LEGISLATIVE PARTY INSTITUTIONALIZATION IN NEW DEMOCRACIES:  
THE CASE OF POLAND

DISSERTATION

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By

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ABSTRACT

Legislative parties are largely absent from discussions of party institutionalization in the extant literature; yet the ability of legislative political parties to become institutionalized directly affects the success of newly established democracies by fostering governmental performance and stability and ensuring greater representation and accountability. Drawing upon the literature on organizational culture, I develop a theory that argues legislative parties institutionalize when party leaders create, and legislators subsequently adopt, party culture, or the rules and norms guiding a party’s behavior. I employ a multi-methodological approach to test the theory, combining an in-depth examination of legislative parties in Poland with a comparative study of new democracies in East Central Europe. First, based on in-depth interviews, I find that Poland’s legislative party leaders have taken steps to establish party culture. Second, utilizing data from two surveys of parliamentarians and an original dataset of roll call votes, I conclude that legislators themselves have by and large adopted this culture. Lastly, I analyze existing studies of parties in the Czech Republic and Hungary for evidence of legislative party institutionalization and find that Poland’s legislative parties are more institutionalized than those of either the Czech Republic or Hungary. This finding clearly challenges the conventional wisdom, which portrays Poland’s parties as weak and poorly institutionalized.
Dedicated to my parents,

whose love and support over the years has given me
the strength to do anything.

And to Amy,

Glad you’re my sister . . .
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Political parties are vital to democracy. They connect voters to the democratic process by aggregating interests, structuring electoral contests, shaping opinion and mobilizing political participation. Parties further serve the key functions of recruiting leaders, organizing the work of legislatures and governments, and influencing the formulation of public policy (Lewis 2000, 157). Scholars have long since noted parties’ essential role in democracy, an opinion perhaps best exemplified by Schattschneider’s (1942) claim that, “Modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties.”

In light of Schattschneider’s assertion, what are the prospects for democracy in East Central Europe, where the one-party dominance of the Communists left little to no room for alternative viewpoints, let alone political parties to represent them, and further engendered hostility to the very idea of the political party among citizens? ¹ Despite the relative absence of political parties under Communism, a plethora of “parties” emerged to contest the first free and fair elections in these countries in more than 40 years, most of

¹ “Satellite parties” were allowed to exist in some countries but the first opposition parties formed in Hungary in 1987. Transitions to democracy, then, were ushered in by broad movements of students, intellectuals and trade union members. As for anti-party sentiment, Rose (1995, quoted in Lewis 2000, 35) reports only seven percent of Poles, 11 percent of Hungarians and 24 percent of Czechs expressed trust in political parties in 1994.
which (perhaps not surprisingly) would not be around to contest subsequent elections.\(^2\)
This lack of staying power was not merely limited to those parties that failed to gain representation in parliament, however.\(^3\)

The experience of parties in East Central Europe suggests that it is not merely whether parties exist that matters for democracy, but whether they in fact persist, or institutionalize. Institutionalized parties should be better able to serve the functions of aggregation and representation of citizens’ interests by providing voters with consistent choices. Institutionalized parties should further be more adept at performing the functions of legislation and governance, largely by reducing the transaction costs associated with coalition formation and policymaking.

How, though, do political parties become institutionalized? Providing answers to this question, it turns out, raises a number of others. How do we define “institutionalization” and what do we mean by “political party”? What factors account for why some parties institutionalize and others do not? And how might we examine this process empirically?

1.1 Defining Institutionalization

Perhaps the most oft-cited conceptualization of party institutionalization in the extant literature is that of Huntington (1968, 13), who defines institutionalization as “the

\(^2\) Rather than “party,” many opted to use “union,” “alliance,” or “forum” in their name instead. For example, in 1991, 67 parties contested elections in Poland, 18 of which won seats in the legislature; 21 parties contested the 1992 Czech elections of which six won seats (Lewis 2000, 88).

\(^3\) Examples of political parties that gained consistent representation in parliament only to find themselves either a) no longer able to clear electoral thresholds or b) ceasing to exist altogether include Freedom Union (UW) in Poland and the Independent Smallholders’ Party (FKgP) in Hungary, among many others. Along with the departure of seemingly well-established parties from parliament, there have been several instances of newly established parties gaining representation. Examples here include the Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP) and the Czech Green Party (which won representation for the first time in 2006).
process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability.” Writing some 20 years after Huntington, Panebianco (1988, 49) defines institutionalization as “the way the organization ‘solidifies.’” He further asserts that through institutionalization an organization “slowly loses its character as a tool: it becomes valuable in and of itself, and its goals become inseparable and indistinguishable from it. In this way, its preservation and survival become a ‘goal’ for a great number of its supporters” (Panebianco 1988, 53). Janda’s (1970, 88) definition of institutionalization adds the notion of “reification;” an institutionalized party is “one that is reified in the public mind so that ‘the party’ exists as a social organization apart from its momentary leaders, and this organization demonstrates recurring patterns of behavior valued by those who identify with it.”

Levitsky (1998) places these various definitions into one of two categories, institutionalization as value infusion and institutionalization as behavioral routinization. Value infusion occurs “when actors’ goals shift from the pursuit of particular objectives through an organization to the goal of perpetuating the organization per se,” whereas behavioral routinization involves the “entrenchment of the rules of the game” and implies that “actors’ expectations are stabilized around these rules and practices” (Levitsky 1998, 79 – 80).4

More recently, Randall and Svåsand (2002, 12) “suggest that institutionalization should be understood as the process by which the party becomes established in terms both of integrated patterns of behaviour and of attitudes, or culture.” Building on

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4 Levitsky’s (1998, 79) justification for developing these two categories of institutionalization lies in the fact that “many of the phenomena associated with institutionalization do not always vary together empirically, which raises the question of whether they might be better thought of as conceptually distinct.”
Levitsky (1998), they identify two dimensions of party institutionalization; the first is broken down into structural (behavior routinization) and attitudinal (value infusion) components, while the second is divided between internal and external factors, producing the following two-by-two matrix (Randall and Svåsand 2002, 13).

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Systemness denotes “the increasing scope, density and regularity of the interactions that constitute the party as a structure” where “regularity implies a degree of routinization, and the development of prevalent conventions guiding behaviour” (Randall and Svåsand 2002, 13). Value infusion, “refers to the extent to which party actors and supporters (whether or not falling into a more formalized category of membership) acquire an identification with and commitment to the party which transcend more instrumental or self-interested incentives for involvement” (Randall and Svåsand 2002, 13). With respect to the external dimension, decisional autonomy involves an organization’s “freedom from interference in determining its own policies and strategies,” whereas reification is “the extent to which the party’s existence is established in the public imagination” (Randall and Svåsand 2002, 14).

1.2 The Argument

My definition of institutionalization takes as its point of departure Randall and Svåsand’s (2002, 12) reference to “integrated patterns of behaviour” and “attitudes, or culture” when defining institutionalization. I argue, however, that these behaviors and
attitudes will differ depending on how we choose to define political party. Following a number of scholars, I distinguish between the party in office and the party in the electorate on the grounds that the attitudes and behaviors central to institutionalization will differ given the different functions of contesting elections and legislating. For example, electoral parties “are typically major vehicles for the recruitment of political leadership, the structuring of electoral choice and peaceable political competition, and the framing of policy alternatives” (Dix 1992, 489), whereas parliamentary parties focus on “the representative function,” which entails the formulation and adoption of legislation and for some, governing. Parties in East Central Europe were created primarily by elites

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5 Political parties have traditionally been defined in one of two ways. The first is structural and “defines parties according to various observable features of their organization” (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 107). Michels (1915), Duverger (1954) and Panebianco (1988) are among the scholars who define political parties in terms of their organization. The second approach is purposive and “defines and categorizes political parties by the goals that they pursue” (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 107). A purposive, or functional, approach to defining parties is taken up by Eldersveld (1964), Epstein (1967), and von Beyme (1985) among others. The organizational forms and goals pursued by parties are not necessarily mutually exclusive, however, leading to a third approach to defining parties. The structural-functional approach (see, for example, Sartori 1976) is a combination of the structural and purposive definitions. Consider the following definition: “A political party is an agreement among politicians to govern and contest elections as a team” (Zielinski 2003, 6). Thus, politicians enter into an agreement (they organize) in order to pursue their goals. Parties, then, are both organizations and goal-seekers and as such should be defined in terms of both aspects. It is the structural-functional approach to defining parties that I adopt in this project, a choice central to the development of my theory in the subsequent chapter.

6 This observation that parties outside of and within parliament operate differently led to a body of literature, primarily within American politics, focused on the role of political parties within legislatures (Cox and McCubbins 1993, Aldrich 1995). More specifically, these theories begin from the assumption that candidates use parties as a means to the ends of election. Once elected, however, legislators see the utility of political parties as diminished. Legislators soon learn that, particularly with respect to policy, the difficulties of getting a large group of parliamentarians with a variety of interests to agree in order to pass legislation are immense. Rather than coordinate votes for every policy proposal, then, legislators “form” parties. Parties in this context act as a “binding coalition;” legislators use this party affiliation as a cue in determining how one another will vote (Aldrich 1995, 36). Put slightly differently, Cox and McCubbins (1993) see parties “as legislative cartels” (85). Thus, the payoffs to acting with one’s party are greater than those of attempting to form a coalition to gain a majority on each piece of legislation (Aldrich 1995, 35).

7 That is not to imply, however, that the party in the electorate and the party in office are entirely distinct from one another. Once in power, for example, the legislative party will seek to maintain that power, requiring the assistance of the party in the electorate; at the same time, the office-seeking goal of the electoral party requires the legislative party to perform its functions successfully, making the electoral and
within parliament and the party in parliament continues to be the central actor in East Central European politics. As a result, I choose to focus on the oft-overlooked party in office, the institutionalization of which holds important consequences for governmental performance and stability, representation and accountability, and the efficiency of legislation. 8

As I discuss at greater length in Chapter 2, legislative party institutionalization is tantamount to the establishment of party culture, or the rules and norms guiding the party’s behavior within the legislative context. The rules and norms central to party culture are designed specifically to prevent the members of the legislative party (the legislators themselves) from shirking their responsibilities by free-riding; for example, failing to attend floor debates and votes, choosing instead to allow other party members to bear the costs of pursuing the party’s interests. These rules and norms consist of a variety of rewards and punishments (more commonly known as party discipline), including promotion within the party’s ranks for good behavior and expulsion from the legislative party for inappropriate behavior.

I further contend that the leaders of legislative parties are the key to the creation of party culture, for they hold the power to both reward and punish members. If institutionalization is to ultimately take place, however, the broader membership of the legislative party must subsequently adopt this culture, or the party will fail to achieve its legislative goals, despite the best efforts of the leadership to see to it otherwise.

8 I use “party in office,” “legislative party” and “parliamentary party” interchangeably throughout.

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8 I use “party in office,” “legislative party” and “parliamentary party” interchangeably throughout.
I refer to this central role of legislative party leaders as *elite commitment*; party culture forms only when party leaders commit to overcoming the free-riding tendencies of their legislators and without such a commitment, party culture will not emerge. If the recipe for success were really that simple, there would be no cases of unsuccessful legislative party institutionalization to speak of. Yet the reality is that legislative party leaders may not recognize the harm of free-riding behavior, or if they do recognize the collective action problem for what it is, leaders may still face certain constraints that prevent them from creating party culture. Among these constraints within a given party system are certain features of the party, including ideology, size, whether a member of government or opposition, and coalition membership. In addition, certain structural factors may make for the more or less successful establishment of party culture across party systems. These include the nature of the electoral system, the structure of government (parliamentary or presidential), and the relative strength of parties vis-à-vis committees.

1.3 **Case Selection, Methodology and Data**

This brings us to the final question identified above; how best to examine the process of legislative party institutionalization empirically. Such an examination is necessary in order to assess the theory’s validity and, as Kalyvas (1996, 17) puts it, “Telling a deductive story without pitting it against evidence would be incomplete and unsatisfactory.” Attempting to examine this process in established democracies would certainly be interesting, but also rather difficult, primarily given uncertainties regarding the availability of evidence. The ideal setting for such an undertaking, then, is a new democracy (or democracies). Those studies empirically examining the
institutionalization of parties (rather than party systems, which are the focus of the bulk of the existing literature) do just that, focusing primarily on Latin America (Dix 1992; Levitsky 1998; Power 1997) and Southern Europe (Gunther and Diamandouros 2001; Gunther, Diamandouros and Puhle 1995). Yet while there is an extensive literature on party systems and their institutionalization in the post-communist world (Ágh, 1994; Bergland and Dellenbrant, 1992; Bielesiak, 1997; Kitschelt, 1992; Mainwaring 1998; Marody, 1995; Roskin, 1993), scholars of East Central Europe have generally not followed suit with the study of party institutionalization.

Despite being overlooked in the literature, a number of factors make the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe an excellent laboratory for the study of party institutionalization. First, most states of post-communist Europe have experienced uninterrupted democracy since the fall of communism. Thus, political parties should be able to engage in the process of institutionalization without disruption. Second, the reemergence of a small number of political parties that had existed during periods of independence earlier in the century, combined with the continued existence of the former communist and satellite parties (albeit often in modified form), provides interesting potential variation in institutionalization when considered alongside new political parties. Third, general suspicion of political parties on the part of both the general populace and many key figures in the emerging political class (for example, Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia) presents an interesting challenge to the institutionalization of political parties.

I opt to examine the process of legislative party institutionalization in depth in the case of a single new democracy, that of Poland. As an emerging democracy in East
Central Europe, Poland’s party system exhibits many of the features previously identified as posing a challenge to party institutionalization, including a relative lack of parties under Communism, a transition orchestrated by a mass movement rather than a political party or parties, and a high level of distrust in parties among the populace.

When compared to two of the other success stories of the transition, the Czech Republic and Hungary, Poland’s legislative parties may have an additional challenge when it comes to institutionalizing, that of functioning within a (seemingly) poorly institutionalized party system. Poland’s party system is often described as fluid, due to the fact that the same political parties do not compete in successive elections. The Polish party system is further characterized as having high rates of turnover (the governing party fails to gain access to government in the subsequent election), electoral volatility (significant changes in a party’s vote share from one election to the next) and fragmentation (many parties, all with a relatively small share of the vote). Selecting a post-communist new democracy with a somewhat unstable party system allows for greater confidence that any institutionalization of parties in the legislature is likely attributable to features of the legislative party, and not simply to a party’s electoral fortunes over time. At the same time, however, evidence of legislative party institutionalization in Poland raises an important paradox: how do we explain the existence of relatively institutionalized legislative parties within a rather poorly institutionalized party system?

The primary methodological approach here is that of the case study design, which proves particularly useful given that institutionalization is an inherently dynamic process. While I do focus on a single case for the bulk of the analysis (the exception being the
In carrying out the study of Poland, I utilize a multi-methodological approach, thereby demonstrating “a major strength of case study data collection in the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence” (Yin 1994, 91). To assess the role of legislative party leaders in creating party culture, I conducted a series of in-depth elite interviews in April of 2004 with Members of Parliament, Cabinet Ministers, and high-ranking officials from eight Polish parties. These interviews provided insights into the internal functioning of Poland’s parties, about which little is generally known, and provided the best possible means for assessing elite commitment to the creation of party culture. I use data from two surveys of parliamentarians (from 2000 and 2005) to examine the degree to which legislators adopt party culture. The 2000 survey data were collected by Wlodzimierz Wesolowski of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and made available to me on request.9 The 2005 data were collected using a webservice designed as a follow-up to that of Wesolowski and administered by a team of researchers from The Ohio State University, of which I was a part.10 Elite surveys like the ones used here are difficult to come by, but provide unique access to elite opinion. The fact that I

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9 These data are only available in Polish and have not yet been made available to the public.

10 The other individuals involved in this project are Kazimierz M. Slomczyński and Goldie Shabad, faculty members in Sociology and Political Science, respectively, and Josh Dubrow, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology.
have data from surveys administered in two different parliaments, asking identical questions, makes my research all the more unique in that it allows for comparisons over time.

I also examine the behavior of legislators in order to measure the degree to which they adopt party culture beyond what they may indicate in surveys. To do so, I constructed a unique dataset of roll call votes in the lower chamber, the Sejm, over the course of a single parliament (from 2001 to 2005). I collected data on over 4,000 randomly selected votes to determine the extent to which legislators from each party attend votes and vote in a cohesive manner, both of which are indicators of the adoption of party culture. Lastly, I supplement this primary source evidence with information from existing studies of parties and party systems in order to compare the process of legislative party institutionalization in the Czech Republic and Hungary to that of Poland.

1.4 Contribution to the Literature

My conceptualization of party institutionalization and the approach taken to examining the process empirically differs significantly from those commonly found in the existing literature, and points to three important shortcomings of the current research on party institutionalization, all of which I seek to improve upon in this project. The first weakness of the extant literature is that by focusing exclusively on institutionalization, it fails to define political party.11 As discussed above, precisely how one chooses to define party will determine the meaning of institutionalization within that specific context. The

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11 Randall and Svåsand’s (2002) article is a good example of this broader trend in the literature on party institutionalization to overlook definitions of political parties. The authors make no mention of how they choose to define party: i.e., as organizations or goal-seekers, in the electorate or office. One might infer, however, both from the model of party institutionalization and the discussion of party institutionalization in the third world, that their focus is the electoral party.
approach taken here, whereby I focus on political parties in office and their institutionalization, is a novel one and offers a more precise definition of institutionalization as a result.

A second shortcoming pertains to the literature’s emphasis on description over explanation. Defining institutionalization as the way in which the party becomes reified, or develops a degree of systemness, for example, provides a starting point for the identification of institutionalization. Description is not explanation, however, and the extant literature says nothing about precisely how reification and systemness (and subsequently institutionalization) come to be. This particular feature of the party institutionalization literature reflects a broader problem with much of the literature on parties and organizations, whereby “Organization is treated as an outcome of general social processes, while political actors and their strategic choices are absent from the analysis” (Kalyvas 1996, 13). I go beyond description in this project, offering a detailed argument for precisely how and why legislative party institutionalization does or does not take place. In doing so, I examine both the preferences and strategies of actors and the broader systemic constraints under which they operate.

A third limitation is that few studies of party institutionalization move beyond the level of theory to empirics. In defining party institutionalization, few scholars operationalize their key concepts. Even when an attempt is made to do so, as Huntington (1968) begins to do with the features of institutionalization he identifies (autonomy, coherence, complexity and adaptability), little effort is made to systematically examine these concepts empirically. Rather, the standard within the literature, then, appears to be “we know it when we see it.” Mindful of this weakness in the extant literature, I take
great pains to provide testable implications from my theory and to operationalize key concepts like party culture and elite commitment. As a result, the theory of legislative party institutionalization developed here is applicable to new democracies generally. At the same time, however, the empirical examination of Poland and its neighbors, the Czech Republic and Hungary, offers new insights into the development of parties and party systems in East Central Europe.

1.5 Project Overview and Chapter Outline

In Chapter 2, I develop my theory of legislative party institutionalization (presented only briefly above) in which I argue legislative party institutionalization is a process that begins when party leaders establish party culture, and takes root when the broader membership of the legislative party adopts the rules and norms at the heart of that culture. In developing this argument, I pay particular attention to the preferences and strategies of both legislative party leaders and the rank and file, and further offer an in-depth examination of the constraints on their behavior. In Chapter 3, I provide an overview of the development of the Polish party system (with an emphasis on those parties that feature prominently in the analysis) in order to establish some context for the empirical study of legislative party institutionalization in Poland.

I begin the empirical discussion of legislative party institutionalization in Poland with Chapter 4. Using evidence from a number of in-depth interviews with legislators and party leaders, I explore the extent to which the leaders of Poland’s legislative parties have established elements of party culture. The fifth chapter is the first of two examining whether and how legislators react to the party culture established by the leadership. The focus in Chapter 5 is on legislators’ attitudes and examines evidence from two separate
surveys of parliamentarians. Chapter 6, on the other hand, examines legislator behavior using an original dataset of roll call votes from the fourth parliament (2001 – 2005). I move beyond the case of Poland in Chapter 7 by attempting to place Poland’s process of legislative party institutionalization in comparative context, using existing studies of parties in the Czech Republic and Hungary. In the eighth and final chapter, I review the theory of legislative party institutionalization presented in Chapter 2 and summarize the findings presented in chapters four through seven, prior to discussing the project’s implications for a number of different literatures, including those on political party institutionalization, legislatures and democratic consolidation, and avenues for future research.
CHAPTER 2

A THEORY OF LEGISLATIVE PARTY INSTITUTIONALIZATION

How do legislative political parties institutionalize? In this chapter, I develop a theory of legislative party institutionalization, the central component of which is party culture, or the norms, values and rules guiding the party’s behavior in the legislature. I argue that parliamentary party leaders are the key to the creation of this party culture. Whether or not party culture takes hold, however, ultimately depends on the response of the party’s legislators to the steps taken by the leadership.

I go beyond previous studies of party institutionalization by offering a conceptualization of institutionalization that provides specific indicators of “culture.” In addition, I provide testable hypotheses for why institutionalization may or may not take place, focusing on what I see as the key component, the role of party leaders. In building this theory of party institutionalization, I focus explicitly on the legislative context; however, the theory could easily be adapted to deal with the challenges and actors unique to extra-parliamentary parties.

I begin by looking at the literature on organizational culture, which I use to refine the concept of party culture developed further on in this chapter. I discuss the key
components of party culture as well as specify the actors within the party involved in creating and adopting this culture. By examining these actors’ preferences and strategies, as well as the outcomes associated with pursuing various strategies, I ultimately arrive at a roadmap for institutionalization. I then turn to potential explanations for the development of party culture, including both my argument regarding the commitment of party elites and a number of potential alternative explanations. The final section summarizes the theory of legislative party institutionalization and provides further thoughts on the theory’s contribution to the literature.

2.1 Defining Culture

In developing the concept of party culture, I looked first to the extensive literature on organizational culture (see, for example, Alvesson 2002, Martin 1992, Ott 1989 and Schein 1991, 1992). Parties, after all, are organizations. In this context culture is perhaps most simply defined as “’the way things are done around here’” (Ripley 1995, 89). Put another way, organizational culture “is the unseen and unobservable force that is always behind organizational activities that can be seen and observed” (Ott 1989, 1). It is this culture that gives meaning or understanding to the sometimes-indecipherable behavior of groups.

Within the vast literature on organizational culture a number of specific components emerge. Among the most common are norms, values and beliefs, and basic assumptions. Norms are “prescriptions for behavior” that “provide organizations with

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12 As I discuss in greater detail below, I do not treat the political party as an organization as a whole, but rather as a collection of individuals, specifically, party leaders and the rank and file members of the party.

13 Ott (1989, 1), for example, lists “shared values, beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, norms, artifacts, and patterns of behavior” in his basic description of organizational culture.
structure and coherence” (Ott 1989, 37). Beliefs and values, on the other hand, “provide the justification for why people and organizations behave as they do” (Ott 1989, 41). Ott (1989, 41) notes that, “it is virtually impossible to understand the meaning and importance of artifacts and patterns of behavior or to predict them without knowing the beliefs and values that shape and drive them” (Ott 1989, 41). Finally, at “the highest level of organizational culture” sit basic assumptions; unconscious manifestations of beliefs and values that “can be thought of as a comprehensive, potent, but out-of-conscious system of beliefs, perceptions, and values” (Ott 1989, 41-42).

From these various elements we arrive at culture, which, “somehow implies that rituals, climate, values, and behaviors bind together into a coherent whole” (Schein 1992, 10). Schein (1992, 12), then, defines “the culture of a group” as follows:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

This definition goes beyond merely identifying culture’s constituent parts to a discussion of why culture exists; norms, values, and basic assumptions all emerge as the result of a group dealing with challenges presented by their environment, both outside of and within the group. The means by which a group chooses to pursue its goals, for example, “creates the behavioral regularities and many of the artifacts that eventually come to be identified as the visible manifestations of the culture” (Schein 1992, 61). Internally, culture involves a group defining itself and its members, identifying those behaviors the

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14 To illustrate the concept of basic assumptions, Ott (1989, 42) gives the example of braking while driving; “After years of pushing the brake pedal and the car slowing, we quit thinking brakes and braking: we just hit the brakes instinctively assuming the car will slow down.”
group deems acceptable, and establishing a system of rewards and punishments for those who break the rules, among other things (Schein 1992, 70-1).

How, though, do cultures form? They do not, after all, “start from scratch” (Schein 1991, 25). Rather, “cultures basically spring from three sources; (1) the beliefs, values, and assumptions of founders of organizations;\textsuperscript{15} (2) the learning experiences of group members as their organization evolves; and (3) new beliefs, values, and assumptions brought in by new members and leaders” (Schein 1992, 211). Schein (1991, 25) argues that, “culture is learned and developed through a variety of explicit and implicit mechanisms, often based on explicit ‘teaching’ by the founder or later leaders.” He further states that, “the creation and embedding process, therefore, has to be viewed simultaneously as a learning and a teaching process. At every stage the role of the leader and the group must be understood if one is to make sense of how the culture evolves” (Schein 1991, 25).

To summarize, the literature on organizational culture specifies a number of components central to culture. Culture develops as the result of choices made by actors, both the leaders of the organization and the membership more broadly, and emerges in response to the challenges an organization faces vis-à-vis its external environment and internal composition. The more commonly observed features of culture such as values and beliefs, and norms of behavior provide a means for overcoming these challenges. Lastly, the creation and adoption of culture is fluid; it is subject to change over time as new members join the group and new leaders emerge.

\textsuperscript{15} If, for example, the founders of a business value employee loyalty and believe further that such loyalty is dependent upon the quality of life in the workplace, those founders may decide to provide benefits and other perquisites geared explicitly toward creating a culture that promotes employee loyalty.
2.2  Party Culture

What, though, is party culture beyond simply “the way things are done” in the party? If culture is designed to overcome challenges, the first step in defining party culture is to establish the challenges legislative parties face. After all, it is the nature of the challenges themselves that determine the specific elements of culture leaders select to overcome said challenges. With respect to their external environment, legislative parties must learn how to work within the legislative context; serving on committees, drafting legislation and voting on those bills that make it to a vote, and for some parties, governing. A legislative party must further learn how to relate to the other parties in the legislature, to the committee system, and to its own extra-parliamentary party apparatus. Finally, legislative parties must deal (albeit indirectly) with voters, for if they hope to be re-elected they must ensure voters are aware (and approve) of their behavior in the legislature. Internally, legislative parties must overcome the challenge of new members entering their ranks after each election, something other organizations generally do not face on the same scale. Rarely is it the case that turnover within a legislative party is 100 percent; however, ensuring that new members understand “the way things are done” is essential to the success of party culture and ultimately, institutionalization.16

Prior to discussing the means legislative parties have for dealing with these various challenges, it is first necessary to know something about the actors themselves in order to better understand what will likely be viewed as a challenge and with what measures these actors are likely to respond. Within the legislative party, who are the

16 That is not to say that party culture depends solely on new members of the legislative party learning how things are done; long-standing members of the legislative party must also be “on board” as it were with the culture of the party. Membership turnover in legislative parties does, however, pose a challenge for the successful implementation of party culture.
actors charged with identifying challenges and creating norms and rules to overcome them, and which actors are expected to subsequently learn this culture?

