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"The Past Is Never Dead"

Identity, Class, and Voting Behavior in Contemporary Poland

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This article presents a summary of analyses addressing the changing patterns of voting behavior in post-communist Poland as a context for examination of the issue of the relationship between regions defined by history (eighteenth-century partitions, border shifts after WWII) and contemporary forms of voting behavior. In the 1990s, the dominant cleavage in Polish politics was the one between the post-Solidarity and post-communist camps, and the best predictor of voting behavior was one's religiosity. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, this cleavage has been replaced by another, between the liberal, pro-European orientation and the more Euro-skeptic, populist attitudes. The empirical evidence seems to suggest that one end of the populist–liberal continuum is relatively well defined and represents the traditional system of values, which defines Polish national identity in terms of ethnic nationalism, strong attachment to Catholic dogmas, and denunciation of communism as a virtual negation of those values. The other end of this continuum is defined more by rejection of this nationalistic-Catholic "imagined community" than by any positive features. This article examines the relative role of identity-related factors (e.g., religiosity or region) and determinants based on one's socioeconomic (class) position in shaping voting patterns in the 2007 elections to the Polish Sejm and Senate. The empirical data come from a postelection survey, the Polish General Election Study 2007.

Keywords: *Poland; voting behavior; elections; history; partitions*

"The past is never dead. It's not even past."

William Faulkner, Requiem for a Nun

To begin an article on Polish politics in twenty-first century with a quotation from the author so strongly associated with the American South is more than just a rhetorical figure. Poland and the South have, in fact, a lot in common—a phenomenon that deserves a treatment much more exhaustive than anything possible within the

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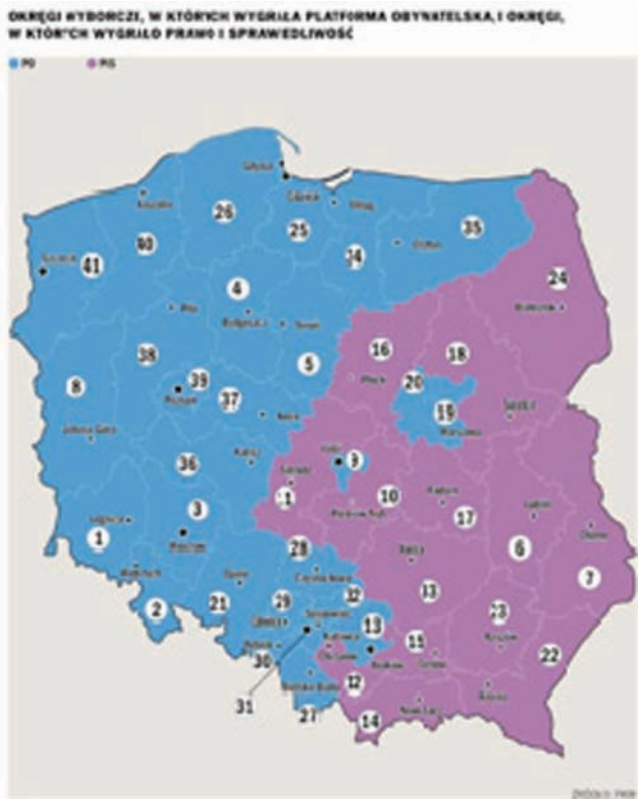
confines of this article. Suffice it to mention the nostalgic attitude toward the past, political as much as social and cultural, with a tendency to expose positive values (honor, valor, chivalry) over the obvious wrongs (slavery in the South, serfdom in Poland) as well as persistence of vibrant religiosity in the face of challenges stemming from modernity. We shall return to the latter question drafting our conclusions.

For a person familiar, even if only superficially, with Polish history, a quick glance of a map presenting electoral returns in the most recent, October 2007, general election is sufficient to discover how the past is interwoven with contemporary politics (see Figure 1). The people who now live in the lands that through the good part of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were under the German rule, voted, by and large, for the Civic Platform (PO) political party. Those who now live in the former provinces of the Austrian and Russian empires, with the exception of dwellers of big cites, such as Warsaw, Łódź, or Kraków, supported rather the Law and Justice (PiS) party. Ninety years after the rebirth of an independent Poland (and sixty after the end of World War II), the old partitions still coincide with current politics. This phenomenon may be more than a mere coincidence, as it may reflect some deeply rooted patterns of political culture. But it can also be just a reflection of various economic or social policy-related considerations, which, for complex reasons, may aggregate territorially in ways parallel to old borders. The issue of the relationship between regions defined by history and contemporary forms of voting behavior is addressed in this article through an examination of data from a postelection survey, Polish General Election Study 2007 (Polskie Generalne Studium Wyborcze; PGSW 2007). First, however, it has to be placed in a broader context of what has been known so far about patterns of voting behavior in post-communist Poland. This summary of research conducted in the 1990s and 2000s is based on several articles and book chapters published by the author in English and Polish, above all in two articles: "Pocketbook or Rosary? Economic and Identity Voting in 2000-2001 Elections in Poland" (Jasiewicz 2003) and "Knocking on Europe's Door: Public Opinion on the EU Accession Referendum in Poland" (Jasiewicz 2006).[1]

Voting Patterns since 1989—Polish Exceptionalism?

