. Also, in case of Poland's integration strategy, the question was one of pursuing a policy, which would lead to Poland's return to Europe and at the same time maximizing Poland's ability for changes. Also, the question was one of what could and should
be attempted in the short term in order to enter the European structures. Polish policy-makers were also acutely aware that Soviet sensitivities still needed to be taken into account. Therefore they knew they had to explore a range of possibilities and not necessarily select the most optimal of alternatives. Not only was there uncertainty over Poland’s future geopolitical role, Poland was shortly to experience the ‘shock therapy’ on economic and domestic policy. This therapy was designed to effect a transition away from the centrally planned economy as quickly as possible in order to facilitate Poland’s entry into the European Community. This move in the economic sphere was complemented by the initiation of a program of institutional reform in other areas aimed at creating civil society and a liberal democratic political culture. Furthermore, EC member-states were also preoccupied with other more pressing matters such as the Gulf War, which affected the EC both individually and collectively. Also, the community was engaged with Agenda 2000, creation of a single internal market, and preparations for the Maastricht summit in 1991, which paved the way for the creation of the European Union.

As for Poland, in September 1989, it signed a non-preferential Agreement on Trade and Commercial and Economic Cooperation with the European Communities.1 This agreement ended a period of almost fifteen years of trade relations with the European Communities without any formal base. However, the progress of reform in the political and economic fields needed a better institutional solution than the mentioned agreement. Therefore, in May 1990, the Polish government applied for association status in the EU. On the 16th of December of 1991 as a result of eleven month’s negotiations both parties signed the Europe Agreements establishing the association of Poland with the European communities and their member states. It was entered into force on the 1st of February 1994.2 In this particular agreement the trade part aims to establish as free trade area over a

1 More on the EU agreements could be found at http://www.eurunion.org/legislat/extrel/cec/poland.htm
maximum of ten years, on a basis of reciprocity by Poland and asymmetric by the European Union.

For instance, it promises a more rapid liberalization on the side of the European Union. It takes the objective of future membership of Poland into account and provides a framework for Poland’s gradual integration into the European Union. Principally, the Europe Agreements are based on shared understandings and values that prepare the EU and the partner countries to converge economically, politically, socially, and culturally. The Europe Agreements provide the means whereby the European Union offers associated countries the trade concessions and other benefits normally related with full memberships of the EU. In addition to the liberalization of trade, the Europe Agreements also contain provisions regarding the free movement of services, payments, and capital in respect of trade and investments, and the free movement of workers. Also, under the Europe Agreements the partner countries commit themselves approximating their legislation to that of the European Union, particularly in the areas relevant to the internal market. Generally, the Europe Agreements become a framework within which Poland and other applicant countries are preparing for membership.

Since implementation of the Europe Agreements, all subsequent governments in Poland have demonstrated their determination and obligation in supporting activities that lead towards closer integration with the European Union. Thus as a result of diplomatic efforts by Poland, the European Council in Copenhagen, Denmark officially confirmed in June 1993 that "associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe that so desire shall become members of the European Union. Association will take place as soon as an associated country is able to assume obligations of membership by satisfying the economic and political conditions required." According to the European Council in order to meet the criteria for a full membership, the candidate country has achieved institutional stability, guaranteeing democracy, and the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of

4 More on the approximation could be found in Article 68 of Poland’s Europe Agreement; also in 1996 Poland published a series of legal studies outlining its path to approximation
minorities; has introduced a market economy system; is able to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union; and has the capacity to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic, and monetary union.  

Moreover, the Polish government on April 8, 1994 passed a formal application for membership in the European Union (Table 2.1). It was as a result of meeting in Copenhagen and in Essen later that year. Furthermore, in December of 1994, “the Essen European Council embarked upon a pre-accession strategy to prepare the countries, which had signed an association agreement with the European Union for membership.” This strategy focused once again on the Europe Agreements; the White Paper that was presented in May of 1995; and the Phare Programme, which is a pivotal financial tool in the pre-accession strategies. It needs to be added that Poland has participated in the structured dialogue, seeing it as a priority in its foreign policy. Poland has submitted background documents for a number of structured dialogue meetings, and has made proposals to improve the dialogue. Although the above mentioned criteria are of a qualitative character, Poland is also expected to fulfill the convergence criteria from the Treaty of Maastricht, which came into force on November 1, 1993. The aim of this strategy is to foster cooperation between states, regions, and interest groups of the European Union and Central Europe countries. The criteria embrace factors such as price stability, budget deficit ratio, government debt, interest rates, and participation in the exchange rate mechanism.

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6 Ibid.:241
8 It set up priorities for the harmonization of legislation and for each sector of the internal market; more could be found in: Gower, Jackie and John Radmond. Enlarging the European Union. Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2000: 44-53
9 The European Commission program, in which main objectives and new priorities of the program are viewed through the enlargement process; a kind of support provided to both candidate and non-candidate country; more on Phare Programme could be found in: “Program Phare 1994.” Monitor Integracji. Jan. 1995. 4 April 2002 <http://www.ukie.gov.pl>
### Table 2.1: Accession Process

| 1. | A European state submits an application for EU membership to the European Council |
| 2. | The Council of the European Union asks the European Commission to present an Opinion on the application |
| 3. | The Commission presents the Opinion on the candidate's application to the Council |
| 4. | The Council unanimously adapts a decision to start the negotiations with the candidate state |
| 5. | The Council chaired by the Council Presidency conducts negotiations with the candidate state |
| 6. | The Commission proposes, and the Council agrees to and unanimously adapts, guidelines for the EU position in the negotiations with the candidate state |
| 7. | The draft of the Accession Treaty is agreed on between the EU and the candidate state |
| 8. | The Accession Treaty is submitted to the Council and the European Parliament |
| 9. | The European Parliament approves the Accession treaty with a simple majority vote |
| 10. | The Council unanimously approves the Accession Treaty |
| 11. | The Member State and the candidate state officially sign the Accession Treaty |
| 12. | The Member States and the candidate ratify the Accession Treaty |
| 13. | Upon ratification the Accession Treaty becomes effective: the Candidate State becomes a Member of the European Union |

Source: Based on a chart by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, USA

Therefore, in order to increase a practical dimension of the pre-accession strategy the European Council at its meeting held in Cannes in June of 1995 accepted the White Paper on ‘Preparation of the Associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe for Integration into the Internal Market of the Union.’ 10 The substantial core of the White Paper has been affirmed by the Union and the applicant countries as a priority in the integration process. This document was intended to guide and assist the efforts already undertaken by the applicant countries. The purpose was to enhance a market economy system within applicant countries and their economic competitiveness. Also, the White Book was accepted in May of that year by Polish government, and

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the official visit of the government delegation with Prime Minister Jozef Oleksy was sent to the meeting of the European Council in Cannes. The main message that was delivered at this meeting was to continue structured relations with the European Union and to carry on a main theme of structured dialogue that was mentioned as an important part of the Europe Agreements.

To improve implementation of the Europe Agreement and the development of pre-accession policy, the Intergovernmental Conference took place in March of 1996. In its opinions on the applicant countries, the Commission had to assess the situation of each applicant country even though the Commission had never before had to handle simultaneously as many as ten opinions on applications for membership. Moreover, the Commission lacked detailed information about the candidate countries. Lastly, the gap between these countries and the existing member states in terms of economic and social development was greater than in the case of any previous enlargement.

Mainly, the Commission relied on information provided by the applicant countries. In April of 1996, the Commission sent to the ten countries a series of questions covering all the main areas of the ‘acquis’ in the form of a questionnaire of 150 pages with 23 chapters, asking for economic, statistical, and legislative information. It was carefully reviewed and analyzed by the Polish government and sent back to the appropriate bodies within the European Union organization. In order to coordinate laws for the possible future adjustment, new institutions were established within the Polish state. Moreover, Poland has been continuously participating in regular meetings of the foreign ministers of the associated countries from Central and Eastern Europe. It means that Poland participates in it along with the foreign ministers of the Union since October 31, 1994. Another pivotal meeting took place in June of 1996 at the Florence European Council where the Council adopted a detailed timetable for negotiations with the Central and Eastern European countries.

12 The Association Council, the Association Committee for Agreement, and the Joint Parliamentary Committee
The final step of opening negotiations was marked by the successful conclusion of the Intergovernmental Conference by adopting the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997. In terms of accession, the treaty set up instructions to be examined later that year and presented to the Luxembourg European Council. Moreover, in early 1997, Poland published ‘The National Integration Strategy’ setting out a plan for preparing for accession to the European Union. This document emphasized the importance of key pre-accession policies and regulations that would help Poland to benefit from transitional periods before achieving a full application of ‘acquis.’

‘The National Integration Strategy’ was a governmental document prepared by the Committee for European Integration. It was aimed at determining the main goals of the integration and coordinating their implementation by government administration so as to ensure Poland’s best possible preparation to membership in the European Union. Also, it focused on tasks stemming from the adjustment process during the period preceding integration, during the negotiations and also during the initial period of membership. It set in order the hitherto integration-oriented undertakings, precise the priorities and identifies the main areas of the adjustment process and the possible challenges Poland may face. The Strategy took into account the already existing timetables of the adjustment activities and envisaged that negotiations with the European Union on membership will start in 1998 and that they would end by the year 2000. This would be followed by the process of ratification of the membership treaty by Poland and the EU countries. Currently, this offers hope that Poland may acquire European Union membership around the year 2004.

2. Association agreements and public opinion responses

By the year 1997, Poland received a big chance to join the European Union—a community of democratic states. The crux of all agreements and negotiation documents took place on July 16, 1997

13 It was established as Government’s Act of August 8, 1996; started working on January 28, 1997 according to: “Polska na Drodze do Unii Europejskiej.” Negocjacje Członkowskie. Warszawa, KPRM 1999; the official website of the Committee is: <http://www.cie.gov.pl>
when the European Commission published Agenda 2000. Accession talks that began on the 31st of March 1998 were likely to be difficult, but Poland had prepared for them very well. There exists an awareness in Poland that political sympathies and past contributions to Europe’s democratic transformation will count less in those negotiations than fulfillment of membership criteria in the economic, legal, and social domains and the possibility of meeting the competitiveness standards of the world’s biggest, uniform market.\textsuperscript{14}

According to surveys, Poland’s entry into the European Union will not highly depend on past contributions. Polish entry would hinge on attitudes of domestic actors and government’s policies toward the enlargement issue. Past surveys conducted in 1998 showed that this entry was supported by 56 percent of Poles while only one fourth of those surveyed opposed the entry. Nearly, every fifth respondent (19 percent) to this survey did not have a precise opinion in this case.\textsuperscript{15} Later on, on June 6, 2000, the RFE/RL Newsline survey showed the results of the opinion poll done by the Centre for Research on Public Opinion (CBOS) in mid-May of 2000 (Table 6.1). The results revealed that 59% of respondents endorse joining the European Union, while 25% are opposed.\textsuperscript{16} Of those polled, 58% think Poland was still not prepared economically for integration with the European Union.