2.2.1 *Actors: Preferences, Strategies and Outcomes*

Within the literature on political parties there is a tendency to treat political parties as unitary actors. I have chosen here to abandon this oft-made assumption based on the rationale that “a political party comprises a group of individuals, and each individual not only has his or her own utility function but is clearly capable of autonomous action” (Laver and Shepsle 1999, 24). As a result, “it is generally problematic (although hardly unusual) to treat collective actors as if they were individual ones because collective desires or beliefs do not exist” (Kalyvas 1996, 32).

By relaxing the unitary actor assumption, I identify two sets of actors within the legislative party, leaders and backbenchers, which allows me to more easily examine the intra-party dynamics at the core of my project. To understand how these two groups of actors deal with challenges, I must first make assumptions about their respective preferences and strategies. In doing so, I discover parties face an over-arching challenge, the nature of which shapes the rules and norms of party culture used to deal with this challenge.

In addition to the assumption that parties are made up of two groups of actors, I further assume that the individuals within these groups are self-interested; they behave in ways that will maximize what they see as their self-interest. This assumption of self-interest allows me to make further assumptions about the preferences these two groups of actors hold. The first of these assumptions applies equally to both groups; politicians
desire reelection. Rank and file members “are concerned above all else with their reelection prospects” (Laver and Shepsle 1999, 24-5). Writes Kalyvas (1996, 27), politicians “seek to further their political careers; to do so, they maximize their probability of being reelected.” Backbenchers further can be assumed to have a desire for promotion within the party ranks.

As for party leaders, Laver and Shepsle (1999, 24) assume “that a party leader is motivated above all else by the desire to remain party leader.” Party leaders enjoy their position only so long as the party succeeds; if the party fails in its reelection bid, for example, the leader will likely lose his or her leadership position. Thus, note Laver and Shepsle (1999, 24), “parties do not transfer party leaders in the way that soccer teams transfer star players.” Party leaders can, of course, switch political parties either by joining an existing party or creating one anew; however, the chance of remaining party leader may be small. We can assume, then, that “party leaders have nowhere to go in politics but downhill and are likely to fight very hard to stay on top” (Laver and Shepsle 1999, 24).

The preferences of these two groups within the parliamentary party may be similar, but the strategies used to pursue these goals differ significantly from, and in many respects are at odds with, one another. Let us first consider backbenchers. Given the importance of re-election, we might assume that all legislators within a given party would work together, doing everything in their power to achieve that goal. After all, “if the members of some group have a common interest or objective, and if they would all be

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17 Some may take issue with the notion that politicians are self-interested, arguing instead that politicians are motivated by goals of policy and representation. I do not disagree with this view; however, politicians must be in office to pursue policy and to represent constituent interests and thus the ultimate goal of politicians in my mind is that of reelection.
better off if that objective were achieved, it has been thought to follow logically that the individuals in that group would, if they were rational and self-interested, act to achieve that objective” (Olson 1965, 1).

Members of Parliament would certainly *like* the party to succeed in winning re-election, for the likelihood that they will also be re-elected increases. Yet how vital is an individual Member of Parliament to the re-election chances of his or her political party? The concept of collective reputation implies that for a legislator, “If their political party enjoys a good reputation, then they benefit regardless of what they do as individuals. Conversely, if their political party develops a bad reputation, then they are sanctioned, again, irrespective of their individual behavior” (Zielinski 2003, 2). If it is the case, then, that the actions of an individual legislator are relatively unimportant to the party’s re-election, legislators “have an individual incentive to free ride on their collective reputation and engage in corrupt activities that eventually undermine that reputation” (Zielinski 2003, 2). Legislators’ preferences, then, are to allow others to bear the costs of pursuing the party’s goals while enjoying the benefits (or suffering the consequences) of collective reputation.

Legislative parties, then, face a problem of *collective action*. If legislators assume that others will bear the burden of attending meetings, floor debates and votes in large enough numbers, the party will be plagued by inaction and will ultimately be incapable of accomplishing its goals within parliament. Such ineffectiveness is likely to be met with disapproval by voters and, as a result, the party’s chances of re-election are remote.

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18 This is particularly true of proportional representation electoral systems, where an individual’s chances for election depend to a great extent on the party, most notably in terms of placement on the party’s list of candidates.
As for the strategies party leaders have for pursuing their goals, recall that they seek both reelection and to maintain their position within the party leadership. The collective action problem, however, poses a serious threat to both goals. If party leaders have any hope of maintaining their positions, then, they must pursue strategies geared toward overcoming the propensity for free-riding among the rank and file.\textsuperscript{19}

In face of this collective action problem, what can party leaders do? Party leaders, I argue, have the following set of strategies from which to choose: they can fail to recognize the collective action problem altogether; they can recognize the collective action problem but fail to take action; finally, they can both recognize the collective action problem and seek to do something to overcome the problem.

Party leaders are but one half of the equation, however. Once party leaders choose to commit to solving the collective action problem, backbenchers have the opportunity to react, choosing from their own set of strategies. They can either reject the leadership’s attempts to solve the collective action problem, or they can cooperate.

Each of the strategies mentioned above corresponds to a set outcome. For elites, both failing to recognize the collective-action problem and recognizing the problem but failing to take action means party culture will not be created and the party will fail to institutionalize in the legislature. As a result, the party’s probability of reelection is low and the likelihood that the party may disappear from the political landscape altogether high. The strategy of recognizing the problem and taking action has a very different

\textsuperscript{19} Are party leaders not also prone to engaging in free-riding behavior? I argue no. Whereas members of the rank and file can rely on others to bear the burden of pursuing the party’s interests, by virtue of the fact that the party leadership is a relatively small group they do not have the same luxury. The party leadership is also highly visible and tends to be associated closely in the public mind with the party itself, making the shirking of duties via free-riding unacceptable for them.
outcome; the creation of party culture as a means to deal with free-riding increases the likelihood that the party will be reelected, ultimately achieving its goal. For party members, on the other hand, if they choose the strategy of cooperation party culture becomes entrenched and institutionalization takes place; if the membership chooses a strategy of defection, however, the party fails to institutionalize in the legislature, will likely fail to win re-election and is more likely to dissolve.

The strategies pursued by party leaders and the rank and file, as well as the outcomes associated with those strategies, are conditional. That is, any given outcome depends on the choices made by both the leadership and rank and file. We can model this series of strategies and outcomes as a decision tree, as seen in Figure 2.1.

2.2.2 Factors Affecting Strategies

If the strategies (and corresponding outcomes) were this clear to both party leaders and backbenchers, why would elites choose a strategy other than recognition/commitment? What factors might obscure the picture and lead party leaders to choose one strategy over another?

It is difficult to imagine a scenario in which party leaders do not recognize the many challenges they face. Legislators choosing not to attend votes, speaking out against the party’s position publicly, and failing to vote with the party line are all free-riding behaviors that party elites can fairly easily observe. As a result, I assume that we are dealing with one of two possibilities; the party elite either fails to commit to solving the collective action problem and chooses not to create party culture, or does, in fact, commit and therefore creates party culture.
I hypothesize that there are four main factors influencing party leaders’ decision to commit to overcoming the collective action problem or not. The first is ideology. A party with strong and coherent ideological underpinnings may not experience problems with legislators failing to vote in accordance with the party’s position. Rather, shared ideology provides legislators with a pre-existing motivation for voting the party line. That does not mean highly ideological parties do not also face challenges (for example, the challenge of getting members to attend votes). These parties may, however, be more motivated to commit to party culture out of an obligation to represent their perception of voters’ interests. Leaders of parties lacking strong ideological attachments, by contrast, may have to rely more heavily on rules and norms as a way to manufacture cohesion where none exists naturally. At the same time, however, party leaders may meet resistance from the rank and file who, without the legitimizing power of ideology, may view these rules and norms as arbitrary and ultimately, illegitimate.

Hypothesis I: Leaders of ideologically strong parties are more likely to commit to overcoming the collective action problem by establishing party culture than are leaders of ideologically weak parties.

A party’s size may also be a motivating factor in whether elites choose a strategy of commitment. In small parties free-riding behavior, although certainly more noticeable, will likely have minimal consequences and as such may be more easily tolerated by party leaders. As Hix and Lord (1997, 143) note, “The politics of cohesion are very different amongst the larger and smaller groups. The incentive to cohere is very high amongst the former, whereas members of the latter know that they have very little chance of being able to influence parliamentary outcomes.” As a result, the leadership may conclude that the costs of implementing party culture outweigh the potential benefits. The collective
voting power of large parties, by contrast, is great enough to have an impact on the outcome, making free-riding more undesirable than in smaller parties. At the same time, members of large parties may be more inclined to free-ride knowing that there are plenty of other party members to bear the costs of pursuing the party’s goals. The motivation for leaders of large parties to commit to solving the collective action problem, then, is strong.

**Hypothesis II:** Party leaders are more likely to commit to solving the collective action problem in large parties than in small parties.

A party’s status as either a member of government or opposition may also be influential in the leadership’s decision to commit to the creation of party culture.\(^{20}\) For the government to usher its preferred policies through parliament requires the support of its membership. Free-riding behavior may be particularly harmful for governing parties, making leaders of these parties more likely to commit to party culture.

**Hypothesis III:** Membership in government makes party leaders more likely to commit to solving the problem of collective action.

A related factor is that of coalition status. Coalitions, like large parties operating on their own, may have a greater chance of influencing votes in parliament. In addition, a party in coalition may be more motivated to commit to party culture for what it signifies to its current (and future) coalition partners.

**Hypothesis IV:** Leaders of parties in coalition are more likely to pursue party culture as a means to overcome the collective action problem.

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\(^{20}\) Institutionalization, and the commitment, creation and adoption of party culture at its heart, is a process. Party leaders may, for example, take steps to create party culture which they find all the more need to do when they enter government, join a coalition, etc. In addition, in new democracies, the fact that parties themselves are largely new means that in the first democratic parliament, new parties will be governing parties, and so on.
Turning now to the legislative rank and file, why would they choose a strategy other than cooperation if they knew the respective outcomes? As with party leaders, there are several factors that may be driving legislators’ choice of one strategy over the other. The primary factor in a legislator choosing not to cooperate is a motivation to pursue interests other than those of the party. Representing constituents is one such motivation. Thus, legislators may choose to vote against the party’s position, or may speak out in opposition to this position publicly, if the party line on a given piece of legislation is seen as disadvantageous to a legislator’s constituents.21

*Hypothesis V:* Legislators are more likely to pursue a strategy of cooperation when they are not motivated primarily by constituency interests.

Another non-party interest that may influence the decision to cooperate with party culture is the desire to promote particular interests within society. A legislator with close ties to business organizations, trade unions or farmers’ groups, for example, may be more concerned with representing this group’s interests than the interests of the parliamentary party to which he or she belongs.

*Hypothesis VI:* Legislators with close ties to particular social strata may be less likely to cooperate with party culture.

A third motivation for legislators not to cooperate involves the nature of the party itself. Political parties in new democracies often lack programmatic coherence, particularly in the early years of the democratic transition. A legislator elected to parliament as a member of a party without a strong identity may discover once there that

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21 Constituency motivations are more likely for individuals elected from single-member districts using plurality electoral laws than in proportional representation systems, although constituency can be defined more broadly in terms of regional interests as well. Within PR systems, we would expect constituency interests to play a greater role in open-list PR systems as opposed to closed-list PR systems.
his or her own interests are incompatible with those of the party. As a result, the legislator may have few qualms about engaging in uncooperative behavior.

*Hypothesis VII: If a party has limited or incoherent programmatic content, its members in parliament may be more likely to pursue a strategy of defiance.*

One final factor that will determine whether a legislator chooses to cooperate with the culture created by party leaders is personal ambition. Individuals who are strongly motivated by the desire for promotion up the ranks will likely play the role of model citizen within the party, choosing to cooperate as a result. These individuals may find additional motivation to cooperate out of sympathy, knowing that they themselves aspire to leadership positions within the party.

*Hypothesis VIII: Legislators who seek positions within the party leadership may be more motivated to cooperate than their counterparts lacking such aspirations.*

Having identified the challenges specific to legislative parties (the collective action problem chief among them), the actors within the party responsible for the creation and subsequent entrenchment of party culture (leaders and backbenchers, respectively) and the preferences and strategies that will or will not lead to legislative party institutionalization, let us now turn to the final component of party culture; the means for dealing with challenges.

2.2.3 The Means for Dealing with Challenges

Legislative parties face a variety of challenges in dealing with their external environment, including relating to other parties and learning how to perform legislative functions, whereas internally, legislative parties must deal with the challenge of turnover following parliamentary elections. The observable features of culture - behavioral norms,
values and beliefs – are created as a means for solving these challenges. It is these features of party culture, then, that signal “how things are done.”

Legislators know what it is they should do; they also know, however, that they can free-ride, allowing others to bear the costs of pursuing the party’s interests. Parliamentary party leaders, then, must find ways to deal with the collective action problem, in addition to the challenges identified above.\(^{22}\) Leaders must signal to all actors within the party what behaviors will and will not be tolerated and provide tangible rewards and punishments for engaging in behavior deemed permissible or impermissible. Party culture, then, involves the establishment of a system of rewards and punishments designed to eliminate the potential for free-riding among members. What follows is a discussion of the specific mechanisms for rewarding and punishing free-riding. Given that the creation of this system of rewards and punishments is the responsibility of party leaders, who subsequently “teach” the party culture to the rank and file, I begin with the role of party leaders.

What are the means by which legislative party leaders encourage the rank and file to act in concert in pursuing the party’s goals? I argue party leaders reward and punish behavior through the use of selective incentives. Selective incentives “can be either negative or positive, in that they can either coerce by punishing those who fail to bear an allocated share of the costs of the group action, or they can be positive inducements offered to those who act in the group interest” (Olson 1965, 51). In the context of

\(^{22}\) Specific challenges identified above include relating to other parties in parliament (for example, as a coalition partner) and adapting to membership turnover. Overcoming the collective action problem directly contributes to the party’s ability to overcome these other challenges as well. For example, getting members of the party to attend votes and vote cohesively allows the party to meet its obligations to its current coalition partner and further signals to future coalition partners that it is reliable. As for new members, establishing the rules and norms of party culture makes the process of incorporating new members that much easier as the rules and norms will not need to be created anew after each election.
parliamentary parties, these selective incentives, or “carrots and sticks” as Bowler, Farrell and Katz (1999) call them, are more commonly referred to as party discipline.

Two categories of incentives have been identified in the literature: “generic incentives” and “procedural devices” (Bowler, Farrell and Katz 1999). Generic incentives most commonly take the form of appointment or promotion to leadership positions; “Patronage and committee appointments (and withdrawal of the same) are the most commonly used, especially in parliamentary systems, where, provided the party is in government, plum jobs within the executive itself are available” (Bowler, Farrell and Katz 1999, 10). Note that for some parties, nomination to the party list may be the purview of parliamentary party leadership, making placement on the party list an additional generic incentive available.

Procedural measures for inducing cohesion include open roll call voting, where an MP’s vote is under scrutiny not only by his or her party but also by the entire legislature. The use of open roll calls is a means of monitoring legislators’ voting behavior, effectively preventing legislators’ disobedience via casting a vote against the party position. Bowler, Farrell and Katz (1999, 11) point to a second procedural mechanism; agenda control. By keeping potentially divisive issues from coming up for a vote, party leaders make it more likely that voting cohesion will be high. Finally, for governing parties, “Introducing votes of confidence can be seen as quite a blunt instrument with which to club members . . . into line” (Bowler, Farrell, and Katz 1999, 11).23

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23 Regardless of whether using generic or procedural measures for manufacturing cohesion, the responsibility of monitoring legislator behavior usually falls to whips’ offices. Write Bowler, Farrell, and Katz (1999, 10), the whips’ office “is an organization specifically devoted to the maintenance of unified action by a political bloc,” in that it “allow[s] leaders to identify and deal with potential rebels.”
2.2.4 Reacting to these Mechanisms

Through the use of discipline, party leaders lay the groundwork for party culture, which specifies norms for what rank and file members should and should not do and further establishes the rewards and sanctions that come along with legislator behavior. The successful adoption of these elements of party culture, however, depends on the larger membership of the legislative party, which must choose whether or not to abide by the rules established by the party elite. According to the decision tree presented in Figure 2.1, there are two strategies available to the rank and file: to adopt the party culture and cooperate with the party elite, or to disobey.

Let us look first at the second of these two choices. What happens when members decide not to cooperate? These members can decide to stay within the party and serve as the voice of dissent: breaking with party culture by failing to attend votes and meetings, refusing to vote the party line, and even going so far as to openly disagree with the party’s position in public. This type of rebellious behavior may go on for some time, at least until party leaders find a way to effectively punish the rebels, most likely when reelection comes around and the party leadership chooses not to nominate them on the party list. The other option is for these dissenting members to defect from the party and find a party in which they feel less oppressed, as it were. This second option is referred to as party switching (see for example Kreuzer and Pettai 2002, Mershon and Heller 2001) and is a fairly common way for party members to extract themselves from a party situation in which they feel the costs of abiding by party culture are too high.

It is when the backbenchers choose to cooperate and abide by the party culture established by the leadership that legislative party institutionalization takes place. Only
through both the elite committing to institutionalization, evidenced by the establishment of mechanisms of party culture (the selective incentives of party discipline), and the rank and file accepting this culture and abiding by it, do legislative political parties institutionalize.

What are the behaviors that indicate backbenchers have chosen to cooperate? When party culture is adopted by the greater membership, the party should be disciplined, in the sense that members abide by the disciplinary measures of leaders. We further should see a low level of party switching in an institutionalized party.\textsuperscript{24} High attendance at votes and, perhaps more importantly, high cohesion on votes are two additional indicators of legislative party institutionalization. Finally, in institutionalized legislative parties we should also see legislators pursuing party interests on committees and publicly supporting party policies.

\textbf{2.2.5 Additional Elements of Party Culture}

The selective incentives associated with party discipline create the norms of behavior within the legislative party, yet what of the values and beliefs that “provide the justification for why people and organizations behave as they do” (Ott 1989, 41)? Creating and imparting values and beliefs to the broader membership is not generally a task required of the leaders of legislative political parties; members already share certain political values and beliefs either in the form of some coherent ideology, an ideological tendency (pro-market, anti-system, etc.), or an issue or set of issues. In creating party

\textsuperscript{24} Note, however, that there is a temporal dimension here. Party switching may be high initially as dissenting members choose to leave the party. If the numbers fleeing the party are great, the party will likely collapse. Over time, however, the number of legislators defecting from the party should decrease as party culture becomes more established. A low level of party switching, then, characterizes an institutionalized party.
culture, then, the lion’s share of legislative party leaders’ responsibility is in developing norms of behavior, not in creating values and beliefs.25 As a result, it is on these norms and behaviors that I choose to focus. I will return to the place of ideology in party institutionalization in the discussion of potential alternative hypotheses below.

I have specified how party culture is created (actions of elites), the elements of that culture (primarily the norms of behavior associated with party discipline), how party culture is adopted (the role of the party rank and file), and the values and beliefs that provide justification for those norms (shared ideology or a general political orientation). Yet what happens at the next election when significant changes in the membership structure of the party are likely to occur? Must the legislative party go through this process again, with the leadership establishing norms and the backbenchers deciding to whether to adopt these norms? If legislative parties were required to “reinvent the wheel” after each election then we could not say that institutionalization has taken place. After all, institutionalization, “is the process by which a body acquires a definite way of performing its functions – a way that sets it apart from its environment and that is independent of the membership and issues of the moment” (Hibbing 1988, 682). This is not to imply that there is necessarily an endpoint at which a legislative party is institutionalized; institutionalization is, after all, a process.

How, then, does the legislative party come to exist “independent of the membership and issues of the moment” (Hibbing 1988, 682)? Culture must be so inextricably entwined with the party that it is carried over from one parliamentary term to

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25 Politicians may act strategically when choosing their party affiliation, deciding to join the party that maximizes their chances of being elected (or re-elected once in office). In such cases, the party leaders will have even more cause to establish rules and norms, and enforce them.
the next, regardless of whether the leadership and general membership are carried over as well. This is where basic assumptions, the “highest level of organizational culture,” come into play (Ott 1989, 41). Recall from above that basic assumptions come about as the result of the success of norms and values/beliefs in dealing with the organization’s challenges.

In the case of legislative parties, basic assumptions are the element of party culture that ultimately allows parties to institutionalize. Over time, as legislative party leaders and members see the value in attending votes and voting the party line for the success of the party’s legislative interests, these norms of behavior will become so accepted that they are eventually “taken for granted.” At that point, the specific mechanisms (rewards and punishments) that created and reinforced the norms in the first place may no longer be necessary to achieve the desired behavior among party members. The development of these basic assumptions imply that the party has acquired value in and of itself, outside of the leaders and members within the party at the time the culture was created and adopted.  

Before moving on to a discussion of explanations for why party culture forms, let me first summarize the theoretical argument made to this point. Party culture, as it exists within the parliamentary setting, entails the establishment of rules and norms guiding the functioning of the party in dealing with the many challenges presented by both its external and internal environs; values and beliefs are pre-existing in the form of ideological predispositions and general political outlooks. Party culture provides

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26 I have intentionally relaxed the assumption that political parties are unitary actors in order to examine the internal dynamics at the heart of the creation and adoption of party culture. Once culture becomes so engrained that it is taken for granted and the party institutionalizes, it may be the case that we can once again view the party as a unitary actor.
members of the legislative political party with a shorthand of sorts for the party’s functioning. Perhaps the greatest challenge legislative parties face is that of the collective action problem, whereby parliamentarians free-ride, opting to allow others to bear the costs of pursuing the party’s goals within the legislature rather than doing so themselves. Parties need some means for dealing with these various challenges; a means for overcoming the collective action problem. I argue that party leaders do so by establishing rules and norms for permissible behavior in the form of rewards and punishments, more broadly known as party discipline. The specific elements of party discipline are further known to both the leadership and the rank and file, and applied to both equally. The rank and file, though, must decide whether or not to abide by this party discipline. If they cooperate with the party leadership, then party culture takes root; if not, however, the party has no effective means for dealing with challenges and has failed to establish itself. It is through the creation and subsequent adoption of party culture that legislative parties institutionalize.

2.3 Explaining Party Culture

2.3.1 Elite Commitment

The party elite is crucial to legislative party institutionalization.27 Party leaders establish the specific selective incentives (the rewards and punishments of party discipline). The party elite within the legislative setting are those individuals within the “inner circle;” those responsible for making the key decisions on behalf of the party. These individuals may include the parliamentary party leader(s), committee chairman, and party whips. For the party (or parties) in government these individuals further include the Prime Minister and the various ministers of his or her cabinet. For parties in the opposition, these individuals may not be as readily identified, say by a cabinet portfolio; nevertheless, it is still possible to identify the individuals within the upper ranks of a political party, whether they are in the government or not. It is difficult, however, to identify a standard group of leadership positions across all parties. Thus it is that I must offer the simple definition of the parliamentary party elite as those individuals who occupy key leadership positions within the parliamentary party, and by virtue of those positions make decisions for the party as a whole.

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discipline) at the heart of party culture, and further determine when and why party
discipline is used. I argue, then, that party culture, in the form of party discipline, is the
result of deliberate choices of the party elite. The factors identified above (ideology,
party size, government or opposition membership and coalition status) may make elite
commitment more or less likely; however, without the conscious decisions of elites, party
institutionalization will not take place.

Elite commitment entails leadership deciding to actively work toward achieving a
preferred outcome, and subsequently doing so. While elite commitment has been fairly
absent from the study of party institutionalization, it has been identified as playing a key
role in party formation. Parties are not created out of thin air, and even if conditions
appear favorable for the formation of a party, there must be some agency involved to get
the party off the ground. Kalyvas (1996, 6), in his account of the creation of Christian
Democratic parties in Western Europe, writes “the central thesis is that the formation of
confessional parties was the contingent outcome of decisions made by political actors.”
The elites in this case were leaders of mass Catholic organizations and lay clergy;
“confessional parties were formed in spite of and not, as is usually assumed, because of
the church’s intentions and actions” (Kalyvas 1996, 6). Accounts of the formation of
Socialist parties in Western Europe argue workers’ parties were created as a direct result
of actions taken by leaders (Michels 1915, Przeworski and Sprague 1986). In this case,
leaders of workers’ groups faced a dilemma: whether to take up their cause through direct
political confrontation with capitalists, or whether to work through the political system to
attain their goals; they chose the latter (Przeworski and Sprague 1986, 14).
If elite commitment is critical to the formation of political parties, then why not also to their institutionalization? Just as “organizations do not form accidentally or spontaneously,” culture does not appear out of thin air (Schein 1992, 212). Party culture, like parties themselves, is created and, therefore, requires agency. My elite commitment argument is explicitly agency-based, arguing that party culture, and ultimately institutionalization, occurs as the result of actions taken by party elites.

Given that voting cohesion and party discipline are such widespread phenomena in parliamentary democracies, they have received relatively little attention in the literature. After all, note Mershon and Heller (2001, 3) “Why study something that is as constant as the landscape?” While I argue these phenomena are, in fact, the observable features of party culture and contend that elite commitment determines whether party culture is created, a survey of the extant literature reveals several potential rival hypotheses for explaining legislative party behavior. I identify two classes of alternative explanations; those at the level of the system itself, and those operating within the system, at the level of the party. The systemic-level explanations can elucidate variation in legislative party institutionalization across party systems, whereas party-level explanations can clarify variation in the institutionalization of the legislative parties themselves. My concern here is with identifying party-level explanations, which are the most relevant alternatives to my argument regarding the role of party elites; however,

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28 That members of the same political party often vote together on legislation is nothing new. Nor is the notion that parties in the legislature develop a system of rewards and punishments known as party discipline. Thus, students of West European politics have long observed that voting cohesion in parliamentary democracies tends to be rather high. That is, legislators from a given party tend to vote together in a unified bloc. The highly cohesive European parties stand in contrast to those of the United States; “members of parliamentary coalitions persistently vote together on different policy issues, while coalitions in the U.S. Congress are issue specific, change frequently, and often cross party lines” (Diermeier and Feddersen 1998, 611).
before turning to alternative explanations at the party level, I first provide a brief overview of system-level explanations.

2.3.2 Alternative Explanations: Systemic Factors

Within the American politics literature there is a school of thought based in rational choice theory that claims to the extent that we observe cohesive party behavior in the legislature, it is the result of similar preferences; there is no independent role for the party (see, for example, Krehbiel 1993). Instead, committees are seen as the center of power in the U.S. Congress. Committee membership allows legislators to more closely approximate their ideal policy positions, which they would likely be forced to compromise if their only input into policy was voting on the floor on proposals developed by party leaders.