All nations, no matter how big or small, seem to have their claims to exceptionality. Perhaps it is what really makes them nations—"imagined communities," in Benedict Anderson's phrase (Anderson 1991). People of a nation organize their collective beliefs around past and current events and personalities—sometimes real, often mythical—in ways that may be impenetrable to outsiders. The outsiders, in turn, may question the historical status and importance of these core elements, hence putting in doubt the legitimacy of these distinctive claims. This opens to various literati, scholars, and social scientists endless avenues to debate such claims and counterclaims.

Figure 1
Parliamentary Elections, 21 October 2007 (Electoral Districts)



Source: Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza.

For Poland, there is strong empirical evidence of her exceptional status. Looking for a proof of Poland's exceptionality, a historian would point out events such as the nation's survival under partitions (between 1795 and 1918), the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, or the Solidarity movement and its contribution to the fall of communism in Europe. A social scientist might seek the proof in quantitative data on social attitudes, public opinion, and/or mass political behavior. One could cite here, for instance, data gathered by Ronald Inglehart in his monumental study of cultural, economic, and political change in forty-three societies. The author clusters all forty-three nations in a two-dimensional space defined by the level of secularization on one hand and the existential considerations (materialist

vs. post-materialist) on the other and remarks, "Poland is an outlier . . . it does not fit into any coherent cluster" (Inglehart 1997, 93). Along with other ex-communist societies of Eastern Europe—and unlike the societies of Western Europe and North America—the people of Poland emphasize the materialist need for a mere survival above the post-materialist desire to achieve subjective well-being; what sets Poland apart from both the post-communist cluster and societies of the West is the attachment of her people to the traditional system of authority. The author associates these traditional attitudes with the influence of Catholic traditions. Elsewhere, he and a coauthor point out that in Poland faith in God and habitual church attendance have been preserved better than in any other European society (Norris and Inglehart 2004, 131).

Moreover, research focused specifically on patterns of mass political behavior leads to similar conclusions. As documented by several authors (see Grabowska 2004; Grabowska and Szawiel 2001; Jasiewicz 2003; Kitschelt et al. 1999; Szawiel 1999; Szczerbiak 2001; Tworzecki 1996, 2003; Wade, Lavelle, and Groth 1995), throughout the 1990s the best predictor of voting behavior in Poland was not one's economic situation or social position but one's religiosity (understood here as intensity of one's religious beliefs and practices). This phenomenon contradicts both conventional wisdom and theoretical predictions, according to which mass political behavior in post-communist nations would be driven mostly by economic factors. Societies undergoing a rapid social and economic change, the argument goes, bifurcate into the winners and the losers, the haves and the have-nots, causing massive feelings of relative deprivation, which in turn are expected to breed "pocketbook" voting. The hardships of transition feed retroactive sentiments—longings for the times of full employment and a reliable, if merely minimal, social safety net. Such attitudes have supposedly accounted for the remarkable comeback of former communists to political prominence across Eastern Europe, of which Aleksander Kwaśniewski's rise to Polish presidency in 1995 and his 2000 reelection and the post-communist Democratic Left Alliance's electoral victories in 1993 and 2001 are arguably most spectacular illustrations.

This reasoning hardly defies the common sense and seems at least reasonable. In the literature of the subject it is probably best expressed by Petr Mateju, Blanka Rehakova, and Geoffrey Evans (1999) in their contribution to the volume *The End of Class Politics? Class Voting in Comparative Context*, edited by Evans. They point out four processes that reinforce class interests (and, by implication, class, that is, economically based, voting) in post-communist societies undergoing the transition to market economy:

1. The emergence of class of proprietors and entrepreneurs
2. The increase in class consciousness of the workers, deprived of the special position given to them by communist ideology and threatened by rationalization of industrial production and employment

3. Growing economic inequality
4. The strengthening of materialist (as opposed to post-materialist) values because of a rapid transition from the economy of shortage to the economy of abundance

In the authors' view, this analysis applies not only to the Czech Republic but also to other post-communist polities in Central Europe, including Poland. The authors recognize the initial role of the ideological or identity factors but predict that the outlined processes "create conditions for the strengthening of class-based voting behaviour and the crystallization of the 'traditional' left-right political spectrum" (Mateju, Rehakova, and Evans 1999, 235). For the Czech Republic, they find strong empirical evidence to support these predictions.

