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Abstract

Despite the fact that almost all Poles are Roman Catholics and that religion has played an important part in post-communist Polish politics, no self-declared Christian Democratic party has been successful in post-1989 Poland. None of the currently successful Polish centre-right parties profile themselves as Christian Democratic, nor can they be labeled as such objectively. While superficially Poland looks like fertile ground for Christian Democracy, the factors that were crucial to the formation and success of Christian Democratic parties in post-war Western Europe were largely absent during the emergence of democratic, multi-party politics in post-communist Poland. Indeed, it is unlikely that such a conjuncture will ever occur anywhere in Europe again, re-inforcing the need for the continent's existing Christian Democratic parties to modernise if they are to survive and prosper. Of course, parties are never simply produced and sustained by 'cleavages': they are more than institutional responses to some kind of social demand. The formation and success, or otherwise, of Christian Democratic parties owes much to the inter-play between social realities and sponsors, on the one hand, and the institutional and ideological crafting of entrepreneurial politicians, on the other.

Why is there no Christian Democracy in Poland (and why does this matter)?

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Political scientists have for some time recognised the importance of 'non-decisions'[1] but they have been less persuaded than historians that non-occurrences may also merit further examination. There are, however, honourable (and famous) exceptions to the rule. In fact, the tradition stretches back at least as far as the beginning of the Twentieth Century when Sombart, first asked 'Why is there no socialism in the United States?' - a question revisited at the beginning of the Twenty First century by Lipset and Marks.[2] The purpose of such thought experiments is twofold: firstly, to tell us more about what did happen in a particular time and place by contrasting it with what did not; and, secondly, to encourage us to reflect and improve on existing explanations of why similar things happened (or did not happen) in other times and places. The key to fulfilling that dual purpose, of course, is not just to pick a case where something didn't happen but also to make sure that what didn't happen might, *prima facie*, have been expected to occur.

In the field of party politics, there is an implicit expectation that the party systems of Central and Eastern Europe will over time come to resemble those of the Western half of the continent. True, there is evidence to suggest that the differences between 'old' and 'new' Europe are as significant as the similarities, and may prove very persistent.[3] But, superficially at least, there appears to be some support for such an expectation. After all, most Central and East European countries have parties that can be plausibly placed on the familiar dimensions (left-right, authoritarian-liberal etc.) and many of them, rather conveniently, get together with their western counterparts in European party federations or at least party groups within the EU. Accordingly, it is, for example, not unreasonable to talk about a centre-right in the region.[4] Yet such categorisation begs questions, the most obvious of which relate to the fact that, as in the West, there is centre-right and then there is centre-right. Why, in Central and Eastern Europe, as in Western Europe, does the centre right take a particular form in one country as opposed to others, and why are some forms more successful than others? One way of answering those questions, and at the same time allowing us to feedback into our understanding of party and party system formation in Europe as a whole, is to follow the example set by Sombart and Lipset and Marks and explore a non-occurrence

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[1] See: Peter Bachratz and Morton S. Baratz, 'Two faces of power,' *American Political Science Review*, Vol 56 No 4 (1962), pp.947-952.
[2] See: Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks, *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).
[3] See, for example: Paul G. Lewis, *Political Parties in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, (London: Routledge, 2000); and Paul G. Lewis and Paul Webb (eds.), *Pan-European Perspectives on Political Parties* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).
[4] See: Sean Hanley, 'Getting the Right Right: Redefining the Centre-Right in Post-Communist Europe,' in Aleks Szczerbiak and Sean Hanley (eds.), *Centre-Right Parties in Post-Communist East Central Europe* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), pp. 9-27.

One of the obvious differences between the party systems of Central and Eastern Europe and their Western counterparts is that there are no cases of a Christian Democratic party that could claim anything like the success enjoyed by parties such as the German Christian Democratic Union-Christian Social Union (Christlich-Demokratische Union–Christich-Soziale Union: CDU-CSU), the Dutch Christian Democratic Appeal (Christen-Democratisch Appèl: CDA), Austrian People's Party (Die Österreichische Volkspartei: ÖVP) or, before its implosion in the early 1990s, the Italian Christian Democracy (Democrazia Cristiana: DC) party.[5]

While in most countries in this relatively secular region of Europe this absence might come as no surprise, there is one country in which, given the nature of its society and political divisions, one might have expected Christian Democracy, at least at first glance, to have gained a foothold and even to flourish. That country is Poland - a nation of practicing Roman Catholics who make up around 95% of a population of almost 39 million, a large proportion of which is still employed in the agricultural sector that, along with religious observers, traditionally supplied continental Europe's Christian Democratic parties with a core vote. This core vote cut across class and laid the foundations for a centre-right that stood out against the re-distributive politics of the left, the equally secular politics of liberalism, and the capitalist politics of conservatism. When we look at Poland, however, there seems to be no such thing as a successful Christian Democratic party.[6]

This absence or non-occurrence raises four related questions. First, and most obviously, why is there no Christian Democracy in Poland? Second, what does this tell us about the formation of parties on, and the nature of, the centre-right in Poland? Thirdly, if a successful Christian Democratic party cannot emerge in the superficially favourable circumstances of post-communist Poland what does this tell us about the long-term prospects for this party family in Europe as a whole? Fourthly, and more generally: how do the answers to these particular questions feedback into our more general understanding of party and party system formation?

We begin by defining Christian Democracy, a necessary but not an easy task, especially because in recent years it has become something of a slippery fish. We then go on to explore the fortunes of Christian Democracy in post-1989 Poland, beginning with the historical context, moving on to consider the record of 'self-declared' Christian Democratic parties, and then examining how the current centre-right parties match our model of an archetypal Christian Democratic party. Next, we explore the factors that played an important part in the initial formation and success of Christian Democratic parties in post-war continental Europe, looking both at countries where such parties did well (in particular, Italy and Belgium, but also the Netherlands and Germany) and at countries where it failed to take hold (notably France). Following that, we explore which of those factors were more or less in play in Poland after the fall of the Communist regime. Finally, after pointing to some other factors that were indeed in play and that might have militated against the formation of a

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[5] See, for example: Kai-Olaf Lang, 'Parties of the Right in East Central Europe,' *Debatte*, Vol 13 No 1 (April 2005), pp.73-81 (p.79).
[6] See: Ewa K. Czaczkowska, 'Czas dla chadecji,' *Rzeczpospolita*, 22 October 1997; Marcin Dominik Zdort, 'Apetyt na chadecję,' *Rzeczpospolita*, 9 June 1999; and Janusz A. Majcherek, 'Taka prawica, jaki Giertych,' 7 February 2005 at http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/wyborcza/2029090,34474,2539594.html (Viewed on 8 February 2005).

Christian Democratic Party - just as they did in, for example, Ireland and Spain - we suggest how our findings from the case study might contribute to our more general understanding of party formation and success.

The paper shows that despite the fact that almost all Poles are Roman Catholics and that religion has played an important part in post-communist Polish politics, no self-declared Christian Democratic party has been successful in post-1989 Poland. None of the currently successful Polish centre-right parties profile themselves as Christian Democratic, nor can they be labeled as such objectively. While superficially Poland looks like fertile ground for Christian Democracy, the factors that were crucial to the formation and success of Christian Democratic parties in post-war Western Europe were largely absent during the emergence of democratic, multi-party politics in post-communist Poland. Indeed, it is unlikely that such a conjuncture will ever occur anywhere in Europe again, re-inforcing the need for the continent's existing Christian Democratic parties to modernise if they are to survive and prosper. Of course, parties are never simply produced and sustained by 'cleavages': they are more than institutional responses to some kind of social demand. The formation and success, or otherwise, of Christian Democratic parties owes much to the inter-play between social realities and sponsors, on the one hand, and the institutional and ideological crafting of entrepreneurial politicians, on the other.

1.   Christian Democracy: defining a party family

How do we define precisely the Christian Democratic party family and categorise political parties in post-1989 Poland, or anywhere else, as Christian Democratic? One of the simplest and most widely adopted approaches in the academic literature involves drawing on the international links that parties themselves establish in so-called trans-national federations. As Mair and Mudde point out, in EU countries in particular direct elections to the European Parliament (EP) stimulated increasing co-operation between like-minded parties in different member states and helped to promote the institutionalisation of official party groups in the EP itself.[7] As a consequence, the various Christian Democratic parties in EU member states were transformed into a single transnational party federation, the European People's Party (EPP), and an associated European Parliament grouping: the European People's Party-European Democrats (EPP-ED).[8]

Although this approach enjoys the advantage of being relatively straightforward, easy to apply, and follows the parties' own subjective choices and actions, it also raises both general methodological and specific problems.[9] In the case of the European People's Party (and, even more so its EP emanation), the most notable is perhaps the fact that, for reasons of political expediency, this transnational party federation, has adopted an extremely expansive admission policy. As a consequence, it now includes

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[7] See: Peter Mair and Cas Mudde, 'The Party Family and its Study', *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol 1 (June 1998), pp.211-229.
[8] See: Luciano Bardi, 'Transnational Party Federations, European Parliamentary Party Groups and the Building of Europarties,' in Richard Katz and Peter Mair (eds.), *How Parties Organize: Adaptation and Change in Party Organizations in Western Democracies* (London: Sage, 1994), pp.357-72; and Simon Hix and Christopher Lord, *Political Parties in the European Union* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997).
[9] See: Mair and Mudde.

other moderate conservative parties that can less easily be identified as 'objectively' Christian Democratic: such as the Spanish Popular Party or Forza Italia. Hanley has, for example, estimated that of some 64 parties from 32 countries in the European People's Party-European Democrats grouping (including observers and associates), a bare third would qualify as Christian Democrat, even being generous with the label.[10] They are increasingly outweighed by a combination of liberals, nationalist/conservative parties, anti-centralising parties of the periphery, and even openly Eurosceptic parties such as the British Conservative Party and Czech Civic Democrats. In other words, while *non-membership* of Christian Democratic transnational party federations may be useful as a criterion for *excluding* parties from the Christian Democratic category, *membership* of these organisations does not *automatically* qualify a party as Christian Democratic.

When it comes to ideology, there are essentially two views of 'classic' post-war Christian Democracy. The first argues that Christian Democracy "can best be described as a left-wing branch of...conservatism", albeit with some differences of emphasis.[11] Christian Democrats share conservatives' "respect for tradition, awareness of human imperfection, an emphasis on the natural social relationships in society and on the social need for religion, a clear preference for a form of affirmation of authority, the acceptance of a natural inequality among people...and the defence of private ownership." They do, however, also see it as their role to "guarantee the rights of organized religion and anchor specific Christian values in society", to offer "a more progressive social programme (social capitalism), focussing to a large extent on the role of the intermediate social groups in society". They are also "less influenced by nationalism" – something which, perhaps significantly, distinguishes Christian Democratic parties not only from conservatism but from the inherently Catholic parties that came to dominate the politics of another country where Christian Democracy is routinely said to be absent, namely Ireland.[12]

The other view of classic Christian Democracy, championed by political scientists like van Kersbergen[13] and Hanley,[14] insists that it has a distinct ideological pedigree and comprises five distinctive, core elements.

Firstly, in terms of their broad political philosophy, Christian Democrats have historically displayed a strong commitment to an organic view of society, based on the idea that different segments and societal interests can be reconciled. The notion of community, therefore, lies at the heart of Christian Democratic ideology and finds

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[10] See: David Hanley, 'The European Peoples' Party: institutionalisation and adaptation,' Paper presented to the ESRC seminar series on the Contemporary right in Europe, University of Sussex, 21 January 2005.

[11] See: Emiel Lamberts, 'Conclusion - Christian Democracy in the European Union (1945-1995)' in Emiel Lamberts (ed.) *Christian Democracy in the European Union, 1945 –1995* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), pp.473-481 (p.474).

[12] See: Martin Conway, 'The Age of Christian Democracy: the Frontiers of Success and Failure,' in Thomas Kselman and Joseph A. Buttigieg (eds.) *European Christian Democracy: Historical Legacies and Comparative Perspectives* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2003) pp.43-67 (p.60).

[13] See: Kees van Kersbergen, 'The distinctiveness of Christian Democracy,' in David Hanley (ed.), *Christian Democracy in Europe: A Comparative Perspective* (London and New York: Pinter, 1994), pp.31-47

[14] See: David Hanley, 'Christian Democracy as a political phenomenon,' in David Hanley (ed.), *Christian Democracy in Europe: A Comparative Perspective* (London and New York: Pinter, 1994), pp.1-11.

expression in the linked ideas of 'social personalism' and 'solidarism'. 'Social personalism' views the individual as socially embedded and only able to reach fulfilment within the 'natural' structures of society: family, community and the place of work. 'Solidarism' involves the integration and reconciliation of different social groups. In other words, Christian Democrats believe that society is composed of socially embedded 'persons' rather than atomised individuals, as liberals would argue, and that individual rights and choices only gain meaning when framed within the context of a wider community. But Christian Democracy also rejects the leftist-socialist notion that the collectivity can be more important than the individual, believing that that the former only exists to assist and complete the latter. Moreover, while Christian Democrats believe that all social groups have a specific role to play, they also contend that all such groups are fundamentally equal and, therefore, reject the conservative emphasis on authority and elitism in which one group's hierarchical social and political dominance is firmly entrenched and social inequality held to be natural and desirable. For the Christian Democrat, then, the central goal of politics is to promote harmonious interaction and eliminate tensions between different social classes and individuals through negotiation and social accommodation.

Secondly, Christian Democrats are traditionally strong supporters of the family as the key means of achieving this societal equilibrium. Christian Democrats believe the family to be the cornerstone of the community - the primary vehicle for the transmission of social values and an ideal tool for social regulation - and direct a significant amount of effort into supporting familial structures. A family-oriented approach to social policy, is accompanied by a concomitant emphasis on conservative social and cultural values, which means that there is also a deeply traditionalist and moralistic thread running through Christian Democratic rhetoric. This finds expression in a limited tolerance of alternative lifestyles, which sometimes leads Christian Democrats to openly characterise single parenthood and homosexual relationships as a corrosive threat to the stability of the traditional family and, consequently, to the community as a whole.

Thirdly, in terms of socio-economic policy Christian Democrats have normally supported some kind of 'social capitalism'. They shared with conservatives and liberals an essential (albeit qualified) belief in the beneficial power of a market-based economy, together with a conviction that private property constitutes an inviolable right and should be protected from an overly-interventionist state. This notwithstanding, the latter is seen as having a duty to provide for all of its citizens, protect the weak in society and prevent entrenched social exclusion. The German 'social market' economy is, therefore, the archetypal Christian Democratic policy regime in which both individuals, social groups such as business and the unions, and the state have rights and are constrained by mutual long-term obligations. Christian Democratic parties, therefore, historically tolerated or even favoured relatively high levels of public expenditure, particularly for the provision of social welfare, not as a means of economic redistribution but because the alleviation of poverty and the exercise of compassion are believed to mitigate the development of conflict between rich and poor. State intervention in and regulation of the economy and the labour market would also prevent the development of an antagonistic relationship between capital and labour, hence the enthusiasm for (neo) corporatist structures allowing

worker input into management decisions and consultation between government, industry, the trade unions and other interest groups.[15]

Fourthly, Christian Democrat foreign policy is underpinned by a strong emphasis on trans-national, as well as domestic, reconciliation.[16] As Hanley puts it, "more than any other political family, the Christian Democratic parties have striven explicitly for some kind of supranational identity; one would be tempted to say that perhaps the one thing they really share with liberals is a tangible discomfort in the face of raw nationalism."[17] Although Christian Democrats know that the nation, alongside the family and voluntary associations, is one of the different kinds of communities in which humankind fulfils itself, "equally they know the fine line that often separates genuine identification with one's nation from unwarrantable pride and chauvinism."[18] This is derived partly from their close association with the Roman Catholic Church with its universalistic claims, but also relates to a worldview rooted in mutual understanding and reciprocity between individuals and groups (or, as Hanley neatly puts it, "making strangers into friends"[19]). Christian Democratic parties' longstanding attachment to European integration as a means of overcoming nationalism flows logically from this worldview.

Fifthly, Christian Democratic party programmes are explicitly rooted in and underpinned by religiosity. Although, Christian Democracy is about the application of general Christian principles and values to the governance of the state rather than the formal 're-Christianisation of society', Christian Democratic parties remain conscious of their religious origins and the values that they embody are clearly inspired by, and originate from, Christian ethics. First and foremost, Christian Democrats are in politics to express a Christian vision of humankind and its destiny. However, although they may continue to enjoy close relations with (and sometimes the explicit support of) the Catholic Church and its ancillary lay organisations, Christian Democratic parties are also self-consciously lay groupings and are not controlled by, and operate at arm's-length from, the Church hierarchy.

