

Stability of Partisan Attachment Among Politicians and Voters

Marcin Ślarzyński
IFiS PAN

Harmonized longitudinal data on social structure:
Polish research in a cross-national perspective
December 1-2, 2021
Staszic Palace

Goals of the presentation

- Questions: to what extent did political elites and voters exhibit similar ideological and partisan divisions? In other words, did political elites differ from voters with respect to their political attachments and behavior across time?
- Problematize the nature of the connection between the political elite and voters by analyzing the stability of ideological and partisan boundaries between parties, among both political elites and among voters, between the 1991 and 2015 parliamentary elections.

Data

- This study captures two modes of switching between parties. The analysis focuses on comparisons of changes in party allegiances, each between two points in time, for candidates, MPs, and voters (elections to the *Sejm*) on the basis of two datasets: **POLPAN** and **EAST PaC**
- **POLPAN 1988(1993)-2018** party allegiance is derived on the basis of answers to the question “Who did you vote for in the last parliamentary elections?” I only include those respondents who reported a party preference
- **East European Parliamentarian and Candidate Data (EAST PaC)**. It contains the near universe of candidates who ran for and were elected to parliament in Poland and, like a panel, follows their political careers across multiple elections between 1985–2015. I define politicians’ party allegiance as being on a specific party list in parliamentary elections

Motivation

- Political parties and groups constitute communities whose boundaries are identifiable in party platforms, as well as in the long-running divisions between political blocks and parties, as perceived by politicians and voters.
- Boundaries between parties are as much a product of ideological divisions between politicians, as they are of the formers' efforts to differentiate their stances in order to secure space in the political field.
- Such position taking is particularly easy to discern during the formation of a democratic political field – a period during which some alignments that could be taken for granted, like that between former companions from a social movement, give way to politics as usual and fail to materialize due to the prevalent need to find one's space in the political field

Political elite - definition

- I define political elite in a narrow and broad way, to cover those who occupy roles and positions in political institutions having, through their group and individual decisions and actions, a tangible influence on politics (Wesołowski, 2000), as well as those that are involved in partisan life but do not occupy positions in national politics

Divisions among the elites and the masses

- Lipset & Rokkan 1967
- Mosaic cleavage formation
„cleavages would not exist without elites conceptualizing the conflict situation” (Enyedi 2005), (Deegan-Krause & Enyedi, 2010)

Switching parties by politicians

- Most of these works define party switching as politicians changing their party after being elected, i.e., during the term, motivated by:
 - achieving more influence on the policy or maximizing one's chances to win next elections (Aldrich & Bianco, 1992)
 - importance of electoral results in previous elections as factors influencing the direction of a switch (Desposato & Scheiner, 2008)
 - frequent switching between parties attests to the low institutionalization of party organizations or, in other words, fluid party system (Mainwaring & Torcal, 2006, p. 221)

Switching the vote

- Voters are more likely to switch their support toward the party that they deem competent and in line with their political attitudes (Petitpas & Sciarini, 2020).
- Voters' continuous attachment to one party is much more probable in party systems with small number of parties and in contexts of high polarization (Dejaeghere & Dassonneville, 2017).

Political divisions: Poland

- Most significant division in Polish society (and hence a potentially important political resource) exists on the level of declared ideological identities (left vs. right) (Grabowska & Szawiel, 2003, pp. 298-299) and the attitude towards communism as a main factor (Grabowska, 2004, pp. 148-149, 368-369)
- Other authors point to 2005 as the real beginning of a sociopolitical divide in Poland, although approaching this conclusion cautiously (Markowski & Stanley, 2016) or suggesting that the division separates the right-wing and the rest (Tworzecki, 2019)

Poland: party switching

- Although in the 1990s in Poland politicians frequently switched between parties, they were increasingly more likely to remain within the same party family (Shabad & Słomczyński 2004, pp. 161-163)
- The emergence of career politicians, i.e., people who take part in consecutive elections to get into parliament (Shabad & Słomczyński, 2002)
- Betkiewicz et al. (2017) show that political parties have maintained their internal characteristics, power structures and positions with respect to society by acting as gatekeepers and socializing newcomers
- Little in the literature about individual voters' changing preferences