As indicated above, while the above-outlined processes have indeed taken place in Poland as much as in any other post-communist country, they did not generate—at least not until the beginning of the new millennium—well-defined political cleavages based on economic class or social status. Instead, the dominant cleavage has usually been articulated as a choice between secular and confessional conceptions of social order, between civic and ethnocentric visions of the nation, and between appeasement or condemnation of the communist past and its residues. Hence, the relative importance of cultural issues: one's position on the question of abortion was in the 1990s a very good predictor of voting behavior, while positions on the questions of unemployment, tax policy, privatization, or crime prevention were not. As this author put it elsewhere, "[At the end of the twentieth century] when one wants to predict how a Pole will vote, one should ask him not 'How thick is your pocketbook?' but 'How often do you say your rosary?'" (Jasiewicz 2003, 24).

A full explanation of why for over a decade after the establishment of pluralist democracy in Poland people tended to be guided in their voting preferences by their worldview (for which religiosity was used as an indicator) rather than by their economic interests (or class) seems impossible with the use of survey data alone. The lack of correlation between Poles' positions in social stratification and their political preferences dates, in fact, centuries back. Norman Davies, the British historian, to describe this phenomenon used the term *two nations* (Davies 1984, 45). The concept may be strong but seems justified. In the times of partitions (from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century), some noblemen rebelled and were sent to prison, exile, or gallows, while others launched bureaucratic, military, or political carriers in Russian, Austrian, or German structures. (Sometimes, an individual would do both in his lifetime: Romuald Traugut, a colonel in the Russian army, led an unsuccessful anti-Russian uprising in 1863-1864.) Some Polish peasants would denounce noble insurgents to the occupiers; others would volunteer to serve in rebel forces. Similarly, in the times of the communist Poland, some intellectuals, workers, and peasants would join the party and remain faithful to it until the bitter end, while other intellectuals, workers, and peasants would risk their professional carriers and the well-being of their families by joining underground organizations, producing and distributing

samizdat, or simply refusing to sign an oath of loyalty to the regime. These choices were not only moral but also political in their nature. Many of the nineteenth- or twentieth-century "collaborators" claimed, often not without merit, that their actions were bringing the nation more benefits (e.g., economic development) than the lofty, but doomed from the beginning deeds of the "rebels."

Polish politics (and, specifically, patterns of voting behavior) of the 1990s seemed to have carried this "two nations" pattern into a democratic Poland. The choices of whom to vote for were defined much more by the past (pre-1989) credentials of political actors and past experiences of the voters than by the present policy issues. The former were well defined and easily understood; the latter were foggy and poorly articulated. Mirosława Grabowska and Tadeusz Szawiel (2001) compare Poland of the 1990s to Ireland of the 1920s: as the attitudes toward the Anglo-Irish Treaty split the Irish society and polity in half across class lines, the Solidarity versus communists conflict defined Polish politics without much relevance to the current social and economic policy issues. In Ireland, the cleavage formed in the 1920s has lasted into the twenty-first century, as the two parties representing its two sides, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, have never ceased to dominate Irish politics. Grabowska (2004) in her subsequent work talks about post-communist cleavage as the one that defines Polish contemporary politics. This way, it is the *most recent* history, the one that was lived by a good many Poles (those born before, say, 1970), that is still alive. Past *cannot* be dead, if it is not (sufficiently) past.

Enter Europe

Yet after the turn of the millennia, the situation began to change, as the issues related to Poland's membership in the European Union emerged as the focal point of political debates. As suggested by several Polish scholars (Kolarska-Bobińska 2001; Koseła et al. 2002; Kolarska-Bobińska, Rosner, and Wilkin 2001; Halamska et al. 2000; Karpowicz, Osiecka, and Kojder 2002), the level of support for Poland's accession to the European Union has been associated with the individual's socioeconomic status, in particular age, education, income, and the place of residence (urban vs. rural). In short, the strongest pro-EU attitudes have been recorded among the Polish equivalent of American yuppies: well-educated and relatively affluent young urban professionals. Conversely, the strongest opposition to the European Union has come from poor and poorly educated older dwellers of rural areas. Nonetheless, the strong relationship between religiosity and attitudes toward European integration has not diminished: the more religious people were (which can be measured either by self-assessment or by frequency of participation in religious services), the more likely they were to display Euro-skeptical attitudes (Jasiewicz 2004).

It is perhaps a paradox that the structural variables (individual's positions in the multidimensional social stratification) first emerged as a significant factor in determining

voting behavior first in the European Union accession referendum of 2003 and then the European Parliament elections of 2004. This development seems paradoxical because Euro-skepticism among the political elite was often articulated in cultural or ideological terms (European secularism vs. Polish Catholicism). Hence, one could hardly expect that the economic or social issues would emerge at the time of the referendum with a strength rivaling that of religiosity. If they had emerged anyway, it might have been simply because of the flow of time. Since 1989, the economic inequalities have been growing, the new classes have been emerging and fledging, and their class (or group) consciousness has been solidifying. In 2003-2004, the old identities still counted, but people seemed more than previously inclined to vote by their pocketbooks.