2.   No one (successful) matching that description: establishing the absence of Christian democracy in contemporary Poland

Polish Christian Democracy in historical perspective

Although, as we shall see, the Catholic Church has played an extremely important role in Polish history, Christian Democracy does not have deep historical roots in that country. Political entrepreneurs hoping to form a successful Christian Democratic party in post-1989 Poland did not really have any successful historical antecedents, or even much of a political tradition at all, upon which they could draw. Polish Christian Democratic groupings emerged at the end of the Nineteenth Century - the period when Poland was partitioned between Austria-Hungary, Prussia and Russia - in Upper Silesia and Greater Poland, regions under Prussian administration, following the

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[15] See: R.E.M. Irving, *The Christian Democratic Parties of Western Europe* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1979), p.xxi.
[16] See: Irving, p.xviii-xix.
[17] See: Hanley, 'Christian Democracy as a political phenomenon,' p.8.
[18] See: Ibid., p.8.
[19] See: Ibid., p.8.

pattern of the influential German Centre (Zentrum) party. However, although all the main Polish parties to emerge at this time (except for those on radical left) made frequent references to Christian values in their programmes, Christian Democracy as a distinct political movement did not enjoy widespread support.

Nor were Christian Democratic parties especially influential during the period of the inter-war Second Republic following the restoration of an independent Polish state in 1918. Although it enjoyed some support in the Christian trade union movement, during the inter-war years, Polish Christian Democracy functioned primarily as a small and fragmented parliamentary-based movement and it was not until October 1937 that its various disparate elements consolidated with the formation of the Labour Party (Stronnictwo Pracy: SP).[20] In 1945, there was an attempt to revive the Labour Party by its pre-war leader Karol Popiel and it operated openly for a short period. However, following increased persecution from the communist authorities, the party executive suspended its activities in July 1946 and pro-regime loyalists gradually took over what remained of the party. The last vestiges of independent Christian Democratic political activity in communist Poland ended in 1950, when a rump collaborationist faction of the Labour Party's remnants merged with the communist satellite Democratic Party (Stronnictwo Demokratyczne: SD).

After the Labour Party was wound up, the remnants of Christian Democratic political thought continued largely as one current of thinking within the Catholic secular associations that the communist authorities allowed to function in a stringently controlled form on the margins of political life. The most prominent of these was the PAX Association (Stowarzyszenie 'PAX'), established originally as a 'collaborationist' organisation comprising Catholic laity and so-called 'patriotic' priests, who believed in the possibility of a rapprochement between Christianity and Marxism, and openly supported the communist regime (which they hoped to 'civilise'). However, these licensed groupings also included the relatively more independent and potentially subversive (but, therefore, even more marginal and tightly constrained) milieu clustered around the 'Universal Weekly' (Tygodnik Powszechny) newspaper and the so-called Catholic Intelligentsia Clubs (Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej: KIK).[21] The latter network was established following the political 'thaw' that followed the appointment of Władysław Gomułka as First Secretary of the Polish communist party in October 1956. A group of Catholic cultural activists in the so-called 'Znak' ('Sign') movement associated with the 'Tygodnik Powszechny' weekly, together with some members of the PAX Association and lecturers from the Catholic University of Lublin (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski: KUL – the only independent higher education in the communist bloc), supported Gomułka's limited reform programme, hoping that they would presage a more far-reaching relaxation of the political system. Although, unlike the PAX Association, the Tygodnik Powszechny/Znak milieu maintained their independence from the communist party, they regarded the regime as an inescapable geo-political reality and avoided engaging in overtly political activity. Rather, they

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[20] See: Ryszard Bender, 'Kościół katolicki w Polsce odrodzonej,' in Janusz Żarnowski, *Życie polityczne w Polsce: 1918-1939* (Wrocław: Zakład Naradowy im Ossolińskich, 1985), pp.307-342 (pp.335-336).
[21] See: Jan Żaryn, 'In Conflict with the Communist State: The Catholic Church and Catholic Political Organisations in Poland,' in Michael Gehler and Wolfram Kaiser (eds.), *Christian Democracy in Europe since 1945. Volume 2*, (London: Routledge. 2004), pp.118-138.

attempted to carve out a niche for themselves within the communist system by concentrating on cultural and educational activities aimed at promoting Christian culture and deepening religious faith. As a consequence the authorities initially allowed this milieu to develop a network of around 500 Catholic Intelligentsia Clubs; although, as Gomułka's liberalising reforms were quickly halted and reversed, this was soon reduced to only five (numbering a few hundred), one in each of Poland's major cities.

During the communist period, there were three main attempts to revive an independent Polish Christian Democrat movement.[22] The first of these was at the beginning of 1961 when a group of former Labour Party activists joined the Warsaw Catholic Intelligentsia Club and tried to use it as the basis for re-building a Christian Democratic party. However, the majority of the club's members supported the position taken by the Tygodnik Powszechny/Znak milieu: rejecting the notion that the Church's social teaching and moral and ethical norms could be appropriated by a single party or, more broadly, (what they viewed as the anachronistic notion) that a political movement in a plural society could be based on religious criteria as inappropriate and anachronistic.

A second attempt to turn the Znak movement into a proto-Christian Democratic party came at the start of the 1970s from a group of activists in the Centre of Documentation and Social Studies (Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Studiów Społecznych: ODSP) led by Warsaw Catholic Intelligentsia Club member Janusz Zabłocki. Some other Club members together with a number of priests and academics from the Catholic University of Lublin, and four out of the five Sejm deputies in the Znak parliamentary circle supported Zabłocki. This grouping also developed contacts with the Christian Democratic international movement through the exiled leadership of the Labour Party in Western Europe. However, Zabłocki and his followers failed to win over a majority within the Warsaw Club, who feared that his initiative would draw the Znak movement too closely into the official state structures and, ultimately, transform it into simply another communist satellite organisation. These arguments appeared to be vindicated when Zabłocki and his supporters in the Znak parliamentary circle voted in favour of the controversial February 1976 amendments to the Polish Constitution that strengthened references to the maintenance of the 'leading role' of the communist party in the state and 'brotherly ties' with the Soviet Union. In fact, many of those associated with the Tygodnik Powszechny/Znak milieu who rejected Zabłocki's initiative came to work increasingly with emerging 'lay' democratic opposition organisations.[23] Individuals associated with the Catholic Intelligentsia Clubs also played a key role in the emergence of the Solidarity trade union movement in August 1980. On the other hand, Zabłocki and his followers broke away to form their own intellectuals club in July 1976, which they dubbed the 'neo-Znak' movement, and subsequently in 1980 established the Polish Social-Catholic Union

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[22] For a good overview, see: Stefan Stępień, 'Christian-Democratic Movement in Poland (1945-1989),' in Katarzyna Krzywicka and Edward Olszewski (eds.), *Christian Democracy in the Modern World* (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2000), pp.215-235.
[23] These included as the Committee for the Defence of the Workers (Komitet Obrony Robotników: KOR), the Movement for the Defence of Human and Civic Rights (Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywateli: ROPCiO) and the nascent free trade union movement. These organisations emerged in the mid-1970s to defend human rights following the persecution of workers involved in the 1976 anti-regime demonstrations at Radom, Ursus and Płock.

(Polski Związek Katolicko Społeczny: PZKS), which remained aloof from the democratic opposition movement and continued to co-operate with the communist authorities.

Finally, there were also small groups of activists involved in the democratic opposition at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s that were both unambiguously Christian Democratic (unlike the Tygodnik Powszechny/Znak milieu) and anti-communist (unlike Zabłocki's Polish Social-Catholic Union). However, these individuals and groupings played only a very marginal role in the Solidarity movement and subsequent attempts to revive the Christian Democratic movement following the collapse of communism and emergence of pluralist, multi-party politics in 1989.

'Self-declared' Christian Democratic parties in post-1989 Poland

So how have Christian Democratic parties fared in post-1989 Poland? Reviewing the fortunes of these parties is not a simple task. For a start, it is not always easy to know which parties to classify as Christian Democratic. Even those parties with an explicit commitment to Christian Democratic principles have not always acted consistently with their professed ideology in practice, with some parties clearly (ab)using the label as a smokescreen to hide the lack of any distinctive programme or policies.[24] However, for the purposes of this paper, we are taking those parties that claimed to have a Christian Democratic identity at face value. The early 1990s saw numerous unsuccessful attempts to establish such 'self-declared' Christian Democratic parties. For example, in 1991 Denhel-Szyc and Strachura estimated that there were around forty Christian Democratic parties operating in Poland.[25] Most of them were either completely new parties that emerged from within the Solidarity movement or attempts to revive historic parties that claimed continuity with the pre-communist and pre-war Polish Christian Democratic movement. However, most of these were also so-called 'couch parties' of an ephemeral character with no political base, and only six of them secured any parliamentary representation following the first fully free elections held in October 1991, even under the highly proportional electoral system.[26] So for the purposes of this analysis we confine ourselves to examining the fortunes of the most (relatively) significant of these parties.

The first notable attempt to revive Polish Christian Democracy was the formation of the Christian-Democratic Labour Party in February 1989, a time when the pluralisation of political life in Poland was just beginning; and therefore pre-dating

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[24] See: for example: Czaczkowska, 'Czas dla chadecji.'

[25] See: Małgorzata Dehnel-Szyc and Jadwiga Stachura, *Gry polityczne: orientacje na dziś* (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen, 1991), p.146.

[26] According to Gołoś the six were: the Centre Agreement (Porozumiene Centrum: PC), the Polish Christian Democratic Forum (Polskie Forum Chrześcijańsko Demokratyczne: PFChD), the Party of Christian Democrats (Partia Chrześcijańskich Demokratów: PChD), the Peasant Christian Party (Stronnictwo Ludowo Chrześcijańskie: SLCh), the Christian-Democratic Labour Party (Chrześcijańsko-Demokrtyczne Stronnictwo Pracy: Ch-D SP); and the Christian Labour Party (Chrześcijańska Partia Pracy: ChPP). See: Michał Gołoś, 'Christian Democratic Parties in Poland,' in Katarzyna Krzywicka and Edward Olszewski (eds.), *Christian Democracy in the Modern World* (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2000), pp.237-248 (p.239). However, as I argue later, it is more accurate to characterize the Peasant Christian Party as a liberal-conservative agrarian party.

even the May-June 1989 semi-free elections when opposition parties were allowed to compete with the communists for the first time. The party claimed to be the historical successor to the pre-war Labour Party - which, as noted above, the communist regime suspended in February 1946 – and was launched in part as an attempt to offer an alternative to the bi-polar communist regime-versus-Solidarity democratic opposition divide. The party's hopes rested on the prestige of its leader Władysław Siła-Nowicki - the renowned war hero, human rights lawyer and opposition activist, who had been a crucial negotiator between the regime and the Solidarity movement in the mid-to-late 1980s and was then a Vice-President of the Christian Democratic International. However, the party failed to capitalise on this apparent potential and its impact on the Polish political scene was always negligible, with its membership peaking at around only 2000 members. The party split over the decision to support Siła-Nowicki rather than legendary Solidarity trade union leader Lech Wałęsa in the 1990 presidential candidate and contested the October 1991 parliamentary election as part of the 'Christian Democracy' election committee, together with four other small Christian Democratic groupings, winning 2.36% of the votes and 5 seats. However, it was a marginal grouping within the new parliament and went on to contest the September 1993 parliamentary election as part of the electoral committee formed by the Centre Agreement (see below). Having failed to obtain parliamentary representation, the party merged with Christian Democracy, another small grouping, in February 1994 to form the slightly re-named Christian Democracy-the Labour Party (Chrześcijańksa Demokracja-Stronnictwo Pracy: ChD-SP) and participated in a number of initiatives to unite the centre-right, eventually joining Solidarity Electoral Action (Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność: AWS – see below). The party secured one parliamentary deputy on its ticket in the September 1997 parliamentary election but then proceeded to fade into obscurity.

A number of other Christian Democratic parties emerged from within the Solidarity movement. The first notable one was the Centre Agreement, launched in May 1990 initially as a broad (and somewhat ideologically incoherent) coalition of parties, political groupings and individuals to act as a springboard for Wałęsa's presidential bid (for example, it originally included the Christian-Democratic Labour Party). However, at its first Congress in May 1991, the Centre Agreement transformed itself into a more structurally coherent and traditional member-based, unitary party, declaring its ambition to become a modern Christian Democratic party incorporating liberal and agrarianist elements and modelled on the German Christian Democratic Union-Christian Social Union;[27] an ambition that a sceptic might argue was based more on admiration of the German party's electoral and organisational success than any ideological affinity. The party grew rapidly to 60,000 members but failed to gain the new President's hoped-for endorsement, at which point it turned from being Wałęsa's most vocal supporter into one of his most dogged critics. In the 1991 parliamentary election, the Centre Agreement emerged as the sixth largest grouping with 8.71% of the votes and 44 seats. Soon afterwards it suffered a series of damaging splits and all but forgot Christian Democracy, preferring to focus on purging former communists and secret service collaborators. The party then became part of the Solidarity Electoral Action coalition in 1996 (see below) and a dozen of the party's members were elected as deputies on its ticket in the September 1997 parliamentary election, before splitting in 1999 with the majority faction joining other small

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[27] See: Gołoś, pp.243-4.

Christian Democratic and conservative parties to form the Agreement of Polish Christian Democrats (Porozumienie Polskich Chrześcijańskich Demokratów: PPChD - see below). Another faction that remained loyal to its founder and leader Jarosław Kaczyński continued the Centre Agreement as an independent party - one that eventually formed the core of the new right-wing Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość: PiS) party that was formed in 2001 (see below).

Another 'post-Solidarity' Christian Democratic grouping was the Party of Christian Democrats formed in December 1990 on the initiative of the Christian Democratic circle within the Citizens' Parliamentary Club (Obywatelski Klub Parlamentarny: OKP) of Solidarity-backed deputies and a group of Christian Democratic activists based in Poznań. The party was intended to be a more authentically Christian Democratic grouping than the Centre Agreement but remained much smaller and less electorally successful, never numbering more than 6,000 members. The party won only 1.12% of the votes and secured the election of 4 deputies in the 1991 election, although its leader Paweł Łączkowski went on to become deputy premier in Hanna Suchocka's 1992-93 'post-Solidarity' government. It contested the 1993 election as part of the Catholic Electoral Committee 'Fatherland' (Katolicki Komitet Wyborczy 'Ojczyjzna': KKW 'O - see below) together with the clerical-nationalist Christian National Union (Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe: ZChN - see below) and two other small parties: the Peasant Christian Party (by some accounts a Christian Democratic party, see note 26, but probably more accurately categorised as an agrarian liberal-conservative one) and the Conservative Party (Partia Konserwaytywna: PK). However, the 'Fatherland' grouping secured only 6.37% of the votes and thereby failed to cross the 8% threshold required for electoral coalitions to obtain parliamentary representation (higher than the 5% threshold for single parties).

The prospects for Polish Christian Democracy appeared to look up when 22 parties and other political groupings under the hegemony of the Solidarity trade union formed Solidarity Electoral Action in June 1996.[28] Solidarity Electoral Action was an ideologically eclectic and heterogeneous political conglomerate including socially conservative trade unionists, (both economically interventionist and more liberal) Catholic nationalists and relatively secular liberal-conservatives; although it also contained a strong self-declared Christian Democratic element. By the time of the September 1997 election, Solidarity Electoral Action had expanded to encompass more than 30 such organisations including the aforementioned Centre Agreement, Christian-Democratic Labour Party, and Party of Christian Democrats.[29] It went on to win the election with 33.83% of the vote and 201 seats and form a government led by Solidarity economic adviser Jerzy Buzek, in coalition with the post-Solidarity liberal party, the Freedom Union (Unia Wolności: UW - see below note 109).

Following the election, a new union-sponsored political party, the Solidarity Electoral Action Social Movement (Ruch Społeczny Akcji Wyborczej Solidarność : RS AWS) was set up in November 1997, formally led by Buzek but primarily inspired by

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[28] See: Adrian Karatnycky, 'Christian Democracy Resurgent: Raising the Banner of Faith in Eastern Europe,' *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77 No. 1 (January/February 1998), pp.13-18.
[29] For an excellent analysis of Solidarity Electoral Action, see: Michal Wenzel, 'Solidarity and Akcja Wyborcza "Solidarność": An attempt at reviving the legend,' *Communist and Post-communist Studies*, Vol. 31 No. 2 (1998), pp.139-156.