Additionally, the results seem to fall rapidly down because the last opinion poll introduced by PAP Agency and conducted by CBOS showed that 55% of respondents would vote for Polish membership in the European Union if the referendum took place in March of 2001. Nearly every third respondent to this survey would be opposed to the membership. Every second respondent thought that Poland was ‘a half way’ through to fulfill the full membership criteria. Every fifth respondent assumed that there was ‘a long way’ to achieve this goal, which makes 13% of those who thought that it would take ‘a very long way.’ Nearly, 58% of respondents thought that Poland should remodernize economy first and then start to fulfill other criteria. Probably for this reason one third of

those surveyed admitted that Poland should become a full member as soon as possible since the membership would accelerate modernization and reparation of Polish economy. Moreover, the survey showed that only 6% of Poles felt that Poland was getting more benefits in the relationship with the European Union, while every second respondent estimated that the European Union was receiving more benefits. Only every fourth surveyed believed that relationship was mutual.17

Apparently, Poland is on its way in preparation for a membership in the European Union. According to Stanislaw Parzymies, Poland is worth to be admitted into European Union structures because it tries to meet all the criteria given by the European Commission that cover agriculture, environmental protection, and the right of Polish citizens to work in other European Union countries.18 Furthermore, Polish Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek19 unveiled ambitious plans in September of 1999 to improve internal security, create new jobs and step up efforts to join the European Union during his second two years in office.20 Despite the fact that the negotiations are expected to be difficult, it is entirely possible that Poland will be accepted as a member state as soon as 2003. One should be aware that these accession negotiations have a very specific character. The negotiations are not between two competitors but among the present and future members of the same Union. For this reason, both sides are interested in Poland’s successful entry into a uniform market and political structure. If in the future, for example, Poland shows poor economic results, such as balance of payments difficulties, the European Union would be forced to provide financial support (as was the case with Greece in the eighties). Unfortunately, a situation such as this one is currently present within the Polish state; in 2001, for the first time since negotiation process was established, the European Union decided to exclude Poland from their internal debate about the membership. The

17 Centrum Badania Opinii Spolecznej. Opinie o Integracji Polski z Unia Europejska. Warsaw: CBOS March (March 2-5, 2001a data)
15 Elected as a Polish Prime Minister on 21 Sept. 1997
European Union made a promise to the countries that show the best progress that it would determine a concrete calendar for future enlargement. Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Cyprus were distinguished among other applicant countries, and also acknowledged by Anna Lindh, the Chief of Swedish Diplomacy at the Press Conference on April 14, 2001. While asked about Polish progress, Lindh simply responded, “will see.”\(^{21}\) In addition to her response, Guenter Verheugen was silent when asked about Poland.\(^{22}\) The ministers decided to work their common approach on May 14, 2001 while they would try to discuss important restrictions to uniform internal markets in applicant countries. Then, the European Commission would have to confirm their propositions.

Furthermore, the negotiations are not “negotiations” in the traditional sense of the word. Poland has to accept the ‘acquis communautaire’ in its entirety in order to become a full member, which means it, has to accept European Union rules. According to Bronislaw Geremek, “Poland is now engaged in meticulous examination of its own legal infrastructure, which must be adapted to European standards, and in preparations for actual negotiations, which will commence very soon.”\(^{23}\) He also added that “we... [Polish people and government]... must modernize our agriculture gradually. We need to expand our tertiary and food-processing sectors and strive to compensate for projected unemployment. The real challenge is to increase our GDP, narrow the hiatus between Poland and Western neighbors, and to maintain high economic growth.”\(^{24}\) Taking his words into account and other evidence that I investigate throughout this paper, I would say that Poland has given the highest priority to the program of the European integration. Poland is prepared to contribute to European growth and development, provide a new economic area of expansion, reshape its own economy and assist Europe in meeting challenges, extend the zone of economic and political prosperity, and contribute to the cultural heritage of Europe. It can also cement Western and East-

\(^{22}\) Ibid.
\(^{24}\) Ibid.
Central Europe through a wide exchange of ideas and people. It is worth saying that Poland also achieved three major steps on the road to meeting major objectives of the European integration: in granting of membership to the Council of Europe in 1991, in the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development in 1996, and in NATO structures in 1999. Moreover, Poles perceive the idea of including their country in the integration of Europe as part and parcel of political and economic transformation. This integration with Western powers would ensure Poland's place in the process of maintaining peace and prosperity for all Western European nations. So far, Poland meets all the membership criteria stipulated in Articles F and O of the Maastricht Treaty.\(^{25}\)

As of November 2000, the outlook for the European expansion was improving even though the Polish Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek was disappointed with the accession timetable. He criticized the European Union's prediction that it will not conclude accession negotiations with aspiring countries until 2002. "That [prediction] does not satisfy us fully. It raises concerns whether once negotiations wrap up in the middle of 2002, it is possible to carry through all ratification procedures to enter on January 1, 2003."\(^{26}\) The prime minister also added that Warsaw plans to conclude the European Union accession negotiations in 2001. However, the Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski stated in the same year that for the past five years, the European Union membership for Poland and other applicant countries seemed as "five years out of reach." In 1995, the date offered by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl was 2000. In 1998, when Poland, together with the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, and Slovenia, opened accession talks, the date was surmised to be 2003. But, at the close of the year 2000 there were indicators the "five-year barrier" may be finally

\(^{25}\) Approved at Maastricht, the Netherlands by the heads of the 12 members of the European Community in December 1991, and was signed on February 7, 1992; Article F says that the Union respects the national identities of its member states, fundamental rights, and provides itself with the means necessary to attain its objectives and carry through its policies; Article O says that any European state may apply to become a member of the Union.

\(^{26}\) "Polish Premier Satisfied with EU Progress Report... But Disappointed with Accession Timetable." RFE/RL Newsline. 4.218 9 Nov. 2000 <http://www.rferl.org>
broken.\textsuperscript{27} In November of 2000, the European Commission issued a report that surprised many by saying advanced candidates could finish accession talks as soon as 2002.\textsuperscript{28} Assuming the first accession treaties are signed and ratification by all member states takes 18 months, new members could join by early 2004. That timetable was indirectly affirmed by December’s European Union summit in Nice. Union leaders said in a declaration that they hope the first new members can join in time to participate in the next elections to the European Parliament, scheduled for June 2004. However, the summit left the timing of any future accessions vague. In addition, the optimism was confirmed by the current Swedish European Union presidency that took over the six-month rotating European Union presidency from France on January 1, 2001. Sweden’s ambassador to the European Union, Gunnar Lund, told RFE/RL that by the end of his country’s presidency in June, it may be possible to answer questions about which countries will be the first to enter and when. However, as I mentioned above, the optimism was overstated since it does not look too promising. The remarkable progress by countries previously relegated to the second wave such as Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania Slovakia, and Malta has been seen lately. These countries opened accession talks only at the start of the year but have made a rapid progress since then.\textsuperscript{29}

I would like to go back to the year 2000 when the European Council meeting took place in Nice. The summit took a decisive step in projecting how the members would fit into existing decision-making structures. This element seems to be one of the most important ones for future membership in the European Union. The difficult debate on how members in the future would decide on the most difficult issues followed agreement on a formula to re-weight votes in the important Council of Ministers. All of the candidate states were included in the re-weighting and received relatively favorable treatment in the assignment of votes. Under the formula, Poland will have equal

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
weight with Spain with 27 votes, leaving it just two votes shy of Germany, the European Union's most populous country. Summit participants also agreed to raise the number of European Union commissioners to 27 from the current 20, suggesting that one day each member will have its own commissioner.\textsuperscript{30} Candidates are still well advised to keep an eye on developments. The next part of this paper will introduce these developments that need to be fulfilled in order for Poland to become a full member of the European Union community.

3. Benefits of the future European Union membership

Poland is becoming ready to join the European Union. It continues its comprehensive reforms in every given area of the 'aquis.' The European Council and the European Parliament would benefit from Polish membership in a variety of ways and in many areas.

First of all, Poland presents the characteristics of a democracy, with stable institutions guaranteeing the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities. Secondly, Poland can be regarded as a functioning market economy. Thirdly, Poland is on its way to continue its efforts on transposition of the 'acquis.' Fourthly, Poland will join the European Union on condition that does not jeopardize the level of integration already achieved by the Union. Fifthly, Poland will have to pertain to take on the obligations of a Union member.

There are also areas where Poland needs more help from the European Union in order to improve, for example, its communication network and advanced communications. However, Poland should become a member of the European Union by the end of 2003. It is the optimal date for Poland's accession to the European Union. It is obvious that Poland is a major trading partner to the European Union. Poland is the seventh trade partner of the Union. "Since 1989 European Union exports to Poland have increased by more than 300\%, and amounted to ECU 15 billion in 1995.\textsuperscript{30} Ibid."
European Union imports from Poland increased by more than 200% over this period, and amounted to ECU 12.2 billion in 1995.31

The next concern is about Poland’s procedures to ensure that the European Union accession negotiations would proceed harmoniously in order to achieve European Union membership in the early 21st century. Apparently, Poland fulfills specific requirements by adapting itself to the political, economic, and social standards that bind the Union.

Poland also carries out two programs that are bringing it closer to the European Union membership: the first is the National Preparatory Programme for Membership in the European Union32 developed by the government of Poland and envisaging ways of incorporating the European Union legislation; the second, so-called the Partnership for Membership worked out by the European Union, is a program of priority adjustment activities, which Poland should take upon itself in the pre-accession period. It also considers mechanisms for financing those efforts. Additionally, Poland has been undertaking adjustment measures that are indispensable and that it is capable of fulfilling.

Poland is also making a considerable effort to incorporate community policies on competition, public assistance, and government orders and to thoroughly liberalize the principles regulating the flow of goods, services, and capital. For example, Polish banking laws have gone a long way to liken themselves to solutions prevailing in the Union.33

However, Poland needs to work out other areas of interest, for example, complete implementation of a social packet, with which countries much wealthier than Poland have had problems, also adaptation of Polish agriculture to the Common Agriculture Policy. There are some areas where some norms have been already stepped up: steel sector, textiles, and mining with the introduction of environmental protection. To help Poland overcome those problems, in 1998

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32 The program includes training strategies for the European Union accession
PHARE program was introduced to Poland. It consisted of national allocation (approximately ECU 150 billion), based on the accession partnership priorities. The main purpose of PHARE program is to support Poland in particular justice and home affairs, agriculture, transport, as well as the participation in community programs. However, by the end of 1998, the Commission decided to reduce this allocation for Poland by ECU 34 million because of a lack of sufficient mature projects meeting the priorities of the accession partnership. Following this decision Poland made a number of significant changes in the management of the PHARE program.

The next priority is to help the candidate countries bring their industries and major infrastructure up to Community standards by mobilizing the investment required. This effort will be largely devoted to areas where Community norms are becoming increasingly demanding: environment, transport, industrial plant, and quality standards in products, working conditions, and so on. Negotiations on truly difficult issues such as agriculture and the free movement of labor have not yet commenced. And before agreement with the candidates can be reached, the European Union member countries must agree on changes in the union’s own common agricultural policy.

For the first reason concerning agricultural policy, the Polish Sejm on July 21, 2000 voted by 363 to four with seven abstentions to confirm a 44-member Committee for European Law intended to speed up the adjustment of Poland’s laws and regulations to the European Union requirements. The committee, which consists of lawmakers from all parliamentary groups, is expected to start work right away by electing a chairman. It appeared to be a former Foreign Minister Bronislaw Geremek as the one who received this position. According to current Foreign Minister Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, the aim of the committee is to bring Polish laws into line with the European Union regulations. “The track is still the same, but the train will move faster,” Bartoszewski said. The European Union

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34 The European Commission program, in which main objectives and new priorities of the program are viewed through the enlargement process; a kind of support provided to both candidate and non-candidate countries.

Commissioner for Enlargement Guenter Verheugen responded such as: “I’m very optimistic that [Poland’s] backlog in legislation will be overcome soon.”