Yet the flow of the time means, above all, the accumulation of personal experiences. Empirical analyses (Jasiewicz 2006) demonstrate that the anti-EU stand was associated not so much with structural factors or religiosity per se but rather with a perception of "the things going in the wrong direction" for the country and/or the individual and of having gone so over the course of the years since the 1989 regime change. Being an actual loser in the process of transition (we may define such a "loser" as a person whose standards of living declined after 1989 in real or even only relative terms) increased chances of this person objecting to the EU accession. Yet much more important here was one's subjective perception of being a loser. Those who felt that the reforms—political as much as economic—launched after the collapse of the communist system had not brought any improvement in their personal lives and/or for the country (or even brought about a setback) tended to be more skeptical about the European Union itself and about Poland becoming its member. They perceived—correctly, it seems—the nation's membership in this rather exclusive club as a logical consequence and completion of the post-1989 changes. Rejecting the changes, they were also rejecting the European Union; being anxious about the future, they shied away from the unknown and the unexplored that awaited them behind Europe's door (see Jasiewicz 2006, 140–41).

The Liberal Poland and the Poland of Social Solidarity

The doomsday scenarios of Poland's EU membership failed to materialize after the accession (1 May 2004). The generally satisfied, if not outright enthusiastic Polish people went to the polls again in fall 2005, this time to elect both the parliament and the president of the republic. PO, the party perceived as the most pro-European and the leader (by a large margin) of pre-election polls, eventually in September 2005 lost, albeit only narrowly, to PiS. The story repeated itself a month later, when Donald Tusk of PO lost in his presidential bid to Jarosław Kaczyński of PiS.

Data collected at the time of the 2005 elections (PGSW 2005; see Jasiewicz 2008) provide an interesting picture of change and continuity in patterns of voting

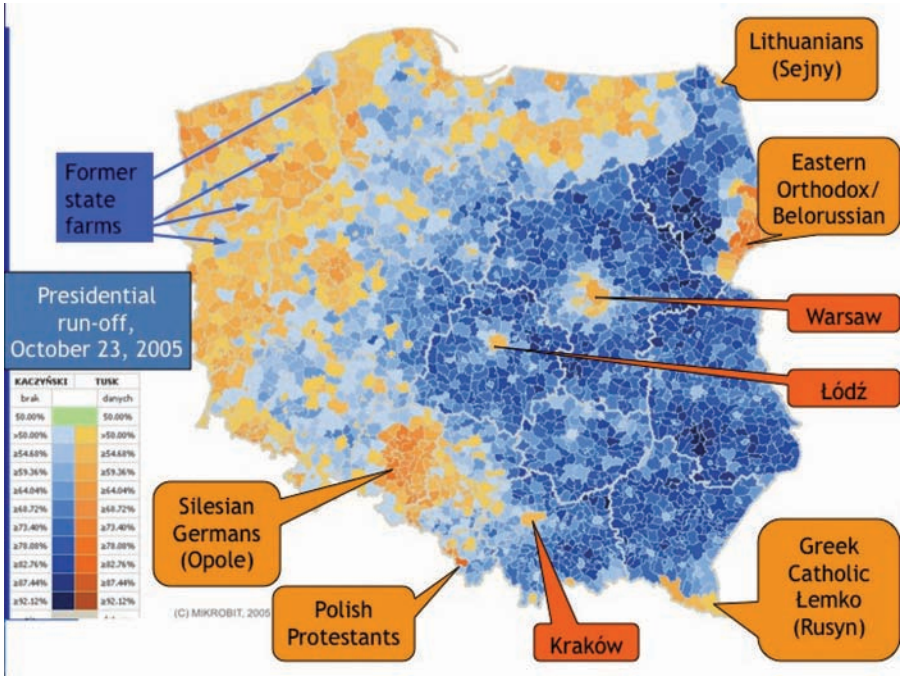
behavior. Tendencies observed at the time of the European Parliament elections, in particular the increase in the relative importance of structural factors, have been clearly reflected in the patterns of support of the two leading parties and their respective candidates for president. The better educated, the younger, the affluent, the urban dwellers—in short, the likely Euro-enthusiasts—tended to vote for PO and Tusk; the less educated, the older, the poorer, the rural dwellers—those prone to Euro-skepticism—tended to vote for PiS and Kaczyński. The two-nations phenomenon reemerged once again, this time as *Polska liberalna* (the liberal Poland) and *Polska solidarna* (Poland of social solidarism).

Yet the relationship between cultural identity and voting patterns did not disappear in this election. On the contrary, it revealed itself, stronger than ever, in the form of regional differences. The lands in the north and west of the country that were in the past under the German rule (either until 1945 or until 1918), where strong support for the European Union was recorded in 2003 and 2004, in 2005 went, by and large, for PO and Tusk. In the former Austrian-controlled southeast (known as Galicia or Minor Poland) as well as the central and eastern provinces, formerly part of the Russian Empire, the majority of voters—with the exception of those in urban centers—leaned toward PiS and Kaczyński.