Solidarity Election Action leader Marian Krzaklewski, who hoped (in vain as it turned out) that all the other existing parties would dissolve themselves into the new party. The objective was to separate formally political and union activity so that the Solidarity trade union did not have to end up protesting against a government of which it had itself formed an important component. When it was formed, the Solidarity Electoral Action Social Movement counted premier Buzek, one deputy premier, several government ministers, the Sejm and Senate Marshals, over 100 deputies and 37 Senators and 3,500 councillors among its members. Although the party contained a relatively broad spectrum of political views, it was set up as a self-declared Christian Democratic party and its programmatic declarations contained numerous references to, and the party claimed to be heavily influenced by, Christian axiology.[30]

However, it is difficult to regard the Solidarity Electoral Action Social Movement as a Christian Democratic party in any strict sense of the term. Indeed from the outset critics accused it of lacking any clearly defined ideology, Christian Democratic or otherwise, and being simply a clientelistic 'party of power' formed as a vehicle for Solidarity union leaders and individuals closely linked to the government to advance their political ambitions.[31] Moreover, although the party was formed initially from the bottom up at the local level and had 40,000 members at its peak, it was dominated by state and former union officials and did not fulfil its objective of becoming a mass, grassroots party. It was not surprising, then, that Solidarity Electoral Action's spectacular 2001 election defeat, when it failed to secure parliamentary representation, precipitated a major crisis within the Social Movement. There was an attempt to keep the party alive, when its April 2002 conference removed any references to Solidarity Electoral Action from its name and a new ideological statement moved the party towards a more 'centrist' ideological profile and distanced it from its previous invocation of Polish Catholic traditions. However, reduced to 14,000 members by May 2002, after contesting that year's local elections unsuccessfully in coalition with the remnants of the Conservative People's Party (Stronnictwo Konserwatywno Ludowe: SKL), the Social Movement dissolved itself into the new Centre (Centrum) party in January 2004.

The wipe out of 2001 also put paid to Agreement of Polish Christian Democrats, a party formed in September 1999 on the basis of an agreement between the Party of Christian Democrats[32] and the majority faction within the Centre Agreement, whose deputies had worked together under the auspices of the 23-strong Christian-Democratic Group within the Solidarity Electoral Action parliamentary fraction. The objective had been to form a fourth, explicitly 'Christian Democratic' pillar within Solidarity Electoral Action alongside the union (Solidarity and the Social Movement), liberal-conservative (Conservative People's Party) and clerical-nationalist (Christian National Union) ones. However, although, at one time, it considered merging and

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[30] In fact, these statements tended to overlap with that of Solidarity Electoral Action as a whole, although they contained a somewhat stronger emphasis on the importance of spreading the influence of Christian principles in public life. See: Krystyna Paszkiewicz (ed) *Partie i koalicje polityczne III Rzeczpospolitej* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2004), p.140

[31] See: Gołoś, pp.245-6.

[32] Which, although it had only managed get eight deputies elected to parliament on the Solidarity Electoral Action ticket in 2001, was able to secure strong representation within the Buzek government including the economy minister and two other junior ministers.

forming a unitary party with the Social Movement, the 2001 election defeat precipitated a major crisis in the party. Having left Solidarity Electoral Action in October 2001, in January 2002 it merged with the majority faction of the Conservative People's Party to form the Conservative Peoples' Party-New Poland Movement (Stronnictwo Konserwatywno-Ludowe Ruch Nowej Polski: SKL RNP) that, in turn, was wound up when its supporters formed the new Centre party in 2004.

One party that has sometimes been categorised as Christian Democratic[33] and enjoyed medium levels of electoral and political success in the 1990s was the Christian National Union. The party was formed in October 1989 by twenty Catholic lay organisations linked to the Solidarity democratic opposition movement and, although it was relatively small with only 3000 members, emerged quickly as one of the most significant parties on the Polish right. In the October 1991 parliamentary election, it spearheaded the Catholic Electoral Action (Wyborcza Akcja Katolicka: WAK) coalition (see below), which emerged as the third largest grouping securing 8.79% of the vote and 49 deputies, and went on to become a leading member of both the 'post-Solidarity' Olszewski and Suchocki governments during the 1991-93 parliament. As noted above, the party contested the September 1993 election at the head of the 'Fatherland' election committee together with three smaller right-wing parties, but this grouping failed to cross the threshold required to secure parliamentary representation. The party went on to play a leading role in the formation of Solidarity Electoral Action and 25 Christian National Union deputies were elected as part of this coalition in 1997. During the 1997-2001 parliament, party members held key positions in the Buzek government and, as noted above, it emerged as one of the four main elements within the Solidarity Electoral Action parliamentary club, acting as the organisational focus for the grouping's clerical-nationalist wing. However, in March 2001 a number of the party's leading members split off to form the new Right-wing Alliance (Przymierze Prawicy: PP) party, which contested the September 2001 election in coalition (and then went on to merge) with the Law and Justice party. The rump Christian National Union remained affiliated to Solidarity Electoral Action until the 2001 election but left the disintegrating coalition following its heavy electoral defeat and became a marginal feature of the Polish political scene.

As its name suggests, the Christian National Union was certainly a Christian-inspired party. It stressed its close links with the Catholic Church; argued that public policy should be rooted in Christian values and notions of 'social solidarity'; and supported the family as the most effective guarantor of individual freedom, social stability and cohesion. However, the party had a much more expansive approach to promoting Christian moral values than an archetypal Christian Democratic party, as outlined in the model above, and sought institutional guarantees to underpin the Church's influence over public life so that the Polish state had an explicitly Catholic character. Indeed, the party was committed to a deep and thoroughgoing re-construction of the whole Polish social, economic and political order on the basis of Catholic values; a process that, it argued, was necessary for the nation's moral and political renewal. Indeed, particularly during the early 1990s, the Christian National Union was often accused of being a fundamentalist party attempting to turn Poland into a theocratic

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[33] See, for example: Wojciech Sokoł, 'Partie polityczne i system partyjny w Polsce w latach 1991-2004,' in Wojciech Sokół and Marek Żmigrodzki (eds.), *Współczesne partie i systemy partyjne: Zagadnienia teori i praktyki politycznej* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii-Curie Skłodowskiej, 2005), pp.190-274 (pp.232-233).

state ('państwo wyznaniowe').[34] This was exemplified by the fact that, unlike West European Christian Democratic parties that did not restrict themselves to specific denominations, the party required its members to be practising Catholics. In fact, the Christian National Union always contained relatively moderate-pragmatic as well as more fundamentalist-traditionalist factions, and participation in government during the 1990s prompted many of its leaders to tone down their earlier radical rhetoric.

The Christian National Union's ideology was also characterised by the importance that it attached to ensuring that the state reflected Polish national and cultural traditions. This was in stark contrast to Christian Democratic parties' traditionally 'universalist' approach, exemplified by their longstanding attachment to European integration as a means of overcoming nationalism. Although the Christian National Union never opposed Polish accession to the EU in principle,[35] it always adopted an extremely cautious approach towards European integration supporting a 'Europe of nations' and emphasising the need to preserve national identities and limit encroachments upon state sovereignty. For example, it never sought membership of Christian Democratic international organisations such as the European Peoples' Party, preferring to develop links with the more Eurosceptic, conservative-nationalist 'Union for Europe' grouping in the EP, the precursor to the current 'Union for a Europe of Nations' grouping.

It was this much more expansive approach towards promoting, and ensuring that the state reflected, Catholic values in public life, together with the party's strong emphasis on national-patriotic rather than 'universalist' principles, that makes it difficult to classify the Christian National Union as Christian Democratic.[36] Indeed, its synthesis of Catholic and national values meant that, in many ways, the party appeared more anchored in the political traditions of the pre-war National Democracy movement (Narodowa Demmokracja: ND - known as the 'endecja') than post-war West European Christian Democracy. For example, in his typology of Polish parties Sielski distinguishes between a 'Christian Democratic orientation' - characterised by an attachment to Christian social teaching, solidarism, and the family (and in which he locates the Centre Agreement, Christian Democracy-the Labour Party, and the Party of Christian Democrats) - and a 'Christian-national' current which attempted to ensure that Catholic religious norms and Polish national-cultural values played a predominant role in public life (in which he includes the Christian-National Union).[37] In fact, the Christian National Union was always an ideologically heterogeneous party that did, indeed, include a Christian Democratic strand, but also drew on other Polish national-patriotic and conservative traditions, including those associated with the Christian-inspired wings of the Polish agrarian and labour movements. As Sabbat-Swidlicka (writing in 1993) aptly put it, the Christian National Union, "holds to the West European, Christian-democratic tradition linking the universal values of

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[34] See, for example: Anna Sabbat-Swidlicka, 'The Polish Elections: The Church, the Right, and the Left,' *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol 2 No 40 (October 1993), pp.24-30 (p28).

[35] In fact, the party always contained a minority that were outright opponents of Polish accession to the EU, although most (but not all) of these broke away from the party in 1999 to form the Polish Agreement (Porozumienie Polskie: PP). See: Aleks Szczerbiak, 'Prospects for the emergence of a Polish Eurosceptic lobby,' Paper prepared for the UACES Research Conference, University of Sheffield, 8-10 September 1999, pp.8-9.

[36] See, for example: Zdort, 'Apetyt na chadecję.'

[37] See: Jerzy Sielski, 'Typologia ugropowań politycznych w Polsce,' in Sylwester Wròbel (ed.), *Polska w procesie przeobrazen ustrojowych* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo 'Sląsk', 1998), pp.112-122 (p.117).

Christianity with the liberal, democratic social order but adds to it a specifically Polish element: appreciation of the historical and national role the Catholic Church has always played in Poland. Its leaders make no secret of their belief that, in a country with a predominantly Catholic population, religion should be 'an organizing element of public life'. They claim that in the civilisation to which Poland belongs there are no ethical norms other than Christian ones."[38]

There were also a number of other very marginal Christian Democratic parties not covered in this survey due their peripheral nature such as the Polish Christian Democratic Forum (basically a political extension of the PAX Association) and the Christian Labour Party (See note 26). There were also agrarian parties emanating from the Solidarity movement that claimed to be directly inspired by Catholic social teaching or included the term 'Christian' in their name. These included the Peasant Agreement (Porozumienie Ludowe: PL) that was formed originally in 1991 as an electoral coalition comprising the Solidarity farmers' union and two post-Solidarity agrarian parties: the Polish Peasant Party-Mikołajczyk (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe [Mikołajczykowskie]: PSL [M]) and the Polish Peasant Party-Solidarity (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe 'Solidarność': PSL-S). The Peasant Agreement became a unitary party when the Polish Peasant Party-Solidarity broke away from the coalition to form the more liberal-conservative Christian-Peasant Party (See note 26). However, these are more accurately classified as agrarian or agrarian-conservative, than Christian Democratic, parties.[39]

Finally, as an aside, it is also worth noting that Wałęsa set up his own Christian Democracy of the Third Republic of Poland (Chrześcijańska Demokracja III Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej: ChD III RP) party in the run up to the 1997 election, although it did not actually contest the poll. Wałęsa hoped this new party would capitalise on what he predicted would be the rapid demise of Solidarity Electoral Action and emerge as a future alternative on the centre-right.[40] However, although some of its members were well-known figures associated with the former president, Wałęsa's party always played a marginal role in Polish politics and neither he nor Christian Democracy derived any benefit from Solidarity Electoral Action's eventual implosion. Indeed, it made no real attempts to develop a clear ideological profile, Christian Democratic or otherwise, and the party, which Wałęsa kept small deliberately, was essentially just a vehicle for him to pursue his personal ambitions. In fact, the party actually ended up playing no role in his 2000 presidential bid (in which he won only 1.01% of the votes) and although, it was involved in various subsequent initiatives to form new political groupings on the Polish centre-right, none of these were successful. The party failed to contest the 2001 election and proceeded to fade into obscurity.

Christian Democracy and the contemporary Polish right

In other words, none of these attempts to set up self-declared Christian Democratic parties in post-1989 Poland have been really successful. As Tymoszuk aptly put it,

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[38] See: Anna Sabbat-Swidlicka, 'Church and State in Poland,' *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol 2 No 14 (April 1993), pp.45-53 (p.51).
[39] The Polish Peasant Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe: PSL), the most important agrarian party operating in Poland during the 1990s, is examined in more detail below.
[40] See: Czaczkowska, 'Czas dla chadecji.'

"...the Christian Democratic movement in Poland after 1989...was divided, organisationally weak, and its programmes were incoherent."[41] Moreover, none of the main Polish right wing or centre-right parties currently operating in Poland – the Law and Justice party, Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska: PO) and the League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin: LPR) - has sought to profile itself self-consciously as Christian Democratic.[42] But is it possible to categorise any of these parties as at least 'objectively' Christian Democratic in the sense that they fit the 'ideal type' of a Christian Democratic party outlined above?

The Law and Justice party was formed in April 2001 by Jarosław Kaczyński to capitalise on the enormous popularity of his twin brother Lech, the Solidarity Electoral Action-nominated (but politically independent) justice minister. It was founded primarily as an anti-corruption and law-and-order party, encapsulated in its 2005 election slogan of building a 'Fourth Republic', a conservative project based on a radical critique of post-1989 Poland as corrupt and requiring far-reaching moral and political renewal. To begin with at least, it mainly comprised individuals who had once been members of the Centre Agreement party, although they were subsequently joined by defectors from two other Solidarity Electoral Action affiliates: the clerical-nationalist Christian National Union, and the more economically liberal and relatively secular Conservative People's Party. The Law and Justice party emerged as the fourth largest party in the September 2001 election with 9.5% of the vote and 44 seats. It then went on to win the September 2005 parliamentary election with 27% of the vote and 155 seats, and, in October, Lech Kaczyński was elected President of the Polish Republic winning 55.04% of the votes in a second round run off. The party formed a minority government led by Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz and then a majority coalition with Self-Defence and the League of Polish Families in May 2006 before Jarosław Kaczyński replaced Marcinkiewicz as premier in July.

At first glance, Law and Justice did, indeed, appear to bear a close resemblance to an archetypal Christian Democratic party. Its economic programme was infused with 'social market' rhetoric, and the party saw the state as fulfilling a significant regulatory and interventionist role to ensure economic security for its citizens. Its 2005 election successes were due, in no small part, to its commitment to the concept of a 'social' or 'solidaristic' Poland, arguing that it was the state's responsibility to build more solidarity between those who had succeeded in the new capitalist Poland and those who felt that they had lost out from economic transformation.[43] From the outset, the Law and Justice party was a culturally conservative party strongly

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[41] See: Zenon Tymoszuk, 'The Political Thought of the Christian Democratic Party and the Programme Conceptions of Peasant Movements in Poland during the Period of System Transformation (1989-1998)' in Katarzyna Krzywicka and Edward Olszewski (eds.), *Christian Democracy in the Modern World* (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2000), pp.263-284 (p.268).

[42] Some commentators have categorised the agrarian-populist Self-Defence (Samoobrona) party, led by the controversial farmers' union leader Andrzej Lepper, as a right-wing or radical right party. See, for example: Michael Minkenberg, 'The Radical Right in Postsocialist Central and Eastern Europe: Comparative Observations and Interpretations,' *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol 16 No 2 (2002), pp.335-362 (p.351). While there were clearly right-wing nationalist-populist elements in Self-Defence's programme and discourse, its primary appeal was as a left-wing economic agrarian-populist party.

[43] See: Aleks Szczerbiak, '"Social Poland" Defeats "Liberal Poland": The Septmeber-October 2005 Polish Parliamentary and Presidential Elections,' *Sussex European Institute Working Paper No 86*, (Brighton: Sussex European Institute, May 2006) at
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/working_paper-social_poland_defeats_liberal_poland.pdf.

committed to traditional social values, particularly the importance of using social policy to support the family. It also argued that the state should recognise the importance of and respect Christian values, which it felt provided an axiological underpinning for associational activity in the public sphere.

However, the party never had any organic links with either the Catholic Church hierarchy or, to begin with at least, lay organisations and its programme was only loosely and implicitly informed by religious values. Indeed, initially at least, Law and Justice was extremely cautious about adopting too high a 'religious' profile and very restrained in using such rhetoric for fear of putting off 'secular' voters who might otherwise have been attracted by its socio-economic and anti-corruption programme.[44] However, particularly towards the end of the 2005 election campaign, both the party and its presidential candidate made a much clearer pitch for the religious electorate,[45] and both became more closely associated with the influential clerical-nationalist broadcaster Radio Maryja and its network of associated organisations and media outlets.[46] These included the 'Radio Maryja Family' (Rodzina Radia Maryja), an organization formed from the radio station's listeners, and linked media enterprises: the 'Trwam' ("I persist") TV station and 'Our Daily' (Nasz Dziennik) newspaper. At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that Radio Maryja was not linked to official Church structures.[47] Moreover, although Law and Justice supported Polish accession to the EU, the party also has a strong 'Eurosceptic' strand to its thinking, in many ways akin to the British Conservative party[48] – a stance reflected in the fact that, having initially aligned itself with the European People's Party, Law and Justice subsequently decided to join the Eurosceptic 'Union for a Europe of Nations' grouping in the EP.[49] Law and Justice's ideology and programme, therefore, reflected

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[44] See: Piotr Zaremba, 'Prawicowe odrodzenie czy przegrupowanie,' *Rzeczpospolita*, 7 June 2001; Marcin Dominik Zdort, 'Koniec karanwału,' *Rzeczpospolita*, 13 July 2001; and Mariusz Janicki, 'Taka sprytna partia,' *Polityka*, 25 June 2005. Jarosław Kaczyński's earlier wariness in relation to what he saw as excessively clerical politics is exemplified by his refusal in the early 1990s to contemplate electoral co-operation between the Centre Agreement and the Christian National Union on the grounds that, as he put it, the "shortest road to the de-Christianisation of Poland runs through the Christian National Union." See: Antoni Dudek, *Pierwsze Lata III Rzeczpospolitej, 1989-1995: Zarys historii politycznej Polski* (Krakow: Wydawnictwo GEO, 1997), p168.