Moreover, in September of 2000, negotiators in Warsaw said “Poland and the European Union are nearing an agreement that would liberalize agricultural trade, thereby removing a key obstacle in the country’s talk on joining the Union.” Poland’s inefficient farming sector is considered Warsaw’s main obstacle to gaining entry to the European Union, for which it hopes to qualify by the year 2003. Therefore, on September 27, 2000 Poland and the European Union signed an accord to liberalize bilateral trade in agricultural goods. Bruno Dethomas, the European Union ambassador to Poland said “the agreement will give Polish farmers much better access to the European Union market and prepare them for difficult competition after [Poland’s] accession to the European Union.” It simply means that 75% of Poland’s farm exports to the European Union countries will be exempt from import tariffs. This agreement took effect on January 1, 2001.

Besides, Poland is still left out of an earlier agreement with other East European countries after Warsaw raised import duties (in 1999) on dairy products, sugar, meat, and grains in an effort to placate striking farmers.

The other reason is connected tightly with the free labor movement; Poland takes some reasonable and confirmative actions. Poland’s Chief Negotiator in the European Union, Jan Kulakowski, mentioned earlier this year in February during his seminar in Brussels that some of the exceptions the European Union is looking for from candidate states do not seem reasonable and might compromise the candidates’ competitiveness. He also pointed out the attempt by Germany and Austria to deny Polish and other Central and Eastern European workers full access to the European Union’s labor market for up to seven years after enlargement. He also criticized reluctance of the European Union to extend the community’s current agricultural subsidies to the new members.


point of view, the absence of subsidies would not allow new members to compete with present members of the Union – “Poland aims at a fully fledged membership in the European Union, without any kind of second-class membership. We want to take up all the obligations stemming from the ‘acquis’ – of course, with some necessary transitional arrangements where needed and agreed. But at the same time, we want to have full access to all instruments [and] benefits provided by the ‘acquis’ as well.”³⁸

Apparently, Poland accepts the need to bring its legislation and economy fully in line with the European Union’s requirements, however it cannot let things go only the way the European Union wants to. There are certain areas such as those above-mentioned that require special care and attention from both sides. Poland as a future member of the Union has a right and duty to present and defend its interests. It is obviously possible through the structured dialogue with the Union within the framework of the strategy preparing the country for the membership that was initiated at the European Council meeting in Essen in December of 1994. Thus, Poland remains committed to its initial plan of concluding entry talks by January 2002 to allow for accession in 2003.

4. Mutual Advantages between Poland and the European Union.

Therefore, there are going to be mutual advantages of Poland joining the European Union community. First of all, the acknowledged reasons indicate that not only Poland is very interested in joining the European Union, but also the European Union representatives and offices are closely watching this applicant country. Generally, Poland and its membership in the European Union will help to speed up economic development not only within Polish country, but also in the Central and Eastern Europe. The European Union will benefit from Polish agriculture and industrial economy. Also, going further to the East, a better cooperation with former Soviet Union states may be established, and so forth with Russia. For Poland, the great benefit will be a liquidation of a gap that

³⁸ Speech given by Jan Kulakowski during seminar on the 8 Feb. 2001 in Brussels, Belgium
exists between Poland and other countries of Western Europe. Also, Poland has already ensured its
democratic status among former Communist countries, which gives Poland a great advantage upon
other applicant countries. This democratic political model of the Polish state will be a great
consolidator of the values that would link Poland to the European Union states. The membership
would also elevate Poland’s international rank and determine its new place in Europe. This means
participation in Europe’s most serious international organization. By far, Poland’s admission in the
NATO structure raised its importance all around the world. Although there are some negative
opinions in this case, the benefits are mutual for both sides. It would be the same turnout in terms of
Poland’s admission to the European Union. Negative reactions would be expected to be unavoidable.

According to Poland’s representatives, the year 2002 or 2003 is the optimal date for Poland’s
accession to the European Union. The years of 2001-2002 are a time necessary for ratification of the
membership and fulfillment of all pre-accession regulations. Also, European Commissioner, Guenter
Verheugen, supports rapid integration. He says, “January 1, 2003 is an ambitious, but not an
unfeasible preliminary date for Poland’s accession to the European Union.”39 He presented his
opinion last year during a meeting with members of the European Parliament on September 1, 1999.
The commissioner pointed out that “a further postponement of the EU’s expansion may lead to a fall
in public support for European integration in countries aspiring to EU membership.”40

However, the Polish government may consider rescheduling the target date for its integration
with the European Union beyond 2003 if the European Union does not liberalize its position on the
issues that Warsaw sees as most contentious in its membership negotiations. Jan Kulakowski, the
Poland’s Chief Negotiator told “Financial Times-Deutschland” on the 6th of November 2000 that
those contentious issues include direct subsides for Polish farming, the free purchase of Polish real

estate by the European Union citizens the opening of the European Union labor market for Poles, and adopting by Poles of the community's environmental protection standards.41

Also, according to Klaus van der Pas42, responsible for the expansion of the European Union, negotiations on the accession of Poland, and other applicant countries will conclude towards the end of 2001. Van der Pas said the European Commission was satisfied with the rate at which talks are held.43 In his opinion, "in June 2000 negotiations will cover all chapters of the European law. Then, the Commission will be able to determine problems, which the candidates will have to solve before joining the European Union."44

Lately, the Polish government wanted the Polish Parliament to speed up its work on European Union-related laws, and promises that will get organized, too. The Sejm told the government on February 18, 200045 to submit a statement by the end of May on the benefits and costs incurred so far leading up to accession to the European Union, as well as those expected after European integration. The deputies approved this resolution on Poland's preparations to join the European Union in a 376-26 vote.46 Also, the Polish Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek, proposed to put legislation needed for the European Union membership on a fast track for parliamentary approval. Buzek said "unless legislators worked faster to bring Polish laws up to European Union standards, Poland could miss its goal of joining the Union at the beginning of 2003."47 European Union officials have said 2004 or 2005 are more realistic enlargement dates, but the six applicant countries48 that started membership talks in the early nineties have stuck to their 2003 target.

41 "Warsaw to Delay EU Membership Bid Beyond 2003?" RFE/RL Newsline. 4216 Nov.4 2000 <http://www.rferl.org>
42 European Commission's Chief Spokesman in Brussels, Belgium
44 Economic Bulletin. 383. 24 Nov.1999
45 <http://www.insideworld.com>
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
48 Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Slovenia, and Poland
Summary

Since the Polish submission of the application for the European Union membership on April 5, 1994, Poland has been working very hard on achieving this high priority goal. Poland closely follows the Union’s internal debates, particularly discussions on future monetary policy. Poland is aware of the fact that the Union itself seeks a new dimension and new ways to express itself in economic, political, and cultural terms. This is one of the reasons why Poland wants to become a European Union member - to bring a new dimension to this organization. Even though the construction of the bridge between Poland and the European Union has been a long in coming, the full membership in the European Union may bring more advantages than disadvantages in the near future. Poland has given the highest priority to the program of European integration, and the public at large seems to be becoming more familiar with the benefits that go along with the European integration. Also, the European Parliament and European Council are aware of Polish progression that is taking place in Poland. These two bodies recognize Poland as a great main trading partner and they also realize that the relationship between Poland and the European Union grows and will strengthen over the next few years. 49 Poland is a great candidate for the European Union accession since the building of bridges between the European Union and Poland has rapidly progressed over the last six years. Meaning Poland’s strategic goal is to have full European Union membership by the year 2003 along with the membership of the Council of Europe, the WTO, NATO, and the OECD that already has been achieved. Poland has given the highest priority to the program of European integration, and is capable of using its own political, cultural, and economic agendas to meet European Union’s standards. Poland will have to accept any conditions imposed on its entry, but Poland will also bring a lot of fresh and methodical qualities.

Table 2.2: Chronology of enlargement process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Association Agreements</td>
<td>Dec. 1991</td>
<td>Legal framework for association between the applicant countries and the EU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Copenhagen European Council</td>
<td>June 1993</td>
<td>Membership criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Essen European Council</td>
<td>Dec. 1994</td>
<td>Pre-accession strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Florence European Council</td>
<td>June 1996</td>
<td>Timetable for negotiations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Amsterdam European Council</td>
<td>June 1997</td>
<td>Institutional reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda 2000</td>
<td>July 1997</td>
<td>Policy documentation + 'acquis'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accession Process</td>
<td>Mar. 1998</td>
<td>Negotiations were opened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cardiff European Council</td>
<td>June 1998</td>
<td>Screening process for seven chapters had been completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Berlin European Council</td>
<td>Mar. 1999</td>
<td>Creation of ISPA (structural instrument) and SAPARD (agricultural instrument); financial framework for these instruments was established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Helsinki European Council</td>
<td>Dec. 1999</td>
<td>Confirmation of the importance of the enlargement process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 3. POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR ROLE IN THE PROCESS OF ENLARGEMENT

The focus of this chapter is upon political parties in Poland and their significant role in the process of enlargement. A particular attention is paid to the characteristics of a party system during a transition period and the nature of the socioeconomic cleavage. In this part, I demonstrate that the Polish party system will not develop according to the West European model simply because it lacks the cleavage structure upon which such systems were built. Instead, the Polish party system reveals unique characteristics that could be used to form new political blocs. Moreover, this part investigates the changing nature of party organization after 1989 and future problems that Poland’s entry into the European Union may cause among the current parties and electorate in Poland.

The consequences of political changes that took place in the late 1980s across Europe have given a huge impact to the process of democratization not only within Polish state, but also elsewhere in East and Central Europe. One of the major areas that have been affected by democratic transformations has been the dynamics of party interaction and party system change. These dynamics need to be explored and compared to those of the western half of European continent.

First of all, a creation of an appropriate framework for the debate about the party and party system formation needs to be presented. Thus, the transition towards democracy has been attended with the emergence of new societal structures, a new political culture, and new patterns of political behavior. These factors were present among new political parties that were engaged in the game of politics and among a very competitive political party system that was entailing a construction of new political structure. This process of party system building was determined by a group of selected individuals with an interest of obtaining political office or political leadership and also by a group of

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politicians competing for electoral votes.\textsuperscript{52} According to Cotta, the parameters of a new political space have to be defined by both on the elite and mass level dimensions of politics.\textsuperscript{53} Additionally, when analyzing newly created parties on the Polish scene, other perspectives need to be taken into consideration. Namely, organizational and programmatic traits along with strategies in the context of the current environmental structure have to be noticed. For instance, competition for votes will create a perfect environment for adjusting their policies and programs to meet the needs of society.\textsuperscript{54}

In comparison, in Western Europe parties have traditionally been viewed as products of social cleavages. According to Stein Rokkan, “mass politics in Western Europe has been structured by major societal cleavages.”\textsuperscript{55} It attempts to explain the creation of parties as the products of these cleavage patterns, the parameters of which determine political alignment. It also means that parties, once constructed in their modern form have the ability not only to passively or even actively adapt, but they have capacity to some extent to create their political and social environment. However, it is impossible to assign a universal pattern of party systems creation since there are no parties that would fit for all kinds of patterns. A party may use some resources for fulfilling its goals by forming political strategies or creating the organizational forms for taking political action. With regard to Poland, it needs to be emphasized that the party development is a continuous and goal-oriented process. Patterns of change and continuity have had an impact on the formation of those political parties that emerged immediately after 1989.\textsuperscript{56} Polish transition can be explained and understood in

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{52} However, there is a little doubt that East European transitions were elite-led changes, and elite had no important place in the political discourse of Poles: Higley, John, Jan Pakulski, and Wlodzimierz Wesolowski. \textit{Postcommunist Elites and Democracy in Eastern Europe}. New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 1998: 163-201
\bibitem{54} Herbut, Ryszard. “The process of structuring the political space.” In Cordell, Karl. \textit{EU-Poland}. London and New York: Routledge, 2001
\end{thebibliography}
fairly general terms: political party identity that was present after 1989 was a historically-derived identity embraced on ideological traditions, organizational continuity, and contemporary political appeals that had to be portrayed. Therefore, components of party identity related with the past and the present, united with the influence of national and international environment, paired with organizational history, have shaped the basis for constructing individual party types present in the party system. In order to show Polish party transition, I will examine the successive stages in the development of parties in Poland since 1989.