Interestingly, the same northern and western areas that in 2004 and 2005 opted for Tusk and PO (and also expressed stronger preference for nation's accession to the European Union than their compatriots from the east and south), in the historic 1989 election and throughout the 1990s gave higher than elsewhere support for the communists and their successors. This apparent paradox—post-communism and neoliberalism even in Poland make strange bedfellows—can be explained by cultural (as opposed to socioeconomic) factors: the relative weakness of the Polish-Catholic syndrome and the traditionalist local communities in these regions, while rural areas in central, eastern, and southern Poland are the stronghold of traditional Polish Catholicism. In the east, the only rural communities leaning strongly toward PO and Tusk were the ones populated by religious or ethnic minorities, Greek Catholic (Unite) Rusyns, Eastern Orthodox Byelorussians, or (Catholic) Lithuanians. In the west, Polish Protestants and ethnic Germans opted in favor of the "liberal" Poland more strongly than their Polish-Catholic neighbors. Across Poland, local voting patterns seem to coincide with the forms of religiosity dominant in a given region (see Figure 2).

The relationship between voting behavior in regions and economic development was less clear: while the east and southeast are more economically backward than the rest of the country (in fact, they are among the poorest regions in the entire enlarged European Union), there are also deeply depressed areas in the north (the Mazury region) and northwest (Pomerania), where, because of the collapse of the communist-time state farming, unemployment and poverty have been widespread.

Figure 2
Presidential Elections, Runoff Round, 23 October 2005 (Communes)



Source: Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza (http://www.prezydent2005.pkw.gov.pl/PZT/PL/WYN/W/0G.htm; annotations added by the author).

2007 Parliamentary Election: An Analysis

The hastily organized 2007 election was, more than anything else, a referendum on the policies of the PiS government, which faced growing criticism from the opposition and large segments of the public. Lacking parliamentary majority sufficient to implement and sustain its policies, PiS decided to gamble on new elections. It hoped for mobilization of its 2005 electorate as well as for gaining new voters at the illiberal end of political spectrum, mostly among the former followers of the radical Self-Defense (Samoobrona) and League of Polish Families (LPR) parties.

PiS's hopes were not unfounded. In fact, on 21 October 2007 it did better at the polls than two years earlier. It increased its share of the vote from 27 percent to 32 percent and the actual numbers of votes from 3,186,000 to 5,183,000. As exit polls indicated,

PiS succeeded in mobilization of its 2005 electorate (keeping the loyalty of three out of four voters) and attracted many of those who in 2005 supported LPR (one out of two) or Self-Defense (one out of four). Even more importantly, PiS drew to the polls almost two million of new voters. The message sent by the PiS—be it its anti-communism, its Euro-skepticism, its law-and-order appeal, or, in short, its populism—still resonates well with substantial segments of Polish society.

Yet if the gamble did not pay off, it was because the opposition, in particular the PO, enjoyed an even greater mobilization of voters. In addition to almost 90 percent (2.5 million) of its 2005 followers, PO also attracted over 1.5 million defectors from other parties (among them almost half a million from PiS) and over 2.5 million new voters. The plebiscitary character of this election resulted in a turnout higher, at 53.9 percent, than in any other parliamentary election since the historic 1989 vote. In big cities, where PO had dominated PiS in 2005, the 2007 turnout was particularly high, often over 70 percent. In the final analysis, PiS's gamble resulted in the high mobilization of those opposed to its policies and populist rhetoric. The PO, whose campaign was focused on the themes of "normalization" of Polish politics and "Europeanization" of foreign and domestic policies, has become a natural beneficiary of voters' discontent. This time, the "liberal Poland" emerged victorious.

To find out why the liberal Poland appears stronger in the west and the north and "Poland of social solidarity" stretches through the eastern and southern territories, we examine data from the PGSW 2007 survey, conducted in October and November of 2007 on a sample of 1,817 individuals, representative of all Polish voters. The spatial clustering of particular voting patterns or party preferences may constitute an outcome of culturally defined identities (local, regional, or national) but may also reflect specific social and economic conditions of a given territory. Structural and cultural phenomena are often interrelated. Public opinion poll reports usually present only bivariate relationships between electoral preferences or other important opinions and various demographic, social, economic, and cultural variables. However, it is possible—indeed, quite likely—that some observed relationships are, in fact, spurious. People may, for instance, object to European integration not because they are devout Catholics and reject the allegedly overly secularized Europe but because they live in the countryside and work on a farm and feel threatened by the competition from French or Austrian farmers or because they feel too old and poorly prepared to cope with the forthcoming changes. The reverse relationship is also conceivable: the old, poorly educated peasants may oppose the European Union because of their deep religiosity and a genuine rejection of the libertarian and materialist West. To correctly assess the real character of these relationships and the relative strength of economic and cultural variables, one must perform multivariate analyses. Here we utilize the technique known as multivariate regression analysis. It allows, in short, the assessment of the net impact of a given independent variable on a given dependent variable, controlling for the influence of all other variables. Beta coefficients cited in Tables 1 to 5 measure the strength (and direction) of this