[45] For example, both Lech Kaczyński and the Law and Justice party sent a special letter to individual parish priests calling for their support. See: Katarzyna Wiśńiewska, 'Lech Kaczyński wysłał proboszczom list,' 1 October 2005 at
http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wybory2005/2029020,67805,2946118.html (Viewed on 3 October 2005).

[46] During the election, Radio Maryja mobilised its listeners to vote for Kaczyński as president and both the Law and Justice party and the League of Polish Families in the parliamentary election. However, subsequently the Catholic broadcaster's relations with the League became cooler as it became one of the most vocal supporters of the Law and Justice-led government. For a good analysis of how Radio Maryja supported the Law and Justice and Kaczyński campaigns see: Jacek Hołub, 'Jak bracia Kaczyńscy podziękują Radiu Maryja,' 24 October 2005 at
http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/kraj/2029020,34314,2983870.html (Viewed on 25 October 2005).

[47] Indeed, liberal bishops shunned the clerical-nationalist discourse used by Radio Maryja, while even more conservative prelates were concerned at the way that the broadcaster developed beyond the direct control of the Church hierarchy.

[48] See: Aleks Szczerbiak, 'Opposing Europe or Problematising Europe? Euroscepticism and 'Eurorealism in the Polish Party System,' in Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart (eds.), *Opposing Europe: The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism in Contemporary Europe. Volume One: Case Studies and Country Surveys* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming, 2007).

[49] A glance through the 'International Political Review' (Międzynarodowy Przegląd Polityczny), a programmatic foreign policy journal edited by Law and Justice MEP Konrad Szymański and an intellectual milieu closely aligned to the party, also suggested that Law and Justice saw its ideological

an eclectic mix of socially conservative, economically collectivist and national-populist influences. However, at root, it remained a leader-dominated and fairly narrowly focused law-and-order and anti-corruption party. The party's clearest defining characteristic, and the ideological core of its programme, was always a commitment to the radical reform of the Polish state and the creation of a new moral, political and social order. This makes it difficult to categorise in terms of Western party families, but it is certainly not an archetypal Christian Democratic party.[50]

Civic Platform was also formed at the beginning of 2001 to capitalise on the relative success of the independent liberal-conservative candidate Andrzej Olechowski in the 2000 presidential election. The party emerged as the main opposition grouping in parliament following the 2001 election winning 12.68% of the votes and 65 seats. However, in the 2005 election the party increased its share of the vote substantially to 24.14% and 133 seats, while its leader Donald Tusk lost narrowly to Lech Kaczyński in the second round run off for the presidency, securing 45.96% of the vote. However, although virtually all commentators expected Civic Platform to join the Law and Justice party in a coalition, as noted above, the latter chose to form a minority government instead and Civic Platform remained the main opposition party.

The substantial increase in the Civic Platform's share of the vote stemmed, in large part, from its ability to construct a broader appeal that went well beyond its original 'core' liberal electorate. After the 2001 election, the party attempted to re-position itself as more socially conservative and with a stronger national-patriotic discourse, which has also involved developing a more religiously informed dimension to its ideological profile. This was exemplified by Civic Platform's December 2001 'Ideological Declaration', a key statement of self-definition, which cited the Ten Commandments as the basis of Western civilisation and outlined the party's role as being to: "prudently support the family and traditional moral norms, which (have) served development and permanence," defend human life, ban euthanasia and limit genetic research.[51] This shifted the party closer towards a more identifiably Christian Democratic ideological and programmatic profile. Moreover, although Civic Platform developed a more national-patriotic element to its discourse, and made some high profile criticisms of the EU constitutional treaty, these were not fundamental and the party remained broadly supportive of the European integration project. From the outset, it was a candidate member of the European People's Party and the party's MEPs became full members of its EP group after the June 2004 elections.

However, Civic Platform's economic programme emphasised the importance of competitiveness, sound public finances and low taxation rather than a 'social market' approach based on welfarism, state intervention and corporatism. The party's signature policies included commitments to: introduce a 'flat tax'; reduce costs and

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soul mates as the British Conservatives, the Czech Civic Democrats, West European Eurosceptic networks and sections of the US right rather than West European Christian Democratic politicians.

[50] Some commentators have suggested that its closest West European analogue may be the Bavarian Christian Social Union. See, for example: Neal Ascherson, 'Poland's interrgenum,' 30 September 2005 at http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article.jsp?id=6&debateId=28&articleId=2883 (Viewed on 8 August 2006).

[51] See: Platforma Obywatelska, *Deklaracja Ideowa Platformy Obywatelskiej: Przyjęta przez Klub Poselski Platforma Obywatelska w dniu 21 grudnia 2001r* at htttp://www.platforma.org/_files_/dokumenty/inne/deklaracja_ideowa_21_12_01.doc (Viewed on 23 August 2006).

regulations on employers and strengthen their position vis-à-vis trade unions; create more flexible labour markets; reform public finances to reduce the state budget deficit; protect the independence of the Polish National Bank in setting monetary policy; a more restrictive and targeted welfare policy; introduce education vouchers and university tuition fees; and partial privatisation of the health service. Above all, and notwithstanding its subsequent embrace of social conservatism, Civic Platform was an economically liberal low tax and free market party. Moreover, attempts to develop a more conservative ideological profile and invoke religious ethics as a source of values in the axiological sphere aside, this economic programme remains at the core of Civic Platform's philosophy and identity. This means mean that, at root, Civic Platform is more accurately categorised as a right-wing liberal or liberal-conservative, rather than a Christian Democratic, party.

The League of Polish Families was also formed in the run up to the 2001 election and, although it formally contested the election as a political party,[52] was originally a coalition of various clerical-nationalist parties and right-wing groupings. Due to support from Radio Maryja, it was able to harness the radical 'religious right' electorate that had previously been subsumed within broader right-wing parties and coalitions such as Solidarity Electoral Action and emerged as the sixth largest grouping to secure parliamentary representation, winning 7.87% of the vote and 38 seats. It then survived the defection of some of its smaller affiliates and leaders to re-organise itself as a more coherent, unitary member-based party. In the 2005 election, the League retained broadly the share of support that it achieved in 2001 (7.97% and 34 seats) and, although initially the party went into opposition, in May 2006 joined the Law and Justice-led government as a junior coalition partner and its young and extremely ambitious leader, Roman Giertych, became a deputy premier.

As its name implies, the League was certainly a very strong supporter of conservative social values and strengthening the legal and economic position of the family. Axiologically, the party invoked Christian values directly and explicitly to justify its strong opposition to homosexual marriage and adoption, euthanasia, cloning, and any attempts to liberalise Poland's abortion laws; and all of these occupied a prominent place in the party's programme and rhetoric. The party portrayed itself as representing an alternative to both collectivist and liberal approaches to political economy and claimed to support a 'social market' programme, with a strong emphasis on policies to promote welfare and social protection.

However, there were at least three important respects in which the League did not fit the ideal type profile of a Christian Democratic party. Firstly, the party interpreted its support for 'Christian values' in a distinctive way and was closely identified with a particular ultra-traditionalist and nationalist pre-Second Vatican Council strand of Polish Catholicism. This was an approach shared by many Polish lay Catholics and clergymen, particularly those clustered around Radio Maryja and the network of organisations and media attached to the broadcaster. However, as noted above, Radio Maryja was not linked to official Church structures and, moreover, since 2002 the radio station began to distance itself from the League anyway.[53] Indeed, as noted

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[52] To circumvent the higher electoral threshold for electoral coalitions (8%) compared to that for single parties (5%).

[53] This was partly due to pressure from the Church hierarchy to disengage from politics and partly because its director, Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, grew increasingly to dislike and distrust Roman Giertych.

above, it became clear during the 2005 election – and, even more so, subsequently - that Radio Maryja was actually closer to the Law and Justice party. Secondly, the League's economic programme included proposals for: high levels of state regulation and protection, particularly for small and medium (ie Polish) firms against large (ie foreign) enterprises; maintaining a dominant role for the state in "strategic sectors"; a highly critical approach towards privatisation; and strong support for trade unions. In other words, it was probably *too* economically interventionist, even for an archetypal Christian Democratic party. Thirdly, like the Christian National Union although even more so, the League fused religious fundamentalism with radical nationalist rhetoric, making it an implacable and principled opponent of the European integration project. The party spearheaded the campaign for a No vote in the June 2003 Polish EU accession referendum and its MEPs joined the anti-EU 'Independence and Democracy' grouping in the European Parliament after the 2004 EP elections. All this highlighted the fact that, although the League drew on a range of different conservative traditions, given its emphasis on the importance of defending national sovereignty against encroachment from international organisations, it was really a clerical-nationalist rather than a Christian Democratic grouping drawing more on the traditions of Dmowski's pre-war National Democracy movement; particularly the wing representing the ideology espoused of Jędrzej Giertych and his son Maciej (Roman's grandfather and father respectively).

In summary, then, parties in post-1989 Poland that have called themselves Christian Democratic have thus far failed, while none of the country's more successful centre-right and right-wing parties can be called (or call themselves) Christian Democratic. In the remainder of this paper we attempt to explain why this might be the case by analysing the conditions that led to the emergence of successful Christian Democratic parties in post-1945 Western Europe. We then go on to compare this framework with the conditions that prevailed in post-1989 Poland to see which of these conditions were present and which were absent.

3   Reasons for the success of Christian democracy: towards generalisation

One of the most interesting books on comparative politics to have appeared in the last ten years is Kalyvas' *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe,*[54] the main argument of which is that the formation of confessional political parties in late Nineteenth and early Twentieth century Europe occurred even though they were neither envisaged nor desired by their initial sponsors, conservative political elites and the Roman Catholic Church. The only flaw in what is otherwise an exemplary combination of social science and historical method is Kalyvas' claim that there was a 'remarkable continuity' between the parties he focuses on and the Christian Democratic parties that came to dominate the politics of a number of West European countries for several decades following the end of the Second World War. This idea is rejected by most experts on the post-war period, be they historians or political scientists – a consensus that arguably calls into question (albeit implicitly) Lipset and Rokkan's assertion that the political formations of the post-war period reflected the cleavage structures of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries. The historian Martin Conway insists that, '"Christian Democrats" (of the pre-war era) were

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[54] See: Stahis N. Kalyvas, *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe* (New York, Cornell University Press, 1996).

precursors of the post-1945 Christian democrats in name only'.[55] The political scientist Carolyn Warner likewise maintains, "the post-war Christian democratic parties were *not* lifted from storage as a continuation of the pre-war Catholic or Christian democratic parties. Maintaining that they were...seriously distorts the process of post-war party formation."[56] In short, in order to understand why Christian Democratic parties came about and why they came, at least in some countries, to be so successful, we have to look at 'a particular conjuncture'[57] – the first few years after a regime change that saw totalitarian dictatorships or their puppet governments replaced by democratically elected administrations.

Doing this does not mean, however, that we are obliged or need to give up the search for generalisation and an explanatory framework that can be exploited in another time and another place, not least in a period that saw a similarly momentous regime change. In fact, a comprehensive survey of the literature on the post-war development of continental Christian Democracy reveals a number of factors associated with success. It also reveals that the absence or weakness of one or more of those factors in a particular country could make it less likely that a Christian Democratic party would do as well there as its counterparts in countries where those factors were in play. We discuss each of the factors in turn, in descending order of importance, indicating the extent to which they were important in the immediate post-war period in a number of continental European countries that either saw or did not see the formation of a substantial Christian Democratic party.

By a substantial Christian Democratic party we mean those Christian Democratic parties which, in the wake of the first elections following World War Two and until at least the 1970s regularly took between a third and two fifths of the national vote, were crucial components of most governments and had no significant conservative competitor. Examples of countries that hosted such parties are Italy (Christian Democracy), Belgium (Christian People's Party-Social Christian Party, Christelijke Volkspartij-Parti Social Chrétien or CVP-PSC), the Netherlands (the present day Christian Democratic Appeal and its forerunners such as the Catholic People's Party, Katholieke Volkspartij: KVP), and Germany (the Christian Democratic Union-Christian Social Union). The country that might have provided fertile soil for such a party but in the end did not was France: there, despite a potentially promising start,[58] the Popular Republican Movement (Mouvement Républicain Populaire: MRP) soon lost out electorally, and then governmentally, to competitors on the centre-right.

Factors favouring Christian Democracy in the immediate years following the Second World War included, in order of importance, the following:

1. A substantial (and preferably practising) Roman Catholic population.

"There was", as Conway puts it, "no secret to the post-war electoral success of Christian Democracy: it relied primarily on the successful yoking of political choice

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[55] See: Martin Conway, 'Introduction,' in Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (eds.) *Political Catholicism in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.1-33 (p.11).

[56] See: Carolyn M. Warner, *Confessions of an Interest Group: the Catholic Church and Political Parties in Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p.24

[57] See: Conway, 'The Age of Christian Democracy,' p.59.

[58] See: Warner, p.110.

to religious commitment."[59] The higher the level of the latter, the easier it was to achieve the former. Italy and Belgium were almost entirely Catholic and, while attendance at mass, varied between regions, on average it exceeded 40%.[60] In France, only around a quarter of the population was Roman Catholic. Other countries where the Catholic population was lower, such as (West) Germany (nearly half) and the Netherlands (about a third), got over this hurdle, however, by incorporating or co-operating with political Protestantism. Success of course also depended on a solid majority of this Catholic population actually voting for the Christian Democrats: this was almost certainly achieved in Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands, where something approaching nine out of ten practising Catholics did so; such voting was reasonably solid in Germany, where about half of all practising Catholics voted for the Christian Democratic Union-Christian Social Union, but considerably flakier in France.[61] All parties, we should note, were almost certainly given a temporary boost by something of a post-war boom in a traditional Catholic religiosity that presumably offered some consolation for the miseries of war and occupation.

2. A real and pervasive fear of a victory (or takeover) by a militant secularist, anti-clerical, egalitarian and potentially totalitarian left.

This was a widespread – and, given the events in places like Prague, a reasonable – anxiety all over continental Europe. Anti-communism had become commonplace in the inter-war and war years, while in the post-war years many communist parties were given a boost by their association with resistance to German occupation and/or by material assistance from a recently triumphant Soviet Union.[62] The apparent (if evanescent) unity of those parties encouraged many to believe that only a similarly united effort could beat them back.[63]

3. Bedrock support from a) newly-enfranchised female voters b) rural/agricultural sectors and c) the propertied middle-classes.

Although the reasons why can only be guessed at (the usual suspects are the parties' 'pro-family' rhetoric and women's relative religiosity), women, many of whom were voting for the first time in the aftermath of the war, seem to have provided significant support for the Christian Democrats.[64] Unlike levels of Catholicity, however, there

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[59] See: Conway, 'The Age of Christian Democracy,' p.48.

[60] See: Martin Conway, 'Belgium,' in Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (eds.) *Political Catholicism in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.187-218 (p188); Warner, p.142.

[61] See: Michael P. Fogarty, *Christian Democracy in Western Europe, 1820-1953*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), p.358; and Warner, p.165, n.2.

[62] See: Martin Conway, 'The Age of Christian Democracy,' pp.52-4; and John E. Pollard, 'Italy', in Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (eds.) *Political Catholicism in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.69-96 (p.87).

[63] See: Raymond Grew, 'Suspended Bridges to Democracy: the Uncertain Origins of Christian Democracy in France and Italy,' in Thomas Kselman and Joseph A. Buttigieg (eds.) *European Christian Democracy: Historical Legacies and Comparative Perspectives* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), pp.11-42 (p.34).