Another explanation involves the rules by which representatives are elected and argues that party cohesion will be higher in proportional representation (PR) systems than in plurality ones. When a legislator is elected under plurality electoral rules, she maximizes her chances of reelection by building up a solid reputation for constituency service, which includes her voting record during the legislative session. The incentives for legislators elected in PR systems are based on party reputation, rather than personal reputation.29 If a legislator is to have a chance at reelection under this system, he must be

29 It is important to note, however, that PR electoral systems can take a variety of forms. Only under what is known as closed-list PR should we expect to see the creation of a strong party mandate. Under closed-list PR the party leadership determines the placement of candidates on the ballot and voters must accept that list as is. Open-list PR, by contrast, allows voters to select an individual candidate from the list presented by the party, thereby placing the control over which individuals go on to represent the party in the legislature in the hands of the voters themselves. In open-list PR systems, then, “personal reputation is more valuable to legislative candidates than in closed list systems” (Carey, 418). The party’s reputation is important regardless of which variety of PR is used, for the voters must be willing to cast their ballot for the party either way; however, legislators elected according to open-list PR rules will face the cross-pressures of party and constituency.
in the good graces of the party leaders, who determine the placement of candidates on the party’s list. Electoral laws, then, do not influence the voting behavior of legislators directly, but rather through the notion of mandate; does the legislator have a mandate from the constituents he or she represents, or the mandate of his or her political party?

A third alternative explanation involves the nature of the relationship between the executive and legislature as specified in the constitution (Shabad and Slomczynski 2005, Kreppel 2002, Loewenberg 1979). Where the legislature does not elect the chief executive, and where the chief executive further does not rely on the legislature for support, we expect to see lower levels of party institutionalization. By contrast, in a system where the legislative body must support the chief executive, we expect party institutionalization in the legislature to be higher. Semi-presidential systems are thought to fall somewhere between the two, with a lower degree of legislative party institutionalization than parliamentary systems but higher levels of institutionalization than presidential systems. Thus, we can expect parliamentary systems to have the highest levels of legislative party institutionalization, followed by semi-presidential systems, and lastly, presidential systems.

The three arguments outlined above are useful in explaining variation in levels of legislative party institutionalization, but only insofar as we are looking across party systems. Thus, legislative parties in Country A are more or less institutionalized than those in Country B as a function of the relative strength of parties and committees, different electoral laws, and whether the chief executive is a Prime Minister or President. These systemic-level factors provide no real leverage in explaining legislative party institutionalization within the same system, however. I choose to incorporate these
systemic-level variables into my theory of legislative party institutionalization not as rival explanations, but rather as both constraints on the behavior of individual parties and opportunities for action within a single system.

2.3.3 Alternative Explanations: Party Level Factors

When we move the level of analysis from that of the system as a whole to that of the party we can begin to identify those explanations that truly do represent potential alternative explanations to the elite commitment argument. Here too there exist three main rival explanations; the role of ideology, the nature of organization, and the character of the party’s founding. In this section I present each of these explanations in detail.

According to the first expressly party-level rival explanation for legislative party institutionalization, the role of elite commitment is usurped by the power of ideology. Legislators from the same party engage in behavior that is in the party’s best interest (such as voting cohesion) not because they are coerced by leadership into doing so, but because they hold the same values and beliefs. Cohesion exists a priori; “representatives of a given party would face legislative issues with a similar outlook on policy which would distinguish them from members of the other party (or parties)” (Norpoth 1976, 1157). Cohesive behavior is not imposed on the rank and file from “without” (the party leadership) but is organic and emerges quite naturally as the result of shared ideology.30

30 The most prevalent form of this argument identifies ideology’s relationship to party behavior as one of the distribution or dispersion of ideological positions within the party. That is, how closely matched in terms of ideology are legislators within the same party? Are there wide-ranging ideological positions, or is the dispersion of these positions narrow? Zielinski (2001, 2) summarizes what he calls the “ideological proximity” theory in the literature, stating “voting cohesion is a function of the ideological distance that separates members of the same party. The smaller the distance, the greater the cohesion.” A second version of the ideology explanation holds that it is the type of ideology that determines the behavior of legislators. Parties of the left, and more specifically communist parties, are said to be more unified in their behavior than any other ideological party type. The reason for higher a priori levels of cohesive behavior in these parties comes from their strict adherence to a guiding ideology – Marxism-Leninism – which in turn helps to ensure their unique position as the “sole spokesman” of the working class (Meny 1990, 79).
Even in parties with strong ideology, cohesion may not be perfect. Write Laver and Shepsle (1999, 26), “If all politicians in the same party had identical tastes, there would be no intraparty conflict of interest and thus no policy basis for intraparty politics.” I would argue that the existence of a strong ideology and/or narrowly dispersed ideological positions within a party do not make the use of discipline unnecessary; ideology provides party leaders with a basis for imposing these measures. Furthermore, the ideological argument is focused almost completely on the act of voting. The collective action problem within political parties is not simply one of how legislators vote; what about attendance at votes and committee meetings? The elite commitment argument goes beyond ideological proximity/strength in explaining legislative party behavior.

A second potential party-level rival involves the locus of a party’s organizational power. This argument states that it is the extra-parliamentary party organization, not that within the parliament, that determines whether the legislative party institutionalizes. The power of the extra-parliamentary party organization lies in its ability to control the electoral fortunes of legislators, and subsequently direct legislators’ behavior within the parliament. Bowler, Farrell, and Katz (1999, 6) write, “To the extent that nomination politics are controlled by the party machine . . . the party can ensure the cohesion of a legislative body by weeding out potential troublemakers.” The extra-parliamentary organization “is helped by the fact that the act of joining a party is explicitly contractual” (Bowler, Farrell, and Katz 1999, 6). Oftentimes, potential candidates “must sign a pledge

Perhaps rather than type of ideology, this argument may be better expressed as strength of ideology. Thus, parties with a strong ideology will be more cohesive than parties with a weaker ideological basis (such as social movement parties like those described by Ágh 1999) or parties in which the ideological positions of its members are widely dispersed. By restating this argument in terms of strength we can include parties of the extreme right and other parties across the ideological spectrum that ascribe to a strong ideology.
in which they declare that they are a member and in which they promise to support the
general aims and constitution of the party” (Bowler, Farrell, and Katz 1999, 6). The
party organization’s power over its legislators continues throughout the parliamentary
session as long as legislators seek the party’s support in seeking re-election.31

This argument assumes that it is the extra-parliamentary party organization that
controls decisions regarding nomination to party lists, which may or may not be the
case.32 I would further argue that, while the extra-parliamentary organization argument
may hold when it comes to the process of candidate selection (although that is an
empirical question) elite commitment allows us additional leverage on the specific

31 Ostrogorski (1902, 207), in his account of the rise of the British Liberal Party, notes that for the extra-
parliamentary party leadership attempting to determine which individuals to nominate on their party list, the
most important qualification was that a potential candidate, “profess the creed of the party in all its
fulness, and that his opinions should give complete satisfaction to the Caucus, which vouches for his
orthodoxy.” Once elected, legislators owed their success to the party. Self-interest led Members of
Parliament (MPs) to follow party discipline in order to gain re-election, for without the party’s machinery
there was little hope of reaching enough voters through the canvass to be elected. Thus, once in office an
MP must vote the party line in order to maintain the party’s favor. Of the party caucus Ostrogorski (1902,
229) writes, “having lent him their moral resources, they consider themselves entitled to a mortgage over
his conscience. And as they have power to foreclose, the Member who wants to be re-elected cannot take a
high tone, the instinct of self-preservation restrains him.”

32 Empirically speaking, in the case of East/Central Europe there is reason to expect that it is the party in
office, rather than the extra-parliamentary party, that is more powerful; “There are in fact at least three
distinct reasons to suggest that, in new democracies in particular, the party in public office is likely to be
particularly ascendant, especially given a context of organization-building in which there are few real
opportunities and little necessity to develop a strong organization on the ground” (Van Biezen 2000, 396).
Among the reasons Van Biezen (2000) offers in support of this claim is the fact that parties tended to be
created immediately prior to democratic elections in East/Central Europe, which precluded them from
having to work to establish an organizational structure outside of parliament. Parties in these new
democracies further tend to lack strong ties to society, leading them to focus on the tasks of legislation and
governance over representing constituent interests. Finally, Van Biezen (2000, 397) notes that:

Partly as a consequence of their ‘institutional’ origins and the sequence of party development,
parties in these new democracies are likely to concentrate on the relatively easier and less time-
consuming strategy of electoral mobilization rather than the laborious strategy of partisan
mobilization. That is, they are more likely to focus on establishing a direct linkage between the
party in public office and the electorate rather than on channelling [sic] societal demands through
the extra-parliamentary organization.

For these reasons, then, my focus on the legislative party and the importance of its institutionalization
appears to be justified. Van Biezen (2000) finds, however, that the expectation of stronger legislative
parties vis-à-vis extra-parliamentary parties does not necessarily bear out in the East/Central European
cases of the Czech Republic and Hungary, nor in the Southern European cases of Portugal and Spain. I
discuss her findings, and my own results for the case of Poland, in the subsequent chapter.
problem of legislative party institutionalization. It does so by providing a more proximate explanation, one that posits a number of additional mechanisms by which party leaders influence the behavior of legislators. These mechanisms include assignment to committees, the development of a system of whips, and control of the legislative agenda.

The third class of party-level alternative explanations deals with a party’s founding and takes two main forms. One version of this argument focuses on where the party was founded: at the electoral level or within the parliament. Parties formed within the parliament itself, so the argument goes, are more likely to institutionalize within that context because they may not be unduly influenced by any social group. This argument is one of autonomy; for a party to institutionalize it must make its own decisions free from the influence of groups within society, such as trade unions and other social groups. A second form of this argument claims that when a political party was founded may be a factor in its institutionalization. In post-communist systems, a party that was established prior to communism, or during the communist era, may have advantages over the newly established political party in terms of organizational/financial resources, name recognition, and experience, among other things. This argument reflects the notion that a party’s age determines institutionalization.  

The argument about where a party was founded (at the electoral or legislative level) is an interesting one, but says nothing about how institutionalization then takes place. Likewise, the length of time a party has been in existence may be helpful for its

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33 Whether the political party was founded around a particular individual may also influence whether or not that party institutionalizes. If a party exists to serve the interests of one person, once that person is no longer involved in the party (as the result of death or retirement, for example), the party may cease to exist altogether.
institutionalization; if party leadership has not taken the initiative to establish party culture, however, the party’s age will likely be irrelevant.

2.4 Summary and Conclusions

Despite its importance for the quality and stability of democratic government (particularly in new democracies), the notion of legislative party institutionalization is largely absent from the existent literature on political parties. Based on the literature on organizational culture, I have developed a theory of legislative party institutionalization that equates institutionalization with the establishment and adoption of rules and norms of behavior, what eventually becomes party culture. By relaxing the oft-made assumption that political parties are unitary actors, and thereby identifying two separate groups of actors, party leaders and the broader membership, I specify the preferences, strategies and outcomes of these groups of actors. As a result, I identify an overarching challenge faced by legislative parties, that of the collective action problem. Party culture provides a means for overcoming the collective action problem; the creation of norms of behavior, specifically, the selective incentives of party discipline, signal to party members those behaviors that are considered acceptable, and those that are unacceptable.

I further argue that the key to legislative party institutionalization is party elites, who must create mechanisms central to party culture. The broader membership of the legislative party is also crucial in that it is their decision to accept party discipline or not that determines whether party culture is adopted. Legislative party institutionalization takes place when the norms associated with party culture become taken for granted and continue with the party from one election to the next, regardless of whether the leaders and members responsible for creating that culture also carry over.
While I contend that elite commitment is the key to legislative party institutionalization, a number of potential rival explanations exist to explain the existence of the identifiable elements of party culture – the norms of behavior associated with party discipline. I identify two key categories of factors, one at the level of the system, the other at the party-level, and discuss how, if at all, these explanations might counter the elite commitment argument. Ultimately, this is an empirical question and one that will be examined in greater detail throughout subsequent chapters.
PARTY ELITE   FAIL TO RECOGNIZE (FAILURE TO INSTITUTIONALIZE)

RECOGNIZE

PARTY ELITE   FAIL TO COMMIT (FAILURE TO INSTITUTIONALIZE)

COMMIT

RANK AND FILE   DEFECT (FAILURE TO INSTITUTIONALIZE)

COOPERATE (PARTY INSTITUTIONALIZATION)

FIGURE 2.1. DECISION TREE OF CONDITIONAL STRATEGIES AND OUTCOMES
CHAPTER 3
POLAND’S PARTY SYSTEM

In order to make sense of the process of legislative party institutionalization in Poland it is necessary to first have some grounding in the development of the post-communist party system. Does the origin of this party system coincide with the transition to democracy or do its roots go deeper to the communist era, or even the interwar period? And how has the party system evolved from the time of Poland’s first (albeit partly) free elections in 1989? What of the parties themselves? Who are the actors contesting elections, how have they changed over time and what are the major issue dimensions parties use to define themselves? These are the questions I explore in this chapter.

I begin with a brief overview of the development of Poland’s modern party system, looking first at the country’s brief experiment with parliamentary democracy in the interwar period and then at the communist era, before moving on to the period of democratic transition beginning in 1989. I then provide a quick snapshot of each of Poland’s fully democratic parliamentary elections, held in 1991, 1993, 1997 and 2001. The remainder of the chapter provides profiles of each of the nine political parties that feature prominently throughout the project.
In terms of the parties on which I choose to focus in the following pages, the bulk of the research presented throughout the remainder of this project was collected for the fourth post-communist parliament, elected in September 2001, and as a result, I focus on the main parties represented in this parliament. I include seven parties from this parliament in my analysis: Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), Labor Union (UP), Polish People’s Party (PSL), Civic Platform (PO), Samoobrona (SO), Law and Justice (PiS) and the League of Polish Families (LPR). In addition to the analysis of the fourth parliament, I include information on the third post-communist parliament (1997 – 2001), which included two major party groupings not found in the fourth parliament: Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) and Freedom Union (UW).

3.1 Historical Overview

Poland’s first experiment with liberal democracy began with the creation of an independent Polish Republic in November 1918. Although the May 1926 coup d’etat orchestrated by General Jozef Pilsudski effectively ended parliamentary democracy in Poland after only eight years, it was during this period that Poland’s first political parties/party system took shape. That is not to say this new party system was necessarily pluralist. “The political stance of the leading circles was unashamedly nationalist” writes Norman Davies (2005, 298-9), who goes on to state that, “In practice, this left very little scope for minority interests or for those political groups, whether conservative or revolutionary, which were not impressed by the nationalist fashion.” While “Some of today’s parties have indeed tried to borrow everything from names to ideologies from the

34 When I implied that Poland was a “new democracy” during an interview with a parliamentary deputy/leader of the League of Polish Families (LPR), I was quickly corrected and reminded that Poland has a long history of democracy dating back to the practice of electing kings.
interwar period,” Tworzecki (1996, 44) argues “there is very little continuity between the
main parties of the interwar period and the main parties of today.”

Like Tworzecki (1996) then, I choose to begin my historical look at the
development of Poland’s party system with the communist era, which began following
the Second World War. It may seem counterintuitive to begin a historical overview of
Poland’s modern party system with the communist period given the lack of party
pluralism in the one-party state; it was during this period, however, that several of the
parties that emerged in the post-communist era have their origins, including Democratic
Left Alliance (SLD), the successor to the ruling communist party the Polish United
Workers’ Party (PZPR), and Polish People’s Party, the heir to the “satellite” party, United
Peasant’s Party (ZSL).

Perhaps an even more compelling reason for starting this discussion of Poland’s
democratic party system with the communist era is the importance of the Solidarity
movement, which not only negotiated the transition to democracy in Poland (and
subsequently set off the process of communist collapse throughout the region) but was
also the forebear of many of Poland’s contemporary parties, particularly on the right of
the political spectrum. The strength of the Solidarity movement, which began in August
1980 with workers’ strikes protesting the rising cost of living, was in its ability to force
the ruling communists to “make far-reaching concessions,” including legalization of
independent trade unions, an unprecedented move for a communist regime (Tworzecki
1996, 49). The popularity of the newly legal Solidarity, which boasted a membership of
10 million, threatened the legitimacy of the regime and led General Wojciech Jaruzelski
(under a good deal of pressure from Moscow) to declare martial law on December 13th, 1981. Solidarity was once again illegal and many of its leading figures were imprisoned.

Although short-lived, the legal existence of Solidarity in 1980 – 1981 had an irreversible effect on Polish society. Notes Tworzecki (1996, 49), “The fact that an independent social organization with ten million members functioned openly in a communist state could not be erased from the public’s memory, and neither could the public’s new sense of civic efficacy.” The imposition of martial law and the continuation of ineffective policies could not cure the ills of the Polish economy, however; after continued conflict in the mid- and late-1980s between the regime and the public over how to bring the country out of its economic crisis, “It became increasingly clear that some form of accommodation with the opposition would be necessary if economic reforms were to take place” (Tworzecki 1996, 50).

The regime’s decision to open negotiations with Solidarity in early 1989 is what ultimately brought about the end of communist rule in Poland. The result of what would come to be known as “Round Table” talks was an agreement signed on April 5th, 1989 in which, “Not only was Solidarity to be re-legalized, but thirty-five percent of the Sejm and all seats in the Senate were to be opened to free election” (Davies 2005, 503). When these partly free elections were held on June 4th, Solidarity candidates won every openly contested seat in the Sejm (161 of 460 total seats) and 99 of 100 seats in the Senate (the 100th being won by an independent candidate). The willingness of satellite parties ZSL and the Democratic Party (SD) to defect from the communist camp allowed Solidarity to form a governing coalition with long-time opposition activist Tadeusz Mazowiecki as
Prime Minister. Rather than provide the regime with legitimacy, as communist leaders had hoped, the elections of June 1989 effectively ended communist rule in Poland.

3.2 Parliamentary Elections

After a lengthy debate over new electoral laws, characterized by a battle between President Lech Walesa (who had won Poland’s first free presidential elections in 1990) and the Sejm, the country held its first fully free parliamentary elections in October 1991 under highly proportional electoral rules. Of the 460 seats in the Sejm, 391 were elected from party lists at the district level and the other 69 from a national list. The new electoral law did little to prevent a highly fractionalized parliament, with the exception that the 69 national list seats would be divided among parties that had received a minimum of five percent of the national vote or seats in at least five districts. The election campaign “was something of a free-for-all,” notes Tworzecki (1996, 58), who attributes this fact to “the wide-open electoral law and the free television time granted to all participants . . . [which] meant that the Polish public was exposed to a wide variety of ‘parties,’ some serious, others less so.”

The elections were contested by 111 candidate lists, 29 of which won seats in the Sejm. Of these 29 parties, only nine had vote shares greater than five percent, the largest belonging to the centrist, liberal party Democratic Union (UD) with 12.31 percent of the vote and 62 seats. The second highest share of the vote in 1991 (11.98 percent) went to the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), a coalition of former communist groups that included the communist successor party Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland.

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35 The electoral laws structuring the vote in the 1991 elections did not include an electoral threshold, which helps to explain the vast number of political parties represented in the Sejm, each with a small share of the total vote/seats. Tworzecki (1996, 58) uses five percent as a means of narrowing down the 29 parties to a more manageable nine in his discussion.
(SdRP). A coalition of parties known as Catholic Electoral Action or WAK, which included the Christian National Union (ZChN), earned 8.73 percent of the vote, the third highest behind UD and SLD. Center Alliance (PC), a party created in 1990 within the Solidarity movement to promote Lech Walesa’s rapid reform plan against the more deliberate pace of economic reform pursued by Prime Minister Mazowiecki, received 8.71 percent of the vote. Polish People’s Party – Programmatic Alliance (PSL-SP) managed to win 8.67 percent of the vote on a platform of protecting farmers from competition from agricultural imports, followed by Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN) with 7.50 percent, Prime Minister Bielecki’s Liberal-Democratic Congress (KLD) with 7.48 percent, Peasant’s Accord (PL) with 5.46 percent and the Solidarity trade union with 5.05 percent.

When the government of Prime Minister Hanna Suchocka (UD) fell as a result of a no confidence vote on May 28th, 2003, President Walesa opted to dissolve the Sejm and called for early parliamentary elections, which were subsequently held on 19 September.36 Despite its short-lived existence, the first post-communist parliament did succeed in reforming the electoral law in place from the 1991 elections. The new law established electoral thresholds designed to prevent the kind of extreme fractionalization that had occurred in 1991. Single parties would now have to earn at least five percent of the popular vote in order to gain representation in the Sejm, whereas coalitions would have to clear an eight percent threshold. The threshold for the 69 national seats was raised from five to seven percent of the vote.

36 The government lost the vote of no confidence by a single vote. President Walesa’s rationale for dissolving parliament was that the vote of no confidence had been unconstructive; the opposition failed to offer a candidate to replace Prime Minister Suchocka (Tworzecki 1994, 182).
The focus of the 1993 campaign was the economy, with the governing coalition emphasizing “the tangible evidence of economic recovery, such as the multitude of new private shops and businesses,” whereas the opposition “accused the government of adherence to liberal dogma at the expense of ordinary people, directing their message to individuals who did not do well in the new economy” (Tworzecki 1994, 182). The opposition’s message was apparently successful; the victors of the 1991 elections were the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and the Polish People’s Party (PSL) with 20.41 and 15.40 percent of the popular vote, respectively. The success of SLD and PSL, both of which had their origins in the communist period, came as a surprise to many. Notes Tworzecki (1994, 180), “puzzled commentators wondered how the birthplace of Solidarity and the first country in Eastern Europe to make a negotiated transition from communism to democracy could have returned the former communists back to power.” The ability of Labor Union (UP), a leftist party with origins in the Solidarity movement, to win 7.28 percent of the popular vote was seen as further evidence of the electorate’s desire for a “return to the left,” particularly amidst growing concerns over the impact of economic reforms on individuals’ well-being.

The success of parties on the left was due in part to citizens’ economic concerns but also to the fact that the post-Solidarity right was divided among numerous small parties, few of which were able to cross the newly-established five percent threshold for gaining seats in parliament. The one real success story amongst the post-Solidarity parties was Suchocka’s Democratic Union (UD). Although the party’s vote share declined slightly from 12.32 percent in 1991 to 10.59 percent in 1993, it still ended up with a respectable 74 seats, the third highest in the Sejm.
The SLD-PSL governing coalition elected in 1993 managed to survive an entire parliamentary term, despite a number of conflicts between the two parties (for example, SLD’s anti-clerical stance was problematic for PSL, whose constituency was largely rural and conservative). The parties contesting Poland’s third fully free parliamentary elections, scheduled for September 21, 1997, focused on “the progress of economic transformation, Church-state relations, and decommunisation” in their election campaigns (Chan 1998, 564). The leading contenders were the governing SLD, which ran a campaign based on the slogans, “‘Good Today, Better Tomorrow’” and “‘Poland believes in Its Future,’” and a newly-formed coalition of post-Solidarity parties, Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS), which focused on traditional values and sought to play up the Solidarity versus Communism angle (Chan 1998, 564).

The results of the 1997 elections showed a slight preference among the electorate for the post-Solidarity AWS, which won 33.8 percent of the popular vote and 201 total seats in the Sejm. SLD was not far behind, with 27.1 percent of the vote and 164 seats. Freedom Union (UW), a merger between UD and the Congress of Liberal Democrats (KLD), continued the solid electoral showing of UD with 13.4 percent of the vote (60 seats). The tensions within the governing coalition appeared to hurt PSL more than SLD, which earned only 7.3 percent of the vote (compared to 15.4 percent in 1993). The final party to gain representation in the Sejm was the Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland (ROP), a party of the right led by former Prime Minister Jan Olszewski. The leftist UP failed to clear the five percent threshold after having won over seven percent of the vote in 1993. Post-Solidarity parties AWS and UW formed a governing coalition.
following the 1997 elections and Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek of AWS became “the first to remain in office throughout the four-year period” (Millard 2003, 368).

Poland’s fourth fully democratic parliamentary elections were scheduled for September 23, 2001 and were to be contested according to yet another new electoral law. The features of these new electoral rules (the third in Poland’s post-communist history) were that “proportional representation [was] retained but with new formulae and larger district magnitude intended to benefit medium-sized parties and to counter the strength of the Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD)” (Millard 2003, 368).

Although AWS had managed to survive four years in government intact, internal divisions led the party to dissolve and split into a number of smaller parties, creating a somewhat turbulent political scene heading into the September 2001 elections. AWS’ internal problems, as well as the government’s general reputation for ineptitude, led many voters to express support for SLD in public opinion polls, which was seen as competent by comparison (Millard 2003, 370). The major issues emphasized during the election campaign included rising unemployment, concerns over extensive flooding in the summer of 2003 and corruption, all of which meant that, “the atmosphere surrounding the election was gloomy” (Millard 2003, 370).

The clear winner in 2001 was the electoral coalition of SLD-UP, which combined for 41 percent of the vote and took 216 seats in the Sejm. The only other political party to enter parliament after 2001 with previous experience in the Sejm was PSL, which received 9 percent of the vote and 42 seats. UW, so long a fixture of post-communist politics in Poland, failed to clear the five percent threshold, as did the “rump” AWS of Prime Minister Buzek. The populist Samoobrona (SO), under the direction of its leader,
Andrzej Lepper, gained national representation for the first time in 2001 winning 10.2 percent of the vote. Three new parties (new in the sense that they had not existed in this form previously, although they were created primarily by former members of AWS) also won seats in the Sejm. Civic Platform (PO), which appeared prepared to take UW’s place as the main liberal party, earned the second highest share of votes after the SLD-UP coalition, with 12.7 percent (65 seats). The Law and Justice (PiS) party, which emphasized the safety and security of Poles and took a hard line on corruption, gained 44 seats in the new parliament with 9.5 percent of the vote. Lastly, the League of Polish Families (LPR), a party formed in May of 2001 “under the patronage of Radio Maryja, the voice of Catholic fundamentalism,” earned 7.9 percent of the vote and 38 seats.\footnote{In the parliamentary elections of September 2005, Law and Justice (PiS) won 27 percent of the vote and Civic Platform finished a close second with 24 percent of the vote. Samoobrona and Democratic Left Alliance each won approximately 11 percent of the vote, the League of Polish Families (LPR) won approximately eight percent and the Polish People’s Party (PSL) won seven percent of the vote.}

3.3 Party Profiles

Having provided a brief historical overview of Poland’s transition to democracy and a summary of the four free parliamentary elections held between 1991 and 2001, I now turn to a more detailed examination of the political parties on which I focus throughout the remainder of the project. Recall from above that the nine political parties discussed here are the main parties represented in the third (1997 – 2001) and fourth (2001 – 2005) parliaments.

3.3.1 Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS)

It was the resounding victory of Solidarity in the partly free elections of 1989 that marked the end of communism in Poland. Yet, notes Smolar (1998, 122), “With the unity imposed by the totalitarian menace no longer necessary, it was not long before the
new democratic conditions began to reveal the Solidarity coalition’s artificial character.” As a result, “The Solidarity bloc began to break up into a congeries of rival groups that spanned the political spectrum” (Smolar 1998, 122). These post-Solidarity parties, led by Democratic Union (UD) with 12.31 percent of the popular vote (the largest share of any party in the parliament), generally performed well in the elections of October 1991 and several of them participated in governing coalitions, first under Jan Olszewski and then under Hanna Suchocka.