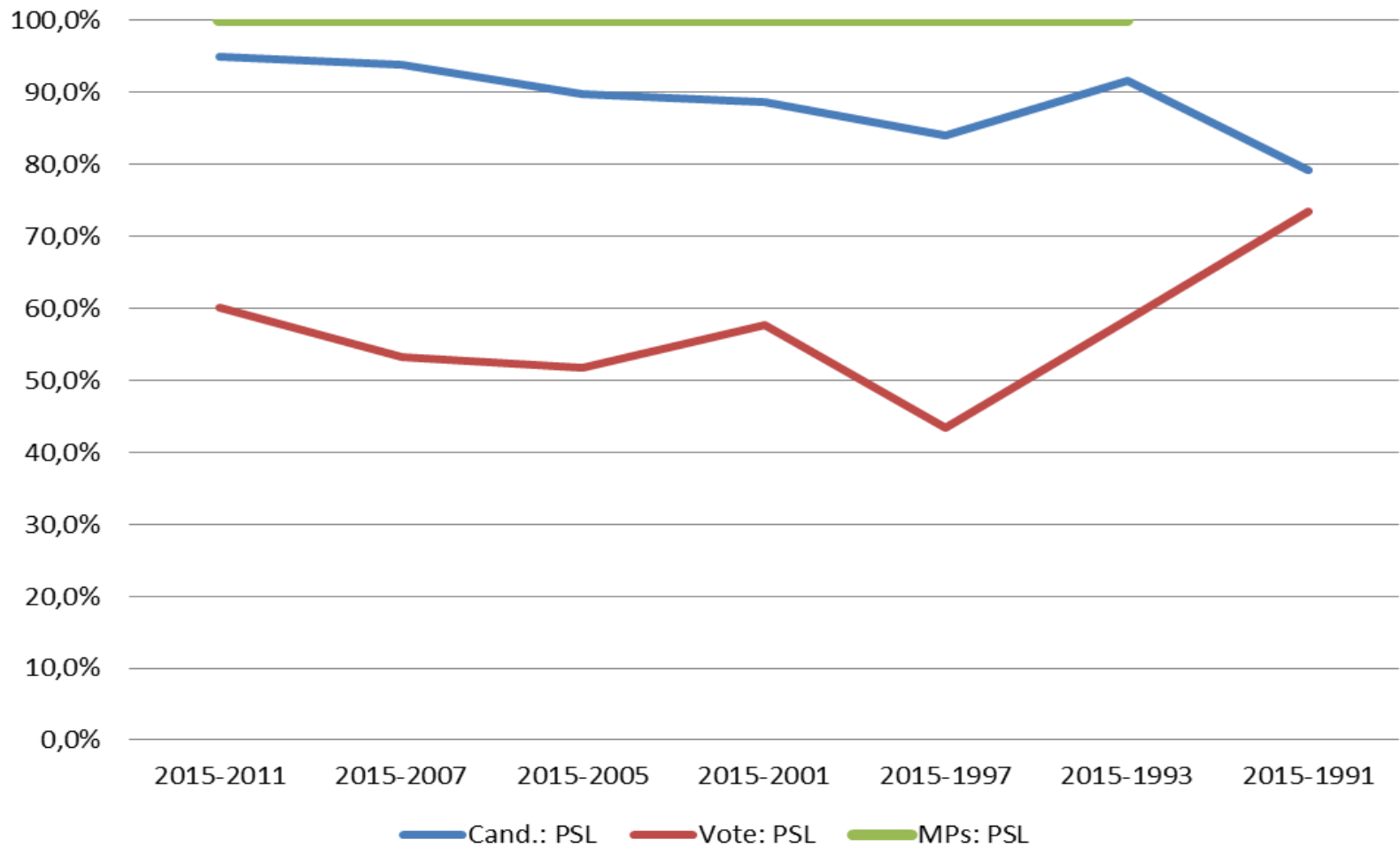
Parties within their families

- All the abovementioned studies suggest that parties/party families constitute communities/milieus with
- **PiS** (PJN, and Prawica; 2007: PiS, LPR, Samoobrona RP, Samoobrona Patriotyczna; 2005: PiS, LPR, PC, Dom Ojczysty, Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski, and Ruch Patriotyczny; 2001: PiS, LPR, and Alternatywa Ruch Społeczny; 1997: ROP, Blok dla Polski, Krajowe Porozumienie Emerytów i Rencistów, KPN; 1993: PC, KPN, Right-wing christian democratic: Katolicki Komitet Wyborczy Ojczyzna, Ojczyzna - Lista Polska, Koalicja dla Rzeczypospolitej, Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe - Porozumienie, Sojusz Ludowo-Chrześcijański; 1991: POC, KPN, Solidarność 80, Right-wing national conservative (Narodowy Komitet Wyborczy, Koalicja Republikańska, Wyborcza Akcja Katolicka, Stronnictwo Narodowe, Porozumienie Ludowe, Partia Chrześcijańskich Demokratów Narodowy Komitet Wyborczy / Forum Chrzescijansko-Demokratyczne, Chrzescijanska Demokracja, Partia Chrzescijanskich Demokratow, Zjednoczenie Chrzescijansko-Narodowe, Stronnictwo Narodowe, Ruch Ludowy - Porozumienie Ludowe), Partia Wolności).
- **PO** (UD, KLD, UW)
- **SLD** (Ruch Palikota, and PPP – Sierpień'80; 2007: LiD and PPP; 2005: SLD and SDRP, 2001: SLD, UP, and PPS; 1997 and 1993: SLD and UP; 1991: SLD, SDRP, UP and center-left post-Solidarity (Ruch Demokratyczno-Społeczny and Solidarność Pracy)
- **PSL**
- **KORWiN** (other parties chaired by Korwin-Mikke)