1. Stages of the political parties development

It is very difficult to determine the most important parameters of parties and the party system within Polish state due to a transition period toward democracy in the 1980s. According to Cotta, this is a consequence of at least two factors specific to transition periods. First, the political space is still in a state of instability, and second, party identities are not yet specifically defined. Thus, “as a consequence, problems internal to parties easily become problems of the party system and vice versa.”57 Because of those reasons, there are three clearly defined stages in the development of the Polish party system.

The first stage began in 1988 and was concluded with the Round Table Agreement and the “contractual” election that took place in 1989.58 There were two political forces, the PZPR (Polish United Workers’ Party) and its allies; and Solidarity, that perceived one another as ideological rivals, but, in fact, neither of them was viewed as having been parties in the classical sense of the word. Solidarity was a type of so-called ‘non-party’ forum or simply a social movement. Moreover, it was also considered as an umbrella organization or a specific coalition against the communist regime.

Solidarity as such was the natural vehicle that pushed for political changes, however it did not play a magnificent role as a political actor due to a lack of political orientation. Hence, Solidarity did not have a specific, electoral program going into the 1989 election. Solidarity was a major mass organization that tried to mobilize public opinion to oppose the communist regime, however at the same time it also constructed a new political regime. Most of all, Solidarity brought into power not only a new government, but also a change of political system. As a mass organization Solidarity was a representative of the entire public. Also, it possessed some major characteristics usually assigned to political parties, such as: horizontal as opposed to vertical ties between party members; it had no stable and definite membership, and presented a vague program. Simply, Solidarity was an organization that derived from the needs of the period of systematic changes.

The second stage in the transformation process took place between 1990 and 1993. By 1990, differences within Solidarity became more visible and process of internal fragmentation began. Solidarity started to split up into several groups, some of which became important players during first election in 1991. Among these post-Solidarity parties the Democratic Union, the Christian-National Union, and the Liberal Democratic Congress appeared on a political horizon. Thus, the process of institutionalization of political parties started to shape up Polish political scene. There were several specific features of this political institutionalization, namely, "overparticization."60

The main characteristics of this process was that those parties that on average had some 5.3 per cent among the Polish electorate started to become powerful players in the distribution of resources rather than on a political ground. Parliamentarization allowed parties to start performing not only at the grassroots level, but also at the parliamentary level in order to experience to maintain

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internal party consensus, clientelism and bureaucratization, which processes appeared remarkably quickly for Polish party system.

The third stage started in the mid-1990s and was characterized by deeper institutionalization of political parties, which was state-oriented. The state became a means by which parties could help ensure their own persistence and organizational continuity. This feature is usually present during the transformation process when parties try to use the state and its institutions to preserve themselves. As a result, cadre parties have developed within Polish party system in order to gain masses through television and other mass media. They concentrate on election campaigns and professionalism that has been sought among new professionals, consultants, and other agencies. The next section is designed to group Polish political parties according to their origins, roles, and ideological criteria.

2. Main types of political parties on Polish scene

Political parties that play important roles on the Polish political scene can be easily divided into two groups. The first group includes the post-communist parties that were formed after the collapse of communist regime in 1989. One of them is the Democratic Left Alliance that was created from the dissolution of former PZPR and has assumed a modernizing image with a promotion of ideologically free pragmatic direction. The second party is the Polish Peasant Party, which was formed in May of 1990 as a successor to the United Peasant Party of the communist period. It became a strong agrarian party with goals set on a social welfare model of the market economy. This party also supports state intervention in the socio-economic spheres, but at the same time strongly opposes Polish entry into the European Union.

The second group consists of the post-Solidarity parties such as the Freedom Union and Solidarity Electoral Action. The former one presents itself as a center force that is ready to cooperate

61 Ibid. 206
with both left and right. Pragmatism, market economy, restricted interventionism; privatization, etc. seem to be major components of the party’s strategy. Moreover, the Freedom Union is considered as a key party to support Polish entry into the European Union and as the most Euro-enthusiastic party on the Polish scene. On the other spectrum, the Solidarity Electoral Action is resistant to the idea of European integration. The party claims that there is an asymmetry of benefits in relations between Poland and the European Union. According to party leaders, it lies in the national interest to preserve national identity and internal market over Europe. Moreover, the AWS is inspired by Polish Catholic values, which emphasize preservation of a national and Catholic identity. However, the post-Solidarity parties are widely spread, ranging from centrist to right-oriented tendencies. There are many small parties within the AWS that cause a political chaos on the right spectrum; hence, a tendency toward unification should be sought prior to the EU admission.63

3. The emerging party system in Poland

As previously stated, the contemporary Polish party system is young, having come into being just after the 1989 Round Table Agreement. Also, it should be clear by now that it is very problematical to fit the Polish case to the complex models of party systems such as those described by Giovanni Sartori.64 However, there are signs of stabilization of Polish political system that can be examined through various stages of party development since 1989.

The first stage (1989-1993) is characterized by the process of marginalization of communist parties, socialist, and social-democratic parties and formation of center-right parties.65 At least until 1991, there was a relatively strong center occupied by the Solidarity bloc. In the immediate post-communist years, party politics was characterized by the domination of historically based cleavages.

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63 Interesting discussion could be found in: Stadtmuller, Elzbieta, “Polish Perceptions of the European Union in the 1990s.” In Cordell, Karl. EU-Poland. London and New York: Routledge, 2001
based on the attitudes toward the past. Neither socioeconomic cleavages nor any other bunch of
issues were of any significant importance. Hence, value dimension, attitudes toward religion,
decommmunization process, and lustration did not form a basis for a conflict.\textsuperscript{66} The major consequence
of the lack of salience of questions shaped by socioeconomic issues was the failure of the political
left.\textsuperscript{67} However, these issues of liberal democracy and market economy became of important
significance in party politics of the political right. Divisions appeared not only between post-
Solidarity and post-communist parties, but also among parties that had originated within Solidarity.
In addition, the value dimension started to assume greater importance. The presence of crosscutting
cleavages facilitated coalition formation within the Polish government. Moreover, an extreme
fragmentation of post-communist parties was a reason for a huge number of parties to enter the
competition for votes and many succeeded in obtaining representation in the lower house of Polish
government. The party system in Poland started closely resemble the French party system in which
there are too many parties and their policy programs are too vague.\textsuperscript{68} Most of these parties were too
small and narrow in outlook to articulate the demands of electorate into rational policy programs.
The center-right wing was very overcrowded and parties tried to outbid each other with illogical
programs and absurd slogans. Thus, fragmentation resulted not from crosscutting cleavages but
rather from personal animosities at the elite level. Also, a lack of loyalties from the electorate toward
parties could cause a potential fragmentation. During this period of time, coalition governments were
the norm since no party was able to secure a majority in the lower house. Furthermore, during this
period, Poland had four governments with anything from five to seven parties present in government.
Post-Solidarity parties formed the core of the party system. Two distinct groups of such parties were
present - "initiating parties, such as the UD and KLD [the Democratic Union and the Liberal-

\textsuperscript{66} Herbut, Ryszard. "The process of structuring the political space." In Cordell, Karl. EU-Poland, London and
New York: Routledge, 2001
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} Cave, Andrew. "The Five Percent Solution." Central Europe Review, 10 July 2000 <http://www.ce-review.org/00/27/cave27.html>
Democratic Congress], which took the leading role in the complex process of coalitional bargaining, and had the last word on the selection of coalition partners. The second group was called “supplementary parties,” which consisted of the Christian Social Union and the Peasant Party. In effect, there was a unipolar center-right bargaining system with the majority of parties rejecting the possibility of grand coalitions. Yet, the characteristics of the Polish party system did not correspond to the left-to-right dimension of Western Europe. The cleavage line was between the former ruling communist parties and the new, anti-communist parties. This cleavage was cut by one concerning value systems and attitudes toward the resolution of socioeconomic problems. The political right would always perceive the political left as an unacceptable partner in the bargaining system. However, following the 1993 elections, a quite different pattern of political competition took place.

The second stage, after the 1993 elections, is characterized by a consolidation in the number of parties represented in parliament. The number was reduced to six, then after 1997 elections to five parties. Since 1993 Poland has had a two-bloc system with parties aligned into two rival alliances: post-communist left and the post-Solidarity center-right. After the 1993 election, the post-Solidarity leftist Labor Union played a pivotal role until 1997 elections when failed to win parliamentary representation. Parliamentary forces have divided into those who support government and those who oppose it. Since 1997 elections, the balance of power in parliament is more symmetrical in character. One reason for this is the active role of the president as an actor in inter-party bargaining.

After the 1993 election, the leftist Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) did not have enough seats to govern on its own and had to opt for coalition with the agrarian Polish Peasant Party (PSL). Although the coalition made sense because both were post-communist parties, they had nothing in common ideologically. The SLD had established itself as a pro-market and pro-European Union oriented party, while the PSL was a conservative, clerical, agrarian, and anti-European Union party. Since the post-communist SLD could not form a positive and programmatic coalition within the

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69 Ibid.
parliament it did not want to take any risky steps of decision-making process. Because of it, the post-
Solidarity elite saw itself as a future defender of post-communist coalition. Thus, following a defeat
of Lech Walesa in the 1995 presidential election, the post-Solidarity elite started to form a center-
right coalition. Building upon this work, the Solidarity Election Action (AWS) was founded in 1996.
After the 1997 elections, the AWS and the Freedom Union (UW) formed a coalition that lasted until
the 2000 elections.

During these two stages of emerging party system and into the post-2001 stage, two
crosscutting types of political conflicts have dominated the process of structuralization of policy
space in Polish politics. The first type occurs at the socioeconomic level, and deals with issues such as
market-oriented reform versus state intervention. The main division is between parties that support
economic liberalism and parties that represent the option of combining economic interventionism
with a large-scale welfare state. The second type is presented by parties that accord primacy to the
preservation of national identity and those that support liberal values. Parties’ attitudes and policies
in regard to the process of integration of Poland with the European Union have constituted one of the
main lines of division within the cultural dimension. It needs to be acknowledged that until mid-
1990s, there was a high degree of consensus among political parties in favor of Polish membership in
the European Union. Since then, there has been some change in attitudes at both the elite and the
mass level.