[64] See: James F. McMillan, 'France,' in Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (eds.) *Political Catholicism in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.34-68 (p.61); Peter Van Kemseke, 'The Social Basis of Christian Democacy in France,' in Emiel Lamberts (ed.) *Christian Democracy in the European Union, 1945 –1995* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), pp174-188 (175-6); Robert Leonardi and Douglas Wertman, *Italian Christian Democracy: The Politics of Dominance* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p.166; and Conway, 'Belgium', p.210.

seems to have been little variation between countries on this score. The same can be said for the other sources of core support – the so-called 'rural-middle class alliance' or 'farmer-bourgeois alliance', some of which had supported the authoritarian right in the inter-war years, but which in the post-war years helped push Christian Democracy away from a thoroughgoing social corporatism towards a more free-market economic policy, albeit one that preserved agriculture as a special case and looked to Europe to help matters.[65]

4. Potential competitors on the right either a) de-legitimised by their participation or tacit acquiescence in totalitarian regimes or b) unwilling or unable to organise themselves rapidly.

Like fear of communism, this applied across much of continental Europe. In essence, the responsibility for the crimes of the dictatorial regimes and/or their puppet governments, and indeed for the war itself, lay fairly obviously – if not always directly or completely – with the conservative right. Indeed, so heinous were they, that there could be little thought, at least immediately, of the 'successor parties' that more peaceful transitions to democracy have produced. One enormous advantage enjoyed by Christian Democratic politicians was that they could present themselves as moderates untainted by association with the previous regimes. Many of them, indeed had been, persecuted and imprisoned by those regimes and/or were involved in the patriotic resistance against them.

At first glance anyway, this is not one of those factors that allow us to discriminate between one country and another. There is, however, one obvious qualification – and it applies to France. There, there clearly was a leader, de Gaulle, around whose charismatic presence a centre-right alternative to Christian Democracy could have been constructed from the outset had he not been reluctant to get more directly involved. Polls in 1946 suggested that over two thirds of those who supported the Popular Republican Movement, which at that point was seen as close to the General, would have voted for a party led by de Gaulle himself; little surprise, then, that once the Rally of the French People (Rassemblement du peuple français: RPF) was founded in 1947 so many of them defected at such cost to the Popular Republican Movement, whose leaders declined to 'break right' with the Rally, preferring instead to carry on a centre-left coalition in defiance of what they saw as a damaging trend toward bi-polarisation.[66] In fact, this apparent French exceptionalism points to a more general consideration, namely that the continued success of Christian Democratic parties across Europe in time varied according to their capacity to persuade more unambiguously right-wing electors and politicians to stay with them, a capacity that varied according to institutional logic. Hence Italian Christian Democracy started out well, but once it became evident that the Italian electoral system would allow small authoritarian parties a foothold, it lost some support – although this was compensated for (as it was in Belgium until the national cleavage could be contained no longer) by essentially centrist governmentalism. The Christian Democratic Union-Christian Social Union, on the other hand, could bank on Germany's high threshold to make voting for a more radical right-wing option seem like a waste of time.[67]

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[65] See: Conway, 'The Age of Christian Democracy,' pp.54-6.
[66] See: Van Kemseke, pp.176, 182-3; and McMillan, 'France,' pp.61-2.
[67] See: Emiel Lamberts, 'Conclusion,' p.475.

5. A church hierarchy with high prestige and centralised organisation that, at crucial early elections, threw its weight and resources behind its chosen Christian Democratic party.

This is clearly a factor that does allow us to discriminate between countries, partly of course because it emphasises the role of agency but also because there were considerable institutional differences between what was ostensibly the same Church in different countries. No doubt, this explains why it is the main focus of Warner's valuable recent study[68] – a study that reveals that the decision of the Church in some countries to support a particular party strongly helped 'lock in' that party as the main centre-right contender, notwithstanding the fact that the choice was sometimes *faute de mieux* to start with and occasioned more than the odd regret afterwards.

In Italy, the Lateran Pacts of 1929 had left the Church in the highly centralised control of a Vatican with immense autonomy and financial power. Once this agreement had been re-cemented into the post-war constitution by Christian Democracy, which also engineered the exit from the government of the left, the Church ceased flirting with more authoritarian forces on the right and its mobilisation on the party's behalf, especially in 1948, was uncompromising.[69] In Belgium, Cardinal Van Roey, widely regarded as a wartime patriot and a man whose hatred of the secular left was a match even for that of Pope Pius XII, similarly swung the Church behind the Christian People's Party-Social Christian Party and effectively strangled a potential rival (the Democratic Belgian Union (Union Democratique Belge: UDB]) in its cot.[70] In Germany, political euthanasia rather than infanticide was the order of the day: the Catholic Church hierarchy had been left with rather less institutional capacity by a Nazi regime from which it had (albeit not immediately) asserted its independence; but it was nonetheless instrumental in killing off the pre-war (Catholic) Zentrum the better to provide a sure start to the new-kid-on-the-block, the cross-confessional Christian Democratic Union – a party whose untainted brand seemed (correctly it turned out) to offer a better chance of embedding the Church's taxation and property rights, and its welfare operations, in the post-war order.[71] The Netherlands provided something of a contrast in that there was less of a sharp break with the pre-war tradition of political Catholicism, but the material and exhortational support of bishops who like their compatriots in other countries were seen to have stood apart from (and frequently up to) the Nazis, was almost as strong.[72]

The obvious exception was France. There the Catholic Church hierarchy was: firstly, tainted by association with Vichy; secondly, hamstrung by a powerful laic tradition that made it difficult to argue against a separation of Church and state – and intervene

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[68] See: Warner.

[69] See: Warner, pp.110, 139. See also: Pollard, p.87.

[70] See: Emmanuel Gerard, 'Christian Democracy in Belgium,' in Emiel Lamberts (ed) *Christian Democracy in the European Union, 1945 –1995* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), pp.65-78 (pp69-70); Conway, 'Belgium,' pp.207-8; and Ellen Lovell Evans, *The cross and the ballot: Catholic political parties in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands, 1785-1985* (Boston: Humanities Press, 1999), p.246.

[71] See: Warner, pp 189, 192, 197-9; and Karl-Egon Lönne, 'Germany,' in Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (eds.) *Political Catholicism in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.156-186 (p.185).

[72] See: Paul Luykx, 'The Netherlands,' in Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (eds.) *Political Catholicism in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.219-247 (p.229); and Evans, p.239.

in politics – without provoking a massive backlash; and, thirdly, in any case not the relatively centralised, unitary actor that its counterparts in other countries could claim to be. Consequently, in spite of the fact that the early signs for the Popular Republican Movement looked good, the Church hierarchy would not, and to some extent could not, go out to bat for the party – a low profile approach that became all the lower once it became clear that the party would not only not give it what it wanted on crucial questions (like religious schools), but that, unlike most of its counterparts in other European countries (at least in the early years), it was also prepared to govern in coalition with the left.[73]

6. Support and campaigning on behalf of a Christian Democratic party by groups and associations in civil society.

If ever there was a golden age of the mass party, it was in the immediate post-war period. Just as some communist and social democratic parties were a sub-culture to spread the message and keep supporters loyal, some Christian Democratic parties enjoyed 'a distinct political advantage in having a network of extra-party ties: unions, lay associations, social and charitable activities and parish organizations' – even if they didn't always stay strictly on message.[74] But here again, there was variation and contrast between countries.

One of the reasons why the Vatican's support for Italian Christian Democracy was so effective in the immediate post-war period was that, during the Mussolini era, the voluntary lay organisation, Azione Cattolica (Catholic Action), remained both intact and under the influence of the Church. It had branches in each of the country's 24,000 parishes and these were mobilised to create the so-called Civic Committees that did direct electoral campaigning.[75] A component part of Catholic Action were the association of Catholic workers (ACLI), which agitated successfully for a separate Catholic trade union federation in 1947, and which remained essentially loyal to Christian Democracy until the 1960s.[76] By that time, however, the Christian Democracy had in some ways weaned itself off any reliance on Church-influenced organisations and money by replacing it with the clientelism and patronage afforded it by its long-time control of the state.[77] Nevertheless the role of intermediary institutions in delivering welfare in Italy (and elsewhere in continental Europe), meant a continued role for what would now be called 'faith-based' organisations. The 'pillarised' societies of the Netherlands and Belgium likewise gave Catholic/Christian Democratic parties there strong connections to civil society groups who, in turn, worked to keep the parties strong and helped them maintain support across class lines.[78]

The latter, however, was not so true in (West) Germany. Although, they gradually re-assumed a role in the delivery of social and health services during the decades

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[73] See: Warner, pp.89, 110-114, 127, 179-184; and Van Kemseke, pp.178-9.

[74] See: Grew, 'Suspended Bridges to Democracy,' pp.23, 34.

[75] See: Warner, pp.147-8.

[76] See: Pollard, pp.92-3.

[77] See: Pollard, pp.89, 95.

[78] See: Paul Lucardie, 'From Family Father to DJ: Christian Democratic Parties and Civil Society in Western Europe,' in Emiel Lamberts (ed) *Christian Democracy in the European Union, 1945 –1995* (Leuven, Leuven University Press, 1997), pp210-221 (p.211); Luykx, p.226; and Gerard, 'Christian Democracy in Belgium,' p.71.

following the war, in its immediate aftermath Catholic associations had been rendered virtually defunct by the Nazi regime. Moreover, the Christian Democratic Union-Christian Social Union never developed a truly organic link with the trade union movement.[79] In France, Catholic Action survived the war, but it stood very much at arm's length from the bishops and, fearing a backlash if it did get too involved in politics, decided to put its energies (and limited resources) into re-awakening the Christian spirituality of ordinary people rather than helping a particular party.[80] As for more secular interest groups, the FNSEA (the anti-communist, conservative farmers federation) quickly wrote off the Popular Republican Movement after it pushed for a rationalisation of the agricultural sector, while the Christian trade union, the 900,000 strong CFTC, was sceptical about its capacity to act as an advocate of workers' interests and keen to retain its own autonomy.[81]

7. A Christian Democratic party that delivers the basics to the Church but manages to achieve relative autonomy from the Church hierarchy and its more contentious policy demands.

Christian Democratic parties had to offer the Church something in return for its support but at the same time minimize the extent to which carrying out its agenda would cost it the support of non-confessional and/or moderate voters. This was not an easy task at first: many bishops and cardinals were seized in the immediate post-war years with an 'integralist urge' to use the state to secure Catholic hegemony and the defeat of modern values they saw as sinful, while some of the Church's more contentious demands, especially on schooling, had considerable (and therefore tempting) potential to mobilise core supporters.[82] This delicate balancing act was made somewhat easier by an almost universal (if fuzzy) commitment among Christian Democratic parties to a 'social Catholicism' that, on the one hand, went down well with a Church that was ambivalent about unbridled capitalism and, on the other, signalled to the wider electorate that they were progressive parties less hung up on religion than some assumed. However, it was still a balance achieved more successfully in some countries than others.

In Italy, for instance, Christian Democracy managed to deflect Vatican pressure for an alliance with monarchists and neo-Fascists by securing the Lateran Pacts and persuading it that its coalition with moderate secular parties was the best way to defeat the ultimate enemy, communism – a holding operation that bought the party enough time to get its patronage politics up and running. In Belgium, the Christian People's Party-Social Christian Party replaced Catholic with the more conciliatory Christian in its name, and worked hard to present itself as a party open to all those who supported its progressive, centrist social and economic policies – a strategy that was somewhat undermined in the 1940s and 1950s, it has to be said, by its willingness during national crises over the monarchy and then over the de-confessionalisation of education to take the Church's side.[83] The German Christian Democratic Union-Christian Social Union, however, resisted pressure to include the 1933 concordat and the confessional school system in the basic law. Adenauer believed the former was

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[79] See: Lucardie, pp.214-5; and Evans, pp.269-70.
[80] See: Warner, pp.155-8.
[81] See: Warner, p.159; and Van Kemseke, p.179.
[82] See: Grew, pp.13-14, 35.
[83] See: Conway, 'Belgium,' pp.209-210.

tainted by association with the Nazi regime and that, along with the latter (which the Church could pursue anyway in individual Länder), it would alienate the mass following a true 'people's party' on the right should be aiming for.[84] This more arm's length relationship with the Church was taken further, indeed probably too far, by the French Popular Republican Movement. Like Italian Christian Democracy it saw its role as more of a broker or arbiter between parties trapped by economic interests and bipolar traditions;[85] but unlike the Christian Democracy it could not or would not offset the downsides of that role (the constant compromises, the blurred identity) with patronage politics or a continued association with Catholicism. Indeed, the representative of Christian Democracy in France, if anything, made a point of not doing what the Church wanted; no surprise, then, that it may have paid a price.[86]

4.   Christian Democracy in post-1989 Poland – the missing links

In the case of post-1989 Poland, only the first of our seven conditions – a substantial, practising Roman Catholic population – appears to have been present unambiguously during the emergence of democratic, multi-party politics. Our second condition – fear of a takeover by a militant, secularist, anti-clerical, egalitarian and potentially totalitarian left – also existed, but only in attenuated form. None of the other five factors that we have identified as being crucial to the success of post-war West European Christian Democratic parties were present, or only in a very limited or qualified form.

Surveys taken in the early 1990s, found that 97% of the Polish population declared themselves to be Catholics while, according to the Polish General Social Survey of 1992, 49% of respondents attended mass at least once a week, making Poland one of the strongest Catholic communities in Europe.[87] Historically, the Church was felt to have played a crucial role in upholding and defending Polish national identity. During periods when Poland did not have independent statehood or when national sovereignty was constrained, membership of the Catholic Church represented, as Monticone put it, a form of "resistance to foreign domination and oppression by non-Catholic powers." [88] During the communist period the Church was also an important focus for opposition to the regime.[89] Moreover, from the mid-1970s, when 'only' 75% of Poles declared themselves to be Catholic, Poland experienced a religious revival, particularly following the election of John Paul II to the papacy in 1978. So there were also clear analogies with the boom in traditional Catholic religiosity that parts of Western Europe experienced in the immediate post-Second World War period. At the end of 1980s, the Church "performed the role of de facto official opposition and of the

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[84] See: Evans, p270. See also: Geoffrey Pridham, *Christian Democracy in Western Germany: The CDU/CSU in Government and Opposition, 1945–1976* (London: Croom Helm, 1977).

[85] See: Grew, p.36.

[86] See: Warner, pp.114, 179, 184.

[87] See: Kenneth Ka-Lok Chan, 'The religious base of politics in post-Communist Poland: A case of bounded secularisation,' in David Broughton and Hans-Martien ten Napel, *Religion and Mass Electoral Behaviour in Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp.176-197 (p.179).

[88] See: Ronald C. Monticone, *The Catholic Church in Communist Poland 1945-1985: Forty Years of Church-State Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p.3.

[89] See, for example: Bogdan Szajkowski, *Next to God...Poland* (London: Frances Pinter, 1983); and Monticone.

mediator between the communist government and Solidarity"[90] and played a key role in the round-table negotiations that led to the collapse of communism and transition to democracy. All this meant that when the democratic breakthrough came in 1989 the Catholic Church was the most trusted and respected public institution in Poland.[91]

That said, the early 1990s also saw the emergence of a secular, anti-clerical (but not totalitarian) left. This was partly in reaction to the way in which the Church (as Korbonski put it, "dizzy with success" at the overthrow of communist rule[92]) moved quickly to expand its influence in the public sphere, exploiting its prestigious position and the political opportunity that opened up when parties sympathetic to its agenda gaining substantial parliamentary representation following the October 1991 election.[93] Firstly, religious education was re-introduced in state schools. Secondly, parliament passed a highly restrictive law controlling the practice of abortion. Thirdly, a new law regulating radio and television stipulated that broadcasters had to respect Christian values. Fourthly, in 1993 the outgoing government signed a Concordat between Poland and the Vatican, an agreement which critics felt gave the Church excessive influence and privilege, after it had a lost a vote of no confidence in parliament and while parliament was still debating a new constitution that was to define the nature of the Church-state relationship. Fifthly, the Church was also heavily criticised for appearing to intervene too overtly on behalf of Christian and pro-Church parties and candidates in parliamentary and presidential elections (discussed in greater detail below).

Evidence of an anti-clerical backlash could be seen in a number of ways. Firstly, the Church saw substantial erosion in its public approval ratings from over 80% at the end of 1980s, to only 46% in November 1992.[94] A March 1991 CBOS survey, also found that the Church had lost its position as Poland's most trusted institution (to the armed forces).[95] Although its ratings rose again steadily in the mid-to-late 1990s, the Church was never able to recover its earlier levels of support and reclaim its position as a relatively unquestioned moral and political authority.[96] Secondly, this decline in the Church's prestige was combined with a feeling that it had an excessive influence on public life; Polish Social Survey data from 1992-97 found consistently that more than half of Poles felt that this was the case, peaking at 65% in 1993.[97] Thirdly, the communist successor party Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy

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[90] See: Mirella W. Eberts, 'The Roman Catholic Church and Democracy in Poland,' *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 50 No. 5 (July 1998), pp.817-842 (p.820).