This success was short-lived, however. The Solidarity bloc, once so united in its opposition to communism, was “in a condition of extreme fragmentation” going into the second post-communist parliamentary elections held in September 1993 (Smolar 1998, 122). The fragmentation resulted from the fact that, “post-Solidarity parties were unable to overcome the exorbitant ambitions of their ‘leaders’ – each of whom wanted a party of their own. They decided to stand separately in the coming elections” (Wesolowski 1996, 236). As a result, most of these parties failed to surpass the five percent threshold and were excluded from the new parliament. Instead, it was the post-communist parties, Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and Polish People’s Party (PSL), that were the clear winners in the 1993 elections.

The success in 1993 of the SLD, “led to the effort to reproduce a similar feat of organization on the right” (Smolar 1998, 124). The result of this effort was Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS), a coalition of 20 to 30 parties and political groups formed in June 1996 and headed by the Solidarity trade union and its leader, Marian Krzaklewski. Although this was not the first attempt at uniting elements of the Solidarity bloc, “The

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38 Early elections were called after Suchocka’s government lost a vote of no confidence on May 28th by a single vote.
key difference between AWS and previous right-wing unity initiatives was that it was not a partnership of equals. The Solidarity trade union acted as the clear hegemon and thereby provided the new grouping with unprecedented organizational cohesion” (Szczerbiak 2001, 23). Despite this “organizational cohesion” there existed within AWS a wide array of ambitions, backgrounds and ideologies. Smolar (1998, 128) notes that, “Many observers and political actors in the AWS itself distinguish three basic trends within their bloc:’ the “Christian-syndicalist current;” “a national-Catholic character” and “the liberal-conservative current.”

The parliamentary elections of September 21, 1997 presented the first opportunity for AWS to see whether it would be able to achieve the same kind of electoral success its main opponent on the left, SLD, had in 1993. AWS contested the 1997 parliamentary elections on the slogan, “Poland, Freedom, Family” and “stressed its mission as one of preservation of fundamental values, of fighting moral decay in society” (Chan 1998, 564). The strategy to form a coalition of right-wing parties around the Solidarity trade union paid off; AWS earned 34 percent of the popular vote and 201 of 460 total seats in the Sejm, edging out SLD, which received 27.1 percent of the vote and 164 total seats (Chan 1998, 565).

AWS formed a governing coalition with centrist Freedom Union (UW), but it was not long before differences between the coalition partners and the many constituent groups within AWS itself emerged. By the 2001 parliamentary elections, these internal divisions, along with the poor showing of AWS’ candidate (the trade union leader, Krzaklewski) in the 2000 presidential election, led to the “disintegration” of AWS. Once again, fragmentation on the right benefited parties of the left and the SLD-UP coalition
ended up with 41 percent of the vote and 216 seats in the Sejm. Writes Millard (2003, 367), “The government lost because it was weak, divided and ineffective, while the opposition SLD appeared competent, professional and united.”

3.3.2 Freedom Union (UW)

The exception to the rule that post-Solidarity parties were too small and fragmented to gain consistent representation in the Sejm was Freedom Union (UW). UW traces its roots to an organization within Solidarity known as Alliance for Democracy, which was formed in 1990 in response to the creation of Center Agreement (PC) by supporters of Lech Walesa, who criticized the Mazowiecki government for its slow pace of reform (Tworzecki 1996, 52-3). By the first fully free parliamentary elections of 1991, Alliance for Democracy had become Citizens’ Movement – Democratic Action (ROAD) which, along with the Democratic Right (FPD), formed Democratic Union (UD). The party, which was headed by former Prime Minister Mazowiecki:

Comprised several different political orientations, including a social-democratic faction that favored ‘humane’ capitalism, extensive social security provisions and a limited role of the church in political life, as well as the more laissez-faire minded FPD [“Democratic Right group of moderate Christian – Liberals”] faction that did not lean toward anti-clericalism (Tworzecki 1996, 58).

UD earned the highest vote share of the 29 parties that gained seats in 1991 with 12.31 percent and went on to form the governing coalition, led by Prime Minister Hanna Suchocka, in 1992. When Suchocka’s government lost a vote of no confidence (by a single vote) in May 1993 the Sejm was dissolved and new parliamentary elections called for September.

In the 1993 parliamentary elections, Democratic Union came in third behind SLD (20.41 percent) and PSL (15.40 percent), with 10.59 percent of the vote. The party
“campaigned on a platform promising the continuation of economic reforms begun in 1989, exhorting the voters not to let the achievements of the past four years be wasted for the sake of short-term relief” (Tworzecki 1994, 184). This message may have been appealing to the “urban intelligentsia,” but as Tworzecki (1994, 184) points out, “the party was seen by other social groups as aloof and indifferent to the economic hardships of the ‘ordinary people.’” Despite failing to appeal to a wide range of social interests, UD was nevertheless able to obtain 74 seats in the Sejm, something most other post-Solidarity parties were unable to accomplish. Writes Chan (1998, 561), “the post-Solidarity right destroyed its chance by splintering into a plethora of groupings too small to win seats in the Sejm.”

In 1994, UD merged with another post-Solidarity party, the Congress of Liberal Democrats (KLD), to form Freedom Union (UW). The newly formed party was led by Leszek Balcerowicz, “the architect of ‘shock therapy,’” whose election signaled that “UW abandoned any aspiration to represent the entire democratic spectrum – from Christian democracy to conservatism to social democracy – in favor of a decidedly liberal profile” (Smolar 1998, 128). This narrower focus was evident in the party’s campaign for the 1997 parliamentary elections, when UW “portrayed itself as a principal supporter of market reforms and the sole representative of the centre.” When the votes were counted, UW had received 13.4 percent of the vote, once again placing it third, although this time it was the post-Solidarity coalition AWS that had won the most votes. UW entered into a governing coalition with AWS, although the differences of opinion among the coalition partners ultimately led UW to leave the coalition in June 2000. In parliamentary elections held on September 23, 2001, UW, which “had been at the heart
of Polish politics since 1990 . . . was now out of parliament altogether, losing votes mostly to the PO [Civic Platform]” (Millard 2003, 372).

3.3.3 Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)

Throughout much of East/Central Europe, the ruling communist parties chose a strategy of reform after the collapse of communism, making themselves over into social-democratic parties. So it was for the Polish United Workers’ Party (PZPR), which became Social-democracy of the Republic of Poland (SdRP) in early 1990 under the leadership of Aleksander Kwasniewski. The SdRP contested the first fully free elections in 1991 in coalition, or alliance, with the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), which included a variety of former communist era groups and organizations. SLD did better than expected in 1991, winning 11.98 percent of the vote (second behind UD) on a platform that promoted social welfare programs and a limited role for the Catholic Church in Polish society (Tworzecki 1996, 59).

The SLD followed up a solid initial showing in 1991 with a first place finish in the 1993 parliamentary elections. SLD “worked patiently to refashion itself as a modern European, social-democratic formation of constructive reformers with a social conscience and benefited from the impressive performance of its new generation of leaders, particularly Aleksander Kwasniewski” (Szczerbiak 1998, 19). The party’s success (20.41 percent of the vote) was seen by many as indicative of Poles’ desire for a “return to the left.” In the 1993 campaign, the party’s slogans, “Things do not have to be like this” and “Let reforms serve the people,” clearly targeted the “losers” in the transition process; however, “The SLD either won or came close to winning the plurality of votes in all major socio-economic groups with the exception of private farmers” (Tworzecki 1994,
Farmers voted instead for the Polish People’s Party (PSL), which won the second largest share of the vote in 1993 and with whom SLD formed a governing coalition.

The relationship between coalition partners SLD and PSL in the second post-communist parliament was strained in large part due to differences of opinion regarding the role of the Church in politics and the type and pace of economic reform. “Last but not least,” writes Chan (1998, 564), “the SLD and the PSL appeared to be embroiled in endless squabbles over their respective share of cabinet portfolios and political appointments.” Both parties lost seats in parliamentary elections held in 1997, although SLD still managed to win 27.1 percent of the vote, which placed it second behind the newly-formed coalition of post-Solidarity parties, AWS.

In 2001, SLD benefited from the poor public image of AWS, which was plagued by “obvious government incompetence and discord” (Millard 2003, 370). SLD, along with its electoral coalition partner UP, obtained 41 percent of the total vote, placing it once again in a position to form a governing coalition. In October 2001, SLD-UP formed a coalition government with PSL, although like the first SLD-PSL coalition, tensions between the parties were evident and PSL would ultimately be kicked out of the governing coalition in May 2003 for failing to support government-sponsored legislation aimed at improving Poland’s roadways.39

3.3.4 Polish People’s Party (PSL)

The Polish People’s Party (PSL) was created in 1990 when the communist satellite United Peasants’ Party (ZSL) changed its name in order “to put some distance

39 The following year, in February 2004, a number of SLD deputies left the party to form a rival party of the center-left, the Social Democratic Party of Poland (SDPL). These deputies’ decision to leave was primarily strategic in that they no longer wanted to be associated with the scandal-ridden SLD knowing that the party’s chances of winning re-election in 2005 were minimal.
between it and its communist past” (Tworzecki 1996, 53). As the party’s former name indicates, PSL represents the interests of Poland’s large rural class. In the 1991 parliamentary elections, the party (along with another small party, Programmatic Alliance or SP) won 8.67 percent of the vote by campaigning on a platform of protecting Poland’s farmers from competition from cheap agricultural imports (Tworzecki 1996, 60). The 8.67 percent garnered by PSL-SP was the fifth largest share of the vote in a parliament comprised of representatives from a total of 29 parties.

PSL fared even better in elections held in September of 1993, earning the second highest share of the vote (15.40 percent) behind the communist successor SLD with 20.41 percent. PSL’s strongest support came from private farmers, “who voted for it, enticed by promises of trade protection for Polish agricultural goods and subsidies that would make the average farm economically viable” (Tworzecki 1994, 184). PSL joined SLD in the governing coalition, which, despite lasting until the next parliamentary elections in 1997, was racked by tensions (see the discussion of SLD above). Combined with these tensions was the reluctance of leaders within either SLD or PSL to push ahead with economic reform despite the improved state of the economy. Notes Chan (1998, 562), “The PSL was essentially a small-holders’ party, seeking protective measures and financial support for farmers; its leaders were therefore more suspicious of market-oriented reforms than their SLD partners.” As a result, voters tended to look elsewhere in 1997, supporting the post-Solidarity coalition AWS in large numbers. PSL’s share of the vote decreased by half, dropping from 15.4 percent in 1993 to only 7.3 percent in 1997.

Despite its origins as a communist era satellite party and its membership in a governing coalition with SLD from 1993 – 1997, PSL had moved decidedly further to the
right during this period. By the 2001 parliamentary elections, PSL’s image had changed even further: writes Millard (2003, 369), “The PSL too sought to broaden its appeal beyond the narrow class base of its natural rural constituency; it gathered under its banner an eclectic combination of individuals and groups, ranging from former Labour Union leader Ryszard Bugaj to conservative nationalists.” Despite the new, more populist image, PSL only earned 9 percent of the vote in 2001, thus, “although PSL remained the party of the countryside, it gained fewer votes than, and lost votes to, Self-Defence, with SO also making inroads into the towns.” PSL, with its 42 seats in the Sejm, joined a governing coalition with SLD-UP in October 2001, which lasted until March 2003 when PSL was expelled from the coalition.

3.3.5 Labor Union (UP)

Labor Union (UP) was formed in June 1992 by members of Solidarity, the “underground Polish Socialist Party” and “the reformist wing of the ex-communists,” all of whom were concerned with the plight of workers in light of the reforms designed to transform Poland’s command economy into a market capitalist system (“Unia Pracy”). UP performed well in the 1993 parliamentary elections, earning 7.28 percent of the votes (41 seats), which was the fourth largest vote total. The party’s campaign strategy appeared to be “calling itself the ‘modern left’ and emphasizing its non-communist roots,” even though “the UP nevertheless favoured policies quite similar to those of the SLD (i.e. slower reforms, maintenance of the welfare state, anti-clericalism)” (Tworzecki 1994, 184).

Despite the party’s solid showing in the 1993 elections, it failed to cross the five percent threshold in the 1997 parliamentary elections and was excluded from the
parliament. UP did not dissolve, however, and contested the 2001 election in an electoral coalition with post-communist SLD. The SLD-UP coalition earned 41 percent of the vote in 2001 and UP ended up with approximately 16 parliamentary seats as a result.

Labor Union considers itself “a modern, social democratic party” committed to the values of “freedom, democracy and economic efficiency combined with social justice and safety, widespread self-governance, tolerance and division of between [sic.] church and state” (“Unia Pracy”). The party also prides itself on being “the oldest existing party, created in Poland after 1989” (“Unia Pracy”).

3.3.6 Civic Platform (PO)

Civic Platform (PO) was established in January of 2001 by the “‘three tenors,’” Andrzej Olechowski, the former independent candidate for president who came in second behind Kwasniewski in 2000, Donald Tusk of UW and Maciej Plazynski of AWS (Millard 2003, 369). Upon its founding, PO appeared as if it might replace UW as Poland’s centrist, economically liberal party, “but it retained an uncertain profile, despite the liberal, free-market bias of its founders” (Millard 2003, 369).

In contesting the 2001 parliamentary elections, PO did so with the intent of serving as “an independent social movement with a new political project for Poland and its people,” rather than a political party (“Platforma Obywatelska”). This was a tactic that Millard (2003, 369) notes was “aimed to play on widespread frustration with politicians” among Poles. PO sought to reinforce its image of being an “electoral committee” and not a political party by being the first party in Poland to introduce primaries. As stated in the party’s official publications, “Civic Platform has been joined not only by those active in politics, parliamentarians and local government
representatives, but also by many ordinary citizens – including a substantial group of our compatriots who were previously politically inactive” (“Platforma Obywatelska”).

Whether it was the party’s attempt to portray itself as being above politics, its liberal economic policies (including a flat tax) or the “suave elegance” of Olechowski, PO did relatively well in its first electoral competition. The party earned 12.7 percent of the popular vote and 65 seats in the Sejm which, although a far cry from the 41 percent and 216 seats of the SLD-UP coalition, was still the strongest performance of the rightist parties.

Since that time, PO formally registered as a political party in March of 2002 and served as the leading opposition party in the fourth parliament. The party continues to appeal to voters as seen in PO’s performance in the European Parliament elections of June 2004 when it won 15 of Poland’s total 54 seats.

3.3.7 Samoobrona

Self-Defense of the Republic of Poland, or Samoobrona, is “a populist party notorious for its confrontational direct action and radical rhetoric” (Millard 2003, 369). Samoobrona’s populist appeals appear to lack any coherent programmatic content (Millard 2003). While Samoobrona’s ideological component may be weak, the same can not be said of its leader Andrzej Lepper who, in the 2001 election campaign, “made an effective transition from streetwise thug to spokesman for the distressed with the aid of his image consultant” (Millard 2003, 371). The party did relatively well in the 2001 elections, earning 10.2 percent of the vote and 53 total seats, the second highest vote total for a party of the right behind PO. It appeared, however, that Lepper’s reputation as a “thug” had not escaped him for he “had been variously accused of assault, defamation,
extortion, tax evasion, public order offences, and bribe-taking; the Procuracy had undertaken some hundred investigations of his activities by the time of the election” (Millard 2003, 373). As a result, notes Millard (2003, 373), “SO’s presence [in the Sejm] raised real anxieties about the extent to which it would accommodate itself to parliamentary properties.”

3.3.8 Law and Justice (PiS)

Law and Justice (PiS) was founded in March 2001 as yet another collection of groups that were formerly part of AWS, including the Conservative-People’s Party (SKL) and the Christian - National Union (ZChN). The party’s founder, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, had been instrumental in the creation of Center Agreement (PC) in May 1990, “a party dedicated to the acceleration of reforms” and designed to support Lech Walesa against Prime Minister Mazowiecki in Solidarity’s “war at the top” (Tworzecki 1996, 52 – 3). “Walesa’s Party,” as it was known, received 8.7 percent of the vote in 1991, having campaigned on a platform of the “‘de-communization’ of Poland: a set of proposals aimed at removing former members of the *nomenklatura* from positions in state administration and ensuring that their crimes from the communist era would not go unpunished” (Tworzecki 1996, 60).

The themes that had been at the heart of PC’s 1991 platform formed the core of PiS’ 2001 election campaign. Jaroslaw Kaczynski’s twin brother, Lech, who became Minister of Justice in the AWS minority government in 2000, took a “hard-line stance, voicing a [s]trong anti-corruption rhetoric and the promise of harsh penalties for offenders” (Millard 2003, 369). In addition to a strong position on corruption, PiS advocated a strong State, police and justice department reform and Catholic social values,
including employment, housing, education and health care (“Our Way”). PiS went on to win 9.5 percent of the vote share in the 2001 elections and a total of 44 seats in the Sejm.

### 3.3.9 League of Polish Families (LPR)

The League of Polish Families (LPR) officially registered itself as a political party on May 30, 2001 and “was drawn from discontented and failed politicians of some ten clerical nationalist formations under the patronage of Radio Maryja, the voice of Catholic fundamentalism” (Millard 2003, 369). Several of the new parties’ leaders, including the party leader Maciej Giertych, had been members of Stronnictwo Narodowe (SN – National Party), a party originally founded in the interwar period and re-established in 1989. At the heart of SN’s platform were the slogans “‘God and Country’” and “‘I am a Pole, therefore I have Polish duties,’” the latter originally being penned by pre-war philosopher Roman Dmowski (Bugajski 1995, 377). LPR also included former members of the Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland (ROP) and the Christian-National Union (ZChN).

The same type of Catholic nationalism articulated by these groups could be seen in LPR’s platform in the 2001 elections. The party further made it clear that it “loathed the European Union and hated the ‘communist-liberalism’ of the SLD, PO and UW” (Millard 2003, 371). LPR earned 7.9 percent of the popular vote in 2001 and received 38 seats in the Sejm. The party’s electoral success “demonstrated the mobilisation potential of Radio Maryja for traditional believers. It performed best in the traditional religious strongholds of the south-east” (Millard 2003, 373).
3.4 Conclusion

The information presented in this chapter is meant to serve as an introduction to the origins and evolution of the Polish party system. The chapter also provides brief profiles of the nine key parties discussed at greater length in the remaining chapters of the dissertation. What is clear from this discussion is that the party system is still in flux; old parties disappear and new parties emerge to take their place, a phenomenon that was still occurring as recently as 2001. To many, these fluctuations indicate poorly institutionalized parties and an unstable party system. Yet, as Davies (2005, 513) notes, “the procession of shifts and machinations, like those in Italy, covered the greater fact that the administration was functioning and the country prospering,” which implies there is something going on at the legislative level deserving of greater attention. It is to the functioning of parties within the legislature that I now turn.
CHAPTER 4
CREATING PARTY CULTURE

According to the theory presented in Chapter 2, the first step on the path to legislative party institutionalization is party leaders’ recognition of the challenges presented by their environment, most notably the potential for free-riding among the broader membership of the parliamentary party. I argued that it is unlikely the party leadership would fail to recognize these challenges; what is much less clear, however, is whether party leaders would commit to the creation of rules and norms (central to party culture) as a means for dealing with these challenges. I further hypothesized that a party’s ideology, size, coalition status and membership in either the government or opposition would be important factors in determining whether, in fact, party leaders commit to the creation of party culture.

As for precisely how party leaders demonstrate commitment to overcoming challenges, I offered party discipline as the key feature of party culture in the legislative setting. Party leaders establish a system of rewards and punishments designed to prevent legislators within the party from engaging in free-riding behavior. The norms (legislators must vote with the party line) and rules (failing to vote with the party will result in concrete punishments) party leaders establish to overcome challenges like the collective action problem are at the heart of party culture; both the establishment of this culture by
party leaders and its subsequent adoption by legislators are necessary for culture to take hold and lead to the institutionalization of political parties in the legislature.

The purpose of this chapter is to determine to what extent legislative party leaders in Poland have taken the first step toward party institutionalization. Have they established the mechanisms of discipline central to party culture? If so, what are the specific rewards and punishments Poland’s parliamentary party leaders use to overcome challenges? Lastly, how do factors such as ideology and party size influence party leaders’ commitment to creating party culture?

In undertaking a systematic study of discipline in Poland I faced a challenge: identifying informal norms and understanding how formal rules are applied in practice is nearly impossible from official party publications; in addition, secondary source information on party discipline in Poland is scarce. I opted to rely on those most familiar with the rules and norms, both in theory and practice; the party leaders and Members of Parliament themselves. The bulk of the information presented in this chapter comes from 18 in-depth interviews conducted in Warsaw with Members of Parliament and high-ranking party officials, including current and former cabinet ministers, party spokespersons and Secretaries General, among others. Supplementary primary source evidence comes from official party publications, including party web pages and other documents, as well as informational resources published by the Sejm.

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40 I conducted 15 of these interviews in April of 2004. A colleague then conducted an additional three in November and December of 2004. For additional details on the interviews, please see the Appendix.
As mentioned above, the primary purpose of this chapter is to study the degree to which parliamentary party leaders in Poland have established the rewards and punishments associated with party discipline. Toward this end, the chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides a picture of the selective incentives Polish party leaders utilize as part of the structure of discipline. Here I look at the procedures used to determine the “party line” on proposed legislation, decision rules in place for invoking discipline and the ways in which backbenchers are either rewarded or punished for their behavior (the existence of Whips’ offices, procedures for nomination to party lists and promotion within the party, etc.).

The second section turns from description to explanation, assessing the extent to which ideology, party size, coalition status and membership in the government/opposition determine whether or not party leaders commit to the creation of party culture. In the third section, I evaluate the merits of the elite commitment hypothesis against both the systemic- and party-level alternative explanations presented in Chapter 2.

4.1 The Structure of Discipline

In September of 2003, while conducting preliminary research in Warsaw, I met with one of Poland’s preeminent parties’ scholars to discuss my project. When I told him I was studying party discipline he responded by saying that “any analyst of political parties in Poland will tell you there is no discipline.” Thankfully, he made clear through the course of our meeting that he was referring not to the existence of rules and norms guiding behavior (has the leadership established mechanisms of discipline?), but rather the extent to which party members can be said to abide by those rules (are parties disciplined?). I turn to the question regarding whether party members behave in a
disciplined fashion in subsequent chapters; prior to doing so, I first offer evidence of the extent to which mechanisms of discipline themselves exist in Poland’s legislative parties.

4.1.1 Establishing the Party Line

In order for party discipline (at least with respect to voting) to exist there must first be party positions; the so-called “party line” that parliamentarians are expected to “toe.” For any given party we can identify its positions on a variety of issues by looking at the party program, which in turn is derived from the party’s ideology (to the extent that it adheres to one). These programs help to inform voters of a party’s positions and, prior to each election, the party will usually modify the program in order to incorporate the most current issues facing the country. Once a party wins election to the legislature, its members within parliament are expected to pursue the party’s platform through their legislative work.

So it is in the case of Poland. Parties hold large meetings of their national memberships, known as National Congresses, and it is here that decisions regarding broad policy positions are made. A deputy and former government spokesman from Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) described the relationship between these National Congresses and the parliamentary group’s activities as follows: “The voting in the Sejm is of course a reflection of the party’s current political program. It is hard to imagine an SLD deputy who is, for example, voting for exacerbation of an anti-abortion act, or voting for abolition of benefits for the unemployed.” According to a deputy from Civic Platform (PO), the National Congress is the forum for deciding on “the program of the

41 The party “program” may also be referred to as the “platform” or “election manifesto.”

42 Individuals from UP, SLD, PO and LPR all mentioned their party’s National Congress in my interviews. It is at these congresses that members make decisions about the party’s platform for the upcoming election.
party in a more general sense.” As an example, the deputy offered the party’s position on the EU Constitution, which was discussed and agreed upon by the entire PO National Congress.

As mentioned above, however, it is up to the parliamentary party to translate this general program into specific legislation. A member of the Executive Committee of Labor Union (UP) summed up a common view regarding how this is accomplished by noting that, “the parliamentary club does what they [the party as a whole] want them to do for the party.” Decisions regarding the party’s position on specific issues within the legislature, while guided by the party’s national program, are left to the parliamentary club, however.

For Poland’s left-of-center parties, decisions regarding the party’s position on legislation and other parliamentary matters are reached via consensus among all members of the parliamentary group, usually with some input from the leadership. Thus, a deputy from the Social Democratic Party of Poland (SDPL) mentioned that the entire club determines what the party’s position will be and how they will vote after hearing from the deputy who was responsible for this particular issue in committee. The club may decide to modify the position presented by this individual if necessary but, she notes; “we discuss all matters within the club until a consensus is achieved.” If a consensus is not possible, she adds, then the club votes “democratically” on what position the party will

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43 UP’s leadership structure consists of a National Board of 80 persons elected by the party members in attendance at the National Congress. The National Congress manages the general politics of the party. The party leader is subsequently elected by the National Congress, as is the 20-person Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is the most important body in the party structure as it is the decision-making body for the entire party and plays a large role in determining how the parliamentary club votes. Note, however, that the overlap between the parliamentary club and the Executive Committee is substantial; approximately 8 individuals on the Executive Committee are also deputies in parliament from UP.
take. This deputy further stated that this procedure is also followed when the party must take a position on some issue in the media. In the case of UP, one of the two members of the party’s Executive Committee mentioned that they, too, try to come to a consensus on decisions so that all members of the parliamentary club are in agreement more or less.\textsuperscript{44} Even for a large party such as SLD I was told that they undertake discussion among the members of the parliamentary group before deciding on the party’s position.\textsuperscript{45} One SLD deputy reports that, “Before every important meeting there is a club meeting and the decision [regarding how to vote] is made by majority vote. This decision is obligatory for every deputy even if there was a difference of a single vote. The presidium of the club is presenting a recommendation but it is the majority that decides.”

For many of the parties on the right, however, the individuals making decisions regarding the party line differ depending on the nature of the issue. Decisions on important matters are brought before the entire parliamentary club for discussion and a vote, whereas the party’s position on more mundane issues is simply made by the party leadership. According to the individuals I interviewed, this is the norm in PO, Polish People’s Party (PSL) and Samoobrona (and was the case in Freedom Union (UW) when it was part of parliament). Individuals from these parties reported that for very important matters, the leadership of the parliamentary club will consult with the entire group before articulating the party’s position.

In PO, for example, one deputy explained to me that the Presidium of the parliamentary club meets each day before parliamentary meetings to discuss those issues

\textsuperscript{44} The Executive Committee guides the parliamentary club in reaching this consensus, however.

\textsuperscript{45} The extent to which this holds true depends in part on whether or not the party is in government, a subject I discuss at greater length below.
on the agenda. They then make proposals to the club about what they think the party’s position should be, but ultimately leave it to the club to decide. Even for these parties, however, it is not always the case that the leadership consults with the backbenchers. Another PO deputy noted that the dynamic nature of Polish politics necessitates swift decision-making; as a result, the party leadership will make some decisions without first consulting the rest of the parliamentary club.