Table 1
Determinants of Political Preferences, Multiple Regression Analysis, Values of Beta Coefficients (Model 1, Region = Post-German)

	Independent Variables						
Dependent Variables	Sol-Lib	Left-Right	Pol-Euro	PO	PiS	LiD	PSL
Age	–.176	—	–.137	–.134	.120	—	.105
Sex	—	—	—	—	—	–.072	—
Education	.113	—	.154	.093	—	—	—
Income	.089	—	.090	.114	–.075	.107	—
Rural–urban	—	—	—	—	—	—	–.093
Religiosity	–.096	.184	—	–.100	.185	–.163	—
Post-German	.104	–.070	.075	.088	–.112	.125	—
Adjusted R^2	.102	.040	.082	.091	.097	.066	.011

Note: Sol-Lib = Solidarism–Liberalism scale; Pol-Euro = national versus European identity; PO = Civic Platform; PiS = Law and Justice; LiD = the Left and the Democrats; PSL =.

Table 2
Determinants of Political Preferences, Multiple Regression Analysis, Values of Beta Coefficients (Model 2, Region = Post-Russian)

	Independent Variables						
Dependent Variables	Sol-Lib	Left-Right	Pol-Euro	PO	PiS	LiD	PSL
Age	–.180	—	–.139	–.138	.122	—	.105
Sex	—	—	—	—	—	–.073	—
Education	.109	—	.151	.088	—	—	—
Income	.094	—	.097	.118	–.079	.116	—
Rural–urban	—	—	—	.069	—	—	
–.093							
Religiosity	–.107	.193	–.065	–.110	.198	–.178	—
Post-Russian	–.088	—	–.074	–.093	.071	–.063	—
Adjusted R^2	.099	.035	.082	.092	.090	.055	.011

Note: See note to Table 1 for variable definitions.

impact: the higher the value of beta, the stronger the impact (positive or negative) of a given independent variable on the dependent variable in question.

Since nominal variables (e.g., the actual voting behavior) cannot be used in linear regression analysis, a different set of dependent variables has been selected. Four of them measure the attitude of each respondent toward each party on an 11-point scale, where 0 means that the respondent dislikes and 10 that he or she likes a given party (this format is used in the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems project, which, since its inception in 1995, has covered, in several rounds of surveys, over fifty

Table 3
Determinants of Political Preferences, Multiple Regression Analysis, Values of Beta Coefficients (Model 3, Region = Post-Austrian)

	Independent Variables						
Dependent Variables	Sol-Lib	Left-Right	Pol-Euro	PO	PiS	LiD	PSL
Age	–.176	—	–.135	–.132	.115	—	.105
Sex	—	—	—	—	—	–.074	—
Education	.109	—	.153	.092	—	—	—
Income	.098	—	.098	.117	–.076	.114	—
Rural–urban	—	—	—	—	—	—	–.093
Religiosity	–.108	.178	–.062	–.103	.185	–.169	—
Post-Austrian	—	.081	—	—	.080	—	—
Adjusted R^2	.091	.041	.077	.086	.091	.054	.011

Note: See note to Table 1 for variable definitions.

Table 4
Determinants of Political Preferences, Multiple Regression Analysis, Values of Beta Coefficients (Model 4, Region = Post-Prussian)

	Independent Variables						
Dependent Variables	Sol-Lib	Left-Right	Pol-Euro	PO	PiS	LiD	PSL
Age	–.177	—	–.136	–.134	.119	—	.105
Sex	—	—	—	—	—	–.076	—
Education	.109	—	.151	.088	—	—	—
Income	.096	—	.099	.120	–.080	.116	—
Rural–urban	—	—	—	—	—	—	–.093
Religiosity	–.106	.192	–.066	–.111	.197	–.177	—
Post-Prussian	—	—	—	—	–.062	—	—
Adjusted R^2	.092	.035	.077	.084	.088	.053	.011

Note: See note to Table 1 for variable definitions.

democracies worldwide). These variables, which represent attitudes toward the four major parties and coalitions, PO, PiS, LiD (the Left and the Democrats, a coalition of the post-communist left and the post-Solidarity center parties that contested the 2007 election), and Polish Peasant Party (PSL), correlate very well with the actual choice in the election. In addition, we also look at respondents' self-placement on the *Left–Right* scale (0 = *left*, 10 = *right*) and the Solidarism–Liberalism scale (*Sol-Lib*, 0 = *solidaristic*, 10 = *liberal*) as well as the national versus European identity (*Pol-Euro*, 5 points, from "I feel only Polish" to "I feel more European than Polish").