[91] See: CBOS. *Opinie o Miejscu i Roli Koscioła w PRL* (Warsaw: CBOS, July 1988).

[92] See: Andrzej Korbonski, 'Poland ten years after: the church,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 33 No. 1, (2000), pp.123-146 (p.144)

[93] For good analyses of how Church-state relations evolved in the early post-communist period, particularly how the Church overplaying its hand in politics, especially elections, fuelled an anti-clerical backlash, see: Anna Sabbat-Swidlicka, 'Church and State in Poland'; and Eberts.

[94] See: CBOS. *Religijność Polaków: 1984-1994* (Warsaw: CBOS, June 1994).

[95] See: Grzegorz Rydlewski, 'Czynnik wyznaniowy a współczesna scena polityczna,' in Stanisław Gebethner, (ed.), *Polska scena polityczna a wybory* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Fundacji Inicjatyw Spolecznych "Polska w Europie", 1993), pp.203-221 (p.212).

[96] See: CBOS. *Religijność Polakow*. See also: Beata Roguska and Bogna Wciórka, 'Religijność i stosunek do Kościoła,' in Krzysztof Zagórski and Michał Strzeszewski (eds.), *Nowa Rzeczywistość: Oceny i opinie 1989-1999* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Akademickie DIALOG, 2000), pp.183-194 (pp188-190).

[97] See: Chan, 'The religious base of politics in post-Communist Poland,' p.181. See also: Roguska and Wciórka, pp.190-194.

Demokratycznej: SLD) exploited growing public anxiety about perceived excessive clerical influence as one of the springboards for its return to power following the September 1993 parliamentary election.[98] Moreover, in spite of Church's fairly open support for him, the incumbent Wałęsa lost the 1995 presidential election narrowly to Democratic Left Alliance leader Aleksander Kwaśniewski which, as well as demonstrating the limits of the Church's political mobilising capacity, also meant that anti-clerical politicians controlled parliament, the government and presidency.

The clerical-secular divide that emerged as a major source of political divisions in Poland in the early 1990s did not manifest itself in terms of a split between Catholics and non-Catholics. Rather, it was based on divisions between those who felt that the Church should play a prominent role in Polish public life and those who feared that this could lead to clericalism and religious fundamentalism. For example, an October 1994 CBOS survey, divided Poland into more or less equal clerical-traditional (42%, 17% radical clerical) and secular (46%, 17% radical secular) camps based on respondents' views on issues such as: religious education, abortion and ratification of the Concordat. This corresponded closely to frequency of Church attendance with regular church-goers believing that the Church should play an active role in politics and more sceptical, less devout Catholics and non-believers advocating separation of Church and state.[99] This clerical-secular divide developed into an important and sustainable determinant of party identification and voting behaviour. A raft of sociological research on Polish voting behaviour found that levels of religiosity (measured by regularity of Church attendance) and attitudes towards the Church's public role were the most significant factors in determining patterns of ideological left-right self-placement, and party and candidate preferences, in every post-1989 Polish election.[100] Indeed, the clerical-secular divide combined (and overlapped) with the closely linked factor of attitudes towards the communist past, to form a 'historical-cultural' axis that dominated party competition in post-communist Poland throughout the 1990s. The 'left' was identified primarily with a more positive attitude towards the communist past, liberal social values and relative secularism, while the 'right' was associated with anti-communism, conservative social values and strong adherence to the Catholic faith.[101]

For sure, the Democratic Left Alliance was a thoroughly reformed and social democratised party rather than the representative of an orthodox communist, and potentially totalitarian, left that, say, the Italian Church faced in the post-war period. By the time of the October 1991 parliamentary election there was certainly no

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[98] See: Radosław Markowski and Gabor Toka, 'Left Turn in Poland and Hungary Five Years After the Collapse of Communism,' *Sisyphus*, Vol. 1 No .IX (1993), pp.75-99.

[99] See: CBOS. *Obecność i Instytucjonalizacja Wartości Religijnych w Życiu Społecznym* (Warsaw: CBOS, October 1994).

[100] See, for example: Krzysztof Jasiewicz, 'Portfel czy różaniec? Wzory zachowań wyborczych polaków w latach 1995-2001' in Radosław Markowski (ed.), *System Partyjny i Zachowanie Wyborcze: Dekada Polskich Doświadczeń* (Warsaw: ISP PAN, 2002), pp.75-100: Mirosława Grabowska, 'Religijność i kościół a polityka w III Rzeczpospolitej' in Radosław Markowski (ed.), *System Partyjny i Zachowanie Wyborcze: Dekada Polskich Doświadczeń* (Warsaw: ISP PAN, 2002), pp.100-146; and Tadeusz Szawiel. 'Podział na lewicę i prawicę w Polsce po 1989 roku – jego sens i trwałość.' in Radosław Markowski (ed.), *System Partyjny i Zachowanie Wyborcze: Dekada Polskich Doświadczeń* (Warsaw: ISP PAN, 2002) pp.178-216.

[101] See: Mirosława Grabowska. *Podział postkomunistyczny: Społeczne podstawy polityki w Polsce po 1989 roku*. (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2004).

realistic prospect of a return to the *ancien regime*. Nonetheless, in the early 1990s, there did appear to be both a strong potential social base for a Christian Democratic party in Poland and, given the emergence of a resurgent anti-clerical left, a clear incentive for the Church hierarchy to actively promote a party that could protect its interests. What then were the missing links that meant that such a party did not arise?

Firstly, the social constituencies that provided the bedrock support for Western Christian Democracy (newly-enfranchised female voters, the rural/agricultural sectors and the bourgeoisie) – our third condition – were either missing in post-1989 Poland, or Polish Christian Democrats faced serious electoral competition for their votes. Female voters in post-communist Poland were not necessarily any more likely to vote for Christian Democratic or Christian parties, or indeed other centre-right parties, than they were to support liberal or social democratic ones. Some, like their newly enfranchised counterparts in post-war Western Europe, may have been attracted by Christian Democratic 'pro-family' rhetoric. However, others seem to have been equally hostile to its patriarchal overtones, the concomitant 'traditional' role that it ascribed to women, and its implicit disapproval of single parenthood. Some Polish women voters may also have been discouraged from voting for Christian Democratic parties by the Church's stance on issues such as abortion and birth control.

A third of Poles lived in rural areas, with (although estimates vary on the precise figure) one-fifth of the Polish workforce were employed in agriculture, the overwhelming majority of them as peasant smallholders. Uniquely in the Soviet bloc, peasant smallholdings survived as an independent sphere of the economy in communist Poland, creating - unusually for a post-communist state - a substantial segment of the electorate with a reasonably well-defined and crystallised socio-economic interest and collective identity. This substantial rural-agricultural electorate could have provided Polish Christian Democracy with a potential social base of support, as it did crucially for post-war Western Christian Democratic parties. However, unlike their Western post-war counterparts, Polish Christian Democrats faced significant competition for this electorate from the outset, from: other centre-right parties, the ex-communist/social democratic left and, perhaps most significantly, agrarian parties. Indeed, initially it was the Polish Peasant Party, formed as the successor to the former communist 'satellite' United Peasant Party (Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe: ZSL) in May 1990, that emerged as the most significant party among this segment of the electorate.[102] This reflected the fact that agrarian parties had a much longer tradition and, historically, been more influential in the Polish countryside than the Christian Democratic movement.[103]

In fact, there were many aspects of the Peasant Party's ideological and programmatic profile that overlapped with archetypal Christian Democracy. These included: an attachment to the Catholic Church's social teachings and support for the application of Christian ethics in public life; a commitment to order, tradition and evolutionary social change; a belief in fostering harmonious social relations between capital and labour based on 'social personalism'; and a critique of both collectivist socialism and 'liberal' models of capitalism. Indeed, the Peasant Party periodically considered

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[102] For example, in the September 1993 parliamentary election the Peasant Party won 29.4% of rural votes and 51.8% support among those working in agriculture. See: Tomasz Żukowski, 'Wybory '93: Kto na kogo głosował,' *Przegląd Społeczny*, Vol 20 (1994), pp.3-32.

[103] See: Bender, pp.336-337.

transforming itself an overtly Christian Democratic party in order to broaden its appeal,[104] and sought membership of the European People's Party which contained many agrarian parties that transmuted into Christian Democratic formations such as the Austrian People's Party and the Bavarian Christian Social Union. By mobilising the protest vote of the (rural) periphery against the (urban) centre it could conceivably have also taken a leaf out of the book of Scandinavia's small (Protestant) Christian Democratic parties.

However, the Peasant Party always remained, at root, an interest-based 'class' party wedded to a peasantist ideology, known as 'neo-agrarianism' in its modernised form, rather than a values-based (proto-)Christian democratic movement. Neo-agrarianism, shared many of the characteristics of Christian Democracy and, in the case of transmuted agrarian parties, Christian Democratic parties also generally retained a commitment to protecting the agricultural sector. However, agrarian and Christian Democratic parties differed on the importance that they attached to: the centrality of peasant culture to the maintenance of national identity in the case of the former; and the role of religion as the well-spring of political ideology and primary motivation for political action in the case of the latter.[105] Moreover, although the Peasant Party went into electoral decline in the mid-to-late 1990s, it was eclipsed largely by another agrarian party, the radical-populist Self-Defence (see note 42), rather than a Christian Democratic one.

As for Poland's middle class-bourgeois voters, their identity and their interests were by no means as clear as they had been in post-war Europe, particularly during the early years of the post-communist transformation. In spite of communism's attempts to produce socially undifferentiated societies that deprived individuals of institutionally or socially structured identities from which to derive political interests, post-1989 Poland was clearly not wholly socially homogeneous.[106] However, the new social identities that were emerging as a result of economic transition were in considerable flux at the birth of multi-party politics.[107] Such an amorphous set of socio-economic alignments meant that the kind of easily identifiable property-owning 'middle class' with a strong subjective sense of its own self-interests that might have provided a natural social base for centre-right parties, including Christian Democrat ones, in more established democracies was still in the process of formation in Poland in the early 1990s. Indeed, in so far as middle class voters represented an objectively identifiable socio-economic constituency, evidence showed that they were as likely to vote for liberal parties - more unambiguously committed to promoting a low-tax, free

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[104] See, for example: Krystyna Naszkowska, 'Wyszycy chłopi Pana Boga: Czy PSL stanie sie polską chadecją,' *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 22-23 October 1993; Krystyna Naszkowska, 'Jak z chłopa zrobić chadeka,' *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 15 March 2004; and 'PSL w strone chadecji? – rozmowa z Jarosławem Kalinowskim,' 15 September 2004 at http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/kraj/2029020,34317,2287289.html (Consulted on 20 September 2004).
[105] See: Wiesław Piątkowski, 'O konsolidację ideową Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego,' *Ludowiec*, No 2-3 (9-10) (November-December 1994).
[106] See: Geoffrey Evans and Stephen Whitefield, 'Identifying the bases of party competition in Eastern Europe,' *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23 No. 4 (1993), pp.521-548; and Herbert Kitschelt et al, *Post-Communist Party Systems: Competition, Representation and Inter-party Competition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
[107] See: Peter Kopecky, 'Developing Party Organisations in East-Central Europe: What Type of Party is Likely to Emerge?' *Party Politics*, Vol. 1 No. 4 (1995), pp.515-534; Peter Mair, *Party system change: approaches and interpretations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp.175-198.

market programmes that were attractive to these kind of voters - as they were for Christian Democratic ones committed to greater state intervention.[108]

Secondly, running counter to our fourth condition, there were many other, equally credible, political alternatives to Christian Democracy available on the centre-right in post-1989 Poland. This represented one of key differences with the situation faced by their counterparts in post-war Western Europe, whose potential competitors on the right were either de-legitimised by their participation or tacit acquiescence in totalitarian regimes or unwilling (or unable) to organise themselves rapidly. Poland had the largest anti-communist democratic opposition in the Soviet bloc; indeed it was the only country in which a mass opposition emerged in the form of the Solidarity movement in 1980-81. This also meant it was also the most ideologically diverse and Christian Democracy was only one of many ideological currents that existed within it including: conservatism, (clerical and more secular) nationalism and (social and conservative) liberalism together with a (much weaker) social democratic strand. A plethora of new parties, therefore, emerged from the Solidarity/democratic opposition movement in 1989.

Moreover, as noted above, the record of Christian Democratic activists during the communist period was a somewhat ambiguous one. For sure, many of the leaders of post-1989 self-declared Polish Christian Democratic parties such as the Centre Agreement, Polish Christian Democracy and the Solidarity Electoral Action Social Movement had impeccable records of activity in the Solidarity movement and could, like their post-war West European counterparts, present themselves as untainted by association with the previous non-democratic regime. But so could many of the other party-forming elites on the centre-right, and they too were, to a greater or lesser extent, also prepared to help advance the Catholic Church's political agenda. Moreover, in addition to individuals with 'heroic' biographies such as Siła-Nowicki, many of those involved in early attempts to re-activate Christian Democracy in post-communist Poland, such as the Christian Democratic-Labour Party, were associated with Zabłocki's 'collaborationist' Polish Social-Cultural Union and 'neo-Znak' movement, so lacked the prestige of association with the Solidarity movement. At the same time, most of the Catholic intellectuals in the Tygodnik Powszechny/Znak milieu who had worked closely with the democratic opposition, such as the first non-communist premier in post-1989 Poland Tadeusz Mazowiecki, both opposed moves to revive the Christian Democratic movement during the communist era and were not involved in attempts to establish Christian Democratic parties after 1989. Indeed, most of them opposed attempts by any party to appropriate Catholic social teaching (and, indeed, all efforts to develop parties on the basis of religious criteria) as anachronistic in a plural society. In so far as they were involved in party politics, individuals from the Tygodnik Powszechny/Znak milieu tended to become members of less overtly Church-inspired parties. Mazowiecki, for example, was the founder and first leader of the Democratic Union (Unia Demokratyczna: UD) in 1990, which comprised social-liberal and more 'secular' conservative elements as well those who

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[108] Indeed, evidence also suggests that the professional middle classes and the business community often supported more traditional conservative parties, and even the social democratic left. See, for example: Żukowski; Aleks Szczerbiak, 'Interests and Values: Polish Political Parties and their Electorate', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51 No. 8 (December 1999), pp.1401-1432; and Aleks Szczerbiak, 'Old and New Divisions in Polish Politics: Polish Parties' Electoral Strategies and Profiles,' *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 55 No. 5 (July 2003), pp.729-746.

drew their inspiration more directly from Christian values and Catholic social teaching.[109]

Thirdly, while, like its counterparts in post-war Western Europe, the Polish Catholic Church certainly enjoyed high prestige and had a good organisational structure, its hierarchy was unwilling to throw its moral weight and resources unambiguously behind a single pro-clerical party, Christian Democratic or otherwise, and eliminate its competitors; our fifth condition. As noted above, the Church emerged from the communist period as the most popular and trusted public institution in Poland. Moreover, given that it was the only significant civil society actor able to operate under a communist regime that claimed a monopoly on all aspects of social organisation and subordinated all intermediary bodies, it was also one of the few to enter the post-1989 period with a developed, nationwide organisational infrastructure. In 1993, for example, there were 25,187 Catholic priests organised in 9,266 parishes,[110] providing any putative Polish Christian Democratic party with a strong potential social-associative base. Indeed, as noted above, one of the reasons for the anti-clerical backlash in the early 1990s was the fact that the Church was felt to have intervened too overtly in electoral politics, with some leading clergymen openly identifying themselves with various post-Solidarity, pro-Church parties. However, it is important to note that the Episcopate never *officially* endorsed a specific party nor candidate in parliamentary and presidential elections and most cases of clerical intervention in the electoral process involved individual clergymen rather than the Church hierarchy per se. It also generally involved supporting a number of, rather than a single, Christian or pro-Church party or candidate; as Sabbat-Swidlicka (writing in 1993) put it: "If the clergy as a group can be said to identify with the broad reform movement begun by Solidarity, there are certainly no grounds to identify either the hierarchy or the lower clergy as such with specific right-wing parties."[111]

The closest that the Church came to an official endorsement was in the October 1991 parliamentary election, when the hierarchy at least gave the impression that it was openly supporting a number of Church parties, specifically the Christian National Union-dominated Catholic Electoral Action coalition.[112] In his account of the 1991 election, Korbonski, for example, claims that: "The Church's involvement was formidable: the Episcopate used its powerful institutional network and its media essentially to tell the voters how to vote. During Sunday masses, priests would give out detailed instructions to their parishioners and the churches were freely used to