There are pro-European parties that are more or less unconditional in their support of
Poland’s entry to the European Union. The most important of such parties are the Freedom Union
and the Democratic Left Alliance. The former has been perceived as the most Euro-enthusiastic party
and its program concentrates primarily on the technical aspects of integration. For the latter, the
integration policy remains an important issue. During the 1997 electoral campaign, the party
employed the slogan ‘Europe is Fatherland of Fatherlands.’ In doing so, the party opted for a ‘federal
Europe.' However, both parties identify the issue of integration in rational terms rather than in party political terms.70

There are also parties such as the Solidarity Electoral Action and the Polish Peasant Party, whose attitudes towards integration can be characterized as “critical acceptance of the European Union.”71 The AWS supports integration process, but insists that national interest should take precedence over Europe. There is also a resistance to the surrender of national sovereignty based on the belief that the moral obligation of Polish politicians is the preservation of national and Catholic identity of the country. The PSL argues that integration should take place on condition that the state undertakes to protect the agricultural market. This party is particularly interested in Polish agriculture and the consequences of the opening of Polish markets to EU products. Furthermore, in April of 1999, the Polish Agreement was founded by some conservative politicians as an alternative to the pro-European AWS. At the moment, the Polish Agreement represents an attempt by Catholic integralist groups, such as the National Party, Polish Family, and Polish Youth, to raise their political profile.

After the 2001 elections, the two main political blocs in Poland became remarkably similar. Both rely on trade union patronage, which limits the scope of progressive economic policy and produces a U-shaped system where both ends of the political spectrum are similarly bound by the protectionist tendencies of the labor movement.72 Moreover, the two main blocs still distinguish themselves on socio-cultural issues such as religion and recent history. However, the party that has emerged as the main opposition to the leftist parties did not exist a year before. Backed by a slick marketing campaign, Civic Platform, known as Platforma, won an impressive 13% in its first

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70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
It is a centrist grouping of pro-business liberals drawn from the upper ranks of the Solidarity Election Action, the Freedom Union and the Left Democratic Alliance.

Summary

The new government will have to preside over some belt-tightening on a domestic level through creation of new jobs and will have to bring in an array of new reforms to prepare for the EU membership. The last part might experience some opposition from Poland’s anti-reform trinity: the Church, the unions, and the farmers. Their conservative influence may have waned since 1990, but agrarian and church-backed parties did surprisingly well in the recent election, winning almost a fifth of the vote between them.

The issue of European membership has become more politicized in Poland after the 2001 parliamentary elections. Although, there is no evidence at the elite level that attitudes toward integration and Europe can be regarded as an independent cleavage line, it becomes more visible that the issue of integration tends to play a role among political parties. As the negotiations move on to even more specific issues, the probability is that the situation could change.

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73 "Loss of Solidarity." The Economist. E-mail to the author. 4 Dec. 2001
74 "Limping Towards Normality." The Economist. E-mail to the author. 4 Dec. 2001
CHAPTER 4. THE POLISH CATHOLIC CHURCH

The aim of this chapter is to introduce a changing nature of the stance adopted by Polish Catholic Church since 1990s. The Catholic Church remains one of the most potent, nonpolitical institutions on the Polish scene. Throughout Polish history, the Catholic Church has often functioned not only as a religious organization, but also as an institution within which national feelings could be expressed. Since 1989, the Church has had a hard time adjusting to its new role as a religious body in a sovereign and democratic state. The general trend has been toward the gradual withdrawal of the Church from politics, but by means of a peculiar cyclic movement.\(^75\) The next section describes historical route of the Catholic Church to become more diplomatic in the political space.

1. Historical Structure of Polish Catholic Church after 1980s

With the fall of Communism, in which the Church played a significant role, the attitudes of some clergy members and secular Catholic activists displayed a triumphant attitude and a hope that Poland would become the center of the new evangelization of Europe. This stance was held along with fear of a return of other, negative processes such as hostility towards religion and the will to marginalize it in the area of social life, which was believed to be the position of liberal circles, despite the fact that in the previous twenty years they had become closer to the Church in the common struggle against the communist system. This combination of glorious attitudes and fear motivated the Church’s hierarchy to attempt to legally and institutionally sanction the freedom to propagate and preach the truths of the faith. The lack of understanding of democratic procedures and the habit of communicating with the state over the heads of society meant that, at the beginning of the 1990s, the Church’s activities were perceived by the public as something negative. This was particularly due to the Church’s support of right-wing political parties that implemented controversial regulations. For instance, applying the obligation to respect Christian values by public TV and radio stations. Along

with these activities on the part of the Church, political party activities identified with Christian values in a way, which was aggressive and demagogic in nature. Also, this negative image was influenced by the activity of Radio Maryja, a radio station that was very popular among radical, far right-wing parties, which were opposed to the idea of Poland's membership in the European Union.

However, the attitude of the Catholic Church is of central importance to Polish society and politicians. Apparently, an acceptance of the European integration has been a favorable factor among Polish clergy since 1997. The evolution of official Polish Catholic views were expressed by the superiors in that year when they accepted the idea of integrated Europe. Before, skeptical views were broadly present among Polish clergymen. This position was present among Polish citizens and clergymen because of protection of Polish own identity and nationality. Since the late 1970s and early 1980s Poland was trying to build a unity among the clergy and Polish government. In October 1978 Karol Wojtyla was elected Pope. The people of Poland saw this as a miracle and began to celebrate openly on the streets. The new Pope soon went on a pilgrimage to his homeland and there he spoke of combining love of Christ with the love of one’s country. He also stated that the future of Poland lies in nonconformity, which was a smack in the face to the communists. In the 1980s, the Church was able to extend a bridge over the chasm that had separated the Poles for years. Workers and intellectuals, socialists and churchmen were brought together to fight for a common goal – to bring the populace together with a sense of solidarity, the sense that they were fighting for the same objective.

Since then the Church and Pope John Paul II constantly call for social unity, and at the same time, criticize the most offensive face of capitalism. Namely, the clergy critically approach drastic protests, the primary aim of which is to increase monetary gains. The Polish bishops remind businessmen that profit should not be their only goal, and convince workers that call for increase in wages should not be the only objective of their protests. Poverty and deprivation are certainly not
something the Church regards as correct or acceptable, but neither is it sufficient reason for protest or disorder.

Since signing the Europe Agreements in 1991, the Polish Catholic Church has not taken any strong position on Polish membership in the European Union. The Church feared the loss of national identity by the Polish state, and tried to stay aside from expressing its opinion on the integration process. However, the Polish Church started to reverse its stance on this issue in 1996 during a visit by a delegation of Polish bishops to Brussels. This appearance not only declared that the Catholic Church does not fear a loss of national identity, but also showed the Church’s own interest in the integration process. 76

Afterwards, the clergy also announced a full support and engagement in the realization of the integration goal. According to bishop Pieronek who was a spokesperson of the episcopate “Europe should be accepted as a wonderful opportunity, a difficult challenge and a great apostolic assignment for the Church.” 77 This statement meant that the Polish Catholic Church is not afraid of a united Europe. Conversely, the Church will look forward to the process of integration. Moreover, the support of the Church for Polish membership of the European Union is connected with goals, which the Church sees for itself in the future and united Europe. Namely, the Polish Catholic Church will attempt to restore Europe for Christianity, which still deeply determines the spirit of European citizens. Still, the Polish Church will endeavor to return to its European roots. However, this newly issued view of Polish Church has not been accepted by all members of the clergy. Some of the members share the postulate that the European Union is an amoral set of institutions controlled by strong countries. These hegemonic countries wish to reduce their weaker European counterparts to “a state of vassalage.” 78 As for the papacy itself, it is very hard to estimate a level of support for the European integration. On the one hand, admiration for the Pope is tremendous, but on the other hand,

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77 ---. Dec 6-7,1997
78 ---. April 21, 1999
Catholic values do not determine all Polish behavior. This aspect of Polish support for the European integration is described in detail in Chapter 6.

Nonetheless, the opinions expressed during the Pope’s last pilgrimage to Poland in June of 1999 with regard to the idea of the European integration will reinforce the arguments of supporters of Polish membership of the European Union. In his speech to the Polish deputies in the parliament, he affirmed that Poland’s policy towards the European Union membership is fully supported by the Holy See. Additionally, he elaborated that Polish people can bring to the enlarging Europe values, which have served them greatly in the past along with present ideas of freedom, security, and cooperation among those nations that still strongly curtail from Christianity. The latter feature is particularly stressed by the Catholic Church as an essential element for the prospect European structure.

2. Threats and challenges to the Polish Catholic Church

The evolution of the Church’s opinions unlocks a new opportunity for a debate among Catholics about future European unity and Polish membership in the Union. Obviously, there is no doubt that the majority of the Polish clergy supports Polish entry into the European Union structures. According to the opinion poll conducted by the Institute of Public Affairs in February 1998 among Polish clergy, 84% clerical respondents accepted Polish accession to the European Union. Correspondingly, according to the CBOS opinion poll, the figure for the adult population at large was only 66% of support for the EU membership in 1998 (Table 6.1). This comparison shows a strong support of the Catholic Church for Polish membership in the European Union structures.

The Catholic Church has found itself in a difficult moral and political situation in the 1990s. It was obvious that a large part of the Church did not understand what democracy was, while

significant wave of anticlericalism showed that many Poles did not understand that religion is rather public in nature and that the Church cannot limit itself simply to an interest in the private lives of individuals. It should not control itself because its mission is to fulfill the mission of religious instruction efficiently. Moreover, with the integration process in place, many unjust accusations were directed towards the Church. It is clear that accusing the Church of wanting to transform Poland into a religious state had no sound basis because, at its roots, the Church had no ominous theocratic intentions. Social groups which misjudged the Church did not understand, either, that the Church’s postulates such as the return of religious classes to schools, the signing of a Concordat between Poland and Vatican, as well as placing a reference to God in the preamble to the Constitution did not infringe on the principles of tolerance or the moral neutrality of the state. Also, the escalation of the conflict related to the presence of the Church in public life was also a consequence of the propaganda of post-communist circles, which using Catholicism as successfully as some of the right-wing parties used communism, made a powerful slogan out of the threat of Catholic fundamentalism. Moreover, it used Catholicism as the element in the election campaigns that facilitated their return to power.

In the Poland of the 1990s, Church and democracy have clashed, thus weakening both. Since it diminished a power of both sources, the integration process with the European Union has been differently approached by both parties. However, to some extent, the conflict between the state and the Church cannot be avoided: the Church is hierarchical in character and refers to revelatory truths. On the other hand, Christian ethics point out the existence of unquestionable values, which can be cancelled by democratic processes. However, it does not mean a rejection of democracy. In fact, the Church emphasizes that democracy is the only political system in tune with the Christian system of

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values. Even though there are tensions between the state and the Church, the presence of the Church and the mass religiousness of Poles create an opportunity for the building of a democracy and a civil society on a basis of Christian values. Also, Poland does not only retain its uniqueness, but could be an experimental ground for the whole Europe.

Summary

The Polish Catholic Church remains one of the major actors on the Polish political scene. Since the 1990s, the Church was able to extend a bridge over the chasm that had separated the Poles for years. Although the Church by itself was not clear of criticism, it has been preserved its important role among Polish citizens and still influences the Polish government. In recent years, the Church has brought together workers, intellectuals, politicians, the public, and churchmen to fight for a common goal of the European Union membership. As Solidarity trade union, the Polish Church is able to bring the populace together with a sense of solidarity; a sense that makes all Polish citizens know that they are all fighting for the same thing.