To interpret these variables, we test them within an explanatory model composed of seven independent variables: *age, sex, education, income, place of residence, religiosity*,

Table 5
Determinants of Political Preferences, Multiple Regression Analysis, Values of Beta Coefficients (Model 5, Region = Post-1945)

	Independent Variables						
Dependent Variables	Sol-Lib	Left-Right	Pol-Euro	PO	PiS	LiD	PSL
Age	–.176	—	–.137	–.134	.120	—	.105
Sex	—	—	—	—	—	–.072	—
Education	.113	—	.156	.096	—	—	—
Income	.094	—	.096	.114	–.077	.111	—
Rural–urban	—	—	—	—	—	—	–.093
Religiosity	–.098	.186	—	–.099	.192	–.168	—
Recovered	.088	–.064	.086	.101	–.067	.091	—
Adjusted R^2	.099	.039	.084	.094	.089	.059	.011

Note: See note to Table 1 for variable definitions.

and *region*. *Education* (years spent in school) and *income* (per capita in the family) are direct measures of one's position in social stratification (or class or status position, in the Weberian understanding of these concepts). Demographic variables, *age* and *sex* (the latter recoded here as a dummy variable, *male* = 1), as well as place of residence (on the *rural–urban* continuum), can also serve as potential indicators of one's social status, albeit only indirectly, as much as they determine one's access to scarce resources. *Religiosity*, measured by frequency of participation in religious services (church attendance), is used here as a proxy of culturally defined identity. Finally, the variable *region* has been operationalized here to reflect the postpartition and post-1945 splits as a series of five dummy variables. The first, *post-German*, allows a comparison of the dwellers of formerly (until 1918 or 1945) German territories to those living in formerly Russian and Austrian lands (*post-German* = 1). Three next variables, *post-Russian*, *post-Austrian*, *post-Prussian*, represent particular partitions; in the latter case, however, the lands awarded to Poland in 1945 are excluded (the region covers Greater Poland and eastern Pomerania). The lands Poland received by the decision of the Potsdam Conference in 1945, known in the Polish popular (communist-induced) discourse as the Recovered Territories (*Ziemie Odzyskane*) or Western Terrritories (*Ziemie Zachodnie*) and composed of Lower Silesia, Central and Western Pomerania, East Prussia (Warmia-Mazury), and a few smaller historical regions, are covered here by the variable *post-1945*. Obviously, the variable *post-German* covers the totality of lands covered by the variables *post-Prussian* and *post-1945*. Results of our analyses are presented in Tables 1 to 5.

The past, dead or not, definitely matters. Arguably the most robust relationships emerge in Table 1, where *region* is operationalized as *post-German*. Living in the territories that until 1914 or 1945 were under the German rule remains a good predictor of political preferences, even when controlling for structural (income, education),

demographic (age, sex, place of residence), or identity-related (religiosity) variables. But also in other cases region holds up as a strong independent factor. With other variables in the model held constant, region constitutes a statistically significant predictor of political preferences in the following ways:

Post-Russian: Solidarism–liberalism (negative), Polish–European identity (negative), support for PO (negative), PiS (positive), and LiD (negative)
Post-Austrian: Left–Right (positive), support for PiS (positive)
Post-Prussian: Support for PiS (negative)
Post-1945: Solidarism–liberalism (positive), Left–Right (negative), Polish–European identity (positive), support for PO (positive), PiS (negative), and LiD (positive)

A comparison of the relationships revealed in the case of the *post-Prussian* and *post-1945* variables seems to indicate that, while they reflect similar patterns (which cumulate in the case of variable *post-German*, composed of the two), the role of latter (living in the so-called Recovered Territories) is greater than the former. The lands acquired by Poland in 1945 have been populated, after the Allies-ordered expulsion of ethnic Germans, by Poles arriving from, literally, all over the world. The greatest numbers came from the territories in the east (the Vilna region, Western Belarus, Western Ukraine) taken over by the Soviet Union (first in 1939, than again in 1944) and from overpopulated villages of central and southeastern Poland; there were also reimmigrants from France and other western countries, and there were a few autochthonic groups in Silesia and East Prussia recognized by communist authorities as Poles (not Germans) and hence allowed to stay. This strange mixture of new settlers has been the ground for some scholars (Zarycki 2002; Bartkowski 2003) to hypothesize that patterns of voting behavior may be related to the "age" of local communities: the old rural communities in central and eastern Poland would be well integrated and more conservative, socially as much as politically, while the young communities of the newly acquired lands would be less integrated and hence their attachment to the traditional values would be weaker. As a mean to address this hypothesis, a *rootedness* variable was introduced to the above-described explanatory models to gauge the role of one's connection to the local community as a determinant of voting behavior. This variable was measured by the number of generations a respondent's ancestors had lived in a given community (from 1, if the respondent is the one who moved to a given locality, to 2, to 3, or more). To no avail—in no case did this variable show any statistically significant relationships within a model. How long the respondent's family has lived in a given locality proved irrelevant for political preferences. One has to note, however, that this variable, intended to serve as an indicator of the social integration at the local community level, has been operationalized at the individual, not community, level and reaches out only two generations into the past (to respondent's grandparents). Today, sixty-plus years after the end of World War II, even in

the territories Poland acquired only in 1945, there are many voters whose grandparents lived in (or moved to) a given city, town, or village.