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[109] In fact, the Democratic Union's successor, the Freedom Union (Unia Wolności: UW - formed in 1994 following a merger with the Liberal Democratic Congress - Kongres Liberalno-Demokratyzny: KLD), was, for a time, the main Polish party linked to the Christian Democratic European People's Party. This prompted some analysts to refer to them in discussions of Polish Christian Democracy in post-1989 Poland. See, for example: Zdort, 'Apetyt na chadecję.' In fact, although some of the parties' leaders, such as Mazowiecki (who remained its leader until 1995), took a pro-Church stance or clearly drew their political inspiration from Christian values, neither the Democratic Union nor the Freedom Union ever sought to profile themselves as Christian Democratic. Indeed, the Freedom Union profiled itself more unambiguously, and should be more properly categorised, as a liberal party, particularly when Leszek Balcerowicz, architect of Poland's post-1989 economic reforms, replaced Mazowiecki as party leader in 1995. In 2002 it broke with the European Peoples' Party and chose to link up with Liberal international organisations, of which its organisational successor, the Democrats (Demokraci - formed in 2005), remains a member.
[110] See: Chan, 'The religious base of politics in post-Communist Poland, p.176.
[111] See: Sabbat-Swidlicka, 'The Polish Elections,' p.29.
[112] For a good analysis of the Church's involvement in that campaign, see: Rydlewski, pp.205-209.

display campaign literature favoured by the bishops."[113] For sure, a clergyman, Father Bijak, played a key role in brokering Catholic Electoral Action[114] and at least one senior cleric, Archbishop Józef Michalik, openly praised the coalition for defending Christian values.[115] Christian National Union spokesman Ryszard Czarnecki also claimed that Catholic Electoral Action enjoyed the support of the Polish Primate, Cardinal Józef Glemp, a claim that the Cardinal neither confirmed nor denied.[116] As Sabbat-Swidlicka put it: "Many candidates of the Christian-National Union assumed that because they were supporting the Church's positions on moral issues they could automatically count on the support of the hierarchy, and they did not hesitate to use this fact as a campaign platform. Indeed, it (was) difficult for it (the Episcopate) to disavow completely a party that includes the Church's objectives in its political program and election campaign...For its part, the Christian-National Union...said that while it accepted the fact that the Church did not indicate its political preferences for any specific party, the Christian-National Union had always felt 'the Church's moral support'."[117] Finally, on election day itself, an 'instruction' appeared in many parishes which specified five parties and political groupings that the faithful should support in the election: Catholic Electoral Action, the Centre Agreement, Christian Democracy, the Party of Christian Democrats and the Peasant Agreement coalition.[118]

However, there are conflicting accounts over the role that the Church played in the 1991 election, particularly the extent of its overt support for Catholic Electoral Action. As noted above, the Episcopate's formal position in 1991, as it was in every post-1989 election, was not to identify with or support any particular parties or candidates and it limited its official intervention to a general and unspecified call upon the faithful to vote for honest, trustworthy and competent candidates who were in favour of promoting Christian ethics and values, and against egotistical, immoral and corrupt ones who advocated separation of the Church and state.[119] Even the Episcopate's 'unofficial' intervention through the election day 'instruction', which it - of course - denied issuing, was on behalf of a range of parties rather than a single one. By the time of the next parliamentary election in 1993, the Church hierarchy made a more conscious effort to avoid the impression that it was endorsing any particular party.[120] Once again, the Episcopate limited itself formally to urging the faithful to vote and issuing general guidelines.[121] The new official tone was exemplified by Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek, who took over as Episcopate Secretary in 1993 and was

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[113] See: Korbonski, p.139. Two surveys carried out in the run up to the 1991 election showed, respectively, that: 33.6% of respondents said that priests had attempted to influence their vote, and 29% that they had received advice in their parish church on which party list to support. See: Rydlewski, p.209. See also: Dudek, pp.181-182; and 'Wyborcza tajemnica kościoła', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 7 November 1991.

[114] See: Rydlewski, p211; and Dudek, p.180.

[115] See: Rydlewski, p.207. On another occasion, Archbishop Michalik argued that: "(a) Catholic has an obligation to vote for a Catholic, a Christian for a Christian, a Muslim for a Muslim, a Jew for a Jew, a mason for a mason, a communist for a communist. Let everyone vote for those, whose conscience dictates them to vote for." See: Rydlewski, p.207; Dudek, p.180.

[116] See: Rydlewski, p.211.

[117] See: Sabbat-Swidlicka, 'Church and State in Poland,' p.52.

[118] See: Rydlewski, p.208. See also: Jarosław Gowin, *Kosciół po komunizmie*, Krakow: Znak, pp.48-52; Antoni Dudek, *Pierwsze Lata III Rzeczpospolitej, 1989-1995: Zarys historii politycznej Polski* (Krakow: Wydawnictwo GEO, 1997), p.181; and 'Wyborcza tajemnica Kosciola'.

[119] See: Rydlewski, pp.206-208.

[120] See: Rydlewski, pp.219-221.

[121] See: Sabbat-Swidlicka, 'The Polish Elections,' p.140.

one of the architects of the Church's more pragmatic and restrained approach to electoral politics, who stated clearly that: "the Church is not a political party and should never identify with any party...today the most important mission for the Church is to spread the gospel, not dabble in politics."[122] Nonetheless, although there were fewer reported incidents of ordinary clergy's involvement in this election campaign, many pro-Church party leaders were still allowed to campaign in parishes and other Catholic lay organisations. The most significant intervention by a leading clergyman was a meeting at the home of the archbishop of Gdansk Tadeusz Gocłowski with a number of pro-Church parties that later formed the loosely structured 'Fatherland' electoral coalition; as noted above, spearheaded, once again, by the Christian National Union.[123]

Indeed, spurred on by the policies of the new Democratic Left Alliance-dominated government, both the Church hierarchy and individual clergymen once again played a high profile role in the 1995 presidential election which developed into an extremely closely fought and highly polarised second round run-off between incumbent Wałęsa and Kwaśniewski, his ex-communist challenger from the secular left. The Episcopate issued two statements during the campaign warning the faithful not to choose anyone "who, during the time of the totalitarian regime, wielded power at the highest party-government level"; which, although not naming Kwaśniewski, was clearly directed against him.[124] Particularly during the second round, bishops and priests voiced their support for Wałęsa openly while Cardinal Glemp declared that the choice between the two candidates represented one between Christian values and neo-paganism and instructed the clergy to hold special masses to pray for the election of Wałęsa and mobilise the Catholic vote.[125] Earlier in the campaign, it was a clergyman, Father Maj, who acted as a political broker, attempting (unsuccessfully) to persuade the right-wing parties to agree on a single presidential candidate.[126]

However, the Church learnt from its mistakes in the early 1990s and elements within the Episcopate, such as Bishop Pieronek, began to re-evaluate their approach to electoral politics and look for different ways to achieve their political objectives. Direct involvement in electoral politics and giving the impression that it was endorsing particular parties or candidates, had, they argued, both undermined the Church's authority and ultimately proved counter-productive by simply generating the kind of anti-clerical backlash that contributed to the defeat of pro-Church candidates in 1993 and 1995. The fruits of this new approach became evident in the September 1997 parliamentary election. Radio Maryja - which, as noted above, had always operated fairly autonomously from the Church hierarchy - and some individual, local clergymen continued to play an overt role in mobilising the core 'religious right' electorate, particularly for the pro-Church Solidarity Electoral Action coalition.

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[122] Cited in Kenneth Ka-Lok Chan, 'Religion and Politics in Post-Communist Poland,' Paper prepared for the PSA Specialist Group Conference on Communist and Postcommunist Politics, South Bank University, London, 8 February 1997, pp.14-15.

[123] See: 'Happy end z arcybiskupem,' *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 15 July 1993. As noted above, the coalition also included the Party of Christian Democrats, Peasant Christian Party and the Conservative Party and failed to cross the 8% threshold for electoral coalitions. In fact, there were conflicting reports as to whether Gocłowski *initiated* the meeting or simply *agreed to host* it at the request of the interested parties. See: Sabbat-Swidlicka, 'The Polish Elections,' p.25.

[124] See: Eberts, pp.828-9.

[125] See: Chan, 'The religious base of politics in post-Communist Poland,' p.183.

[126] See: Ibid., p.187.

However, the Church hierarchy maintained a more disciplined neutrality throughout the 1997 campaign, thereby preventing the secular left from mobilising the anti-clerical vote effectively.[127] The Church adopted the same approach in every subsequent Polish parliamentary and presidential election.[128] As Father Adam Schulz, the spokesman for the Church Episcopate, put it (perhaps a little over-optimistically) in 1998, "the times when priests told their faithful how to vote are over."[129]

Fourthly, in Solidarity - a large, anti-communist and strongly pro-Catholic trade union rooted in conservative social values - any putative Polish Christian Democratic party certainly had the kind of strong potential civil society ally that its counterparts in post-war Western Europe benefited from. Although, it never recovered the membership levels of its 1980-81 heyday (nearly ten million), the newly legalised Solidarity entered the post-communist period with around two million members, while its credible claim to have a direct organisational linkage to the original movement meant that it retained an even larger social constituency for whom the Solidarity label remained an important 'mobilising myth'. As such, Solidarity was, potentially, both an important organisational partner for centre-right parties in post-1989 Poland and, specifically, source of institutional support for a putative Polish Christian Democratic party.

Our sixth condition was therefore partially fulfilled. However, unlike in post-war Western Europe, where Catholic trade unions (at least initially) threw their weight solidly behind Christian Democratic parties, Solidarity was unwilling to support or campaign on behalf of any of the 'post-Solidarity' centre-right parties, including the Christian Democratic ones. The union stood an independent slate of candidates in the 1991 and 1993 parliamentary elections. It did finally decide to join the post-Solidarity parties in sponsoring the formation of Solidarity Electoral Action in 1996, and then the Solidarity Electoral Action Social Movement that emerged in 1997 to take over the union's political functions. As noted above, this was probably the closest that post-1989 Poland came to the emergence of an electorally successful self-declared Christian Democratic party. However, as also noted above, the Social Movement developed as a largely non-ideological 'party of power' at arms-length from the union. Together with the other parties that comprised the Solidarity Electoral Action coalition, it disintegrated following the 2001 election. For its part, the union decided eventually to withdraw from electoral and party politics in the run up to 2001 election chastened by its bad experiences with Solidarity Electoral Action. In the 2005 elections, for example, although the leadership of the Solidarity union wanted to support the Law and Justice party, it was forced to hold back from doing so explicitly for fear of antagonising the rank-and-file who had bad memories of its foray into party politics through its sponsorship of Solidarity Electoral Action. Instead, it had to

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[127] See: 'Kosciół nie jest związany z żadną, partią,' *Rzeczpospolita*, 28 August 1997; and Ewa K. Czaczkowska, 'Oceny zamiast wskazań,' *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 September 1997.
[128] Although, again, in all cases both Radio Maryja continued to play a very active and controversial role in Polish electoral politics and individual clergymen campaigned openly for specific candidates and parties. As noted above, Radio Maryja had also played a key role in the emergence of the League of Polish Families as an electoral force in 2001 and during the 2005 elections in mobilising support for the Law and Justice party and its presidential candidate, Lech Kaczyński.
[129] See: Chan, 'The religious base of politics in post-Communist Poland,' p.191.

express this support by proxy, supporting the party's presidential candidate Lech Kaczyński enthusiastically instead.[130]

In some senses, the seventh and final explanatory factor identified above, that Western Christian Democratic parties delivered the basics to the Church while managing to achieve relative autonomy from the Church hierarchy and its more contentious policy demands, was simply irrelevant in the Polish case. For one thing, no self-declared Christian Democratic party ever achieved enough electoral support to find itself in a position where it could 'deliver' for the Church in this way. For another, the Church was, broadly speaking, able to achieve virtually all of its political objectives without having to 'pick a winner'. This was partly because, to a greater or lesser extent, virtually every centre-right party in post-1989 Poland stressed its commitment to Christian values and promoted policies sympathetic to the Catholic Church's social teachings and political agenda anyway.[131] As the survey of the main centre-right parties currently operating in Poland shows, even a grouping such as the Civic Platform, which emerged from a relatively secular liberal milieu, stressed its commitment to Christian values. As Bishop Pieronek put it, "if there are more parties inspired by Church teaching, it may be even better (than a single Christian Democratic party), because there will be more than one party able to explain the Church's teaching in practice."[132]

However, the Church also, as Korbonski put it, "succeeded in deterring the anti-Church opposition"[133] from attempting to roll back its gains. For sure, the anti-clerical left returned periodically to the question of abortion and even opened up new fronts on issues such as Church finances (especially the so-called Church Fund which collected revenue from lands seized from the Church by the communists after the war and from which it continued to be a beneficiary) and lesbian and gay rights.[134] Given the aforementioned importance of these moral-cultural issues in determining left-right ideological self-placement in post-communist Polish politics, this was particularly the case when the secular left felt a need to invigorate its 'core' electorate.[135] However, there have been no attempts to reverse the Church's political gains on issues such as: religious education in schools, respecting Christian values in the broadcasting media, and the Concordat. Even on the abortion law, which the secular left attempted to liberalise on a number of occasions, the Church was able to construct a hegemonic discourse accepted by some sections of the left, such as Kwaśniewski when he was president, that the existing law represented a 'compromise' solution that should not be unpicked; in spite of the fact that it was the second most restrictive in Europe (after

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[130] See: Krzysztof Katka, 'Jak rozmawiać, to tylko z Lechem', 26 January 2006 at http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/kraj/2029020,34317,3131110.html (Viewed on 26 January 2006)

[131] See: Gołoś, pp.239-240.

[132] Cited in Chan, 'The religious base of politics in post-Communist Poland,' p.189.

[133] See: Korbonski, p.144.

[134] See, for example: Eliza Olcyzk, 'Kosciół na cenzurowanym,' *Rzeczpospolita*, 20 September 2004.

[135] In January 2003, for example, a group of Democratic Left Alliance women deputies drew up a proposal to liberalise the abortion law following pressure from Polish women's groups. Similarly, in March 2004, the Democratic Left Alliance announced its intention to pass a new bill that would not only ease restrictions on abortion but also introduce universal sex education, secure access to birth control and legalise in-vitro fertilisation. See: Sabrina P. Ramet, 'Thy will be done: the Catholic Church and politics in Poland since 1989,' in Timothy A. Byrnes and Peter J. Katzenstein, *Religion in an Expanding Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp117-147 (pp136-137).

Ireland).[136] As one commentator put it, "every government, regardless of its political colour, considers its first obligation to maintain proper relations with the bishops", while "subordination to the Church is almost a condition of conducting politics in this country" such that the Church "defines the sphere of democratic debate."[137]

An interesting illustration of the Church's hegemony came in the 2003-4 negotiations on the EU constitutional treaty, when even the secular Democratic Left Alliance-led government led by non-believer Leszek Miller made inclusion of references to Europe's Christian heritage in the treaty's pre-amble one of its core negotiating demands.[138] Indeed, the Polish delegation at the June 2004 EU summit when the treaty was finally agreed, again led by another secular left premier Marek Belka, was the last to concede on this issue, drawing praise from Pope John Paul II for its stance.[139] The Democratic Left Alliance-led government's support for this demand was partly a reflection of the fact that it needed, and was grateful for, the Church's support in the June 2003 EU accession referendum.[140] But it also illustrated the way in which the Church was able to shift the terms of the political debate in its favour during the 1990s. Its more subtle and restrained approach to electoral politics also appeared to be more successful than its blunter interventions in the early 1990s; helping the pro-Church Solidarity Electoral Action to secure victory in 1997 and (arguably) preventing the Democratic Left Alliance from winning an outright parliamentary majority in 2001.

5.   Discussion

Let us return to the four questions that we posed at the beginning of this paper. Why is there no Christian Democracy in Poland? What does this tell us about the formation of parties on, and the nature of, the centre-right in Poland? If a successful Christian Democratic party cannot emerge in the apparently favourable circumstances evident in post-communist Poland what does this tell us about the long-term prospects for this party family? How do the answers to these particular questions feedback into our more general understanding of party formation and success?

In order to answer the first of these questions we began by positing a model of an archetypal Christian Democratic party based on five core elements. These were: a strong commitment to an organic model of society, based on the idea that different societal interests can be reconciled; support for the family as the key means of achieving this societal equilibrium; support for a 'social' model of capitalism; a strong emphasis on trans-national, as well as domestic, reconciliation in the foreign policy sphere; and programmes rooted in and underpinned by religiosity, but in the context of self-consciously lay organisations not controlled by, and operating at arm's-length from, the Catholic Church hierarchy.

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[136] See: 'Co dalej z ustawą aborcyjną', 22 January 2004 at
http:serwisy.gazeta.pl/kraj/1,34308,1881241.html (Viewed on 5 June 2006).
[137] See: Roman Graczyk, 'Wybór tronu z ołtarzem,' 4 November 2005 at
http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/kraj/2029020,34314,3001436.html (Viewed on 6 November 2006).
[138] See: Andrzej Stankiewicz, 'W obronie zasad z Nicei,' *Rzeczpospolita*, 10 September 2003.
[139] See: Jacek Moskwa, 'Jan Paweł II dziękuje Polsce,' *Rzeczpospolita*, 21 June 2004.
[140] See, for example: Mariusz Janicki, 'Czerwone i czarne,' *Polityka*, 16 February 2002; and Wojciech Załuska, 'Porządki w SLD', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 26 January 2003.