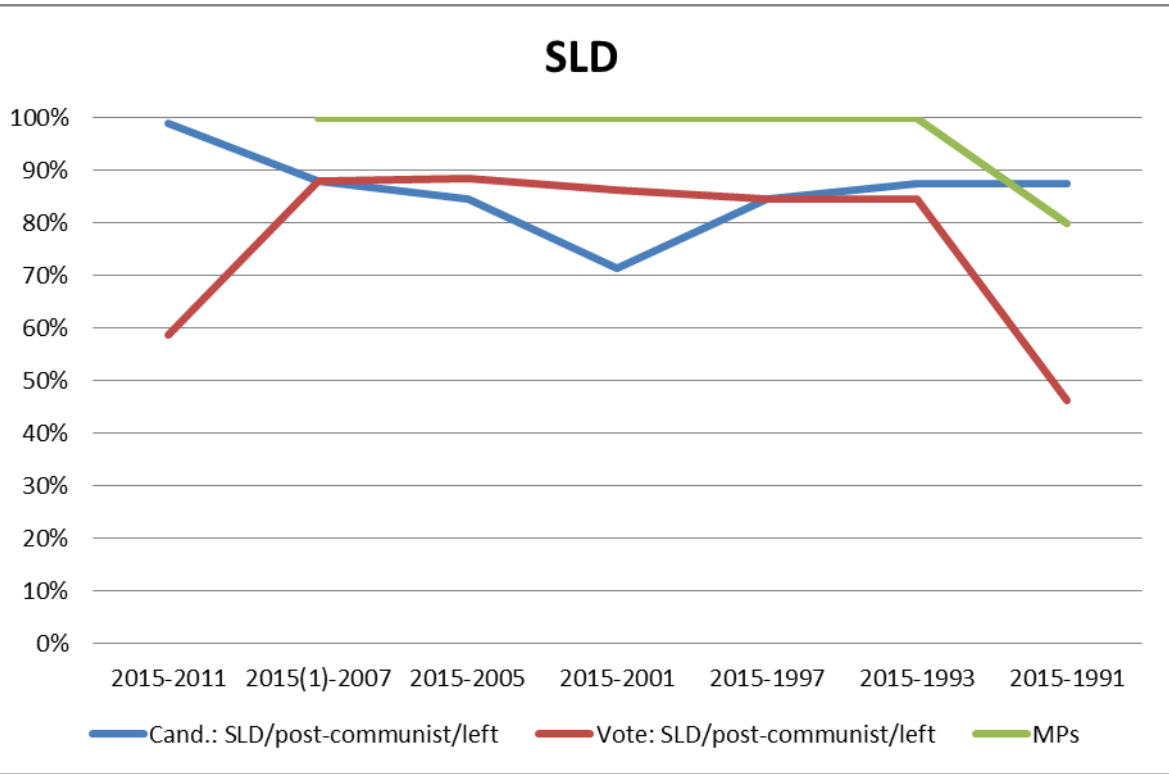
Analysis

- Past of voters/politicians with 2015 as a starting point (2015=>2011, 2011=>2007...)
- Consecutive elections (1991=>1993...)
- Five parties and their predecessors: PSL, SLD, PO, PiS, and KORWiN