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83 Doubts about the Church's attitude towards democracy were finally removed by the encyclical of John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*
CHAPTER 5. TRADE UNIONS

Poland used to be known as a society with a high degree of unionization. The breakdown of the former political system, the passage to a market economy, and the profound privatization has affected the labor market climate and the preconditions for union representation. Poland's official unions declared their independence from the communist party in 1990, which restricted their agenda to distributive and welfare issues. At the side of the official unions was a new independent union called Solidarity movement. This union had broader political ambitions with roots in the support of new reforms and began to gradually grow in the late 1980s. However, Poland's tripartite system has definitively restricted the roles of traditional as well as alternative unions. Moreover, the unions weakened even more in 1993, partly as a function of a conflict with the government but primarily because the Polish economy was so bad that workers' demands for reforms became rather impossible to realize. Thus, Poland's major challenge is to achieve both economic and political stability, measuring up to the European Union standards. Concurrently, unions still have to find their role in this process.

1. The central role of union structure in Poland and the concept of social dialogue

In the twelve years since the collapse of the Communist regime in Poland, numerous aspects of Polish life and society have changed beyond recognition. Proposals for the reform and rationalization of union structure were introduced in Polish politics. Thus, some important changes were implemented in order to presume fewer and larger unions. Because of these changes, two politically strong unions have prevailed: the Solidarity Trade Union (NSZZ) and The All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions (OPZZ). These two unions have been continuously working on the establishment of a social dialogue that would connect workers with employers, and government with labor unions.
The social dialogue has played a very crucial role in the economic, social, and political transformation of Poland since 1989. "It has been one of the most fatuous of recent devices within the European Union."84 The pursuit of social dialogue within and between trade unions, in Poland and in the EU, is a vital requirement since unions should search for common opinion among themselves. Moreover, the positive development of changes in Poland would have never happened without substantial contribution of the social partners. But on the other hand, the relative social peace and stability in the period of painful social transformation would not have been possible without a consensual way of concluding social accords with participation of social partners. At the same time, the practice of social dialogue has contributed to the evolution of social partners and institutions. It has been widely accepted as the best method of solving political and socio-economic problems or conflicts. Moreover, by the adoption of the new Polish Constitution in 1997, the social dialogue became a base of the legal system in Poland.

Furthermore, the dialogue and cooperation of the social partners are pillars of the social market economy. This fundamental constitutional principle is a cornerstone of social relations in Poland and may contribute to the further development of institutions of the social dialogue, not only in the national, but also in the international arena. However, one of the particularities of the social dialogue instruments in Poland is the fact that special significance has been attributed to the tripartite dialogue. In fact, this dialogue is recognized as the most vital factor of social relations or at least much more important then in most countries of the European Union. This is probably a consequence of two interrelated factors.

Firstly, the fact that employers' organizations did not exist in the beginning of the transformation and have still remained relatively weak puts the government in a rather strong position.

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Secondly, the fact that legal changes linked to the political and economic transformation, as well as development of social relations, had to be channeled to the Parliament through the government and its agencies, which was the most logical path of transforming the system.\textsuperscript{85}

Thus, the Tripartite Commission was created on the basis of the Resolution of the Council of Ministers in 1994. This was one of the results of negotiations between the government and social partners, especially trade unions, whose main criticism of the Commission’s functioning focused on the fact that it was not anchored enough in the legal system, which gave the government a privileged position.\textsuperscript{86} Thus, there are expectations that the Commission, which is well enshrined in the legislation, will be more efficient. The most controversial issue that the Commission has been facing in recent years is that of the new Tripartite Commission law. This provides that collective bargaining between trade unions and employers could be held within the Commission and that national collective agreements could be concluded within its framework.

Although the new legislation is not yet operating, I think that it may create a possibility of state interference into the regular bilateral relations between trade unions and employers’ organizations. If this will be the case, social partners will certainly vigorously oppose such a threat. It needs to be mentioned that collective bargaining is considered by trade unions as a cornerstone of industrial relations, even though it still remains a rather weak element of the social dialogue.

There are several reasons for that, resulting from the situation of both trade unions and employers as well their attitudes. Trade union density is low in Poland and according to different estimates, ranges between 17% and 25%.\textsuperscript{87} Moreover, labor unions are fragmented and sometimes unwilling to cooperate with each other. The OPZZ and NSZZ have an extremely hard time to meet their needs in the collective bargaining since their programs differ enormously.

\textsuperscript{85}It could be also found in the NSZZ program at <http://www.solidarnosc.org.pl>
\textsuperscript{87}Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej. \textit{Polish People on Trade Unions}. Warsaw: CBOS July (July 6-9, 2001f data).
The NSZZ puts a special emphasis on the tripartite dialogue, which is a consequence of a specific Polish experience of social pacts from the past decade. Also, employers’ organizations are still not very well structured. Most employers especially multinationals are not members of any organization, which results in an excess of company level concurrences and difficulties in concluding national sectoral collective agreements.

In order to support development of labor unions, the social dialogue is also connected to the European integration process. There is a consensus of all major social actors in Poland about the enlargement of the European Union and Poland’s accession. Even though the negotiations with the European Commission are very difficult and time consuming, the harmonization of the Polish legislation with the ‘acquis’ is going relatively smoothly and without major controversies. There exist several mechanisms and institutionalized forms of consultation with social partners concerning the government’s position on different issues covered by the accession negotiations. The ongoing process of Poland’s integration with the structures of the European Union is one of the biggest challenges for both the OPZZ and the NSZZ. However, the OPZZ and the NSZZ differ in their approaches to meet the new challenges lined out in the ‘acquis.’

For the NSZZ, to achieve international cooperation and to meet the European Union criteria, trade unions should participate in the social dialogue on the national arena. Thus, the government has created a number of working groups within its ministries where social partners have a chance to express their position in all fields of the ‘acquis.’ For the OPZZ, entering the European structures, particularly in its initial period, can bring various dangers for the employers and their families as well as for the Polish economy. The minimalization of these dangers can be achieved by developing international cooperation and fuller participation of the Polish sectoral trade union movement in

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88 According to the NSZZ program at <http://www.solidarnosc.org.pl>
89 In 1999, the Prime Minister’s Office established the National Council for Integration gathering leaders of all representative trade unions and employers’ organizations as well as experts. Also, the Consultation Committee with the social partners’ representatives as the negotiator in chief. Moreover, the Liaison Committee with the European Economic and Social Committee was established in order to bring trade unions, employers’ organizations and third interest groups together.
various forms of the international social dialogue. Those forms may be accomplished through common activities together with European trade union movements or through bilateral contacts with all national trade union headquarters of the European states. Furthermore, this approach does not levy the responsibilities of the all-country trade union organizations for their own fields of action. Also, the OPZZ is “against random introduction of laws being in force in the European Union, separated from a wider context of social and economic conditions existing in Member States. These changes must have a complex dimension and precise schedule of implementation - they must be understandable from the social standpoint and acceptable.”

Personally, one of the most vital results of the consultation process linked to accession negotiations was a consensus that the social ‘aquis’ should be fully integrated into the Polish legislation. While the NSZZ approach emphasizes domestic cooperation and social dialogue, the OPZZ tries to reach a consensus through international agreements. Yet, prior to a full creation of international cooperation and adoption of the European social model, the liberalization of the labor code and industrial relations on a domestic level is needed. The NSZZ trade union organizations believe that the European social ‘acquis’ will give them necessary guarantees and more room for negotiating the liberalization and flexibility of the labor code and industrial relations.

2. Threats and Challenges to Polish Trade Unionism

Traditional unions began to change in 1993. The parliamentary elections that took place in September of 1993 brought a victory of a coalition consisting of the post-communist Left Democratic Union and the Peasant Party, a previous satellite of the Communist party. This victory was a result of the frustration of the electorate, people’s discontent with the neoliberal policy carried out by the governments in 1990-1993, the populist electoral campaign conducted by post-communist political

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90 More on the OPZZ could be found at <http://www.opzz.org.pl>
91 Ibid.
groupings and the diffusion of democratic parties. This government did not keep its promises.

Although the economic growth was a statistical improvement in 1996 as the fourth successful year of GDP growth, these relatively promising economic results did not affect workers because of the lack of a social safety net and growing differences between the rich and the poor.92 This further degradation of worker groups and the social atmosphere together with the domination of the old and new nomenclature in state and local administration (as well as in finance and business circles), resulted in the frustration of trade union members. All of those difficulties and lack of pro-labor political alternatives have declined the membership participation within labor unions.

According to a new report from a United Nations’ Agency, labor union membership dropped in most industrialized countries between 1985 and 1995.93 Additionally, the International Labor Organization attributed the decline to a shift away from manufacturing and the loss of many unionized jobs. According to this report, the sharpest membership declines took place in Central and Eastern Europe – from 21.8 million workers to 14 million over the ten-year period. This decline is largely a result of the end of compulsory unionism. In Poland, union membership plunged by 46%.

Although the report also claims that labor remains at least as influential as before – the OPZZ labor union was instrumental in electing left-of-center governments after 1993 in Poland – the current opinion polls, government reports, and the socio-economic situation of the Polish state do not support this notion. Although, unions have seen membership fall (tellingly, the NSZZ and the OPZZ no longer publish their figures), they still have many friends on both sides of the lower house of the Polish government.94 Even though the politics of trade unions may be messy (through numerous strikes and protests), it is clearly marked in trade unions’ programs. Their path to membership of the European Union prevails as the most important aspect of their programs.

94 "Limping Toward Normality." The Economist. E-mail to the author. 4 Dec. 2001
The most vital challenge for trade unions in Poland lies within the issue of the European Union enlargement. Both labor unions need to operate in the conditions of fast proceeding globalization of the Polish economy due to its opening for the global markets and the integration of Poland with the European Union. It raises new problems for trade unions. These problems are connected to the threats that endanger the Polish economy. Both unions are involved in the common issues, extending outside the field of the sectoral trade unions’ structure activities. The scope of interests considers legislation of labor law, social policy, and employment policy with active forms of counteracting unemployment. This part is the most crucial for the NSZZ since the majority of its members are farmers. For example, within the Union, farmers are likely to lose their privileged position, and those industrial sectors in which Poland now has a competitive advantage will also be on the losing side. In addition, “this sector of the Polish economy is plagued by low productivity, and underemployment is estimated at between 1.5-2 million persons.”\(^95\) Also, farmers do not contribute to budget revenues in that they do not pay state income tax (only local farming taxes). However, if cheap and relatively skilled Polish labor is allowed to enter the European Union market, some Western Europeans are likely to lose their jobs. In Poland, the rapid restructuring of the economy and politics is likely to benefit young, mobile and educated people living in big cities. Those who do not share these characteristics will find it difficult to cope with the mounting changes and are likely to end up on the losing side. A radical improvement in the sector is unlikely in the next several years and the state of Polish agriculture will be a major sticking point in Poland’s negotiations with the European Union.

In order to meet the European Union needs, Polish labor unions will have to alter a structure that is essentially regional to one that is also sectoral. A move in that direction had already begun in 1989 with the creation of a nonregional union for hospital workers. This move was implemented by

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the NSZZ labor union. Moreover, the OPZZ considers the creation of new trade union structures, particularly in the private sector. Since Poland moved from a centrally governed economy into a market-oriented economy, this sector plays an important role in Polish politics. Thus, new intercompany structures should be initiated for the employers of companies in which, due to a small number of employees, trade unions cannot be set up. The system of cooperation among the ties of the trade unions and the support for integrational initiatives should be still under improvement. In spite of this, the European Union institutions also lack the structure and the desire to become active in the industrial relations domain. Thus, not only do unions remain weak and dominated by national structures, but also employer organizations and firms in Poland and in the European Union are reluctant to engage in such an activity as liberalization of labor laws and institutions.

