

Shabad, Goldie and Kazimierz M. Slomczynski. 1999. "Political Identities in the Initial Phase of Systemic Transformation in Poland: A Test of the Tabula Rasa Hypothesis." *Comparative Political Studies* 32(6):690-723.

Abstract:

The basic premise of this article is that, contrary to the tabula rasa hypothesis, individuals in the new democracies of post-Communist Eastern Europe have been able to form meaningful political identities even under conditions of great fluidity and uncertainty. These identities are expressed through the pattern of voting choices that individuals make during successive elections. The authors based their analysis on a 1993 panel survey of a national sample of the adult Polish population first interviewed in 1988. They show that when political identity is conceptualized in a dynamic manner, the majority of the Polish electorate exhibit patterns of electoral choice that conform well to interpretable types of political identity. Such political identities are shaped by social group memberships and individuals' experiences under communism. These identities, in turn, shape individuals' orientations toward crucial issues related to the systemic transformation of their society.