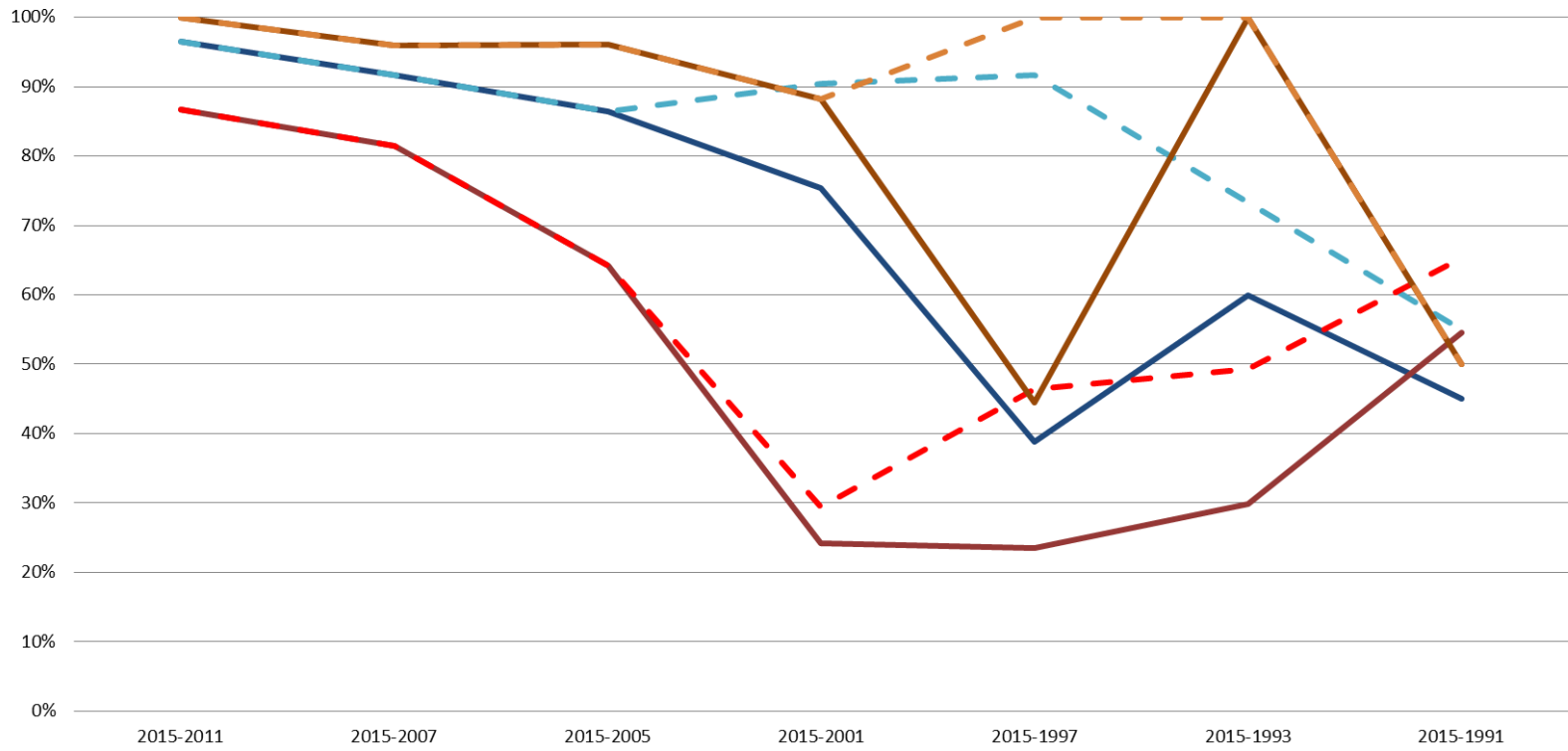
PSL



SLD

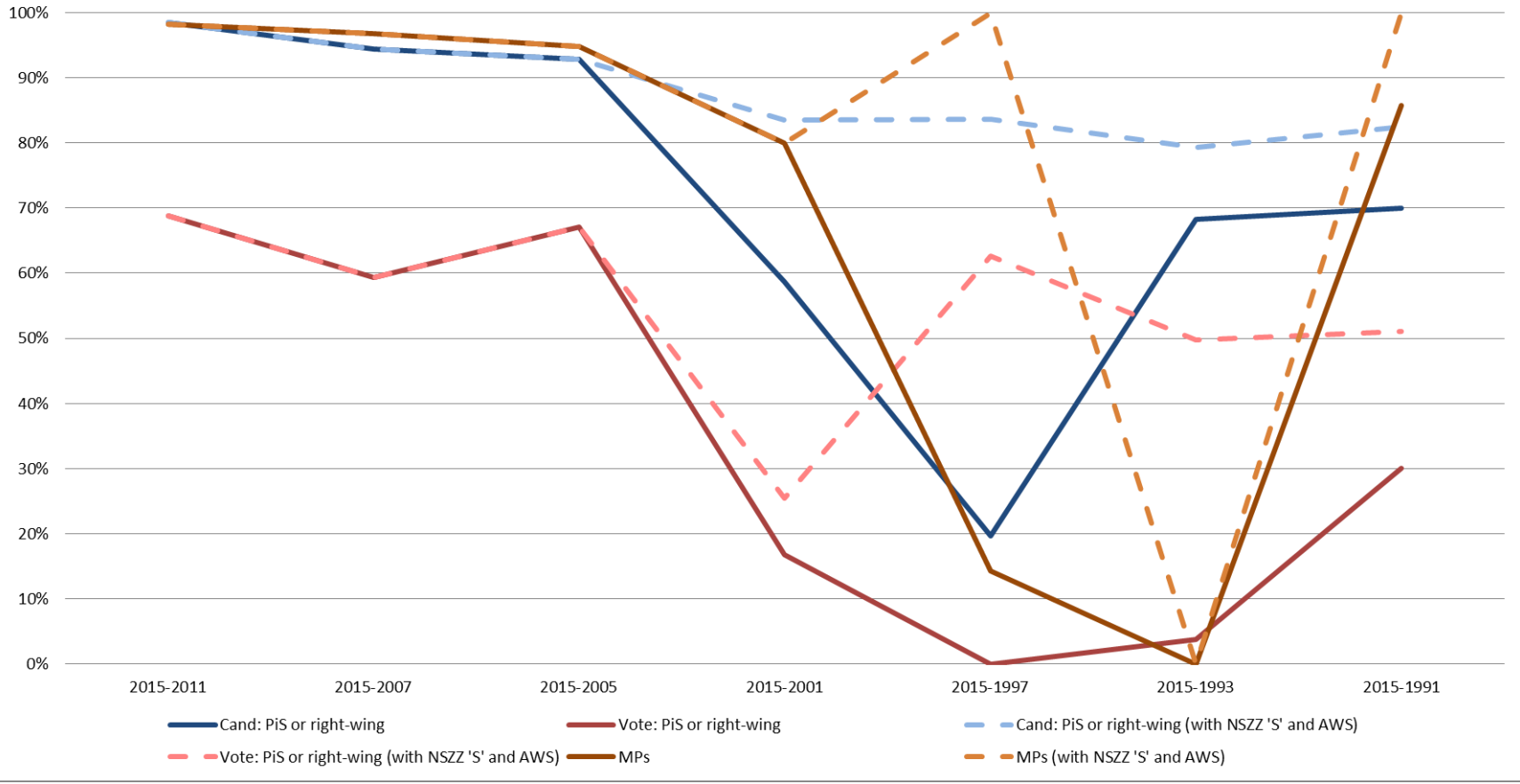


PO

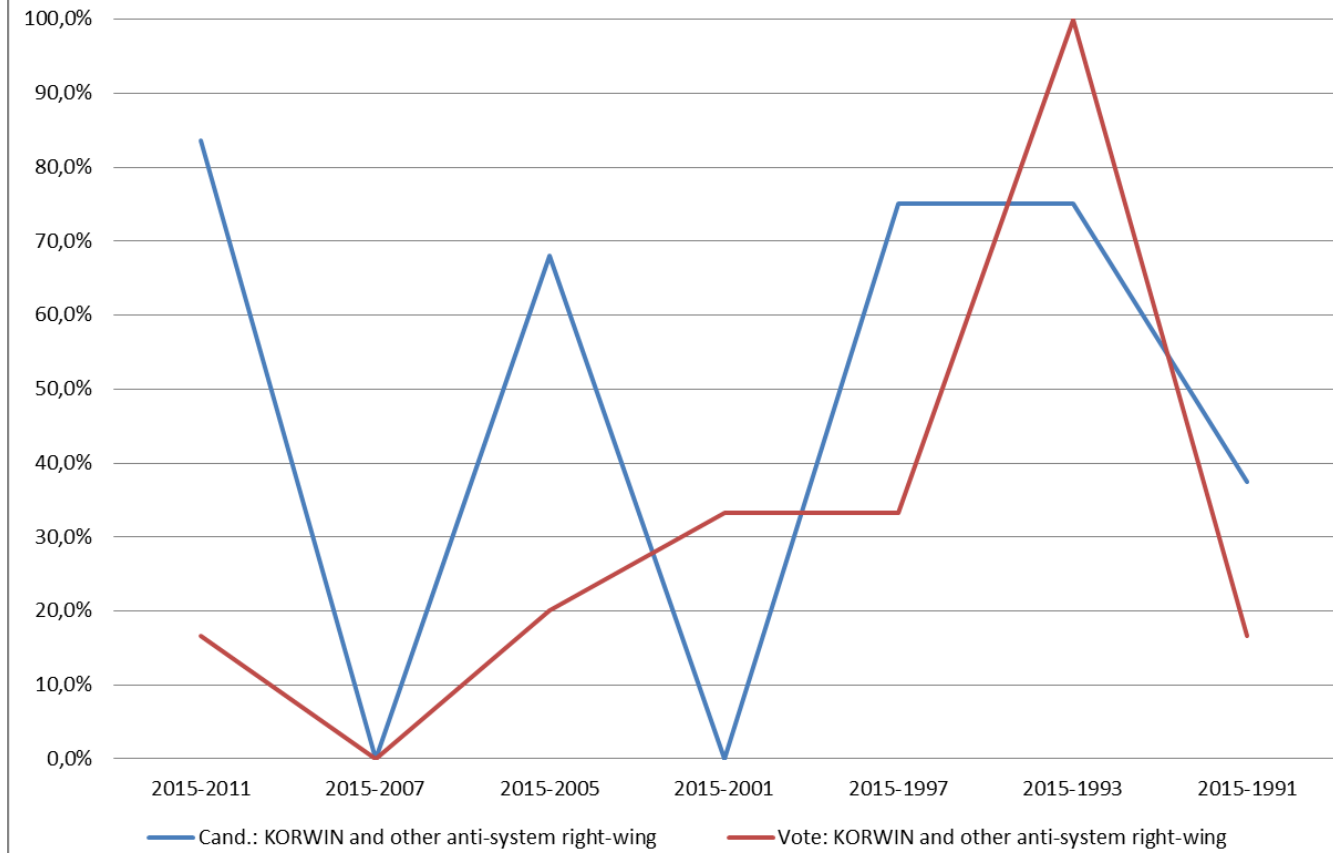


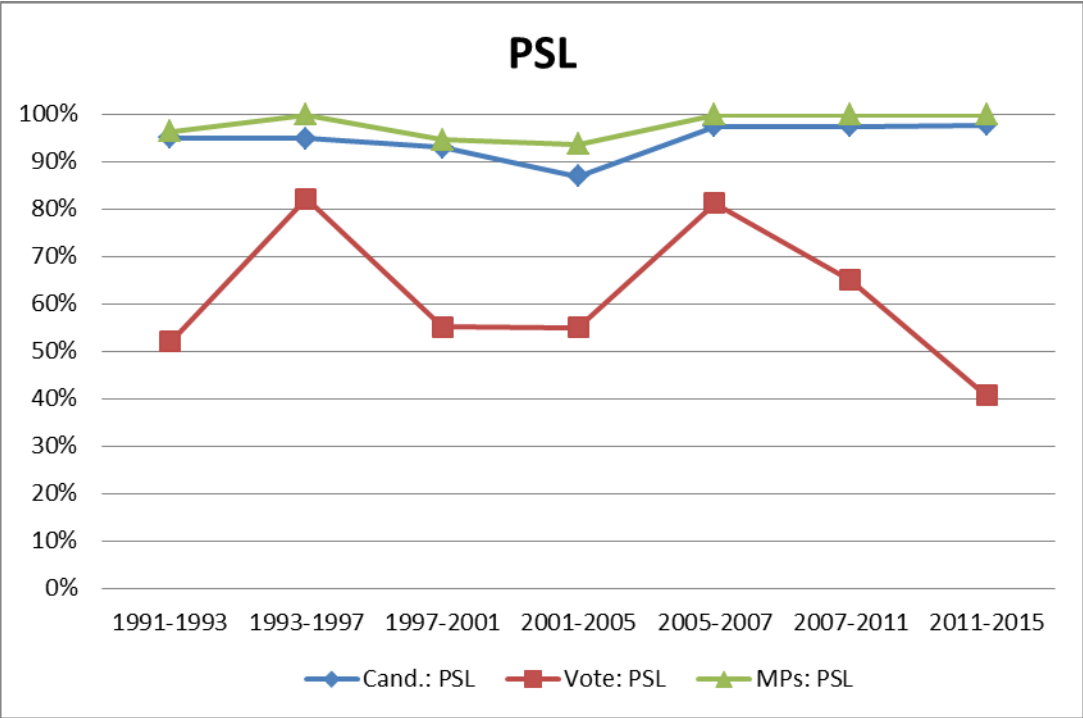
- Cand.: PO or other centrist-liberal
- Vote: PO or other centrist-liberal
- - Cand.: PO or other centrist-liberal (with NSZZ 'S' and AWS)
- - Vote: PO or other centrist-liberal (with NSZZ 'S' and AWS)
- MPs
- - MPs (with NSZZ 'S' and AWS)