We then found that no self-declared Christian Democratic party has been successful in post-1989 Poland, while none of the currently 'successful' Polish right wing or centre-right parties had self-consciously sought to profile themselves as Christian Democratic nor did any of them fit the ideal type of a archetypal Christian Democratic party that we set out in our model. In other words, those parties that claimed to be Christian Democratic failed, while those that succeeded cannot be described (nor do they describe themselves) as Christian Democratic.

In order to understand why this was the case we laid out, in descending order of importance, the factors that were crucial in the formation and success of Christian Democratic parties in post-war Western Europe. Firstly, a substantial (and preferably practising) Roman Catholic population. Secondly, a real and pervasive fear of a victory (or takeover) by a militant secularist, anti-clerical, egalitarian and potentially totalitarian left. Thirdly, bedrock support from newly enfranchised female voters, rural/agricultural sectors, and the propertied middle-classes. Fourthly, potential competitors on the right that were either de-legitimised by their participation or tacit acquiescence in totalitarian regimes or unwilling or unable to organise themselves rapidly. Fifthly, a Church hierarchy with high prestige and centralised organisation that, at crucial early elections, threw its weight and resources behind its chosen Christian Democratic party. Sixthly, support and campaigning on behalf of a Christian Democratic party by groups and associations in civil society. Seventhly, a Christian Democratic party that delivered the basics to the Church but managed to achieve relative autonomy from the hierarchy's more contentious policy demands.

A close examination of the period after the fall of the communist regime in Poland found that only the first of our seven conditions – a substantial, practising Roman Catholic population – appeared to have been present unambiguously during the emergence of democratic, multi-party politics. Our second condition – fear of a takeover by a militant secularist, anti-clerical, egalitarian and potentially totalitarian left – also existed, but only in attenuated form. None of the other five factors that we identified as being crucial to the success of post-war West European Christian democratic parties were present in Poland, or only in a very limited or qualified form.

So what does this tell us about the formation of parties on, and the nature of, the centre-right in Poland? Firstly, although has been no successful self-declared Christian Democratic party in post-1989 Poland, one or more of the five distinctive core elements that we have identified as comprising archetypal Christian Democracy are present in each of the successful centre-right parties currently operating in Poland. Crucially, however, none of those parties could claim to combine all or even most of those elements. All three main centre-right parties currently operating in Poland - the Law and Justice party, Civic Platform and the League of Polish Families - are, to a greater or lesser extent, socially and culturally conservative and, therefore, strong supporters of the family. But only the Law and Justice party and the League of Polish Families also support a 'social' as opposed to a 'liberal' model of capitalism. And while virtually all centre-right parties in post-1989 Poland, to a greater or lesser degree, stress their commitment to Christian values and support for policies based on Catholic social teaching, none of the programmes of the main ones are rooted explicitly in the linked notions of 'social personalism' and 'solidarism', which lay at the heart of Christian Democratic ideology, even if the Law and Justice party's rhetoric about the importance of 'social solidarity' does appear to come close to this.

At the same time, the relatively successful parties that have placed religiosity at the core of their ideology and identity – currently the League of Polish Families and previously the Christian National Union - have not been able, even at their most successful, to develop into much more than medium-sized 'niche' parties.[141]

A second major implication is that national-patriotic themes appear to be a much more important element in the discourse of the Polish centre-right than its Christian Democratic counterparts elsewhere. The explicitly religious Christian National Union and League of Polish Families usually combined this with a nationalist discourse producing a synthesis of Catholic and national values, reflecting the political traditions of the pre-war National Democracy movement. Indeed, as noted above, even the relatively 'cosmopolitan' Civic Platform developed a more national-patriotic element to its discourse as part of its process of ideological re-definition and re-positioning after the 2001 election. One specific implication of this appeared to be that the Polish centre-right was much less committed to federalism and more Eurosceptic than most of the centre-right in Western Europe which has been strongly influenced by Christian Democratic ideas of transnational reconciliation that found expression in a longstanding attachment to European integration as a means of overcoming nationalism. This was reflected in some of the Polish centre-right's choices of transnational partners in the EP: with the Law and Justice party aligning with the Eurosceptic 'Union for a Europe of Nations' (and the Christian National Union with its predecessor) and the League of Polish Families joining the even more explicitly anti-EU 'Independence and Democracy' grouping. This also reflected the nature of the Polish Euro-debate, with Eurosceptic and 'Euro-realist' discourses emanating from the right and centre-right rather than the left of the political spectrum.[142]

At this point, it is worth bringing in, albeit briefly, two West European countries where Christian Democracy, despite the fact that it might have been expected to at first glance, failed to take off in anything like its archetypal form, namely Spain and Ireland. In neither country, of course, were all the conditions that gave rise to take off fulfilled. In Spain, for example, the Church, after years of trying to escape its close identification with the Francoist regime, was not keen to re-enter politics, and in any case "the Left in the new democracy was not openly anti-religious, nor militantly anti-clerical."[143] Consequently, the centrist Union of the Democratic Centre (Unión de Centro Democrático: UCD), which governed Spain in the first few years of democracy before being squeezed out of politics by the Socialists on the left and a transformed Francoist successor party on the right, may have temporarily subsumed self-styled Christian Democrats (many of whom eventually ended up in the aforementioned Francoist successor party); but it never convincingly nor consistently

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[141] In doing so they appear to be following the pattern of relatively succesful Christian parties in other post-communist states - such as the Czech and Slovak Christian Democrats and previously the Hungarian Christian Democratic People's Party - of Christian niche parties which are, as Enyedi puts it, "subcultural." See: Zsolt Enyedi, 'Organizing a Subcultural Party in Eastern Europe The Case of the Hungarian Christian Democrats,' *Party Politics*, Vol. 2 No. 3 (1996), pp.377-396.
[142] See: Szczerbiak, 'Opposing Europe or Problematising Europe?'
[143] See: Peter Matuschek, 'Who Learns from Whom? The Failure of Spanish Christian Democracy and the Success of the Partido Popular' in Steven van Hecke and Emmanuel Gerard (eds), *Christian Democratic Parties in Europe since the End of the Cold War* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), pp.243-267 (pp.245-7).

defined itself as a Christian Democratic party.[144] One can also argue that, as in Poland, the "strategic errors" and "misguided campaign(s)" of political actors unwilling to settle their differences and reconcile their ambitions, played a large part in the story.[145] Moreover, in both Spain and Ireland, national-patriotic themes merged with Catholicism to produce a political discourse on the centre-right that in some ways precluded classical Christian Democracy: in Ireland as a reaction to British colonialism, and in Spain to the perceived desire of 'historic nationalities' to break up the country.

If a successful Christian Democratic party cannot emerge in the superficially favourable circumstances of post-communist Poland, what does this tell us about the long-term prospects for this party family? Put simply, it reinforces the lesson that Christian Democratic parties in Western Europe are already learning, namely that, individually, their continuation depends upon their adaptation and that, collectively, they need to be broad-minded when considering new recruits to their cause. True, secularisation and its impact on political preferences is sometimes over-played.[146] But the take-off and relative success of post-war Christian Democracy was contingent on a combination of socio-economic conditions and institutional choices that no longer exists and will never do so again. The non-emergence of a successful Christian Democratic party in post-1989 Poland – a nation of practicising Catholics, a large proportion of which is employed in agriculture sector and in which the religious-secular divide was one of the most important means of ideological self-placement – means it is difficult to envisage a successful Christian Democratic party of the 'classic' post-war type emerging anywhere again in contemporary Europe.

In order to survive and even prosper in countries like Austria, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, Christian Democratic parties have had to move on from the archetype. In terms of party ideological and identity, as Hanley and van Keersbergen have demonstrated, this has meant moving away from the 'social market' model of capitalism and downplaying traditional Christian Democrat themes of solidarity, the role of the state in securing justice through redistribution and neo-corporatism. 'Modern' Christian Democratic parties have increasingly taken on elements of economic (neo-) liberalism and moved towards a more market-oriented discourse; meanwhile the social profile of Christian Democrat parties has also changed as they have moved away from religiously-rooted politics and evolved into more secular conservative parties.[147] At the same time, as noted above, organisationally the European People's Party-European Democrats grouping has expanded well beyond its

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[144] The best account of the Union of the Democratic Centre is: Jonathan Hopkin, *Party Formation and Democratic Transition in Spain: The Creation and Collapse of the Union of the Democratic Centre*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999). For a detailed account of what happened to, and arguably some of the errors made by, Spain's Christian Democrats, see: John Gilmour, 'Losing its soul: The changing role of Christian democracy in the development of Spain's new right,' *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 10 No. 3 (2005), pp.411-431.
[145] See: Matuschek, p.247.
[146] See: David Broughton and Hans-Martien Ten Napel, (eds.) *Religion and Mass Electoral Behaviour in Europe* (London: Routledge, 2000); and Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[147] See (among other contributions to the same edited volume): Emmanuel Gerard and Steven Van Hecke, 'European Christian Democracy in the 1990s. Towards a Comparative Approach', in Steven Van Hecke and Emanuel Gerard (eds.) *Christian Democratic Parties in Europe since the End of the Cold War* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), pp.297-318 (pp.308-12).

Christian Democratic core. As our survey of centre-right parties in contemporary Poland shows, the European People's Party has recruited non-Christian Democratic Polish parties such as the liberal Freedom Union (until it left to join the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe in 2002), agrarian Polish Peasant Party and liberal-conservative Civic Platform. In other words, although both individual Christian Democratic parties and transnational party family groupings have survived and even prospered in a more secular, market-driven age, they have done so by adopting a more ideologically flexible and organisationally expansive approach.[148] It is one they will have to continue with: only dilution can stave off dissolution.

So how do these findings feedback into our more general understanding of party formation and success? The idea that parties are produced and sustained by cleavages continues to cast a long shadow over our understanding of these phenomena. Underlying the argument is the idea that parties are institutional responses to, and expressions of, some kind of social (and often socio-economic) demand. As those demands, or their strength, wax and wane, then older parties lose their strength and even die off, while new parties are founded that replace, or at least eat into, their support.[149] In the last decade or so, however, political scientists begun to question and qualify what Panebianco terms 'the sociological prejudice';[150] possibly (if not always consciously) spurred on by the formation and development of parties and party systems in Central and Eastern Europe. The latter, after all, often cannot be readily traced back to 'cleavages' in the sense that we have come to understand them in established Western democracies. In other words, they owed as much to agency, and to institutions, as to structure.

Both our own case study from the same region and our exploration of Christian Democratic success in the post-war era confirm that this questioning and qualifying of underlying implicit assumptions is indeed warranted. Parties do not, of course, float free from society either in the abstract or in the particular. What Panebianco calls 'sponsors', institutions that link party and society and often provide material and other resources, are important and the choices of both Church and Catholic lay groups were obviously crucial to the parties studied here. But the formation and success of the latter owes much to the inter-play between those social realities, and sponsors, and the institutional and ideological crafting of entrepreneurial politicians, whether they were part of the parties we looked at or their competitors. Even if it was first pointed out to us by Schattschneider[151] almost fifty years ago, and again by Sartori less than a decade after him, we continually need to remind ourselves that what happens (or does

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[148] Christian Democratic parties in Western Europe have recently enjoyed something of a comeback after being prematurely written off. This may in part be due to the fact that religion is not quite the spent political force as some imagined: see, for example: Broughton and Ten Napel; and Norris and Inglehart. However, it is also almost certainly due to the fact that they (or at least those that have experienced some success rather than continued decline) 'moved with the times'. See the contributions to: Van Hecke and Gerard, and also to: Peter Mair, Wolfgang Müller and Fritz Plasser (eds.), *Political Parties and Electoral Change* (London: Sage, 2004).

[149] See: Andrew J. Drummond, 'Electoral Volatility and Party Decline in Western Democracies: 1970-1995', *Political Studies*, Vol. 54 No, 3 (2006), pp.628-647.

[150] See: Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.3.

[151] See: E.E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People: a Realist's View of Democracy in America*, (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960).

not happen) to parties and party systems requires a political explanation, and one that recognises the inter-action between demand and supply.[152]

Mair, in the course of a more recent piece that aims to rescue the concept of cleavages from the sociological determinism into which it has been allowed to fall, makes a similar point. Moreover, to support his position he quotes Kalyvas to the effect that: "Confessional parties were not the historically predetermined and automatic reflection of pre-existing identities and conflicts, nor were they the emanation of structural, economic, or political modernization. They were instead a contingent outcome of the struggle among various organizations facing a multitude of challenges under tight constraints."[153] The 'non-occurrence' or 'failure' of a viable Christian Democratic party in post-communist Poland, every bit as much as the appearance and success of such parties in some countries in post-war Western Europe, illustrates the essential truth of that important observation.

6.   Conclusion

No self-declared Christian Democratic party has been successful in post-1989 Poland. None of the currently 'successful' Polish right wing or centre-right parties has self-consciously sought to profile itself as Christian Democratic nor do any of them fit the ideal type of an archetypal Christian Democratic party that we set out in our five-point model. A close examination of the period after the fall of the communist regime in Poland found that only the first of the seven conditions that we identified as crucial to the formation and success of Christian Democratic parties in post-war Western Europe – a substantial, practising Roman Catholic population – appeared to have been present unambiguously during the emergence of democratic, multi-party politics in post-communist Poland. Our second condition – fear of a takeover by a militant secularist, anti-clerical, egalitarian and potentially totalitarian left – also existed, but only in attenuated form. None of the other five factors that we identified - bedrock support from certain key electoral constituencies, potential competitors on the right either de-legitimised or unable to organise themselves rapidly, a Church hierarchy throwing its weight and resources behind its chosen Christian Democratic party, campaigning on behalf of that party by civil society groups, and a party that delivered the basics to the Church but retained relative autonomy from more contentious policy demands - were present in Poland, or only in a very limited or qualified form.

One or more of the five distinctive core elements that we have identified as comprising archetypal Christian Democracy - a strong commitment to an organic view of society, support for the family as the key means of achieving societal equilibrium, a 'social' model of capitalism, trans-national reconciliation, and programmes rooted in and underpinned by religiosity - are present in each of the successful centre-right parties currently operating in Poland. Crucially, however, none of those parties could claim to combine all or even most of those elements. At the same time, national-patriotic themes appear to be a much more important element in the discourse of the Polish centre-right than its Christian Democratic counterparts elsewhere. One specific implication of this appears to be that the Polish centre-right is

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[152] See: Giovanni Sartori, 'The sociology of parties: a critical review', in Peter Mair (ed.) *The West European Party System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990 [1969]), pp.150-82.

[153] Cited in: Peter Mair, 'Cleavages' in Richard Katz and William Crotty (eds.) *Handbook of Party Politics* (London: Sage. 2006), pp.371-375 (p.372).

much less committed to federalism and more Eurosceptic than most of the centre-right in Western Europe. The latter has been strongly influenced by Christian Democratic ideas of transnational reconciliation that found expression in a longstanding attachment to European integration as a means of overcoming nationalism.

The failure of a successful Christian Democratic to emerge in post-communist Poland reinforces the lesson that such parties in Western Europe are already learning: that, individually, their continuation depends upon their adaptation; and that, collectively, they need be broad-minded when considering new recruits to their cause. The take-off and relative success of post-war Christian Democracy was contingent on a combination of socio-economic conditions and institutional choices that no longer exists and will never do so again. The non-emergence of a successful Christian Democratic party in post-1989 Poland – a nation of practising Catholics, a large proportion of which is employed in agriculture sector and in which the religious-secular divide was one of the most important means of ideological self-placement – means it is difficult to envisage a successful Christian Democratic party of the 'classic' post-war type emerging anywhere again in contemporary Europe. In order to survive and even prosper West European Christian Democratic parties have had to move on from the archetype.

Both our case study and our broader exploration of Christian Democratic success in the post-war era confirm the need to question and qualify assumptions that parties are simply produced and sustained by 'cleavages' as institutional responses to, and expressions of, some kind of social demand. Rather, our paper shows that the formation and success of Christian Democratic parties owes much to the interplay between those social realities and sponsors, and the institutional and ideological crafting of entrepreneurial politicians. The 'non-occurrence' or 'failure' of a viable Christian Democratic party in post-Communist Poland, every bit as much as the appearance and success of such parties in some countries in post-war Western Europe, shows that what happens (or does not happen) to parties and party systems requires a political explanation that recognises this essential interaction between demand and supply.

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