Finally, for two of the parties furthest to the right of the political spectrum, it is unclear to what extent any real discussion takes place among the entire club prior to establishing the party’s position. In the case of Law and Justice (PiS), one deputy told me that the leadership of the parliamentary caucus makes all decisions, regardless of their importance. He did note that the leadership may consult with the entire caucus on very important matters but this is generally a matter of the leadership providing the caucus as a whole with guidelines for voting. In the case of the League of Polish Families (LPR), I was unable to get a very direct answer to my inquiry into decision-making regarding the party line. One LPR MP and party leader gave the impression that there is no need to discuss the party’s position on issues because the position is dictated by the party’s ideology. Given that the same individual is both the leader of the party and of the parliamentary club, it may also be the case that the members of the club are keenly aware of the leadership position, making discussion unnecessary.

To summarize then, decisions regarding the party’s position on legislative issues vary across parties with respect to the individuals responsible for making those decisions. For parties of the left, the norm is to make issue decisions via consensus. For the majority of parties on the right, however, the individuals responsible for decisions
regarding the party line differ according to the importance of the issue at hand. In some cases, all decisions are reached after discussion among the club as a whole. In others, the parliamentary club is only consulted on very important matters. The exceptions here appear to be PiS and LPR, where the leadership seems always to play a key role in determining the party line.

4.1.2 Deciding When to Invoke Discipline

It is important to note that members of the parliamentary club are not necessarily obligated to vote according to the party’s position, however it may have been established. In the case of LPR, for example, the party had decided when they entered parliament in 2001 not to require parliamentary deputies to vote a certain way on legislation (believing that their shared values should lead them to do so). Most of the party representatives I interviewed, however, mentioned that the parliamentary club will often vote on whether or not deputies should be required to vote with the party on a given issue. In other words, will party leaders consider defection from the party line on this particular vote a punishable offense?

In some cases, the decision to “invoke discipline” is made by a vote in the parliamentary club. For most parties, this is a simple majority vote; in the case of UW, by contrast, these votes required two-thirds of the club in order to pass. In other cases, the leadership of the parliamentary club will make the decision to invoke discipline and impose it on the entire club.46 For relatively clear-cut issues, such a vote is unnecessary as disagreement among party members is unlikely; the expectation, then, is that deputies will vote with the party. For those issues considered important enough for the

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46 The decision to invoke discipline (and whether that decision will be made by a vote or the leadership) appears to be made on a case-by-case basis.
parliamentary club to invoke discipline, legislators’ votes will be monitored closely and dissenting voters punished (precisely how this occurs is discussed below).47

The need to invoke discipline may be particularly strong for governing parties. Leaders of both the governing party in the fourth parliament, SLD, and the former governing party, UW, claimed there were several issue areas where party discipline was automatically required. The first and seemingly most important issue area mentioned by members of both SLD and UW is the budget. The second issue is personnel matters. An example from my time in Warsaw was a vote held on April 30th, 2004 on whether to recall the Minister of the Treasury. Finally, discipline is expected on votes of confidence in the government.

In addition to votes for which discipline is automatically invoked, there may be some issues for which discipline is never used. According to a former UW deputy (now a top party leader), the UW leadership did not invoke discipline on votes dealing with certain sensitive subjects, such as abortion or other moral, religious and ideological issues. Instead, UW MPs were allowed to vote according to conscience, something the party became known for. Abortion, he noted, was a particularly sensitive issue because parties had to balance the overwhelmingly Catholic Polish society with the deputies’ own moral positions; “there were some who didn’t want to vote that a woman couldn’t choose.”

47 One interesting aspect to these votes to invoke discipline, pointed out by a former legislator and cabinet minister from UW, is that such votes were only taken on controversial issues where opinions diverged within the party. As a result, the vote for discipline ended up being “a weaker decision” because the club would simply make the prevailing (majority) viewpoint the party line.
4.1.3 Monitoring Compliance

Once the decision to invoke discipline on a particular vote is made, how does the party monitor compliance? In other words, how does the leadership of the club keep track of whether deputies attended a vote and whether they did, in fact, vote according to the party line? In parliamentary democracies, perhaps the most easily identifiable mechanism of party discipline is the office of the Whip.\(^{48}\) Put rather simply, the role of a Whip is to guarantee that the party’s backbenchers attend votes and vote the party line. Whips further work to facilitate dialogue between the leadership and the rank and file. On the one hand, the Whips’ Office keeps backbenchers abreast of parliamentary business, notifies them when votes are scheduled, and informs the rank and file of the party leadership’s position with respect to those issues. On the other hand, the Whip is also responsible for gauging the attitudes of backbenchers with respect to certain issues and passing that information on to the party leadership. The importance of the Whip is seen most clearly when votes are expected to be close; their ability to get MPs to vote and to vote “correctly” can make the difference to whether a bill passes or fails.\(^{49}\)

\(^{48}\) Whips’ Offices are not limited to parliamentary systems; however, they tend to be used to greatest effect in these systems. The Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. Congress, for example, have Whips’ offices, although their ability to exercise any meaningful power appears limited when compared to their British counterparts.

\(^{49}\) The success of Britain’s political parties, the case most often associated with disciplined political parties, is directly attributable to the strength of the Whips. For the three main political parties in the House of Commons (Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrat), there is a Chief Whip, a Deputy Chief Whip, and a number of junior Whips. Smaller parties will usually also have a Whip, although their size does not necessitate more than one. The Government Whip in Britain answers to the Prime Minister, attends cabinet meetings, and is largely responsible for scheduling government business, whereas the Opposition Chief Whip must be consulted with respect to the government’s program before the government is able to proceed. The term “whip” also applies more generally to weekly bulletins issued by the Whip’s office to the party’s MPs notifying them of that week’s parliamentary business. The whip prioritizes parliamentary business according to its importance; a “one-line whip” refers to routine business where attendance is optional, whereas a “three-line whip” refers to a vote at which attendance is required. Missing a vote on a “three-line whip” is a major offense and will most likely lead to punishment of some sort.
In Poland, officials of the Sejm itself play a role in monitoring deputies’ attendance at votes, as well as punishing those who miss votes. According to Article I of the statutes of the Chancellery of the Sejm, the Chancellery has the right to impose monetary fines on those deputies who do not attend parliamentary votes. These fines for non-attendance are taken directly from the deputy’s salary. Note, however, that deputies are subject to these fines for missing a vote of any kind, not simply those that their respective parties deem important.

The existence of such a statute, applicable across all parties in the Sejm, may appear to make the position of party Whip redundant given that ensuring the party’s deputies turn out to vote is one of the key duties of a Whip. Yet when I asked deputies and party leaders whether there is a specific person within the parliamentary club responsible for discipline, they overwhelmingly answered “of course!” As I discovered, the organizational structure of the vast majority of Poland’s legislative parties does, in fact, include the position of Whip, the exceptions being LPR and the relatively newly formed (as of the date of these interviews) SDPL. The powers available to these Whips and the individuals selected to serve in this capacity, however, differ across parties.

The Polish term for what we would refer to as a “Whip” is “Rzecznik Dyscypliny” or “Rzecznik Dyscyplinarny,” which translates as “Discipline Advocate.” Unlike large parties in the United Kingdom or United States, which usually have Whips’ Offices comprised of a whip and several deputies, parties in Poland are small enough that

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50 The Chancellery consists of the Marshall of the Sejm and a number of Vice-Marshalls. According to Article 110.1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, the Marshall and Vice-Marshalls are elected by the members of the Sejm from among their midst. Article 110.2 outlines the duties of the Marshall of the Sejm; “The Marshall of the Sejm shall preside over the debates of the Sejm, safeguard the rights of the Sejm as well as represent the Sejm in external matters.”
they only require one Discipline Advocate. As for whom parties select to serve the role of Discipline Advocate, a former MP and top party leader of UW told me that the party usually nominated an individual for this position who was “not very involved in the political process [implying that they were not on the most important committees]” but “who enjoyed sympathy among the members.” Another former MP/cabinet minister from UW mentioned this individual would have had “some kind of standing within the party” but was “not considered one of the top political figures,” the reason being that “job satisfaction is limited” in this position. One additional point worth mentioning is that certain parties appear to have a gender bias when selecting the Discipline Advocate. Thus, the first individual from UW mentioned that the party always selected a man to serve this role, whereas a deputy from PiS noted that their Discipline Advocate at the time (a woman) “may be very weak” simply because she is a woman.

The Discipline Advocate’s role within the party is largely that of monitor; he or she keeps track of whether the club’s deputies are fulfilling their duties. As a leader of the PSL parliamentary club noted, the Discipline Advocate has two spheres of action: the first is outside parliament, when a deputy acts improperly in public, and the second is inside parliament. The most basic duty of the Discipline Advocate within parliament is monitoring the voting behavior of deputies, checking into whether the party’s deputies voted at all and whether they voted in accordance with the party’s position. This task is made easier by the fact that the Marshall of the Sejm maintains voting records, which they use in assessing fines for those who miss votes.

The Discipline Advocate in PiS, noted one MP, further exercises a sort of “ante factum control;” individuals who know in advance that they will miss a vote (due to
constituency business, the need to travel abroad, etc.) are required to first gain written permission from the Discipline Advocate. It is also the case in SLD that deputies must obtain prior approval for missing votes, as well as for casting a vote in opposition to the party line.\(^5\) This rule is likely a function of the party’s status as the majority partner in the governing coalition (at the time of these interviews in 2004), where knowing how many votes you will have may prove crucial for passing government-sponsored legislation. Deputies in Civic Platform (PO) are required to gain the permission of the Chairman of the Club, rather than the Discipline Advocate, prior to missing a vote or other important meeting of the club, whereas SDPL deputies must inform the Presidium of the club if they must be absent.\(^5\)

If a deputy is absent from an important club meeting or a vote without having gained prior approval, or in cases where a deputy votes contrary to the party’s position, the Discipline Advocate is responsible for handling the matter. In PO, the Discipline Advocate discusses the matter with the offending deputy prior to any further action being taken. The Discipline Advocate in Samoobrona must be provided with an explanation of why the deputy was absent or failed to vote the party line. In the case of PiS, I was told that the Discipline Advocate conducts an inquiry into the offense to determine what happened and why. It is also up to the Discipline Advocate to determine what to do with this person if he or she is deemed guilty. The process works much the same in PSL, where the Discipline Advocate asks the offending deputy to provide him with a written

\(^5\) One SLD deputy mentioned that, given the fast pace of the Sejm’s work in the current term and a high number of votes (mainly to bring Polish law in line with that of the European Union), there were times when individuals (or groups of individuals, say from certain regions) voted against the party line without first notifying the Discipline Advocate.

\(^5\) SDPL had not, as of these interviews, established a post of Discipline Advocate; the party had only formed a few months prior in February 2004.
explanation, which he then uses to decide whether or not the person should be punished. If the Discipline Advocate determines punishment is warranted, he or she proposes an appropriate punishment, which is then decided upon by the parliamentary club as a whole.

4.1.4 Rewards and Punishments

There is a multitude of possible punishments for those who break party discipline, as well as a number of potential rewards for those whose loyalty in parliamentary votes is exceptionally strong. Dealing first with punishments, deputies from PO, Samoobrona, PSL and LPR all mentioned verbal reprimand as the least severe form of punishment used in their clubs. Written reprimands or warnings are also issued in PO and Samoobrona. In the case of LPR, where a deputy insisted there is no need for a “Whip” because there is no need for voting discipline within the party, if a deputy fails to vote, he or she will be met at club meetings with “general disapproval” and the chair of the club will likely use “stern words” with respect to the deputy’s absence. In UW, the former deputy/cabinet minister described reprimands as being “moral” and said they “rarely took the form of the Whip making public the deputy’s indiscretion.” This is not the case in PiS, however, where the lowest level punishment is a public announcement, whereby the Discipline Advocate or other member of the party’s leadership makes public what a particular individual has done, along with some comment that his behavior was improper.

The fact that the Sejm issues fines to deputies for failing to attend a vote generally makes the use of monetary fines at the party level unnecessary. PO implemented its own monetary punishment (a fine of 500 zloty, approximately 125 U.S. dollars) in April 2004
for deputies failing to participate in a parliamentary meeting without a valid reason, or for neglecting to vote in accordance with the agreed upon position of the party.

Failure to support the Law and Justice (PiS) party’s position may result in a mid-level punishment; the individual retains membership in the party but is prevented from contesting elections of any kind as a candidate from the party. This punishment applies both to individuals with ambitions to become a parliamentary deputy, who would be prevented from standing for election on the PiS party list if they failed to support the party’s position publicly, and current parliamentarians, who would be prohibited from re-election on the party list. In LPR, party members (deputies and non-deputies alike) are subject to a similar penalty whereby their privileges as a party member are “frozen.” These individuals may not present themselves as a member of the party publicly, are unable to vote in party elections, and cannot stand as candidates for office or delegates to the National Congress. The party’s highest leaders determine the duration of this punishment.\(^5^3\)

The most extreme form of punishment for breaking party discipline is being expelled from the parliamentary club and, ultimately, the party itself. Representatives from SLD, PiS, LPR, Samoobrona, PO and PSL all mentioned expulsion from the club/party as the most severe form of punishment for those who break discipline. A deputy from SLD mentioned that deputies who break discipline on budget acts (an area where party discipline is utterly obligatory) might find themselves expelled from the club, a practice consistent with common practice in established parliamentary democracies.

\(^{53}\) In the case of LPR, the highest-ranking individual in the party is also the head of the parliamentary club.
A representative of LPR told me that three LPR deputies were encouraging others in the party to disregard the European Parliament elections, which the party’s National Congress had decided the party would contest despite being vocally anti-EU, and were subsequently expelled from the parliamentary club as a result. According to party statutes, LPR members may be expelled from the party for failing to follow the party line, joining another party, neglecting to pay monthly party dues, failing to follow the party statutes, committing a crime that was confirmed by the courts, and generally acting against the image of the party. Expulsion is an option in PO as well; however, I was told that in the party’s relatively short existence it had not yet been utilized.

Representatives of most parties mentioned that expulsion from their club happens rarely, if at all; in the case of Samoobrona, one MP mentioned that there had been 22 individuals kicked out of the parliamentary club over time because of their indiscipline. The explanation this deputy provided for why these individuals would have broken with party discipline is that they were “not mentally or psychologically as strong and may have been influenced by outsiders telling them that the platform and positions of Samoobrona were not good somehow.”

In the case of UW, I was explicitly told that expulsion from the parliamentary club was not an option for punishing deputies who broke party discipline; “if people broke discipline, it never happened in UW that someone was expelled from the club.” According to this former deputy/cabinet minister from UW, expulsion also appeared to be out of the question in UW’s coalition partner, AWS. Thus he told me the story of a cabinet minister from AWS who was using the restroom during a vote of confidence and

54 These individuals are no longer part of LPR’s parliamentary club; however, they are still deputies in the Sejm and are simply not affiliated with any party.
arrived 15 seconds late to the vote. As a result, the government lost by one vote and therefore fell. This minister was “ostracized” by the other members of his party and the governing coalition, but was not, consequently, expelled from the party.

In Poland, as in parliamentary systems more generally, political parties control nominations for political office. Current deputies are generally given priority when the leadership constructs the party list; however, an individual who fails to “toe the party line” may find it more difficult to be placed on that list. The precise process for nominating individuals to the party list differs from one party to the next. Coordination between the leadership of the parliamentary club, national and local party leaders appears to be the norm. For several of the parties, including SDPL and PO, the relationship between discipline and nomination in practice was irrelevant in that these parties had yet to compete in a second round of elections.

Beginning with SLD, I was told by a party leader that “it is the authorities of the parliamentary group who decide how an MP acted during the last term of parliament, if he/she was disciplined, if they acted on the party program, etc. If anybody was not disciplined, then they would not be placed on the list again.” This individual further noted that “there were some individuals in parliament who were good parliamentarians but who were not disciplined at all times and so were not viewed as favorably in terms of the party list.” A deputy from SLD further noted that, “If someone has a considerable amount of ‘setbacks’ [referring to cases of breaking discipline] this negatively influences

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55 Parliamentary elections in Poland are contested using open – list proportional representation rules. The party determines whether an individual is placed on the list, but ultimately it is voters who decide placement.

56 SDPL was created from within SLD in the spring of 2004, whereas PO contested elections for the first time in 2001. As a result, they have not yet had any experience with current MPs being re-nominated to the party list.
the evaluation of the deputy. In the next election such a deputy may have difficulties in being high on the list.”

In the case of SLD’s coalition partner, UP, I was told that it would only be the case that a current MP would not appear on the party list for reelection if they “had done something bad.” Rather than referring to breaking discipline, however, this individual mentioned that “committing a crime, drinking and driving, and unethical behavior are considered undesirable and would lead the party leadership to reconsider whether that MP should be nominated to the party list.”

Representatives of other parties clearly stated that an MP’s behavior during the current parliamentary term is a priority in determining whether he or she will be placed on the party list in the coming election. A deputy from PiS mentioned, “If an MP breaks discipline often, it is understood that they wouldn’t be on the party list for the next election,” a sentiment echoed by another PiS deputy. A parliamentary leader from PSL responded to my inquiry regarding a deputy’s record on discipline and nomination by saying that, “of course it is important and having a record full of past punishments because of discipline makes re-nomination to the party list closed to them, or at least very difficult.” In PO, which had yet to run for re-election after entering the Sejm for the first time in 2001, one deputy told me that “everyone understands that if he goes his own way, he may have problems with being re-nominated on the party list. This is not an official, written rule but rather an unwritten rule that the deputies know to exist.” In this way, he said, “there exists a kind of psychological discipline.”

57 UP is a small parliamentary club, however, and one drawn together by its ideological position so, as I was told, breaking discipline is rare.
Several individuals went on to mention that determining whether, and where, a sitting deputy would be placed on the party list was not simply a matter of discipline, but one of performance more generally. Thus, a deputy from Samoobrona mentioned that “deputies who do not work hard or are not recognizable are not put on the party lists and are not given the opportunities within the party that they could be.” A party leader and deputy from LPR stated: “It is not a question of discipline really. It is more a question of whether deputies have been useful in terms of being hard-working, presenting good ideas, etc. vs. those who have been less successful in handling the job.” I was told by a deputy from PiS that he expected two or three current deputies to either not be placed on the party list in the upcoming elections, or to be placed fairly low because “every MP is evaluated on their achievements during the term and these individuals have not been very active.” Penalizing deputies in this way for failing to actively pursue the party’s goals in parliament further supports my theory of legislative party institutionalization; party leaders are responding to free-riding behavior with punishment.

In the case of UW, a lack of discipline or poor performance during the parliamentary term was viewed slightly differently than the other parties mentioned here. While one party leader told me that “there was a knowledge that punishment for poor behavior during the parliamentary term could come in the form of not being re-nominated to the list,” he also stated that he did not remember any incidences of this occurring. Instead, he noted, “if someone was not feeling good within the party [not comfortable upholding the party line], he or she would resign.” Rather than overtly punishing deputies, UW leaders were more likely to promote those with good records and withhold opportunities for promotion from those with records of violating the party’s rules and
norms. The other individual from UW with whom I spoke, a former deputy and cabinet minister, echoed this claim saying that, “it was more often the case that an individual was moved up or promoted for good behavior rather than be punished by not being placed on the party list.” He went on to say that “more often it happened that an individual who was not disciplined would not be offered a position in the government or would not be promoted to the Presidium of the parliamentary club.”

Samoobrona and PSL also use a deputy’s performance when making decisions about promotion. A deputy from Samoobrona noted that those who do not work hard during the term “are not given the opportunities within the party that they could be.” According to a deputy and club leader from PSL, decisions regarding promotion and advancement within the party are made according to the “same principle” as for punishments; a deputy’s record of behavior is a key factor.58

It is clear from the discussion to this point that the leaders of Poland’s parliamentary clubs have established mechanisms of discipline geared toward overcoming deputies’ inclinations to engage in free-riding behaviors, although the precise

58 Party discipline is not solely the purview of the parliamentary club, however. In at least two parties, PSL and LPR, a mechanism for discipline exists at the level of the party as a whole. I mention this here as deputies are, at the same time, party members. The “Arbitration Court” is an internal court for the party as a whole. For both PSL and LPR, there is a court within each voivoidship, as well as a central court for the entire party. The duties of the court are similar to those of the Discipline Advocate within the parliamentary club. Thus, if an individual is thought to have behaved improperly somehow, he or she can be brought before the court. Improper behavior here generally refers to acting unethically or breaking the law in some way. Both members of PSL and LPR told me that the court could also be used to mediate disputes between party members. As for procedure, in the case of PSL there is an individual, like the Discipline Advocate within parliament, who looks into the matter brought before the court and decides whether or not the accused member should be reprimanded, or even expelled. The court then approves this individual’s recommendation. For LPR, the court will gather information on the case at hand and work out an opinion on the matter. It then presents this opinion to the Presidium, which makes the ultimate decision. The individuals from both LPR and PSL with whom I spoke were quick to point out, however, that the courts are rarely used. In the case of LPR, I was told that members prefer to “resolve conflicts between themselves as they do not want to make the issue/conflict public.” In the case of PSL, the court gets little work because of “the atmosphere within PSL and the tradition that members in the party refer to each other as colleague; the party is very friendly or collegial.”
nature of these mechanisms differs from one party to the next. Table 4.1 summarizes the information to this point and provides an overview of these cross-party differences in party discipline.

With the exception of the newly formed SDPL and the far-right LPR, every club has a “Discipline Advocate,” what we would refer to as a Whip. It is the Whip’s responsibility to monitor attendance at votes (using the records kept by the Marshall of the Sejm) and determine whether deputies voted in accordance with the party line. In some cases, the Discipline Advocate will recommend, either to the club leadership or the club as a whole, a punishment commensurate with the deputy’s offense. In some parties, the Discipline Advocate also acts to discipline “before the fact” by requiring deputies who must miss a vote to gain permission ahead of time; in others, such permission is obtained from the leadership of the club rather than the Discipline Advocate.

For those individuals who violate party norms, parties have established a wide array of punishments, ranging from verbal reprimands and written warnings, to public pronouncements on a deputy’s misconduct, to the ultimate punishment – expulsion from the club and/or party. Variation exists in the extent to which parties use these punishments, however. Thus, over 20 individuals have been expelled from the parliamentary club of Samoobrona during its parliamentary existence, whereas UW never used expulsion. Party leaders further use a deputy’s record when making decisions about placement on the party list and internal promotion. Thus, a record of indiscipline will usually preclude a deputy from advancing within the ranks of the party and may lead to a low position on, or exclusion from, the party list.
4.2 Factors Influencing Commitment to Party Culture

Based on the evidence presented to this point, leaders of Poland’s parliamentary clubs have shown a commitment to overcoming the collective action problem by establishing norms and rules of behavior central to party culture. Throughout the discussion of the mechanisms of discipline, as well as in Table 4.1, I identified differences across parties in both the extent to which party leaders see a need for discipline and the corresponding means they use to reward and punish deputies’ behavior. I hypothesized in the second chapter that four factors will likely influence the extent to which parliamentary party leaders commit to the creation of party culture: size of party, ideology, whether or not the party is a member of the government or opposition and coalition status. In this section, I examine these factors in detail to determine the extent to which they account for systematic variation in party leaders’ commitment to party culture.

4.2.1 Ideology

The first factor identified in Chapter 2 as having a potential impact on party leaders’ commitment to party culture is ideology, specifically the strength of that ideology. In one sense, we might expect parliamentary clubs united by a strong shared ideology to have less commitment to party culture because they do not see a need for explicitly establishing a position on votes, let alone creating a system of rewards and punishments. A strong ideology, then, may negate the need for disciplinary mechanisms. It may be the case, however, that leaders of strongly ideological parties are more motivated to eliminate free-riding behavior among their ranks out of a commitment to those like-minded individuals within society who voted the party into office. I adopt the
latter view, and hypothesized in the second chapter that leaders of parliamentary clubs with a strong ideology would be more likely to commit to creating party culture.

Which parties hold strong ideological views and, as a result, are expected to have a stronger commitment to party culture? It can be difficult to distinguish clearly between Poland’s parties according to strength of ideology. Leftist UP sees itself as being highly ideological (more so than most parties in Poland according to one of the Executive Committee members), whereas both SLD and the offshoot SDPL, while being parties of the left and committed (ostensibly at least) to principles of social democracy, do not appear to have quite as strong an ideological commitment. On the exact opposite end of the political spectrum from UP stands LPR, a self-proclaimed “nationalistic” party whose ideology and party program are derived in large part from the writings of Roman Dmowski, a “philosopher” from the inter-war period.59 As a result, noted one deputy and party leader from LPR, “the members of LPR have a clear mind on where they stand. This stems from the philosophy common to all members.”

Other parties of the right, such as PO, PSL, PiS and Samoobrona vary in the extent to which they can be characterized as having strong ideological underpinnings. PiS, while not adhering to a particularly well-developed ideology per se, is committed to the principles of law and justice as its name (“Prawo i Sprawiedliwość” or “Law and Justice”) implies. PO, PSL and Samoobrona all have less clear-cut ideological predispositions, making it difficult to ascertain the strength of their ideology; PO is a liberal party in the European meaning of the word, PSL has traditionally been an

59 Many current members of LPR were also one-time members of the “Stronnictwo Narodowa,” or “National Party,” giving them more common ground.
agrarian, populist party but appears to have been moving further to the right in recent years and Samoobrona considers itself populist without articulating any clear ideology.

Does the evidence from my in-depth interviews support the hypothesis that leaders of strongly ideological parties will be more committed to party culture? The empirical record appears mixed. UP, a strongly ideological party, makes all decisions via consensus and has a Discipline Advocate with relatively weak powers; Samoobrona (which does not appear wedded to any particular ideology, let alone strongly), on the other hand, has expelled more than 20 members from the ranks of its parliamentary club for indiscipline. These two parties appear to contradict the hypothesis, yet leaders of the Law and Justice party (PiS) appear fairly strongly committed to party culture, confirming the hypothesis (if we choose to treat PiS as a party with a strong ideology). Thus, notes one PiS deputy, “for PiS it [discipline] is really important given the party’s reputation and emphasis on “law and justice.” Yet PO and PSL, parties with weaker ideological ties, also appear to have relatively well-developed systems of rewards and punishments.

One final point related to ideology involves the party of government at the time of these interviews, SLD. Although the party had started off the parliament unified and enjoyed a reputation for strong discipline, by the spring of 2004 the party was divided over tensions between the parliamentary club as a whole and the party’s leaders in government. As one top SLD leader noted, the government’s failure to adhere to the party’s ideology on certain issues led the rank and file to protest by failing to play along, choosing instead to voice opposition to government-sponsored legislation.\(^60\) To remedy

\(^{60}\) The example mentioned here was the purely strategic decision made by Prime Minister Miller in summer 2003 to support the creation of a flat tax in clear violation of the party’s center-left ideology.
this situation, the party leadership was forced to place even greater emphasis on formal mechanisms of discipline and the consequences associated with failing to toe the line. Interestingly enough, ideology proved an important factor in motivating the party leadership to further commit to discipline; backbenchers rebelled when the government pursued policy that contradicted SLD’s ideology and, as a result, party leaders had to commit even further to discipline so as to get the membership to support the government-sponsored legislation.