PiS

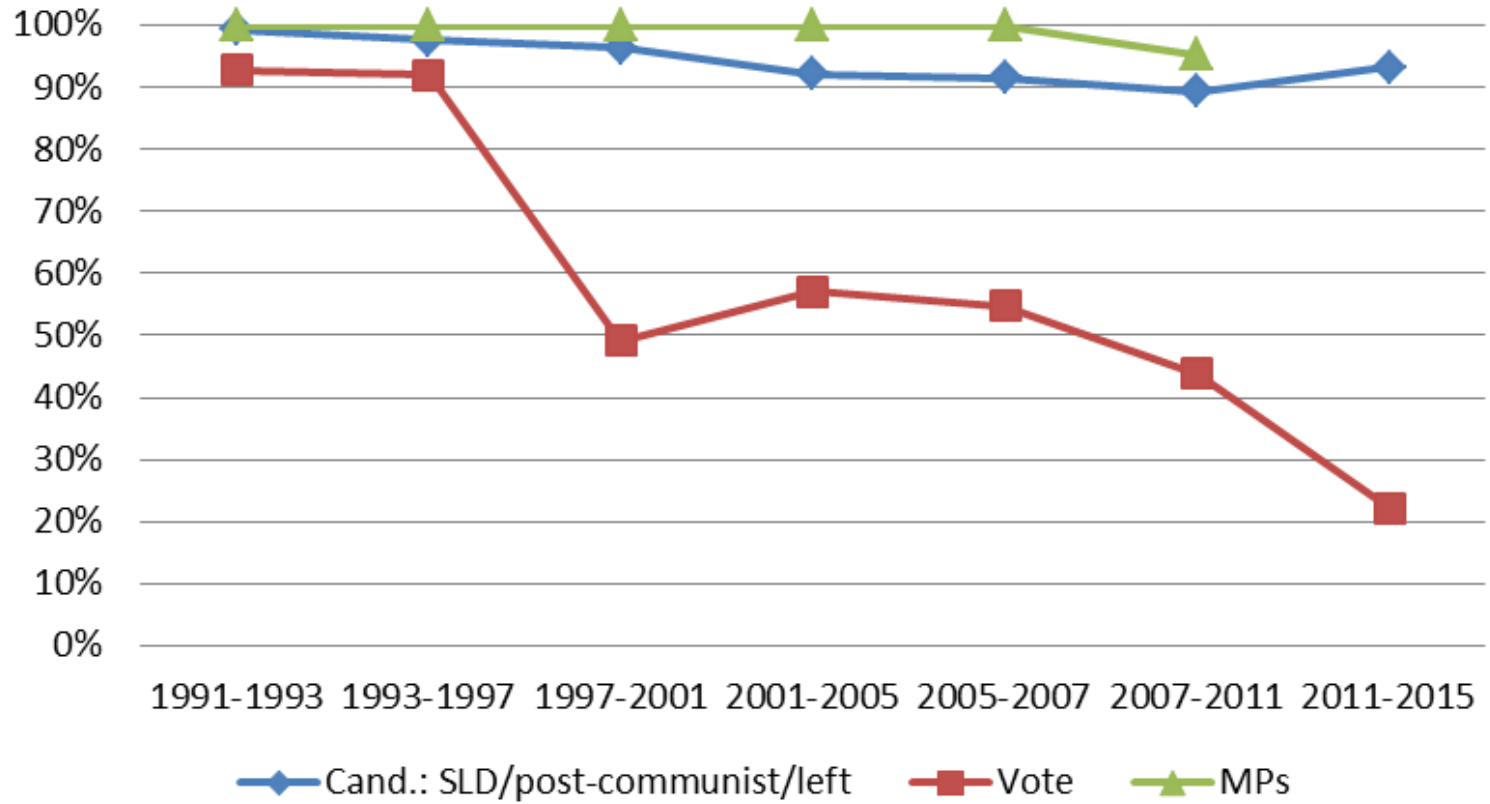


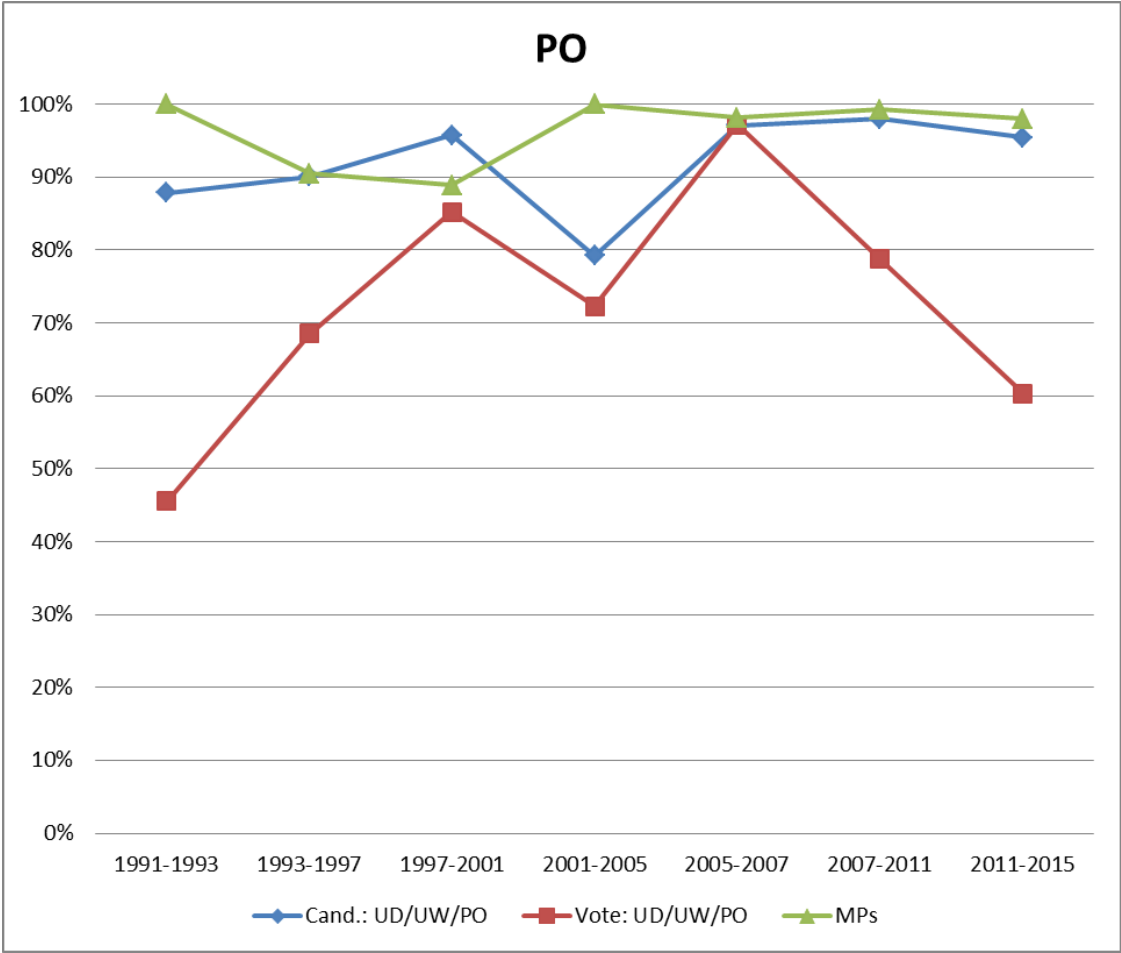
KORWIN



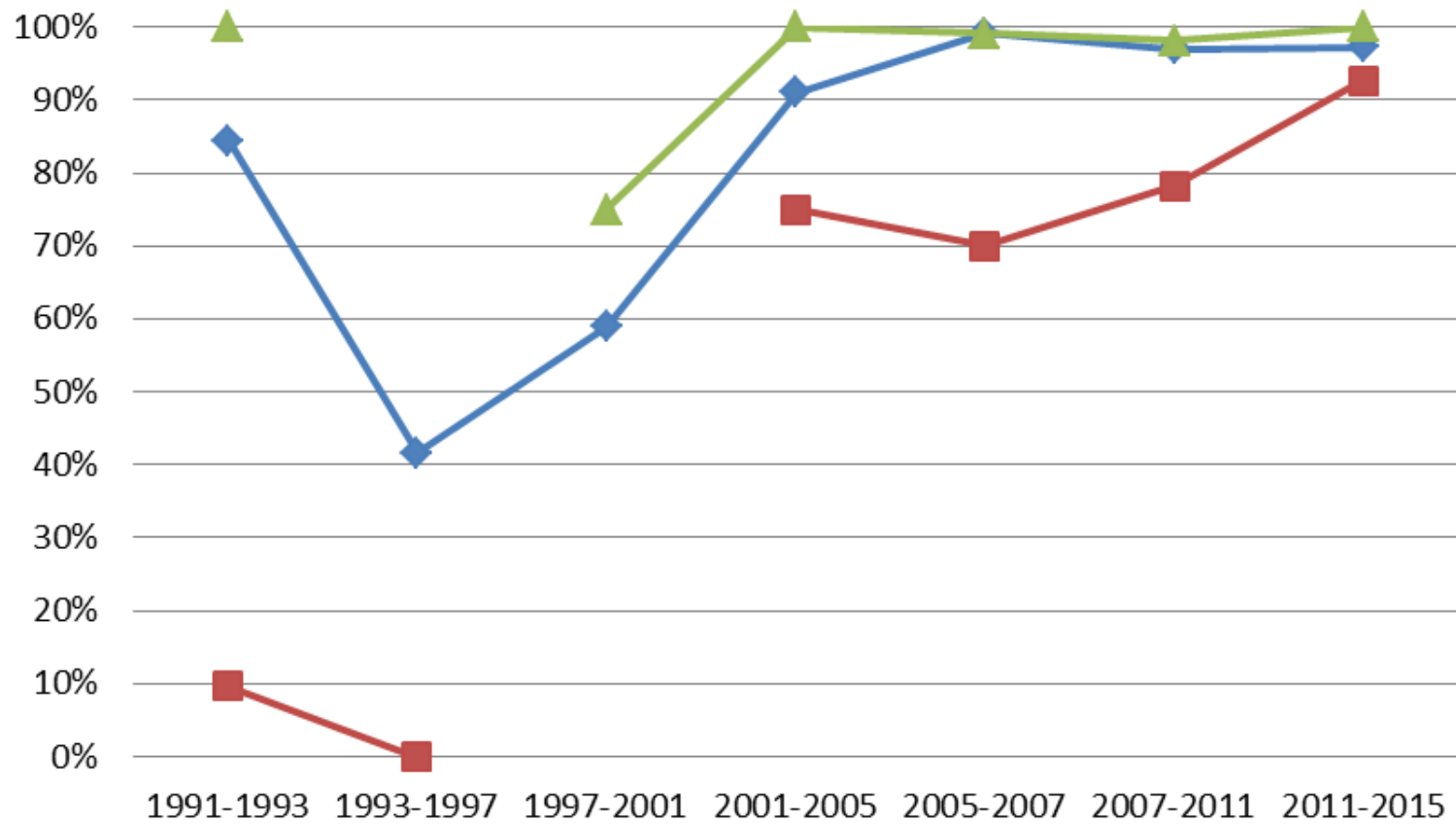


SLD





PiS



◆ Cand.: PiS or right-wing ■ Vote.: PiS or right-wing ▲ MPs

Conclusion

- Party attachment grows and goes down not on the level of political field but within it
- It does not go up or down but gets similar at some points in time
- MPs are much more often within the borders than candidates
- Voters, while their party allegiances have not been very strong in general, in some contexts have had more stable preferences (as in the case of SLD between 1991–1997, PO between 2005–2007, and PiS towards 2015)
- Elite divisions exist in Poland and have been surprisingly stable since the early 1990s. Their borders have been delineated not only on the basis of post-communist vs. post-Solidarity divide, but also by separations within these groups – for example, there has been a clear separation between SLD and PSL, as well as between PiS and PO together with their organizational predecessors