In addition, it should be noted that the left–right continuum remains defined by culturally determined identity (religiosity and region), not by structural factors. Those in turn play a significant role in defining the solidarism–liberalism continuum, the new paramount cleavage of Polish politics, and political support for parties at the ends of this continuum, PiS and PO, respectively, as well as the levels of European identification. But with the (perhaps surprising) exception of the latter, religiosity remains at least as good as the structural variables as a predictor of political preferences examined here. The class-determined and the identity-related factors seem to play an equal role in Polish politics today.

A word of caution will be in place here. The relationships outlined in this article, as the colors of a map, reflect a very complex social and political reality. Neoliberalism and social solidarism (or populism) are in fact present in every community. Statistical analyses and their graphic illustrations—maps—emphasize the differences, at the expense of what is common, shared, uncontroversial. They show relationships that are probabilistic, not causal in their nature. To say that religiosity is a relatively good predictor of voting behavior does not mean that a devoutly Catholic Pole would never vote for a post-communist candidate (after all, Aleksander Kwaśniewski won presidency twice, the second time as a landslide) or an atheist libertine would not support a conservative post-Solidarity party. Also, the relationships, while statistically significant, are rather weak (as indicted by values of adjusted R^2 statistics). Furthermore, in a polity where only one of every two citizens bothers to vote in national elections, the different colors and shades of the maps reflect political preferences of tiny minorities. The rest remains silent—and gray.

Conclusions

Analyses based on survey data reveal more than many a skeptic would expect but still have their obvious limits. For instance, as indicated above, certain important phenomena, such as levels of social integration, can hardly be measured in a survey. Yet the accumulation of data from several years and studies allows us to draw certain conclusions regarding continuity and change in general patterns of political behavior.

The left–right cleavage that so conveniently organizes West European politics reflects at least two dimensions. The first is socioeconomic and usually pits those who lean toward free markets against those who favor an economically interventionist and redistributive welfare state. The second is cultural and features a continuum whose left end is libertarian, inclusive, and cosmopolitan and whose right end is authoritarian, exclusive, and particularistic (see Kitschelt et al. 1999). For decades, the electoral competition has taken place between the market-friendly and

culturally traditionalist right and the redistributionist and culturally libertarian or inclusive left.

In Poland, the post-communist cleavage (*podział postkomunistyczny*, in Grabowska's [2004] apt expression, pitting post-communist versus post-Solidarity parties) defined the political space in the 1990s, to be replaced by the solidarism–liberalism cleavage in the current decade. Here, the continuum of political competition runs in a fashion perpendicular to that in the Western democracies and pits the market-friendly and inclusive liberals (*Polska liberalna*) against the redistributionist and culturally traditionalist populists (*Polska solidarna*; see Jasiewicz 2008).

Yet one can see in this cleavage an even deeper divide. The empirical evidence seems to suggest that one end of the populist–liberal continuum is relatively well defined and represents the traditional system of values, which defines Polish national identity in terms of ethnic nationalism, strong attachment to Catholic dogmas, and denunciation of communism as a virtual negation of those values (the phenomenon also noted by Ronald Inglehart [1997] and analyzed thoroughly by Geneviève Zubrzycki [2006]). The other end of this continuum is defined more by rejection of this nationalistic-Catholic "imagined community" (Anderson 1991) than by any positive factors. This Polish-Catholic syndrome is strongly rooted in the traditionalist, tightly knit rural communities, still ubiquitous in central, eastern, and southeastern Poland, although, of course, individuals subscribing to it can be found anywhere, in any region and on any rung of society. The opposition to this syndrome may be motivated by or associated with different ideologies, from communism (or post-communist social democracy) to libertinism (or neoliberalism). In addition, it seems more common in "young" communities, from urban centers populated by migrants from rural areas a generation or two ago to rural settlements established after World War II in formerly German territories. This way the differences in voting behavior patterns among the historical regions reflect not so much a sense of regional identity but rather the various ways to interpret the meaning of a "true" Polish national identity. If the Polish-Catholic syndrome can be fairly described as traditionalist in its essence and form, its rejection often stems not from a learned choice of modernity as a coherent system of values and norms but rather from the local absence or weakness of traditionalist communities and the mechanical solidarity (Durkheim 1893/1984) they provide. Yet the voting behavior in the 2007 general election seems to signal a change in these patterns, in particular the strengthening of universalistic values associated with modernity and perhaps even the emergence of post-materialist attitudes.

Still, at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, Poland faces a dilemma that was once summarized by two American scholars in the following way: "Can religion be a principal source of social integration in a modern, even post-modern, society characterized by multiculturalism and religious pluralism? Today, this question is no less relevant for the South than for the nation" (White

and White 1995, 9). One just needs to substitute *Europe* for "the nation" and *Poland* for "the South."

Note

1. An earlier version of this chapter appeared as "Knocking on Europe's Door: Voting Behavior in the EU Accession Referendum in Poland" in *Problems of Post-Communism* (Jasiewicz 2004).

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