Based on the information provided here, the impact of strength of ideology on party leaders’ commitment to party culture appears rather ambiguous. If we look at a variant of the ideology argument, looking not at the strength of a party’s ideology but ideological type, do we see equally vague results? In other words, are there differences in the commitment to party culture among parties of the left and right? On the left, leaders of UP and SDPL do not appear particularly committed to establishing the rules and norms of party culture; leaders of SLD, on the other hand, appear fairly committed to discipline. Looking now at parties of the right, the leaders of most of these parties have committed to the creation of party culture in some way or another. In fact, arguably the most disciplined party in the parliament, Samoobrona, is a party of the right. Given that the relationship between both strength and type of ideology, and commitment to party culture, remains unclear, it is necessary to turn to an examination of other factors.

4.2.2 Party Size

The second factor presented in Chapter 2 as a potential influence on whether party leaders choose to commit to overcoming the collective action problem by creating party culture is the party’s size. I mentioned in Chapter 2 that smaller parties should have a
relatively easy time establishing party culture but may be less motivated to do so if the party’s votes have little chance of determining the fate of legislation. Deputies from larger parties, by contrast, will likely have an easier time engaging in free riding behavior, making the need for party culture greater than in smaller parties. In addition, the greater ability to make or break a vote on legislation may provide leaders of large parties with added motivation to commit to party culture. I hypothesized in the second chapter, then, that leaders of larger parties would be more likely to commit to party culture than leaders of small parties.

Establishing which of the parties included here are “small” or “large” is challenging given that SLD held over 40 percent of the seats in parliament in 2004; the remaining parties ranged from 15 seats at the low end (UP) to 65 at the high end (PO). All things being equal, leaders of smaller parties in this parliament (UP, SDPL, LPR, for example) appear to be less concerned about free-riding behavior in their clubs than leaders of mid- and large-sized parties and, as a result, have not exhibited as great a commitment to creating party culture. In all three cases, interviewees noted that shared viewpoints and the relatively small size of their parliamentary clubs make discipline largely unnecessary. For both UP and SDPL, the party line is established after discussion among all the members and a consensus is reached. Invoking discipline in these two parties is generally seen as unnecessary given that each deputy had a hand in establishing the party’s position on an issue. A deputy from SDPL described the situation as follows:

Before every Sejm session there is a club meeting. The club is small, we know each other very well and everybody has a chance to speak. The meeting usually lasts for two hours; we can argue and try to convince each other to our hearts content, as long as it is necessary. The execution of discipline is not an issue. We are all mature people. We can cooperate in harmony.
In LPR, there is no voting discipline; deputies are free to vote their conscience, although it appears in most cases the beliefs common to LPR deputies lead them to vote in the same manner. LPR does, however, require attendance at votes and uses the records of the Marshall of the Sejm to keep track of that information.

As for the position of Discipline Advocate, it exists in UP, although there appears to be little work for this individual; anyone who disagrees with the agreed upon position of the party is permitted to abstain, although this rarely happens. Neither SDPL nor LPR, at the time of these interviews, had created a Whip’s office.

The commitment to creating mechanisms of discipline appears to be stronger in medium and large-sized parliamentary clubs precisely because their size gives the individual deputy greater freedom (and possibly temptation) to engage in free-riding behavior. This reality is not lost on members of larger parties for, as one former deputy and cabinet minister from UW noted, “in big clubs, discipline is more difficult to keep.” Of the mid- to large-sized parties represented in parliament at the time of my interviews (PSL, PiS, PO, Samoobrona and SLD), all had established the position of Discipline Advocate and had either vested this individual with a fair amount of power or had found a way for the club leadership to play a role in disciplining members for non-attendance at votes, voting against the party’s position, etc. The ultimate punishment in all of these parties is expulsion from the parliamentary club, although the extent to which it had been used varied (Samoobrona having expelled numerous members from its ranks in parliament while UP, for example, had expelled none).

In the previous parliament, by contrast, the relationship between party size and commitment to creating party culture did not appear to hold. The largest party (a
coalition of parties, in fact) was AWS, which despite having a strong need for it due to the wide-ranging viewpoints of its members, had a weak commitment to creating discipline. Thus, a deputy from PiS who was previously the leader of one of AWS’ constituent parties, told me that the party ultimately failed due to a lack of leadership; the party did not have a “clear message,” leaders were “short-sighted” and while they had established the position of Discipline Advocate, the individual had little real power. Recall, too, the anecdote related by a leader of UW regarding the AWS cabinet minister whose late arrival at a confidence vote led to the government’s collapse; this individual was not officially punished by the leadership, but merely fell out of favor with fellow party members.

AWS’ coalition partner, UW, was not much better when it came to the club leadership’s commitment to creating party culture. When I mentioned I was interested in knowing about discipline during UW’s tenure in parliament, one leader responded, “We don’t know this word . . . we are the most undisciplined party in Independent Polish political history.” This assessment was based on the inability of the party’s representatives to present a unified face to the public. As for UW’s Discipline Advocate:

The problem here, however, was that this individual was deprived of having any serious sanctions against members who defied discipline. What could they do then? A lack of discipline would be used to make decisions about nomination to the party list but beyond this there was nothing.

At least during the 1997 – 2001 parliament, then, leaders of large parties did not universally commit to the creation of party discipline. Nonetheless, for the subsequent parliament, medium and large parties alike were characterized by fairly well developed mechanisms of discipline, whereas the smallest parliamentary clubs appeared to have a weaker commitment to creating party culture.
4.2.3 Government or Opposition

A third factor identified in the second chapter as potentially influencing party leaders’ commitment to culture was the parliamentary club’s status as either a member of the government or the opposition. Governing parties are expected to have a strong motivation to overcome free-riding behavior in order to ensure their legislative proposals are passed. Opposition parties may also be committed to the creation of party culture in order to show a unified face to supporters; however, in the face of a strongly unified governing party/coalition, the combined votes of the opposition are unlikely to affect the fate of legislation, making the motivation to enforce party discipline somewhat weaker than in governing parties. Thus, I hypothesized in Chapter 2 that leaders of governing parties will be more likely to commit to party culture than opposition parties.

In speaking to party leaders, it appears that at least some opposition party leaders are motivated by a desire to signal to voters their commitment to standing against the government’s program, consistent with the expectation mentioned above. PSL, noted one parliamentary club leader, believes that for opposition parties “discipline is also highly important because being disciplined is a strong signal to the public/voters that the club is clearly an opposition party and acting as one.” As a further example of the symbolic nature of a party’s desire to appear disciplined, a deputy from PO observed that because of the party’s popularity around the country at the time, “decisions are often made in the party as if it were a ruling party, but it is not (yet).”

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61 At the time of my interviews, PO was seen as the frontrunners in parliamentary elections to be held the following year (2005). The party consistently led in public opinion polls asking Poles for which party they would vote in the next parliamentary elections. Ultimately, PO received the second most votes in the elections of September 2005 behind PiS.
Leaders of governing and opposition parties alike further appear cognizant of the fact that discipline may be more or less important depending on the strength of the governing majority. Consider the statements of the parliamentary club leader of PSL quoted above, who told me that, “when PSL was in the governing coalition [with SLD] it did not have a strong majority in parliament so discipline was therefore very important.” In order to get the government’s legislation passed in parliament, it was crucial that deputies from the respective governing coalition parties voted together, particularly given the relatively small majority it enjoyed.

In the case of opposition parties, a deputy from PO told me that discipline had become more important for the opposition over the course of the parliament. The reason he cited for this added emphasis on discipline was the shrinking majority power of the governing coalition as a result of dissension in its ranks, most notably the decision by a number of SLD deputies to leave the club and form SDPL in February 2004. He noted that for opposition parties, now “every vote counts and thus parties place a greater premium on getting deputies to show up to vote and to vote a particular way.” Votes, he said, “Now can go either way.” Thus, the emphasis placed on discipline differs according to a party’s position in government vs. opposition; however, opposition parties appear to stress discipline as a way to signal to the public that they are serious and to set themselves apart from SLD, which has come to be seen as undisciplined.

4.2.4 Coalition Membership

The final factor that may determine whether party leaders commit to culture (and one that is related to the government/opposition factor above) is that of coalition status. I noted in Chapter 2 that party leaders will likely be more motivated to create a strong
party culture if the parliamentary club is part of a coalition than if it is acting independently. The primary reason for stronger discipline in coalitions is the need to support positions agreed upon among the parties in coalition, as well as to signal to future coalition partners that the party is a reliable partner. While the motivation to maintain strict discipline is strong in coalition parties, it may ultimately be harder to keep deputies from free-riding, particularly if the party line is seen as the result of compromising with the coalition partner and not the party’s own views. Parties in coalition are, nonetheless, expected to be more committed to overcoming free-riding behavior through discipline than parties that are not a member of a coalition.

In 2004, there was only one coalition in the parliament, that of SLD-UP, which also happened to be the governing coalition. UP’s position as the minority member of that coalition (15 deputies versus approximately 150 from SLD) illustrates just the kind of pressures coalition partners face. UP was under a great deal of pressure to support the SLD position, even when such a position was not completely in line with the party’s ideology. Thus, notes one UP Executive Committee member, “as a minority in the coalition it is difficult for UP to change anything in these proposed laws or to voice much in the way of opposition.”

Two specific examples of UP holding different viewpoints from its coalition partner SLD are the war in Iraq and Deputy Prime Minister Jerzy Hausner’s plan to cut social programs. According to one Executive Committee member, Hausner’s plan was not one UP would support for ideological reasons; however, UP found itself unable to voice its opposition given its partnership with SLD. As for Iraq, “UP supported the operation there [Iraq] because of ‘big brother’ [SLD], not because they wanted to.”
UP, then, was highly motivated to fulfill its obligations as a coalition partner, even when the position they were expected to support required them to compromise their ideology. As mentioned above, UP’s leadership did not appear to feel discipline was particularly necessary within the parliamentary club; given their commitment to acting as a responsible coalition partner, however, club leaders may have taken steps to invoke more rigid disciplinary measures if UP had had more seats in parliament.

The relationship between coalition partners AWS and UW (1997 – 2000) illustrates the potential negative consequences of a lack of discipline on the part of a coalition member. Representatives of UW readily pointed to the lack of discipline in AWS as a major source of tension between the two parties. As one former UW deputy/cabinet minister described it, AWS had a reputation for being undisciplined and because the public had difficulty distinguishing between the two parties, “UW suffered from the lack of discipline in AWS, their coalition partner.” For its part, UW did little to remedy the situation, avoiding criticism of AWS publicly out of a sense of loyalty. However, once UW “was about to quit the coalition they did so [criticized AWS] because they needed to give the public a reason or a way to understand their decision.” Interestingly enough, an Executive Committee member of UP mentioned the party has “decided to be a loyal member of the coalition” in order to avoid the same public image AWS/UW had of “arguing a lot in public.” Unfortunately, notes this individual, “the public doesn’t see the difference between UP and the SLD because they avoided public conflict (opting instead for dealing with issues behind closed doors).”

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62 Like the AWS/UW coalition before it, the SLD/UP governing coalition was voted out of office as the result of parliamentary elections held in September 2005.
4.3 Elite Commitment

To this point, I have provided a highly detailed picture of what the rules and norms within Poland’s legislative parties look like. I have also gone on to discuss the extent to which a number of factors influence whether or not party leaders commit to the creation of party culture. The empirical record appears mixed, however; some of those parties with a strong ideology have committed to party culture, while leaders of perhaps the least clearly ideological party (Samoobrona) have shown the strongest commitment to party discipline. Smaller parties appear to be less committed to party discipline on average, in line with the hypothesis from the second chapter, whereas the relationship between both government/opposition and coalition status and commitment to party culture varies from one party to the next. The true impact of these factors may be obscured by the fact that these categories are not mutually exclusive: UP, for example was a small party with a strong ideology that was also part of a governing coalition.

Even given this interaction, these four factors themselves do not create party culture; they can provide motivation or influence the resultant nature of party culture, but the creation of that culture requires agency. Elites create and perpetuate the rules and norms guiding the behavior of party members on a day-to-day basis. I now explicitly address the role of party leaders in establishing and maintaining the mechanisms of discipline we see in the Polish case, as well as how these party leaders influence when and how these mechanisms are used. As with many of the issues discussed above, there is variation in the extent to which party elites play a role in the creation and persistence of the mechanisms of discipline. What is eminently clear from my interviews is that leadership matters.
Perhaps the clearest example of elite commitment to creating party culture is that of PO. The first PO deputy I interviewed mentioned that when the party first entered parliament following the 2001 elections, formal discipline was not particularly well-established, although deputies “kept relatively in line anyway.” Now, though, PO “is recognized more as a unified party in the media and the public eye.” When I inquired of this deputy why that is, he told me that the change came about “because of a change in leadership.” When Donald Tusk became party leader, he decided “to transform the party to a more organized party in terms of how and what deputies think and do. This made the party less individualistic but more disciplined.” I followed up on this change in discipline with a second PO deputy, who told me that the reason the party began without any formal structure of discipline but developed one over time was that PO “changed the leader of the Parliamentary club; the new leader [Tusk] is strong and disciplined. As a result, formal structures for discipline have been created.” In the case of PO, none of the four factors discussed above (ideology, size, government/opposition membership and coalition status) had changed and yet the parliamentary club was suddenly characterized by stronger discipline. Rather, the changing nature of discipline in the party was the direct result of actions taken by the club leadership.

Just as the successful implementation of mechanisms of discipline by elites contributes to the ultimate institutionalization of legislative parties, failing to implement these mechanisms may lead to party collapse. Consider the case of AWS, a coalition of approximately 30 political parties of the Right that, along with UW, governed from 1997-2001 but failed to clear the five percent threshold in 2001 and was therefore left out of the parliament. If the four factors hypothesized to influence commitment were sufficient,
leaders of AWS should have been motivated to create party culture given the likelihood of free-riding in a large party with diverse viewpoints, as well as the pressures of serving in the governing coalition. That was not, however, the case.

I interviewed one individual, a deputy from PiS who had been the leader of one of AWS’ constituent parties, who attributed the collapse of AWS to failures of leadership.\(^63\) Thus, he noted, “It was the leadership of AWS that led to its dissolution. There was no clear message. There were bigger problems that the leadership could not solve because they were short-sighted; they were unable to see long-term.” The wide array of viewpoints within AWS, as well as the leadership’s inability to establish a clear message, proved problematic for establishing a position on legislation that was acceptable to all deputies. Despite a strong need for discipline, AWS leaders failed to show a strong commitment to discipline; “the AWS Whip was weak but should have been strong.” Not even in the case discussed previously of the cabinet minister whose decision to use the restroom at an inopportune time led to the collapse of the government did AWS enact sanctions. The lack of discipline in AWS not only created problems for itself, but for its coalition partner, UW, which was seen as guilty by association.

One final example of the importance of leadership to party culture, although in this case with respect to the evolution of that culture, involves the governing party at the time of these interviews, SLD. Rather than failing to commit to discipline, as was the case with leaders of AWS, the SLD leadership insisted on discipline seemingly at all costs. I interviewed a top party leader who said SLD “had been famous because of its

\[^63\] This individual also told me that his former party “disappeared because of very weak discipline.” By contrast, PiS “is disciplined because of the leadership structure and the willingness of MPs to cooperate.”
discipline;” however, that reputation had changed fairly dramatically over the course of the parliamentary term. Tensions between the party’s leaders in government and its parliamentary club as a whole came about because the government decided:

to treat the parliamentary club in an instrumental way. Too often the government prepared laws and demanded support from the club without consultation or discussion with the parliamentary club. The parliamentarians had no chance to make suggestions or changes to these proposed bills; there was no input from the parliamentary group. This led to frustration on the part of the parliamentary group.

In addition to choosing not to consult with the parliamentary group on the specifics of legislation, the government decided to pursue policies that contradicted the party platform developed prior to the elections. As a result, the government was at odds with both the parliamentary group and the national party, both of which advocated following the party program.

As a consequence of these tensions, “decisions taken by the parliamentary group ended up not being as disciplined as before . . . More and more people in the parliamentary group were against the decisions of the government. Never before had something like this occurred.” This situation further led to a declining trust in leadership. This party leader noted that deputies had previously “really trusted in leaders. If the leaders were in favor of something, then it was no problem to persuade the members to support the same policy.” By the time of my interviews in 2004, however, this was no longer the case; “the positions of some of the leaders are not so good and when they try to argue in favor of some position, it is not so clear that the membership will follow along.”

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64 Prime Minister Leszek Miller’s decision in 2003 to support a “flat tax” is an example of the party leadership acting strategically rather than following the party’s ideology.
As an example of this changing relationship between party leaders and backbenchers, at an earlier point in the parliament a group of SLD deputies from the region of Silesia had voted against the party line established regarding legislation on coal mines out of concern that it was harmful to their constituents. The party leader I talked to stated, “these individuals were removed from the parliamentary group. In this case, the consequences of discipline were very decisive (or definitive).” More recently, however, another group of deputies from Silesia voted against the government position but without being removed from the parliamentary group. The conclusion this party leader came to as a result of these two situations is that it “indicates that the party has less power.”

4.4 Assessing Alternative Explanations

While I make a case for the importance of leadership in creating party culture, there are a number of potential alternative explanations for legislative party behavior, and ultimately institutionalization, which see the establishment of disciplinary mechanisms by party leaders as unnecessary. Recall from Chapter 2 that systemic-level alternative explanations point to the strength of committees, electoral rules, and constitutional structure, whereas party-level explanations offer ideology, organization, and the party’s founding as alternatives. My goal in this section is to address these alternative explanations using evidence from my interviews, focusing on party-level factors because systemic-level factors, such as electoral rules, constitutional structure and strength of committees, do not vary within the single case of Poland. Prior to discussing party-level factors, however, I first discuss the role of committees in the Polish legislature as a

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65 Given the discussion of the role of ideology above, revisiting it here would be redundant.

66 I revisit these systemic-level explanations in Chapter Seven when comparing the process of legislative party institutionalization to that of other post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe.
means to deal with any concerns scholars of American politics may have that the organizing principle in the Sejm is the committee and not the political party.

4.4.1 Committees

If it were the case that committees were more important for understanding legislator behavior in Poland than political parties, we would expect to see parliamentary deputies functioning rather independently of their party affiliations on committees. We would further expect to see strong committee chairs and a highly competitive process for assignment to certain key committees. The bottom line in this argument is that legislative party organizations take second stage to legislative committees. Although the precise relationship between the parties and committees differs according to the party, in speaking to parliamentary deputies and other party leaders it is clear that political parties remain the centerpiece in the Sejm.

There are 25 standing committees in the Sejm, within which draft legislation is prepared and revised. It is committee members who then hear outside expert testimony in making decisions regarding that legislation. There are also a number of special and investigative committees, not established by the Constitution as are the standing committees, which have the task of dealing with a particular issue or problem. Each deputy is assigned to serve on a particular committee by his or her party; however, no deputy can serve on more than two standing committees. Exceptions to this rule are made in the case of special and investigative committees, when deputies are then permitted to serve on three committees.67

67 One example of such an instance is an extraordinary committee to look into the secret service within the Polish military which one of my interviewees served on.
As for how deputies are assigned to the committees, again this is a decision internal to the parliamentary club. The club leader from PSL told me that immediately following parliamentary elections every deputy is asked to propose two fields in which he or she is especially well trained/educated, or on which that individual feels knowledgeable. It is according to the deputy’s professed expertise that he or she is then assigned to a committee. Given that PSL advocates on behalf of the agrarian segments of Polish society, there tends to be a large number of individuals wanting to serve on the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, for example. Once deputies are assigned to committees, in most parties the process is such that on each piece of legislation, one of the party’s deputies will be asked to serve as “Project” or “Law Coordinator.” A member of UP’s Executive Committee described the job of the “Law Coordinator” as follows: he or she will be the party’s spokesperson for this piece of legislation, and is responsible for the bill at every stage of its development, from its introduction to the Sejm for a first reading to its consideration by the Senat.

I asked the individuals I interviewed whether deputies from their party operated autonomously on their committees and returned to the club as a whole with recommendations for voting, or whether deputies entered into committee work with the party’s position already established. The answer to this question was generally the latter, that deputies were on committees to represent the party and its program. A deputy from SDPL articulates the common response to this question; “In parliamentary committees the deputies present the position of the party. Of course, during the discussions every deputy has a right to speak for him-/herself, but the decisions are made by the party.” Samoobrona approaches committee work in a similar manner. I was told that “everything
. . . is decided before the deputy goes to committee; the topic is known in advance so the party’s position has already been settled. Thus, the deputy represents the party on the committee.” I was told something similar by a deputy from PO who stated that, “you have to defend the position of the party on committees.”

It is the case, however, that committee members may make judgments regarding the party’s position on a particular piece of legislation and bring that recommendation to the club leadership or the club as a whole. Thus, the individual from PSL I interviewed mentioned that the Sejm has been “working like a factory” during the last two years as it works to bring Polish laws “in line with those of the European Union.” Given the fast pace of committee work during this time, he mentioned that it often happened that a deputy would return to the club with suggestions for how they as a club should vote on that particular issue. Consultation with the leadership of the club was also mentioned by one of the PO deputies, who noted that if the committee is dealing with a piece of legislation for which the club had not previously formulated a position, the coordinator from PO will come back to the leadership, discuss the matter and “receive instructions on how to proceed.” The Samoobrona deputy I spoke with noted that if the government reworks a bill that includes changes from the original, the deputy responsible for the bill from the party is “able to make decisions on his own about the new language of the bill.”

In some parliamentary clubs, on the other hand, deputies serving on committees are given much more freedom to act. In the case of UP, for example, there are so few deputies that there can be no more than one on each committee, making that individual a focal point for issues relating to that committee’s legislation. The demands on the time of UP deputies is so great that each deputy “specializes in his or her committee and the rest
of the parliamentary club relies on the area experts to provide them with information and
guidance.” In the case of UW, a much larger party, I was told that it was also the case
that deputies on committees “were experts on the issues and brought suggestions to the
caucus for how to vote.” This party leader noted that UW deputies ended up specializing
in certain areas and, given that many UW deputies were lawyers and/or had extensive
political experience (for example, in local government) the caucus was comfortable
relying on these individuals for guidance on specific legislation. Reliance on the UW
coordinator for a certain piece of legislation was so great that, “it was common practice
for the MP responsible for a certain bill to sit on the first bench and all others to sit
behind him or her and that person would raise their hand to indicate to the others how
they were voting on the issue.”

4.4.2 Locus of Power

Turning now to expressly party-level explanations, one alternative to the role of
party leaders in legislative party institutionalization claims that it is the extra-
parliamentary party and not the parliamentary club that has the real decision-making
power regarding the club’s activities. The rationale here is that if extra-parliamentary
party organizations control nomination to party lists, then they hold a significant degree
of power over parliamentarians who must toe the party line in order to gain a coveted
space on the party list. By contrast, Van Biezen’s (2000) expectation, presented in the
second chapter, is that in the new democracies of East/Central and Southern Europe the
party in office should be more powerful than the extra-parliamentary party organization.68

68 This expectation does not necessarily hold in the cases she examines. Using three indicators: the way in
which parties define the relationship between these two faces of party organization, as described in party
statutes; the extent to which there is overlap in the individuals serving in leadership positions within and
I asked a number of questions designed to assess to what extent separation exists between the party within and outside of parliament in Poland, both in a general sense and more specifically with respect to decisions regarding the party line and the handing out of rewards and punishments. Beginning with the party line, I mentioned above that for any given party, their general position with respect to a specific issue is guided by their party program, established every few years by a meeting of the entire party at the National Congress. Decisions regarding specific pieces of legislation and issues that arise on which the party program says nothing are made by the leadership of the parliamentary club, or the parliamentary club as a whole. The extra-parliamentary party leadership appears to play a small part in influencing these decisions, if any. Even at the point of determining the party program, decisions are made “democratically” with the input of the entire party membership.

Looking more specifically at party structure, this argument regarding the locus of decision-making power in the party relies on there being a significant degree of separation between the party leadership in parliament and outside of it. I stated in the second chapter that in the case of East Central Europe, where many political parties were created at the parliamentary (as opposed to electoral) level, we might expect to see a good deal of overlap between the parliamentary club leadership and the leadership of the extra-parliamentary party (which Van Biezen (2000) does, in fact, find).

outside of parliament; and where the bulk of State party financing is directed, the parliamentary party or extra-parliamentary party, Van Biezen (2000) concludes, based on evidence from the new democracies of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Portugal and Spain, that only in the case of personnel overlap can the legislative party be said to be the dominant party organization. Van Biezen’s (2000) finding, that the individuals holding leadership positions in the parliamentary and national party organizations are, in large part, the same, challenges the argument that it is extra-parliamentary party organizations that determine legislative behavior.
I discovered that leadership structures do, in fact, overlap to a considerable
degree, although as in the case of other factors examined to this point, there is variation
from one party to the next in the degree of this overlap. For many parties, the degree of
overlap is considerable, although less than perfect. In UP, I was told that approximately
half of the party’s deputies are also members of the Executive Committee, the highest
decision-making body within the party. One Executive Committee member told me that,
while not every parliamentary deputy simultaneously serves on the Executive Committee,
the most important deputies (those in leadership positions for the parliamentary club) do.
As for UP’s partner in the governing coalition, SLD, the party is quite large and thus 100
percent overlap between the parliamentary group leadership and the party leadership is
not possible. However, one SLD deputy and former spokesman for the Government
mentioned that all deputies are at the same time members of the party’s National Council
(Rada Krajowa), a practice established by party statute. In addition, it is common
practice for the head of the parliamentary club and the head of the party to be the same
person. According to a top SLD leader, leaders of the party are also always heads of the
parliamentary group or members of government, thus there are close links between these
individuals and the party in parliament, outside parliament and in government.

Samoobrona is another party in which overlap exists, but is not perfect. Many
members of the party’s top leadership body, the Presidium, are parliamentary deputies
and are more active within the Presidium by virtue of their work in parliament. While the
membership of the Presidium does not overlap perfectly with the parliamentary club, this
may understate the extent to which overlap exists as the leader of the party, Andrzej
Lepper, is also the leader of the parliamentary club. In PO, the leader of the party is also
one of the leaders of the parliamentary club. The majority of members of the party’s National Board are also deputies in parliament and part of the parliamentary club leadership. The Chairman of the PSL parliamentary club was, at the time of my interviews, also Chairman of the party, although other individuals in top leadership positions in the party are not simultaneously deputies.

In other parties, the overlap between the party leadership and parliamentary club leadership is nearly perfect. In the case of SDPL, a party created entirely within the parliament in February 2004 as an offshoot of SLD, the leaders of the party as a whole are at the same time parliamentarians. According to one deputy, SDPL’s most important institution is the Convent (Konwent), made up of 43 individuals, 33 from the Sejm and 10 from the Senat.69 This is also the case for PiS in which, “the National Party is more or less the same as the Parliamentary Club in both structure and personnel.” Another PiS deputy stressed the highly centralized nature of the party, whereby local parties are dependent on the centralized national party. That PiS is so centralized makes this overlap between party and club leadership possible. LPR is another example of a party in which near perfect overlap between party leadership and club leadership is the norm. According to one deputy, the party leader is the leader of the club, and the individuals holding the three main jobs in the party are also deputies in the Presidium of the parliamentary club.