Another challenge faced by trade unions is that they are becoming ineffective in their programs when they should be more influential in governing the country. According to the people asked by the poll of Public Opinion Research Center, which was conducted after adoption of the Act on Tripartite Commission for Social and Economic Affairs in July of 2001, only 8% of the respondents declared membership in a trade union organization with 3% in NSZZ trade union and 2% in OPZZ trade union. Almost 73% are of the opinion that trade unions are ineffective in defending the workers' interests. Only 13% are of the contrary opinion. Although, the NSZZ and the OPZZ are considered as the most effective, their positive notes decrease regularly. Almost two-thirds (65%) of the respondents wished the unions had had greater influence on governing the country. Only 8% of those surveyed think that the unions' influence is too high. While asking about a protection of workers interests, 47% of the respondents do not see any effective method. 16% pointed at tripartite negotiations and 10% declared strikes and protests as ways to protect workers interests. Most of the trade union members are in state-owned companies (33%), and 6% are in private ones. The union members are more aware of the possibility of loosing jobs than non-members. There are also
differences in perceiving the situation of companies. 55% of trade union members stated the condition as bad, and this opinion is shared only by 27% of non-members.96

The effectiveness of trade unions in defending the workers’ interests is very low. Simultaneously, the number of respondents who want to increase the influence of employers’ organizations on the government’s decisions is dramatically rising. Currently, a majority of Polish respondents declares that the influence on governing the country is unproductive. There exists an opinion among Polish society that none of the trade unions represents the workers’ interests. It needs to be noted that trade union members are as skeptical towards effectiveness of trade unions as those who are not members. Hopefully, the liberalization and regulation of the labor code through the Tripartite Commission will consolidate the current social dialogue among social actors in Poland.

Summary

This chapter has argued that two major trade unions in Poland; The All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions (OPZZ) and Solidarity Trade Union (NSZZ), are not simply passive actors at the receiving end of commands of national politics; rather they are crucial actors in the creation of the politics, especially through collective bargaining, while establishing their future role in the European Union sphere. Clearly, there is a vivid relationship among trade unions, employer organizations, and the Polish government that is represented by the social dialogue issue. However, new challenges and threats to trade union effectiveness have an impact on the market economy, the administrative structures, and the public at large. Furthermore, to increase its effectiveness, the trade unions must participate in the tripartite structure on a domestic level or the unions must find allies in the international environment, for example, in the European Trade Unions’ Confederation. Moreover, labor groups may improve in their effectiveness through influencing corporate and state policy. The

current process of enlargement may have an impact on labor unions' efficiency by moving national labor activity into the international setting. Thus, enlargement brings new challenges not only for the Polish state, but also for the European Union structures, market behavior, and socio-economic norms. This new challenge means that unions are increasingly looking beyond basic issues and reaching out to unprotected workers and other social, international unions to form a broader coalition.
CHAPTER 6. PUBLIC OPINION

Poland is at a historic point as it stands on the doorstep to the European Union and has enjoyed one of the highest levels of support for EU membership. The most important aspect of eastward enlargement is the question whether this prospective membership is likely to have any impact on domestic politics and public opinion in this applicant country. This issue is a pivotal tool for future enlargement since it assumes a progressing outline in its internal political debates as the accession negotiations proceed.

This chapter focuses on how the European Union membership will impact on domestic debates within Poland, and how internal factors influence citizen attitudes toward the EU membership. Poland represents a very interesting case study because it already is one of the most difficult applicants to accommodate by the European Union. Moreover, it has had one of the highest levels of support for the European Union membership. It also shows more complex, but advanced political discussion than in other applicant countries.

This chapter begins by examining the altering patterns of support for the European Union membership. I argue that we should not be surprised that Polish people have become progressively more skeptical about the EU membership since the accession negotiations began in 1998. Even though the overall level of support still remains high, the feelings of apathy and low turnout might pose greater threat than outright rejection in the future referendum on the EU accession. The first part considers the possible reasons for this decline. In the second part, I try to predict future support for the European integration on a basis of factors that shape citizen viewpoints. The main objective of this chapter is to posit a set of main aspects that cause the declining support for the EU accession among Polish citizens.
1. Changing Patterns of Public Support

By the year 1997, Poland received a big chance to join the European Union – a community of democratic states. The breaking point of all agreements and negotiation documents took place on July 16, 1997 when the European Commission published Agenda 2000. There exists an awareness in Poland that political sympathies and past contributions to Europe’s democratic transformation will count less in those negotiations than fulfillment of membership criteria in the economic, legal, and social domains and the possibility of meeting the competitiveness standards of the world’s biggest, uniform market. However, Poland’s entry into the European Union is not a goal of the Polish government alone. The Polish public has enjoyed one of the highest levels of support for the EU membership since as early as 1994 (Table 6.1). For instance, in May of 1998, 66% of Poles said they would vote ‘Yes’ in a referendum on accession. Nonetheless, the number of Poles who say that they will vote ‘Yes’ in a referendum on the EU membership has fallen significantly over the last few years. Additionally, the results seem to fall rapidly down because the last opinion poll introduced by CBOS showed that 55% of respondents would have voted for Polish membership in the European Union in March of 2001. Nearly, every third respondent to this survey would be opposed to the membership.97

97 Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej. Poglady na Temat Integracji z Unia Europejska. Warsaw: CBOS July (July 6-9, 2001e data)
Table 6.1: Polish Support for the EU Membership, 1994-2001 (in percentages)

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<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
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Source: CBOS (2001e)

It needs to be added that the percentage of Poles who are very skeptical about the EU membership has been systematically growing. Nearly 62% of respondents think that Poland should modernize the economy first and then start to fulfill other criteria. Probably for this reason one third of those surveyed admitted that Poland should become a full member as soon as possible since the membership would accelerate modernization and reparation of Polish economy. Moreover, the survey made known that only 6% of Poles feels that Poland gets more benefits in the present relationship with the European Union, while every second respondent thinks that the European Union gets more benefits (54%). Only every fourth surveyed believes that the relationship is mutual (25%)98 (Table 6.2 and Figure 6.1).

Table 6.2: Present relationship between Poland and the European Union (in percentages)

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<th>May-99</th>
<th>May-00</th>
<th>Sep-00</th>
<th>Mar-01</th>
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<tr>
<td>For the EU</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>For Poland</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
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</table>

98 Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej. Opinie o Integracji Polski z Unia Europejska. Warsaw: CBOS March (March 2-5, 2001a data)
As Table 6.1 shows, since Poland formally submitted its application in 1994, the number of Poles supporting the EU membership has declined from 77% in June 1994 to 55% in March 2001. At the same time, a significant segment of anti-EU opinion has begun to emerge with the number of opponents increasing from only 6% in 1994 to 30% in 2001. Also, every second respondent thinks that Poland is 'a half way' through to fulfill the full membership criteria (47%). Every fifth respondent (23%) assumes that there is 'a long way' to achieve this goal, which makes 16% of those who think that it would take 'a very long way.'

Generally, the overall tendency over the last seven years has been radically downward, even though the level of support still remains relatively high. However, beneath this hopeful and high support, there are a number of potentially significant indicators to suggest that the prospect of the EU membership provokes considerable anxieties even among enthusiasts of the EU.

First of all, there is some evidence that Poles are becoming increasingly skeptical about whether or not they will actually benefit from the EU membership compared with current member states (Figure 6.2). This perception of a gradually more unequal relationship is rising. According to Figure 6.2, the number of those who believe that the existing EU member states will derive the greatest benefit from Polish accession has grown steadily to 54% in March 2001. At the same time
25% of Poles believe that accession would be mutually beneficial to both Poland and the EU countries while only 6% cite their country as the main beneficiary. Among the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, Hungarians most often see a profitable relationship with the European Union countries.  

![Image: Relationship b/w Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and the EU](image)

**Figure 6.2: Relationship between Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and the EU (in percentages).** Source: CBOS (2001b).

Furthermore, a rising skepticism is confirmed by data on Polish beliefs about the effects the EU membership will have on both specific sectors of the economy and their living standards in general. In July 2001 (Table 6.3), 73% of Poles said it would have a negative effect on individual farms, while only 0% said it would have a positive outcome. 27% of respondents employed by individual, private farms said that the result would not have any influence. Similarly, 41% of employed individuals in each sector of the economy said that the EU membership would have a negative effect on the functioning of public sector enterprises compared with only 26 who felt it would be positive. Even the number who believed that the EU membership would have a positive impact on the private business sector has fallen from 44% in December 2000 to 34% in July 2001.

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99 More on public opinion from the Czech Republic and Poland could be found in: Kucia, Marek. "Public Opinion in Central Europe on EU Accession: The Czech Republic and Poland." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 37.1 (March 1999): 143-52. The author of this article conducted a qualitative research on group discussions in April 1997 in the Czech Republic and Poland.
On the other side, the negative views increased from 21% in December of 2000 to 32% in July 2001. This number has fallen drastically since 1994 when 67% had a positive belief and 6% a negative opinion on the EU membership among private businesses. Also, in terms of the impact on the economy, 52% of respondents during July’s survey said that the economic situation in Poland in recent months would not change for better. Also, since July 2000, the percentage of those who classify their standard of living as ‘dissent’ (19-20%) has remained at the same level.

Table 6.3: Labor situation and condition of Polish households (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation in a workplace</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>VIII</th>
<th>IX</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>XI</th>
<th>XII</th>
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<th>VI</th>
<th>VII</th>
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<td>Public Institutions</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CBOS (2001d)
Secondly, the number of real enthusiasts for the EU membership is considerably smaller than the caption figure of those who say that they will vote ‘Yes’ in a referendum. Most Poles can be located in a neutral category. In other words, the best way to characterize the current state of Polish public opinion is that most Poles agree with the idea of EU membership but are not particularly enthusiastic about it. In the absence of more detailed empirical research specifically on this group, it is hard to convey accurately how firm or delicate this pro-European Union section of Polish public opinion actually is.

2. Explanation of Declining Public Support for the European Union membership

Hypothetically, there are a number of reasons that explain the decline of public support among Polish citizens during the process of accession negotiations. Nevertheless, the data I will present in this chapter will brightly demonstrate the strong effect that political partisanship has on popular attitudes regarding the EU membership. The data suggest that party support may serve as a proxy for Polish citizen attitudes towards European integration. Moreover, among Polish citizens, political partisanship is the strongest predictor of citizen attitudes next to democracy and free market economy. Such evidence may help to better understand variation in public opinion, and may also provide a stronger explanation of why economic conditions may have a more limited and indirect effect on levels of EU support. Regardless of ideology, citizen attitudes in Poland are shaped by partisanship in terms of political party’s position on the European integration. It is a very crucial aspect since voters may use party attachment as a proxy to answer questions on EU membership. In order to explain this phenomenon I present some reasons for which citizens of Poland lean towards certain preferences.

