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The political evolution of Solidarity camp between 1989-2001
from the perspective of legislative elections campaigns

– summary of doctoral thesis

Legislative elections between 1989-2001 were the first elections in Poland since the Second World War, which considered the attributes of democratic voting and their results in characteristic manner reflected the political division of society. The election campaigns touched significant matters for nation, but often committees exposed the problems that touched only one (limited) group of voters.

The leading role in Polish politics in that period of time, played solidarity camp. Groups and politicians were identified with it, through their work, determined development of Polish political scene, affected the framing of the political system. The foundations of the system of the Third Republic of Poland were build by restoring, already independent country, the right character of a big, European country, with centuries-old tradition.

The aim of this thesis is to represent the dynamic of political subject evolution, defined as solidarity camp, seen through election campaigns to the Sejm and Senate. In particular, showing the extent in which groups that belonged to this camp found effective methods for success during elections and what contributed to their failures and how it affected the political potential of the whole camp, in the given period. The leading research problem of this thesis remains the electoral activity of the solidarity groups and analysis of the effects resulting from it.

The author undertakes to demonstrate the truth of the hypothesis, which states that the positive factor for the functioning of solidarity camp after 1989 was to create limited internal pluralism, while the negative was the tactics to maintain both artificial unity and excessive dispersion. That is why the solution which was both desirable and strengthening the potential of the camp between 1989 and 2001 was the division into two (and only two) political groups

of an election nature. In other words, functioning of this two groups (center, or center-left and center-right) with strong political potential, was to provide the optimum concept.

The scope of the research includes the number of specific issues, that concerns: the effectiveness of the electoral strategy of solidarity groups; the scope of competition inside the solidarity camp; attitudes towards groups who are representatives of other political options; the influence of that camp on the development of Polish political and electoral system; the effects of direct political involvement (election) NSZZ "Solidarność"; the reflection of the sentiment and sympathy of the electorate.

Chronological framework appoints years from 1989 to 2001. Therefore five parliamentary elections were analyzed. The beginning of researched period are elections in 1989, known as contract elections, the first elections in which representatives of NSZZ "Solidarność" took part. While year 2001 is the end of the electoral activity of union. The result of this election caused the termination of camp's activity on the Polish political scene, starting at the same time next period- modern, consolidated groups. Both dates serve as a kind of buckles, stringing area of temporary activity in the Polish political scene groups classified as representatives of the Solidarity camp.

The period between 1989-2001 is a development of the Polish foundations of parliamentary democracy. Following the freedom of elections and political pluralism, various political parties started to formulate and undertook activities, also referring to the legacy of "Solidarity". Compact and uniform, in the final period of the PRL, Solidarity camp was yield to systematical and sustained decomposition, what caused that in the next election more and more new groups, grew on the basis of this political movement. Additionally political transformation stimulated variability and the instability of both political scene, as well as the electoral system.

In various stages of the research the author applies the method of information sources analysis and content analysis (content). Next, for the right representation of the course and the character of the next election campaigns, the isolation of their impact and demonstration of the similarities and differences, which characterize the different groups and committees, is using comparative method. The deep analysis of election campaigns to the Sejm and Senate were recognized as a research preparation, to show the changes taking place inside the subject of the research (Solidarity camp). In this regard, the author also uses situational analysis method, that is analysis of the moment of election (campaign) as a political event.

Chapter one presents the most important events related to the creation and activity of NSZZ "Solidarność", since 1980 to the start of the election campaign in 1989 against the

political conditions (functioning during communist dictatorship) and in the context of the international situation (Cold War). A number of references to the events, preceding the groundbreaking 1989, are possible to find in these election campaigns. Additionally, as an introduction to the subject of the thesis, a brief description of the parliamentary elections after the political transition in 1989 has been prepared.

Chapters; second and third, present in detail the actions and strategies of the Solidarity camp groups for the following five parliamentary campaign, between 1989 – 2001. They also include information about current political situation and elaboration of the election results. The part of the attention focused on the issue of the changing legal conditions for holding an election.

Chapter two includes period between 1989-1993- the time of Solidarity camp stratification (characterized by the domination on the political scene by numerous groups identified with it). Based on the documents about voting program, supported by the relations of participants of the events, the author presents the characteristics of the camps electoral committees and strategies used in the campaigns of 1989, 1991 and 1993(from gaining parliamentary representation to its significant loss).

Third chapter concerns the period of re- consolidation of the Solidarity camp (however ended by its practical elimination from the political scene). In this part of the thesis the author analyses election strategies of Solidarity committees between 1997- 2001 (second period of governance) and post-solidarity committees in 2001. Attempts to illustrate the effectiveness of the parties' election methods which participated in the competition with a clearly defensive position (often non-parliamentary) at the beginning of the mentioned quadrennial and incorrect political assumptions and the need of regrouping at its end.

Last chapter is devoted to analysis of the effects of actions and election methods of the Solidarity camp. The author presents the dynamics of the evolution of its political potential within a defined period. In chronological order he describes the changes that each time followed the campaign. He formulates and discusses the conclusions resulting from the undertaken studies. In particular (based on materials presented in previous chapters) attempts to illustrate how Solidarity camp determined the political conditions in Poland between 1989-2001, with the benefit of its own, changing, potential. He shows, how under the influence of Solidarity camp actions the political scene and political system developed in the first decade of the Third Republic of Poland.

In the thesis the author used source material, including the documents of political parties: election programs and brochures, committees coalition agreements, transcripts of

meetings and conferences, the occurrence of leaders, lists of candidates. This information was gathered thanks to the collection of Documentation Archive of Political Parties ISP PAN. Additionally, a query was performed, in the archives of the Institute of National Remembrance paying special attention to the campaign and the election in 1989. The relations of leading politicians take a special position (participants of the events), their opinions and commentary, available in the form of extensive and meticulous interviews published as personal memories, or as a tool of political competition. As the thematic scope relates to the political aspects of electoral strategies, less attention was paid to the technical elements of the campaign, such as advertising, and public relations.

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