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69 There are other deputies in the Sejm who joined SDPL after the party’s creation who are not part of the Convent; however, all individuals in the party leadership are at the same time deputies in the Sejm (or in a few cases, Senators). SDPL is developing a more national party organization outside of parliament, establishing regional coordinators to oversee the party’s activities in each voivoidship.
The lowest degree of overlap between national party leaders and parliamentary party leaders appears to be in the case of UW.\footnote{Recall that UW was not represented in the 2001 – 2005 parliament but had served in each of the previous parliaments.} At the start of each parliamentary term, UW deputies elected from among their midst the governing body of the caucus (five or six individuals). This body was, therefore, “independent from the party in that the party didn’t elect the chairman and his/her deputies but rather this was done by MPs.”

4.4.3 The Party’s Founding

The final party-level alternative explanation I consider here is the party’s founding. In the second chapter, I mentioned two separate versions of this argument; whether the party was established within the parliament or without, and when a party was founded (older parties are more likely to have these mechanisms in place and use them effectively). The assumption, then, is that institutionalization within the legislature is determined to some extent by when or where the party was founded. Such structural arguments generally fail to specify the mechanisms by which the party’s founding creates institutionalized parties, nor do they account for the role of agency, in this case party leaders.

Dealing with where the party was founded, parties created within the parliamentary setting are expected to have an easier time functioning effectively in that setting. As a result of their creation at the parliamentary rather than societal level, parties will likely have weak or non-existent ties to groups within society (for example, trade unions) and should, therefore, be able to operate within parliament without excessive outside interference.
As Van Biezen (2000) points out, most parties in East Central Europe originated within parliament, rather than outside of it, a fact that has led to relatively weak ties between parties and society. Poland is no exception to this rule. One deputy from the Law and Justice party (PiS) described the fact that parties “are not deeply rooted in society” as “a big weakness of political parties in Poland.” Comparing Poland to more established democracies, this deputy further noted that, “In Germany, Britain and even in the U.S., parties represent clear segments of society. In Poland, parties don’t express social feelings.”

Nonetheless, we can identify slight differences in the extent to which parties have ties to society. PSL is perhaps the best example of a party that represents societal interests, in this case farmers. SDPL, on the other hand, was created in the middle of the current parliamentary term and thus is unlikely to have particularly close ties to any group within society. We might expect PSL to have greater difficulty in establishing the mechanisms of discipline if undue pressure is placed on the party’s leadership by its constituents. Nonetheless, PSL has a whip system, clear guidelines for punishing deputies for their behavior in parliament (and outside of it through the “Arbitration Court”), and uses a legislator’s record of behavior in parliament when making decisions about nomination and promotion. Contrary to the expectations of the founding argument, SDPL had not established a whip at the time of my interviews, nor did it routinely invoke discipline. Instead, the party’s decisions were made via consensus.

Moving now to when the party was founded in terms of length of time, we would expect newer parties to have fewer mechanisms in place for disciplining members and for those mechanisms that do exist to be less effective. I found no evidence to support this
argument. In fact, one very interesting point that emerged in several of my interviews is that newer parties on the right such as PO and PiS were able to learn from the experiences of parties such as UW and AWS, which had reputations for being relatively undisciplined. Thus, one PiS deputy (who was a leader of one of the many smaller parties that made up AWS) told me that because many PiS deputies were formerly deputies of AWS, they were familiar with the problems associated with discipline (or lack thereof). As a result, these individuals know that for the party to succeed, their differences should be limited. The same theme emerged in discussions with deputies from PO. One PO deputy told me that because many of the party’s MPs were involved in UW and AWS, they have been able to observe what was wrong with these parties and do things differently in PO. This notion of learning from past mistakes seems to be paying off, for both PiS and PO have reputations for being highly disciplined.

SLD, on the other hand, has been around for a significant period of time by virtue of being the successor to the Communist party. For most of its post-communist history, the party was known for its discipline; however, throughout the parliamentary term beginning in 2001, that discipline deteriorated as the party was besieged by scandal and as the rank and file chose to rebel in the face of a leadership that failed to consider its interests (as discussed above).

The argument that older parties will automatically have established the means for discipline and use them effectively does not appear to bear out in the case of Poland. Age alone, after all, does not create mechanisms.
4.5 Conclusion

Contrary to the statement presented at the outset that “there is no discipline” in Polish parties, the picture that emerges from my interviews with parliamentary deputies and top party leaders is one of well-developed mechanisms of discipline. Like their more established counterparts in the advanced democracies, parliamentary clubs in Poland have established Whip’s offices tasked with monitoring the behavior of legislators during parliamentary sessions. In addition, Poland’s parliamentary parties have established a whole host of specific punishments for violating norms of behavior, including verbal and written reprimands, public statements on an individual’s misconduct and finally, expulsion from the club. Parties further utilize a deputy’s record during the parliamentary term in determining whether, and where, that individual will be placed on the party list, as well as in making decisions with respect to internal promotion. Party elites have, on the whole, taken the first step toward establishing party culture.

Variation exists across parties in the precise mechanisms of discipline created and the manner in which they are subsequently employed, indicating differing levels of commitment to party culture on the part of these parties’ leaders. To account for this variation, I examined four factors hypothesized in the second chapter to make the creation of culture more or less likely: ideology, size of party, government or opposition membership and coalition status. Only in the case of party size does the empirical evidence appear to support the hypothesis; the results for the other three hypotheses are mixed at best. These factors, I argue, may make it more or less difficult for party leaders to create party culture; ultimately, however, the creation of party culture requires agency, what I call elite commitment. Evidence from my interviews supports the argument that
institutionalization is the result of elite commitment and fails to offer convincing support for a number of alternative hypotheses originally presented in Chapter 2, including organization and party founding.

Returning to a statement by Schein (1991, 25) presented in the second chapter, “At every stage the role of the leader and the group must be understood if one is to make sense of how the culture evolves.” Having examined the role of party leaders in creating the mechanisms of discipline central to legislative party culture, I turn to the reaction of the parliamentary rank and file to these mechanisms of discipline in the next two chapters. In Chapter 5, I look at legislators’ attitudes, based on an analysis of survey data and in Chapter 6 I analyze legislator behavior using roll call votes. The evidence presented in these two chapters is used to determine whether party members are “learning” the party culture party leaders are “teaching” them; that is, whether the party rank and file is, in fact, disciplined.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY LINE</th>
<th>DISCIPLINE ADVOCATE (RD)</th>
<th>REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CIVIC PLATFORM (PO)</strong></td>
<td>Deputies missing a vote obtain permission from Chairman of club; RD discusses a deputy’s violation of party norms/rules with the offending individual</td>
<td>Monetary fines beyond those of Sejm; verbal and written reprimand; expulsion (rare); nomination and promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEMOCRATIC LEFT ALLIANCE (SLD)</strong></td>
<td>Majority of the time by consensus</td>
<td>Ultimately expulsion (occasionally); nomination and promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FREEDOM UNION (UW)</strong></td>
<td>Deputies obtain RD’s permission to miss vote or vote against the party line</td>
<td>“Moral” reprimands; NEVER expulsion; nomination and promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LABOR UNION (UP)</strong></td>
<td>Existed but had little power beyond monitoring function</td>
<td>N Nomination and promotion based on undesirable behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LAW AND JUSTICE (PiS)</strong></td>
<td>Deputies must obtain RD’s permission to miss a vote; RD discusses matter with deputy, determines guilt or innocence and suggests punishment</td>
<td>Public announcement of offense; revoking privileges; expulsion (rare); nomination and promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEAGUE OF POLISH FAMILIES (LPR)</strong></td>
<td>No RD because no voting discipline; use records of Marshall of Sejm to monitor attendance at votes only</td>
<td>Verbal reprimand; “freezing” privileges; expulsion (occasionally); nomination and promotion; arbitration court (party as whole)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POLISH PEOPLE’S PARTY (PSL)</strong></td>
<td>Deputies provide RD with written explanation after missing vote; RD determines guilt or innocence, suggests punishment, voted on by club</td>
<td>Verbal reprimands; expulsion (rare); nomination and promotion; arbitration court (party as a whole)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SELF-DEFENSE (SAMOBRONA)</strong></td>
<td>Deputies provide RD with written explanation after missing vote</td>
<td>Verbal and written reprimands; expulsion (frequently); nomination and promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF POLAND (SDPL)</strong></td>
<td>None as of Fall 2004 (deputies obtain permission to miss votes from Presidium of club)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.1. Summary of Party Discipline in Poland’s Parliamentary Clubs**
CHAPTER 5

PARTY CULTURE AND THE RANK AND FILE:
LEGISLATOR ATTITUDES

In the second chapter, I argued that legislative party institutionalization depends on the successful creation and subsequent adoption of party culture. Elites within the legislative party are responsible for getting the process of institutionalization underway by establishing party culture. It is party leaders who establish the norms and rules that guide the party members’ behavior and party leaders who hand out punishments to those who fail to abide by these norms and rules. This initial step in the process, whereby party elites establish norms and rules of behavior, is necessary for legislative party institutionalization, for without it there would be no party culture; it is not, however, sufficient for institutionalization to take place. Party culture must be accepted by those individuals expected to abide by it - the rank and file members of the legislative party - if it is to succeed in its aim of institutionalization. Party culture is, then, a two-way street.

In the previous chapter, I examined party culture from the perspective of party elites by focusing on the norms and rules, in the form of discipline, that have been established by leaders of Poland’s legislative parties. I further explored the extent to which this discipline is enforced in each party. The purpose of this chapter is to study
party culture from the viewpoint of the larger legislative party membership. Using data from two separate surveys of Sejm deputies, one from the third parliament (1997 – 2001) and one from the fourth (2001 – 2005), I begin to assess the extent to which the elements of party culture identified in the previous chapter have been adopted by Polish legislators. More specifically, I utilize closed-ended survey questions to examine legislators’ attitudes with respect to particular elements of party culture. How influential is the party in determining how an individual legislator chooses to vote? How does the rank and file view discipline within their parliamentary club? Using responses to open-ended questions from the 2005 survey, I look at the justifications provided by parliamentary deputies, in their own words, for a) why legislative parties implement party discipline and b) why legislators either do, or do not, follow that discipline. In the chapter after this one, I look not at what legislators say they do, but what they actually do, using roll call evidence to complete the picture of legislators’ role in party culture initiated here.

In the next section of this chapter, I provide a description of the surveys used before moving on to the analysis in the second section, where I begin by looking at the influence legislators say their party has (or should have) on their decision to vote a certain way. The third section deals directly with the role of discipline and deputies’ opinions regarding whether it should be stronger or weaker in their own parliamentary club. Using two open-ended survey questions, I attempt to establish why legislators do or do not abide by party discipline in the fifth section. Lastly, I conclude with a summary of the findings from the analyses of parliamentarian surveys and a broader discussion of the place of surveys in the study of legislators and legislative parties.
5.1 Data

To examine the attitudes of deputies in the Sejm regarding party culture, I utilize data from two different surveys. The first, conducted in June 2000 by Wlodzimierz Wesolowski of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences, consists of 407 face-to-face interviews (a response rate of 88 percent) assessing parliamentary deputies’ opinions on a variety of topics relating to the Sejm, politics and democracy.71

The second source of data is the Polish Parliament WebSurvey, administered in 2005 through an inter-disciplinary research program in the Sociology and Political Science departments of The Ohio State University, of which I was a part.72 This survey of Polish parliamentarians in the Sejm was administered between May and August 2005 through the Sociology department’s computing services and examined parliamentarians’ opinions regarding their work in the Sejm, focusing on two issues: descriptive representation and party discipline.73

Our response rate for the 2005 web survey was 86 of 460 deputies (19 percent), which raises questions about the potential for sample bias.74 To check for

71 The study’s title was, “Sejm, Politics, Democracy: Opinions of Deputies in the Third Parliament”. Professor Wesolowski was kind enough to grant me access to this dataset, which is currently available only in Polish and has yet to be made public.

72 Professor Kazimierz M. Slomczynski of the Department of Sociology led the research team, which included Professor Goldie Shabad of the Department of Political Science, Josh Dubrow, Ph.D. Candidate in the Sociology Department, and myself.

73 The 2005 survey is a pared down version of Wesolowski’s earlier 2000 study and combines closed- and open-ended questions; the closed-ended questions are identical to those of Wesolowski’s 2000 survey in order to allow for direct comparisons across surveys, and therefore across time. Slomczynski, Kistner, and Dubrow wrote all open-ended questions. See Appendix A for full text of the survey.

74 The low response rate may be due to the fact that parliamentary elections were to be held in September, or the web-based format of the survey, or both.
representativeness, I compared both party affiliation and gender of participants in the survey to data on the broader composition of the Sejm taken from the Inter-parliamentary Union’s Par-Line archive. These comparisons are provided in Table 5.1. The percentages in the table clearly demonstrate that, despite comprising only 19 percent of total deputies in the Sejm, respondents to the 2005 survey are largely representative of the broader population. Looking first at party affiliation, the percentage of respondents in the 2005 survey is within one or two percent of the true population percentages, with the exception of Samoobrona, whose members make up only seven percent of survey respondents compared to 11.5 percent of the total population in the Sejm. Respondents to the survey are also highly representative of the Sejm population in terms of gender. In the 2005 survey, 79.1 percent of respondents were male and 20.9 percent female; the composition of the Sejm was 79.78 percent male and 20.22 percent female.

5.2 Measuring the Party’s Influence

5.2.1 Differences of Opinion

In both the 2000 and 2005 surveys, there are three questions related to the subject of discipline, two of which look at the influence of the party on a deputy’s voting decisions, and one that deals with the issue of discipline directly. The first of these asks parliamentarians the following question: “If a deputy has a different opinion on a given

75 Unfortunately, I do not have data for the question regarding respondents’ views on discipline within their party for the 2005 survey (question eight). In May 2005, we contracted a technical expert to write the actual syntax/html that constructed the WebSurvey. The data for q8 and all the other questions are stored on the website that houses the data, which itself is housed in the sociology department of the Ohio State University. Because the syntax/html for the program was written incorrectly, all responses for q8 came back as zeroes. Even if the respondent checked a response, the answer was recorded as zero. Even though the data was stored on a website, we cannot recover the true answer as intended by the respondent because the syntax/html was written incorrectly. Even if the syntax/html had been written correctly, and if there was some other error, we would not be able to recover it from the web logs (the data that shows activities from the internet server) as they do not record this kind of activity. For confidentiality’s sake, web logs do not record this type of data. As such, there is no data for q8 from this WebSurvey.
issue than his/her own club, should he/she follow the opinion of the club or follow his/her own opinion?” The response options provided were “according to the opinion of the club,” “according to one’s own opinion,” “it depends on the circumstances,” and “it is difficult to say”.

Deputies were asked this question with respect to four distinct issues areas: the budget, the program of government, moral/conscience issues, and appointments to important positions. Table 5.2 presents the frequencies and percentages for this question in both the 2000 and 2005 surveys.

Looking first at budget issues, nearly all deputies (93 percent) in the 2000 survey responded that an individual should vote according to the opinion of the parliamentary club, compared with only 2.7 percent who believed a deputy should vote according to his or her own opinion, and 4.2 percent who said it depends on circumstances. In 2005, 76.7 percent of respondents said a deputy should vote in agreement with his or her parliamentary club, whereas 4.7 percent and 12.8 percent responded that one should vote according to personal opinion and it depends on circumstances, respectively.

Turning to votes on the government’s program, in the 2000 survey those of the view that one should vote according to the parliamentary club’s opinion decreased somewhat to 80 percent, with another seven percent answering one should vote according to his or her own opinion, and just over 12.5 percent of deputies stating “it depends.” In 2005, the percentage of respondents who stated a deputy should vote in agreement with the club on the government’s program also dropped when compared to the budget, to 64 percent.

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76 In the 2005 web survey only three response options were provided; “it is difficult to say” was not provided to respondents. There were, however, a small number of respondents who did not answer these questions, which accounts for the fact that percentages provided do not add up to 100.
percent. Those who responded one should vote according to their own stance increased to 9.3 percent, and those stating that it depends on circumstances to 20.9 percent.

For budget issues and the government’s program, then, we see overwhelming support for the notion that party matters, both in the 2000 and 2005 surveys. Responses to the question pertaining to moral issues are quite different, however; in 2000, 87.4 percent of deputies answered an individual should vote according to one’s own opinion on these matters, as opposed to roughly six percent each responding that votes should be according to the club or that it depends on circumstances. Those responding that an individual should vote according to his or her own stance on such issues made up 70.9 percent in 2005, with only 9.3 percent agreeing that an individual should vote with the parliamentary club on these issues and 12.8 percent stating that it depends. By definition, a deputy would be expected to vote according to his or her own opinion on moral/conscience issues as parties generally do not establish a common party position on such votes.77

Lastly, opinion is slightly more split with respect to votes on appointments to important positions. Sixty-three percent of respondents in the 2000 survey said an individual should vote according to the opinion of the club on these matters, while 22.5 percent said it depends, and only 12 percent said a deputy should vote his/her own opinion. In 2005, 45.3 percent of respondents said individuals should vote with the parliamentary club on votes regarding appointment to important positions, 12.8 percent said one should vote according to personal stance and 36 percent said it depends on

77 An example of an issue often treated by parties as a matter of conscience is that of abortion. As I learned from my in-depth interviews, parties generally do not establish a party line on votes pertaining to abortion.
circumstances. One possible explanation for the result here is that votes on personnel matters can sometimes cut across party lines, particularly when friendships are involved.78

We can draw a few conclusions from this pattern of responses. The first is that in all but one issue area, the majority of parliamentarians believe a deputy should vote according to the opinion of his or her parliamentary club if uncertain how to vote. The second most frequent response on these same issue areas was that it depends, not that a deputy should vote his or her own opinion. These responses show the fairly strong influence of the “party line” in determining how an individual votes. The second conclusion to be drawn here is that deputies make distinctions between types of vote in terms of the party’s expectations. That is to say, deputies are aware of whether an issue up for vote is one on which they are expected to “toe the party line” or not. Thus, it appears that on votes pertaining to budget issues the party line must be followed, whereas for moral issues, individuals are expected to vote according to conscience.79 The last conclusion to be drawn from the results presented in Table 5.2 is that opinion regarding the relative importance of voting with the parliamentary club on certain issues is

78 For example, I conducted an interview with a leader of the PSL parliamentary club on April 30th, 2004, the same day there was a vote scheduled on whether or not to recall the Minister of the Treasury from his post. This individual told me that some parliamentary deputies from PSL may not vote to recall him (which was the predominant opinion within the club) because this individual was a personal friend and former colleague.

79 This finding is consistent with evidence from in-depth interviews I conducted with party leaders and parliamentary deputies. Numerous deputies mentioned budget votes as the most important for cohesion, claiming that failing to vote with the party on a budget vote would certainly mean punishment for the offending deputy. Others discussed the importance of allowing deputies to vote according to conscience on moral and religious issues, such as abortion, claiming there was no explicit party line on such votes.
consistent over time, with respondents in both 2000 and 2005 showing highly similar
patterns of responses to these questions. 80

5.2.2 Advice on Economic Issues

The second survey question also deals with the sources of influence on deputies’
voting behavior, although in this case with respect to economic issues specifically.
Deputies were asked the following: “If you do not have an established opinion on how to
vote on specific legislation dealing with economic issues, to whom do you turn to get
some advice?” Respondents were presented with a variety of response options, including
“other deputies, representatives of the government, politicians from your own party, and
independent experts,” among others. In the 2000 survey respondents were instructed to
identify the top three, whereas in 2005 respondents were simply asked to identify whether
they do or do not turn to a particular group for advice on votes pertaining to the economy.
Responses for 2000 are presented in Table 5.3, where the potential sources of influence
are listed in the rows and the percent of deputies mentioning each first, second or third is
provided in the columns.

In 2000, nearly 36 percent of deputies cited “other deputies” as the first source
they would consult on economic matters, followed by “politicians within the party” (28
percent), and “government politicians” (20 percent). The most frequently offered second
source of influence is “independent experts” (30 percent), followed by “politicians within
the party” (23 percent) and “club experts” (23 percent). Responses for the third source of
influence on economic legislation are more varied, with experts, both from the

80 The absolute percentages of respondents selecting “vote with one’s party” in the 2005 survey are
somewhat lower than those in 2000, which may be an artifact of the smaller sample size in 2005 where
outliers will have a greater affect; however, the trend of MPs acknowledging the party’s position
superceding their own on most issues holds for both 2000 and 2005.
parliamentary club and independent sources, making up 24 and 15 percent, respectively. Business organizations (13.5 percent) and trade union organizations (14 percent) are also cited here, and perhaps most interesting is the second most common response, “friends whom you could trust” with 23 percent of responses.

If we aggregate these responses across the three mentions, we see that the most common source cited by deputies in the 2000 survey is “politicians within the party,” with 54.4 percent, followed closely by “independent experts” (54.3 percent) and “club experts” (48.6 percent). As with the previous question dealing with to whom a deputy should look for guidance on voting, we see a clear party influence here.81

For the 2005 survey, I can only speak to the percentage of respondents who do or do not turn to a particular group for advice on matters pertaining to the economy; assessing the relative importance of groups is not possible given the wording of the question. Responses for 2005 are presented in Table 5.4. The majority of respondents in the 2005 survey claim not to turn to others for advice on votes related to the economy with one exception, that of “independent experts.” Thus, 67.4 percent of respondents said they do not turn to other parliamentarians for advice (32.6 percent said they do) and 68.6 percent said they do not turn to politicians from their own party for advice (as opposed to 31.4 percent who said they do). Business organizations (77.9 percent do not turn to for advice) and trade unions (84.9 percent do not turn to for advice) also appear of little importance in decisions regarding the economy. Independent experts, as mentioned

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81 I should point out, however, that it is unclear from the way the response options are presented whether deputies will interpret “politicians from your party” as being those within parliament, or those outside. If we interpret this response as meaning politicians outside of parliament, the fact that “other deputies” was the most frequent first choice with 36 percent of total responses still supports my conclusion that there is a strong influence for party, be it parliamentary club or the party outside of parliament.
above, are the only group in the 2005 survey where more respondents said they do turn to the group for advice than do not; 44.2 percent do not turn to independent experts for advice, whereas 55.8 percent said they do turn to independent experts for advice on the economy.

How can I explain the relative unimportance of all groups (not simply party) in the 2005 survey, particularly in light of the results from the first question whereby the influence of party appears to be strong? One possible explanation is that the first question regarding voting with one’s club or one’s own opinion may imply the party line is known (and indeed it should be based on my interview evidence). The wording of the second question, however, may imply a legislator seeking out advice from the party, which is likely unnecessary. Given that respondents in 2000 said they sought the advice of their party, there is a second possible explanation for differences between the 2000 and 2005 results. Whereas the 2000 question forces respondents to choose three groups to whom they turn for advice (and there is no way of knowing how frequently they do turn to these groups), the response options in the 2005 survey give respondents the option of saying they do not turn to anyone for advice. Legislators, then, may be unwilling to admit they do not know how to vote on any issue, let alone economic issues, and when given the option to say they do not turn to anyone for advice on voting, may choose to take it. Not only that, but there is no category for “it depends” on the 2005 survey, forcing respondents to make a discrete choice.

Given these many potential explanations for the differences of opinion in 2000 and 2005, it is hard to say for certain how important party is in helping an individual
determine how to vote on economic issues. Nonetheless, when forced to choose, as was the case in the 2000 survey, respondents do cite party representatives most frequently.

5.3 Attitudes Toward Discipline

The final relevant question in the 2000 dataset pertains to the issue of discipline directly. Deputies were asked, “What is your opinion on the matter of discipline in your parliamentary club?” and were provided four options; “discipline should be stronger than present, discipline should be the same as at present, discipline should be weaker than at present, or it is difficult to say.” Looking at Table 5.5, deputies are nearly evenly divided on this question; 49.4 percent of deputies answered that discipline should be stronger within their parliamentary club than at present; whereas 45.6 percent believed it should stay the same as it is. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, only 2.5 percent of respondents said discipline should be weaker in their club (the same percent responded it was difficult to say). To provide a more nuanced picture of attitudes regarding discipline, I break down responses by party, legislative experience and leadership position in the following sections.

When we cross-tabulate answers to the discipline question with respondents’ political party affiliation (also in Table 5.5), we see several interesting trends. For Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS), 143 of 158 respondents, or 91 percent, responded that discipline should be stronger in their party than at present, with no AWS deputies feeling discipline should be weaker. This is in stark contrast to the second largest party in this parliament, Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), with 117 of 149 deputies, or 79 percent, responding that discipline in their parliamentary club should stay the same as at present. Fourteen percent of SLD deputies said discipline should be stronger in their club, while
seven percent thought discipline should be weaker. In contrast to the rather clear opinions of a majority of AWS and SLD deputies, opinions on the matter of discipline were more split in the cases of Freedom Union (UW) and Polish People’s Party (PSL). For UW, 38 percent of deputies responded that discipline should be stronger in their parliamentary club, whereas 62 percent thought discipline should stay the same as at present. Deputies from PSL were even more evenly split, with 48 percent saying discipline should be stronger, and 43 percent agreeing that discipline should stay the same in their party.

The divergent opinions of deputies from AWS and SLD with respect to the state of discipline within their parliamentary groups are not terribly surprising. SLD’s extensive experience in parliament, combined with its relatively coherent ideology, likely account for the majority opinion that discipline should stay the same within the club. AWS, on the other hand, was a newly created party, or rather loose coalition of several parties, which undoubtedly worked against the effective use of discipline. Given that this survey was conducted three years into the parliament, however, AWS certainly would have had plenty of time to adapt. According to my interviews, the structure of discipline within SLD was well-established and generally seen as effective by its members, whereas former members of AWS pointed to a lack of effective discipline as one of the reasons for the group’s downfall. A further point worth noting here is that AWS was in government during this period, whereas SLD was in opposition; this calls into question the notion that parties will be more cohesive by virtue of being in government.

In addition to the parliamentary club to which a respondent belongs, responses to this question regarding discipline may depend on whether a deputy holds a leadership
position within the party. Just over 18 percent of respondents in 2000 said they hold some office within the parliamentary club (71 of the 386 deputies who responded to this question). Table 5.6 provides responses to the question about discipline by those holding a position within their parliamentary party. Opinion was fairly evenly divided on the subject of discipline among those holding a leadership position within their club; 51.4 percent said discipline in their club should be stronger than present, and 41.4 percent responded that discipline should stay the same as present. Another 1.4 percent said discipline should be weaker in their club and 5.7 said it was difficult to say.

When we add in party group to which a respondent belongs, 44 percent of party leaders who said discipline should be stronger in their club were from AWS, 14 percent from SLD, 25 percent from UW, and 14 percent from PSL. As for parliamentary party officeholders who said discipline should remain the same in their party, 66 percent were members of SLD and 21 percent members of UW. None of the AWS deputies holding parliamentary party office said discipline should stay the same. Only one respondent holding a leadership position within their party, a member of SLD, said discipline should be weaker.