100 For an interesting discussion on this, see Kolarska-Bobinska, Lena. “Rozmowa z Unia Europejska.” Rzeczpospolita, 18 March 1998.
Firstly, the issue of Polish membership in the European Union has been a subject of a great consensus among the main political parties, groupings, and elites. Until present, no major political grouping has questioned EU membership as a major objective of Polish foreign policy. Moreover, all the parties and electoral blocs that won parliamentary seats in 1997 elections declared their support for the EU accession. By the same token, this strong consensus among political elites up to this point of time does not reflect the realism of factual stage of support for Polish accession to the European Union. In this sense the current figures are simply a more realistic reflection of the true level of support for the membership (Table 6.4).\textsuperscript{101}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral Blocs</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UW-The Union for Freedom</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO-The Civic Platform</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWS-The Solidarity Election Action</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLD+UP- The Democratic Left Alliance</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and the Labor Union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSL-The Polish Peasant Party</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Decided</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Intended to vote</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CBOS (2001a)

Secondly, there has also been very little serious debate about the potential costs and benefits of the EU accession and the issue has had practically no significance in the everyday lives of Polish citizens. Relatively, the debate has been embedded in broad geopolitical and historical terms rather than focusing on political, social, and economic issues. According to CBOS, in August 1997, 41% of Poles felt that the EU membership would bring Poland more well than harm, the number who said it would benefit them or their families personally felt to 27%, while nearly 31% did not know how the

\textsuperscript{101} The useful survey of Polish parties’ attitudes to EU membership in the run-up of September 1997 elections could be found in Osrodek Badania Opinii Publicznej, Polacy o Integracji z Unią Europejską. Warsaw: OBOP October (October 1999a data)
process would affect them.\textsuperscript{102} Hitherto, the levels of Polish support for the EU membership did not really represent a conscious affirmation of support and were created on unstable foundations.

Thirdly, it was inevitable that the introduction of the actual accession negotiations would reduce the level of support for Polish EU membership. As I mentioned above, Poland will be a very problematic new member and will also have to confront economic and social consequences. In recent months, painful economic and social reforms have taken place in Poland, therefore, the public support for the EU membership dropped drastically. The social atmosphere aggravated among Polish citizens in the month of July 2001. Over 77\% of respondents determine the whole situation in Poland as critical. Polish citizens have been talking about the critical social moods since a very long time. Overall, this aspect has had a falling tendency since the beginning of this calendar year.\textsuperscript{103} However, Poland has not noted such a critical tendency since 1992.

Importantly, this decline in public support for the EU membership has been exacerbated by the way the Polish Eurodebate has been conducted in the months since the September 1997 parliamentary elections.\textsuperscript{104} The most important aspect of it was a breakup of the pro-European Union elite consensus and the creation of the first organized and potentially significant force to adopt an anti-European Union stance – the Polish Agreement (Porozumienie Polskie PP). The Polish Agreement was set up in April of 1999 and registered formally as a political party in November of the same year by a number of groupings associated with the Catholic nationalist right.\textsuperscript{105}

Fourthly, one of the most vital aspects of this politicization of the Polish debate on the EU membership has been the division of the pro-European Union camp into those who are ‘soft’ and prepared to give in to Brussels and those who favor a ‘tough’ road of negotiations. There are two

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{103} Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej. \textit{Nastroje Społeczne w Lipcu}. Warsaw: CBOS July (July 6-9, 2001d data)
\textsuperscript{105} Gazeta Wyborcza. Daily News. 26 April 1999.
significant examples of this kind of rationalizing among the main parties and groupings currently operating on the Polish political scene.

One of the most influential streams comes from the Christian-National Union (Zjednoczenie Chrzescijansko-Narodowe, ZChN). The ZChN does not look at the European Union with a great enthusiasm. Although, the union is not completely opposing the European Union membership, it explicitly states in its program “we are in favor of a Europe of free nations seeking their inspiration in the Bethlehem grotto.”

The party’s program sets out some conditions that the party supports for the Polish EU membership, for instance, freedom to opt out of the euro, the maintenance of legal sovereignty in certain spheres, rejection of European citizenship, and so forth. Interestingly, the formation of the Polish Agreement has changed the center of gravity in the Polish EU debate in a way that makes the ZChN’s conditions appear more moderate and ordinary.

The second main stream comes from the agrarian-populist Polish Peasant Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, PSL), which emerged in 1990 after first democratically implemented parliamentary election. The PSL party has traditionally adopted a so-called ‘twin-track’ approach towards Polish membership in the European Union. Officially, it has always been in favor of Poland’s membership. However, the party urged that Poland should accept the EU membership only on condition that it is mutually advantageous. In the other means, at the same time as supporting the broad objective pf the EU membership, the party has also attempted to tap into the fears of those who have reservations, particularly among farmers from rural areas of the country. For instance, the party argued in favor of transitional periods for Poland’s agricultural sector with simultaneous access to the same kind of farm subsidies currently available to other EU member states.

107 More on ZChN’s program see <http://www.awsp.pl/program.html>
109 Parliamentary debate on the European Union accession. 19 March 1998
110 More on PSL’s program see: <http://www.psl.org.pl>
This particular political debate encourages political parties to compete with one another for the mantle of most effective defender of national interests. On the other hand, these parties have tried to defend their political interests in order to enhance the level of support among Polish citizens. However, an OBOP survey revealed that the number of Poles who said that they trusted their EU negotiators to defend the national interests fell from 51% in December 1998 to 42% in October 1999, while the number who said that they did not trust them increased from 36% to 42% over the same period of time.111

This trend towards the politicization of Polish debate on the EU membership exacerbated during 2000 presidential election when the pro-EU, AWS-backed candidate Marian Krzaklewski felt it was necessary to make skeptical overtures towards the anti-EU elements on the Polish right, and which attempt cost him the presidential seat to former communist, unequivocally pro-EU incumbent Aleksander Kwasniewski.112

Furthermore, there is also another segment of the public that views Europe as a remote, or even hostile, institution, with structures that can seem anonymous and distant. The citizens feel quite defenseless when faced with something that they are ignorant of. The link between the Union’s objectives and the actions of the applicant states are no longer clear. The functioning of Polish and the European Union institutions is becoming increasingly complex. As a result, the legitimacy of the institutions is being challenged. The most important factor of it is a lack of comprehension if not skepticism that is not natural to Polish citizens. This melancholy affects the representative system of Polish state. The most visible symptom of this is a low turnout at national elections. Moreover, people have some uncertainties about European integration and the European Union institutions. By the same token, the public’s support for developing the Polish foreign, security, and defense policies

111 Osrodek Badania Opinii Publicznej. Polacy o Integracji z Unia Europejska. Warsaw: OBOP October (October 1999a data)
is evident to have a positive and generous influence for the future membership. These features are achieved through honest and open dialogue with citizens. In this connection, Polish citizens should be more engaged in a political debate that would help them to make up their own minds. The citizens are no fools, so there should not be any fear to eliminate the public from the political debate. The purpose of the debate should be to listen to the aspirations of people and to engage in an exchange based on rhetoric and concrete argumentation. In this process, the role of the media starts to play a critical role.

Summary

Polish citizens have become increasingly skeptical about the European Union membership over the last few years. Indeed, all the polls indicate that it is a fear of the socio-economic consequences of the European Union membership that lies at the root of anxieties about what many Poles may see as a premature accession.

Moreover, the political debate that takes place in Poland in recent years may reinforce the idea of the European Union accession as an elite-driven process, from which only a narrow, wealthy section of Polish population will benefit. This danger has been aggravated by Polish governments’ attempts to shift the blame for unpopular decisions on the European Union institutions and by the recent politicization of the Polish Eurodebate. Although the overall level of support for the European Union membership remains high it may suffer some further difficulties. One of them may be a danger that a large portion of Poles may decide not to participate in a referendum on the European Union membership even though a majority would likely vote ‘yes.’
CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

The negotiations between Poland and the European Union began officially in the spring of 1998 and effectively in the fall of that year. By June 2000 all the negotiating chapters had been opened and negotiations had been provisionally finished on eleven chapters (Table 7.1). Thus, progress has been smooth, regular, and in some sense predictable. In those areas where Poland has asked for transitional periods or special arrangements, the response of the EU member states has generally been to ask for more information or to ask Poland to reconsider its position. This response is also normal and to some extent understandable. The EU member states will need the maximum amount of information possible in order to consider deviations from the 'acquis' in some areas; this is especially so because of granting transition periods for applicant countries.

When the negotiations are finished and the accession treaty is ratified, Poland will become a member of the European Union. The enlargement will influence the shape of the European Union and Poland's place in the world. However, the uncertainty caused by constant change is balanced by certain stable elements of Polish politics. The political parties, the Catholic Church, trade unions, and the public at large highly influence a process of becoming a member of the European Union community. These stable factors are very crucial because they guarantee tangible and intangible benefits for both Poland and the European Union: the maintenance of community values, widening the zone of stability and peace as well as strengthening of the internal domestic market and sociopolitical development.

One of the most important aspects of eastward enlargement that was investigated in my thesis is the question whether this prospective membership is likely to have any impact on domestic politics in this applicant country. This issue is an essential factor for future enlargement since it assumes a progressing outline in its internal political debates as the accession negotiations proceed. Also, the

113 In case of purchase of land by EU citizens, Poland adopted its negotiating stance on March 1, 2002 by deciding that EU farmers, who are already cultivating leased land in Poland, will be able to purchase it after three or seven years from the signing of the lease agreement.
European Union membership will impact domestic debates within Poland, and how internal factors influence citizen attitudes toward the EU membership. Poland represents a very interesting case study because it already is one of the most difficult applicants to accommodate by the European Union. Moreover, it has had one of the highest levels of support for the European Union membership, and it shows more complex, but advanced political discussion than in other applicant countries.

Furthermore, two major trade unions in Poland: The All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions (OPZZ) and Solidarity Trade Union (NSZZ) are crucial actors in the creation of the politics, especially through collective bargaining, while establishing their future role in the European Union sphere. Clearly, there is a vivid relationship among trade unions, employer organizations, and the Polish government that is represented by the social dialogue issue. In order to increase trade unions’ effectiveness, they must participate in the tripartite structure on a domestic level or the unions must find allies in the international environment. Even though the issue of European membership has become more politicized in Poland after the 2001 parliamentary elections, there is no evidence at the elite level that attitudes toward integration and Europe can be regarded as an independent cleavage line. It becomes more visible that the issue of integration tends to play a positional role among political parties. As the negotiations move on to even more specific issues, the probability is that the situation could change, as there at the mass media level.

Also, the presence of the Catholic Church influences domestic politics and views on the European Union membership. Even though the phenomenon of Polish Catholic Church has been criticized since the early 1990s, the Church just like Polish society, government, and other political actors underwent a long period of transformations after 1989. Moreover, it has become more optimistic about the European Union integration process and the issue of national identity.

By virtue of Poland’s accession, the European Union gains a strong partner determined to help shape internal and external policies of the European Union as well as to maintain peace,
democracy, and economic prosperity in this part of the region. This, after all, has always been the motivation behind the European integration process.
Table 7.1: Status of Poland’s accession negotiations

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<th>Nr</th>
<th>Negotiation position in the area of</th>
<th>Adopted by the Council of Ministers</th>
<th>Submitted to the EU</th>
<th>Negotiations Opened</th>
<th>Negotiations Provisionally Closed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Free Movement of Goods</td>
<td>26.01.99</td>
<td>29.01.99</td>
<td>21.06.99</td>
<td>29.03.01 and 28.11.01**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Freedom of Movement for Persons</td>
<td>27.07.99</td>
<td>30.07.99</td>
<td>26.05.00</td>
<td>21.12.01**</td>
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<td>Freedom to Provide Services</td>
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<td>12.11.99</td>
<td>14.11.00**</td>
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<td>15.07.99</td>
<td>30.09.99</td>
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</tr>
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<td>11.12.98</td>
<td>19.05.99</td>
<td>28.11.01**</td>
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*Data comes from www.ukie.gov.pl
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