Literature

- Aldrich, J. H., & Bianco, W. T. (1992). A game-theoretic model of party affiliation of candidates and office holders. *Mathematical and Computer Modelling*, 16(8-9), 103-116.
- Baker, A., Ames B., Sokhey A., & Renno L.. (2016). The Dynamics of Partisan Identification When Party Brands Change: The Case of the Workers Party in Brazil. *The Journal of Politics*. 78(1), 197-213.
- Betkiewicz, W., Kotnarowski M., & Wasilewski J. (2017). Trzy generacje polityczne regionalnej elity samorządowej. *Studia Socjologiczne* 228(1), 7-34.
- Deegan-Krause, K., & Enyedi, Z. (2010) Agency and the Structure of Party Competition: Alignment, Stability and the Role of Political Elites. *West European Politics*, 33(3), 686-710.
- Dejaeghere, Y., & Dassonneville, R. (2017). A comparative investigation into the effects of party-system variables on party switching using individual-level data. *Party Polit.* 23(2), 110-123.
- Desposato, S., & Scheiner, E. (2008). Governmental centralization and party affiliation: Legislator strategies in Brazil and Japan. *American Political Science Review*, 102(04), 509-524.
- Dubrow, J. K. (2016). The Content and Structure of EAST PaC for Ukraine, Poland, and Hungary, 1985-2014. In J.K. Dubrow & N. Palaguta (Eds.) *Towards Electoral Control In Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 77-84). Warsaw: IFiS Publishers.
- Dudek, A. (2007). *Historia polityczna Polski 1989-2005*. Cracow: Wydawnictwo ARCANA.
- East European Parliamentarian and Candidate Data (EAST PaC), 1985-2015. Version 2.0.
- Enyedi, Z. (2005). The role of agency in cleavage formation. *European Journal of Political Research* 44(5), 697-720.
- Flis, J., & Kwiatkowska, A. (2018). Polski system partyjny: idee i identyfikacje. In A. Wojtaszczyk, P. Stawarz, & J. Wiśniewska-Grzelak (Eds.), *Zmierzch demokracji liberalnej?* (pp. 587-606). Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR.
- Grabowska, M., & Szawiel T. (2003). *Budowanie demokracji. Podziały społeczne, partie polityczne i społeczeństwo obywatelskie w postkomunistycznej Polsce*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

- Grabowska, M. (2004). *Podział postkomunistyczny. Społeczne podstawy polityki w Polsce po 1989 roku*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- Gray, J. (1993). From Post-Communism to Civil Society: The Reemergence of History and the Decline of the Western Model. *Social Philosophy and Policy* 10(2), 26-50.
- Lewandowski, A. (2016). *Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność. Centroprawica w poszukiwaniu modelu współpracy*. Płock: Wydawnictwo Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Zawodowej w Płocku.
- Lipset, S. M., & Rokkan S. (1967). Cleavage structures, party systems and voter alignments: An introduction. In *Party systems and voter alignments; cross-national perspectives* (Eds.), S.M. Lipset, and S. Rokkan (pp. 1-64). New York: Free Press.
- Mainwaring, S., & Torcal, M. (2006). Party system institutionalization and party system theory after the third wave of democratization. *Handbook of party politics*, 11(6), 204-227.
- Kreuzer M., & Pettai V. (2003). Patterns of Political Instability: Affiliation Patterns of Politicians and Voters in Post-Communist Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 38(2), 76-98.
- Markowski, R., & Stanley B. (2016). Rozłamy socjopolityczne w Polsce: iluzja czy rzeczywistość?. *Studia Socjologiczne* 223(4), 17-40.
- Petitpas A. & Sciarini P. (2020). The more the better? Cumulative issue ownership and intra-campaign party switching. *Electoral Studies* 64, 102-118.
- Sawiński, Z. & Dubrow J. K. (2016). Collecting, Cleaning, and Matching Electoral Data on Candidates and Parliamentarians in Poland, 1985-2011. In J. K. Dubrow & N. Palaguta (Eds.), *Towards Electoral Control In Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 99-114). Warsaw: IFiS Publishers.
- Shabad G., & Słomczyński K. M. (2004). Inter-Party Mobility among Parliamentary Candidates in Post-Communist East Central Europe. *Party Politics*, 10(2), 151-176.
- Shabad, G., & Słomczyński, K. M. (2002). The Emergence of Career Politicians in Post-Communist Democracies: Poland and the Czech Republic. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 27(3), 333-359.
- Stanley, B. (2014). The Dynamics of Party-System Supply and Demand in Poland, 1997-2007. Cleavage Change or Shapeless Shifting?. *Europe-Asia Studies* 66(8), 1295-1322.
- Szczerbiak, A. (2001). *Poles together? The emergence and development of political parties in postcommunist Poland*. Budapest: Central European University Press.
- Tucker, J. A., & Markowski R. (2017). Subjective vs. Objective Proximity in Poland. *Studia Polityczne* 3, 9-44.
- Tworzecki, H. (2019). Poland: A Case of Top-Down Polarization. *The Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science* 681(1), 97-119.
- Wasilewski, J., & Wnuk-Lipiński E. (1995). Poland: Winding Road from the Communist to the Post-Solidarity Elite. *Theory and Society*, 24(5), 669-696.
- Wedel, J. R. (2017). From Power Elites to Influence Elites: Resetting Elite Studies for the 21st Century. *Theory. Culture & Society* 34(5-6), 153-178.
- Wesołowski, W. (2000). Teoretyczne aspekty badania elit politycznych. *Studia Socjologiczne* 159(4), 5-33.
- Zarycki, T. (2000). Politics in the Periphery: Political Cleavages in Poland Interpreted in Their Historical and International Context. *Europe-Asia Studies* 52(5), 851-873.