If we look at responses from the perspective of party instead, 94 percent of AWS deputies, 71 percent of PSL deputies, and 60 percent of UW deputies holding an office within the club thought discipline should be stronger. Only in the case of SLD did a majority of those holding positions within the club (76 percent) respond that discipline should remain the same, compared to 40 percent of UW leaders, 14 percent of PSL leaders and no AWS leaders. The only leaders to say discipline should be weaker in their party were from SLD (four percent).
When we compare these numbers to those of all legislators presented above, we see that for both AWS and SLD, a majority of both club leaders and backbenchers viewed discipline in the same way. For UW and PSL, however, there appears to be some distinction between being a member of the rank and file and a member of the club leadership. In the case of UW, 60 percent of those in leadership positions said discipline should be stronger, compared to only 38 percent of those in the rank and file. In PSL, 71 percent of club leaders said discipline should be stronger, compared to 48 percent of the club as a whole.

In addition to party membership and holding a leadership position, views on club discipline may depend on one’s level of experience in the Sejm. The 2000 survey asked respondents whether or not they were serving in the Sejm for the first time. The respondents were fairly evenly split; for 50.6 percent of respondents this was their first experience in the Sejm, while 49.4 percent had served previously. In Table 5.7, I compare opinions of these two groups regarding the subject of discipline. We see that 68 percent of deputies serving in the Sejm for the first time responded that discipline in their parliamentary club should be stronger. The majority (63 percent) of those who had previous experience in the Sejm, on the other hand, believed discipline should stay the same as at present, while 30 percent believed discipline should be stronger.82

Viewing party and experience in isolation may be unwise, however, particularly if large numbers of newcomers belong to a particular party. In the 2000 survey, a majority

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82 One interpretation of these results might be that experienced deputies are accustomed to the status quo, and may feel invested in the rules of the game that they helped create/perpetuate. New deputies, on the other hand, may view the state of discipline within their club according to expectations with which they entered parliament; their desire for stronger discipline within their parliamentary club may reflect some level of discord between these expectations and reality.
(61 percent) of deputies without previous parliamentary experience are members of AWS, compared to 25 percent of new members from SLD, eight percent from UW and two percent from PSL. Put slightly differently, 79 percent of AWS deputies were serving in parliament for the first time, whereas the same was true for only 35 percent of SLD deputies, 30 percent of UW deputies, and 19 percent of PSL deputies.

When we add in attitudes regarding discipline, we see that 80 percent of new AWS deputies felt discipline should be stronger. AWS deputies made up 83 percent of all new deputies claiming discipline should be stronger, and 48 percent of all experienced deputies responding that discipline should be stronger. AWS deputies, then, make up the majority of those who feel discipline should be stronger, regardless of whether they are new or experienced deputies. In the case of SLD, one third of new SLD deputies thought discipline should stay the same as it is. SLD deputies comprise 66 percent of all new deputies arguing for discipline to stay the same in their club, and 64 percent of all returning deputies favoring the status quo with respect to discipline in their party. Deputies from SLD, then, favor discipline remaining the same in their party, whether they are new or experienced. The culture within the newly formed AWS differs from that of SLD, the communist successor party. The relationship between experience and attitudes toward discipline is clearly mediated by the party to which a deputy belongs.

5.4 Explaining Party Discipline

The results presented to this point illustrate that legislators in the Sejm, when responding to closed-ended survey questions in both 2000 and 2005, are generally mindful of the party’s position with respect to votes on legislation. In addition, legislators appear to understand the need for discipline within their parliamentary club,
although with some interesting differences across parties in terms of whether discipline should be stronger or stay the same. In the final analytic section of this chapter, I turn from description to explanation, offering legislators’ opinions regarding two issues; the potential benefit of discipline to a parliamentary club and why legislators choose either to abide by, or break with, party discipline.

The data used for this section are taken from two open-ended questions in the 2005 web survey of parliamentarians. The first question asked respondents the following; “Please express your opinion, what objectives are achieved, or could be achieved, through exercising discipline in parliamentary clubs?” The second question builds upon the first, asking; “The last question pertains to the motivation of parliamentarians to obey the discipline of their parliamentarian clubs. Why do they obey discipline or why do they not?”

5.4.1 Objectives Achieved Through Discipline

Beginning with responses to the first question, which deals with the objectives achieved from exercising discipline, one theme that emerges is that discipline is functional or pragmatic; it is a means for winning votes on important issues. As one deputy noted, “A unified position among members of a caucus is undoubtedly an important factor in votes on significant social or economic issues.” Perhaps more importantly, discipline allows for the effective execution of the party’s platform and the pursuit of the goals of the parliamentary club. One respondent summed up this commonly expressed viewpoint in the following statement, “voting discipline allows for execution of the [party’s] program, not softening accepted platform guidelines and unity . . . in establishing law.” Discipline further allows the government to introduce stable
policy, while offering parties outside of government the ability to present a unified front in opposition. “In the case of opposition parties,” states one respondent, “the discipline of the caucus to a certain degree pushes more optimal legislative solutions; it also monitors the actions of the government.”

Another theme that surfaces is that discipline is symbolic; it represents something to the parties’ supporters and society more broadly. In allowing parties to more easily pursue their policy goals, discipline provides voters with a sense that their interests are being represented within parliament. According to one respondent, “A party and its emanation in the Parliament, the parliamentary caucus, have to execute the program presented to and accepted by the voters.” Another claimed discipline, “is a signal to the voter that representatives identify with the platform of their party.” A third stated that discipline, “sends a message to society, that a certain parliamentary group has a specific position on a particular issue – it is a signal first and foremost to the party electorate.” The terms “transparency” and “clarity” were mentioned frequently by respondents when describing the importance of discipline in relation to the electorate. One final aspect of the symbolic nature of discipline is its ability to guarantee the interests of the many take precedence over those of the individual by ensuring party unity (even if some differences of opinion exist among party members). Thus, stated one respondent, “our voice is stronger when it is a united voice.”

There were only a few respondents who provided highly critical opinions of discipline in response to this question. One respondent argued that discipline reflects subordination to the will of party leaders versus a real unity in opinion. A second noted that discipline involves, “the absence of thought and total subordination in exchange for a
place on the ballot in future elections.” In the same vein, another respondent referred to discipline as “a handy tool for party leaders” and stated that the use of discipline has “anti-democratic traits.” Another critical viewpoint expressed was that discipline serves to weaken the link between parliamentarian and voter and has the potential to push policies favorable to one particular group over the interests of the country as a whole. Despite these skeptical viewpoints of discipline, however, the overwhelming opinion was that discipline is a largely positive phenomenon for both the pragmatic and symbolic functions it serves.

When we add these closed-ended responses from 2005 to responses to the open-ended question in 2000 regarding discipline, it is clear that parliamentary deputies in Poland generally see discipline within their parties as necessary. Yet discipline is unlikely to be perfect, which begs the question, what motivates deputies to either follow or break discipline? In Chapter 2, I offered a number of factors that might make it more or less likely for deputies to follow party discipline. Thus, I hypothesized that legislators motivated by constituency interests or with strong ties to groups within society would be less likely to pursue a strategy of cooperation, choosing instead to defy party discipline, as would those deputies belonging to a party with poorly developed programmatic content. Parliamentarians with aspirations to leadership positions within the party, by contrast, are expected to be more likely to cooperate with party leaders by following party discipline.
5.4.2 Cooperation and Defiance

What factors do Polish deputies themselves offer for why legislators choose either to cooperate with party culture or defy the leadership by breaking party discipline? Looking at responses to the second closed-ended survey question, there was little variation in deputies’ answers regarding both why parliamentary deputies obey discipline and why they do not. The predominant view among respondents was that deputies obey party discipline because they are aware of the consequences for failing to do so. Thus, respondents mentioned that deputies follow discipline because they “fear the consequences” and are “afraid of sanctions.” Among the more specific consequences mentioned were angering the party leadership, “marginalization” or even expulsion from the parliamentary club, and monetary sanctions. A desire for re-election was also mentioned in that failing to obey party discipline will threaten one’s chances of returning to parliament. Following party discipline is necessary for being held in “high regard in the eyes of the party leadership, which is invaluable in future elections.”

I was struck by the terminology used by several respondents, who referred to membership in a party as a “team sport” and stated that members of the team must “play by the rules.” Noted one deputy, “If we’re playing on a team, we have to observe the rules that we’ve all agreed upon. If that doesn’t work for us, we can switch teams.”

A number of respondents also noted that as a representative of a political party, deputies obey discipline out of shared programmatic beliefs. As one respondent writes, “Compliance with discipline results simply from membership in a party and to be a member of a party it is necessary to pledge allegiance to it as well as to become familiar

83 Recall that the Sejm, through the Marshall’s office, impose fines on deputies who fail to attend votes.
with its platform; for this reason also, anyone who decides to become a member of a party will support its statutory and programmatic goals.” Deputies abide by party discipline out of a sense of loyalty, then, a term that was explicitly mentioned by a number of respondents.

As for breaking discipline, the overwhelming response here was that to do so a deputy must be motivated by concerns other than party. Regional concerns and constituency interests are both examples of non-party concerns mentioned by respondents. Another is the desire to promote “particular interests,” regardless of how these might fit with the interests of one’s own party. One respondent wrote that deputies break discipline out of “the desire to endear oneself to particular professional/trade groups or voters from one’s own election districts.” Characteristics of the individual were also mentioned; “personality traits,” “opportunism,” and an unwillingness to compromise one’s personal beliefs and values for the sake of party discipline.

Based on these responses, it appears that the factors I hypothesized would make deputies more or less likely to cooperate with party leaders in establishing party culture are also those identified by parliamentary deputies themselves. Respondents identified fear of angering party leaders and a desire for re-election as reasons why deputies would abide by party discipline, both of which can be seen as support for the hypothesis that deputies who aspire to leadership positions within the party are more likely to cooperate. Deputies also mentioned belief in the party’s program as a reason why parliamentarians would cooperate with party culture; for those parties in which this programmatic content is weak or incoherent, it may then be more difficult for deputies to abide by discipline. Lastly, respondents mentioned constituency and regional interests, along with ties to
particular interests in society, as reasons why deputies would choose to break party discipline. Both of these factors support the remaining hypotheses presented in the second chapter that legislators would be more likely to pursue a strategy of defiance in the face of party culture established by party leaders to the extent that they are motivated by constituency interests and/or have strong ties to certain social groups.84

5.5 Conclusion

From the results of survey analyses presented in this chapter, it is clear that parties have a good deal of influence over legislators in the Sejm. Deputies responding to closed-ended survey questions in both 2000 and 2005 are mindful of the party line and believe that, in most cases, individuals who are of a different opinion than the party’s should vote according to the party’s opinion and not their own. The extent to which this holds depends on the type of issue and may vary somewhat according to party. Parties also appear influential in resolving uncertainty regarding economic issues, although this result holds only for the 2000 survey. Lastly, Polish deputies are largely accepting of the need for discipline within their clubs and, depending on the party to which a deputy belongs, believe discipline should either stay the same, or be even stronger, than at present.

I further extended the discussion of legislators’ opinions of party discipline from one of description to explanation using two open-ended questions in the 2005 survey, one asking respondents to describe the objectives achieved by the use of discipline within the parliamentary club and a second asking why legislators either do or do not abide by party discipline. From answers to the first of these two questions, we see that legislators in the

84 There are no identifiable differences in legislator opinion across parties.
Sejm are, for the most part, aware of the aims party discipline seeks to achieve (even if, in the opinion of a few respondents, the costs outweigh the benefits). Based on responses to the second question, respondents also appear aware of the consequences associated with failing to follow party discipline. They further note that to break with discipline implies an individual puts other interests (regional, constituency, professional or trade group) above those of the party. It would seem, then, that legislators in the Sejm have generally adopted the party culture established by the leaders of their respective parties.

Studies of legislatures and legislative parties are generally studies of behavior (for example, in the American context: Aldrich 1995; Cox and McCubbins 1993; Poole and Rosenthal 1997; Rohde 1991. In a comparative context: Herron 2002; Mershon and Heller 2005; Smith and Remington 2001; Thames 2005). Examples of the behavioral emphasis in the literature include the extent to which legislators switch parties, either during the legislative term or between elections, and the degree to which legislators from the same party vote together, referred to as either voting cohesion or voting unity. This focus on legislative behavior, while certainly of substantive interest is, in part, a function of the data available. Researchers are generally limited to (and limited by, as I will discuss in the subsequent chapter) data from recorded votes, which explicitly measure behavior.

Despite this emphasis on the behavior of parties in legislatures, we are oftentimes interested in knowing something about the underlying reasons that led to the behavior we observed. Scholars examining party switching, for example, may be interested in knowing why a legislator switched parties, whereas those researching voting cohesion may want to know what causes legislators to vote together. Ideally, we would simply ask
party switchers why they chose to switch, and legislators from the same party why they do, or do not, vote together. Unfortunately, information from in-depth interviews may be unavailable or unrepresentative of the larger population, whereas surveys of parliamentarians will likely result in low response rates.

Asking legislators about the reasons behind their behavior directly is easier said than done. As a result, scholars often make inferences from the data available, which usually deal with behavior rather than attitudes. In this chapter, I have been able to do what many scholars interested in legislators and legislative parties are unable to accomplish: examine both how and why legislators say they abide by party culture using survey data which are largely representative of the larger population of parliamentary deputies. The question now becomes whether these attitudes also extend to behavior, which is the focus of the next chapter.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Percent of Survey Respondents</th>
<th>Percent in Sejm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLD</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMOOBRONA</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PiS</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSL</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPR</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>8.0</td>
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<td>German Minority</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.04</td>
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**Gender**

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<tr>
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<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79.78</td>
<td>20.22</td>
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**Table 5.1. Respondents to 2005 Survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vote with Club</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Governmental Program</th>
<th>Ideological Issues</th>
<th>Appointment to Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote own stance</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>87.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It depends on circumstances</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>36.0</td>
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</table>

**Table 5.2. Differences of Opinion Regarding Votes**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Mention</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Mention</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Mention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Parliamentarians</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians from Government</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians from Your Party</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials from Appropriate Ministries</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Experts</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts from Parliamentary Clubs</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Organizations</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Unions</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends Whom You Trust</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other People</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3. Voting on Economic Issues 2000
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Do not turn to for advice</th>
<th>Do turn to for advice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other parliamentarians</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians from government</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians from your party</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials from appropriate ministries</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent experts</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts from parliamentary clubs</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>33.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business organizations</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade unions</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends whom you trust</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 5.4. Voting on Economic Issues 2005
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Should Be Stronger</th>
<th>All Deputies</th>
<th>AWS</th>
<th>SLD</th>
<th>UW</th>
<th>PSL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline Should Stay the Same</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discipline Should Be Weaker</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to Say</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Table 5.5. Legislators’ Attitudes Regarding Discipline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Should Be Stronger</th>
<th>Leaders</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>AWS</th>
<th>SLD</th>
<th>UW</th>
<th>PSL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline Should Stay the Same</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Discipline Should Be Weaker</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to Say</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>--</td>
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<td>14</td>
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**Table 5.6. Leadership and Attitudes Regarding Discipline**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCIPLINE SHOULD BE STRONGER</th>
<th>NEW DEPUTIES</th>
<th>EXPERIENCED DEPUTIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline should be stronger</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline should stay the same</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline should be weaker</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to say</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.7. Experience and Attitudes Toward Discipline**
As I argued in Chapter 2, the principal goal of party culture is to overcome the challenge of the collective action problem, which threatens to keep a party from realizing its goals related to policy, representation and re-election, among others. An individual legislator who understands the realities of collective reputation may choose to free-ride rather than bear the costs of pursuing the party’s goals. The potential free-riding behaviors of greatest concern to parliamentary party leaders include failing to attend votes and, more importantly, failing to vote with the party’s position once there. Party discipline, then, is intended to keep legislators within a given party from engaging in behaviors that may ultimately undermine the party’s ability to pursue its goals.

In Chapter 4, I established that leaders within Poland’s legislative parties have established mechanisms of discipline (such as the Discipline Advocate); Chapter 5 illustrated that legislators are aware of and have largely internalized what their party’s leadership expects of them in terms of their voting behavior. While deputies give credence to the influence of party when responding to survey questions, does this also extend to their behavior? The purpose of this chapter is to determine whether deputies in the Sejm heed the party line in both word and deed. I approach this question by focusing
on the act of voting, both in terms of whether legislators attend votes and how legislators vote when they do turn out. Thus, I examine rates of voting participation and absenteeism, as well as the frequency with which legislators abstain. The greater part of this chapter is dedicated to discerning the extent to which legislators from the same party vote together, what is more commonly referred to as voting cohesion.\textsuperscript{85}

I start with a discussion of the data used in the analysis of cohesion in the Sejm. This includes information regarding the parties selected for the analysis, such as average membership. In the second section, I begin the analysis of legislator behavior in earnest by looking at voting participation, abstention rates and cohesion. I then examine the factors that may contribute to higher or lower levels of cohesion in the third section. In the fourth section, I look at voting cohesion in Poland over time. Lastly, I move from legislator behavior in the form of voting, to that of party switching.

6.1 Data

Scholars interested in the behavior of legislators and legislative parties must rely heavily on data from recorded votes. Yet in many parliamentary systems the majority of votes taken are by a show of hands; only roll call votes, whereby each legislator’s vote is read aloud, are recorded. As a result, the data available for analysis are but a subset of the larger population. In the European Parliament, for example, where the standard

\textsuperscript{85} In recent years, scholars have taken a growing interest in voting cohesion, particularly in the legislatures of post-communist Europe and the European Parliament (EP), although such studies are still relatively few in number. Those that do exist take exception to the notion that cohesion is “constant,” arguing instead that variation in cohesion is likely to exist from party to party within the same country, across countries, and over time. These scholars further attempt to identify the sources of such variation. Thames (2001), for example, looks at the way in which a mixed electoral system influences voting cohesion, examining whether legislators elected in single-member districts are less cohesive than their proportional representation counterparts in the Russian Duma and the Ukrainian Rada. Zielinski (2001) examines party cohesion in the Polish Sejm, looking at variation across types of parties, votes and coalitions to determine whether ideological proximity or discipline is the more likely cause of such cohesion.
voting procedure is a show of hands, it is estimated that only around 15 percent of all votes are roll call votes (Faas 2003). Researchers have no choice but to rely on recorded votes, however few, despite the fact that, “the decision to request a recorded vote is itself a political act, restricted to particular conditions that may make roll-calls unrepresentative of normal party political behaviour” (Hix and Lord 1997, 155). These “particular conditions” usually involve a party calling for a roll call vote in order to monitor the voting behavior of its members to ensure they vote with the party line. Thus, a roll call vote may itself be a form of discipline and to treat these votes as representative of voting behavior generally may be unwise.

In the Sejm, decisions are made according to a simple majority vote of at least half (230) of all statutory deputies. Voting is open ballot; deputies cast their vote by simultaneously raising their hand and using an electronic vote-recording machine. With the backing of at least 30 deputies, the Marshall of the Sejm (akin to the Speaker) can issue a written motion calling for a roll call vote that, if approved by a majority of deputies, will require each deputy’s vote to be read aloud within the chamber.

Like most parliamentary systems, roll call votes make up a small proportion of all ballots cast in the Sejm. Yet unlike most parliaments, the use of electronic voting machines in addition to a show of hands means that all votes, not just roll call votes, are recorded. As a result, an analysis of voting unity in the Sejm based on recorded votes does not suffer the same problems with bias in the population that plague studies of parties in many other legislatures.

Records of votes cast using the electronic vote-recording machines are made public on the Sejm website at the conclusion of each session of parliament. For each
vote, the Sejm publishes data in two forms: individual-level data of how each deputy voted and aggregate-level data of voting within each parliamentary club (Figures 6.1 and 6.2). I chose to use the party-level data for two reasons. First, party-level information is sufficient for the calculation of party cohesion measures and participation rates discussed later in this chapter, and second, collecting this summary information was significantly less labor-intensive, allowing for a larger total sample size. Had I been interested in estimating legislators’ ideal points, for example, party-level data would have been insufficient and I would have needed to collect legislator-specific data instead.

Using these recorded votes (often referred to throughout as roll call votes for comparability to similar studies), I constructed a dataset for the fourth parliament, which held its first session in October of 2001 and concluded its work in July of 2005 in anticipation of parliamentary elections scheduled for September 25th. As votes are organized into sessions, I took a random sample of the 108 total parliamentary sessions during this time period and collected data from 39 of them (approximately one-third of all sessions). I then collected information on every vote within these 39 sessions. As Zielinski (2001, 6) notes, “This procedure is attractive because it preserves an uninterrupted sequence of votes within a selected session without compromising the random nature of the overall sampling.” Whereas the fact that all votes are recorded avoids issues of population bias, the use of random sampling helps to avoid sample bias; thus the votes collected for this dataset should be representative of the overall voting behavior of deputies in the Sejm (Zielinski 2001).

For those parliamentary clubs that existed throughout the course of the parliament (for example, UP, SLD, PSL, PO, Samoobrona, PiS and LPR), the total number of votes
in the dataset is approximately 4,100. The total number of votes recorded varies for clubs that either dissolved or were created anew at some point during the parliamentary term, although by and large these clubs do not factor into the analysis here. The exception is SDPL, which formed as an offshoot of SLD in February of 2004 and for which the total number of votes in the dataset is 994.

I include in the analysis here only those parliamentary groups with an average membership of 15 deputies or greater, as measured over the course of the parliamentary term. According to the rules of the Sejm, only groupings of 15 or more deputies may be considered a parliamentary club (smaller groupings of at least three deputies may form what are known as Deputies’ groups). Those deputies who choose not to affiliate with any parliamentary club oftentimes number greater than 15; however, while their votes may be grouped together by the Sejm for the sake of convenience, they do not resemble a party in any meaningful way and are therefore omitted from the analysis here (as are deputies’ groups). Based on these criteria, I include eight parliamentary clubs in the analysis (listed roughly from left to right ideologically): UP, SDPL, SLD, PSL, PO, Samoobrona, PiS and LPR.86 In Table 6.1, I provide basic information about the membership of these parliamentary groups over the course of the votes included in the dataset, including mean number of deputies in the parliamentary club, standard deviation, and both the minimum and maximum members over this period of time.87

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86 These are the same criteria used to determine which parties to include in the chapter based on interview data, with the exception of UW, which was part of the governing coalition from 1997-2001 but failed to make the threshold in the 2001 elections.

87 Note that I look at the average membership over the votes sampled during the parliamentary term from 2001-2005. As a result, the rank orderings of parties may differ slightly from total seats at the start of the term.
We can see from this table that by far the largest parliamentary group in the Sejm during this period is SLD, with an average membership of 184.63. It was SLD that suffered the greatest losses of membership when SDPL formed in February 2004, which likely accounts for the relatively large standard deviation (17.66) and range (50 deputies). The second largest party grouping in this dataset was PO, with a mean membership of 56.69. With a standard deviation of only 1.60 and a range of 10, PO had relatively little turnover in its membership over the course of the parliamentary term. The third largest party grouping in the Sejm is PiS, with a mean membership of 43.36. With a small standard deviation (0.885) and range (4), PiS, too, saw fairly little turnover. PSL and Samoobrona are relatively close to one another in terms of average membership, with mean scores of 39.38 and 37.25, respectively. Samoobrona, however, has the second largest standard deviation (7.57) and range (23). Whereas most of SLD’s variation in membership comes from defections to SDPL, which were voluntary, in the case of Samoobrona many of its members were forced out of the party for failing to follow party discipline, and became non-affiliated members. SDPL and LPR are also relatively closely matched in terms of mean membership across these votes, with 32.39 and 29.09 members respectively. Again, however, LPR has a much higher standard deviation and range, with 3.669 and 12 respectively, making it third behind Samoobrona. SDPL, on the other hand, has the smallest standard deviation (0.65) and range (2), in large part due to its status as a newly created party. Finally, UP, with a mean of 15.52, a standard deviation of 0.90 and a range of 4, barely cleared the 15-member threshold, making it the smallest party included in the sample.

\footnote{Recall the discussion in Chapter Four of the many members of Samoobrona who were expelled from the party for failing to toe the party line.}
6.2 Rates of Attendance, Abstention and Voting Cohesion

6.2.1 Attendance

Turning now to the behavior of these parliamentary party groups, Table 6.2 offers evidence of the extent to which members of these groups were disciplined with respect to their attendance at votes. For each category (total voting and those not in attendance), the mean is provided for each parliamentary club in the dataset, along with the standard deviation. Given the variation in the size of each party, however, the most telling number is the proportion of the party’s total membership that attended, or failed to attend, votes on average.

Looking first at total members voting, the proportion of members voting is relatively high among all parties, with a high of .93 for UP and a low of .80 for PSL. Thus, an average of 93 percent of UP members attended votes over the course of the parliamentary term, whereas only an average of 80 percent of PSL members did the same. It appears that the average proportion voting is higher among parties of the left than for those of the right, with UP, SDPL, and SLD having on average greater than 91 percent of members voting. PO, the party of the right that is closest to the center, has an average proportion of members voting of .91, which is equal to that of SLD. Samoobrona (.83), PiS (.88) and LPR (.84), all parties of the right, have lower rates of attendance at votes at fewer than 90 percent. PSL, a populist party that has moved further to the right since beginning the parliament in coalition with SLD in 2001 has, as mentioned, the lowest proportion of members attending votes at .80.

We can look at the same issue from a different angle by examining the number of members failing to attend votes altogether. By far the party whose members fail to show
up for votes most often is LPR, with an average proportion of members not voting of .25. Thus, over all votes sampled, an average of 25 percent of LPR deputies failed to turn up. Behind LPR is PSL, with 18 percent of members failing to attend votes on average. Both Samoobrona and PiS had an average of 12 percent of members failing to show up for votes. On the other hand, UP and SDPL had relatively low levels of absenteeism with six and five percent failing to show on average, respectively. SLD, the other party of the left, also has a relatively low proportion of members not attending votes at .09. It would appear, again, that parties of the left are more cohesive in the sense of turning up to vote than those of the right with the exception of PO with only six percent of members failing to vote on average.

6.2.2 Abstention

Getting party members to turn up to votes is certainly an important element of party culture; it is how legislators vote once there that may ultimately be of greatest consequence, however. I look first at whether legislators vote “aye” or “nay”, or whether they choose instead to register a vote of “abstain.” Information on abstention rates is also presented in Table 6.2. Rates of abstention are extremely low in this parliament, ranging from a low of less than one percent (UP, SDPL, and SLD) to a high of 5 percent (LPR). Here it appears that we can more clearly distinguish between parties of the left and right, with parties of the left having abstention rates below one percent, and right-leaning parties having average abstention rates between one and five percent. PO, which had similar rates of attendance and non-attendance to parties of the left, differs from leftist parties here with an average abstention rate of two percent. Samoobrona, on the other hand, which had relatively low levels of attendance and high levels of non-attendance (as
compared to the other parties), has a lower abstention rate than might be expected at only one percent. It appears, then, that for Samoobrona, failing to attend a vote is much more common than registering a vote of abstain.

For both attendance and abstention, average rates are higher on average for parties of the left than those of the right, the real exception being PO. Rather than party ideology, it could be that the party’s age is affecting rates of attendance and abstention alike. The majority of parties with lower rates of attendance and higher rates of abstention were new, the exception here being the relatively well-established PSL. SDPL was a new party created during the course of the parliament in 2004, yet it had high rates of attendance and low rates of abstention.\(^89\)

6.2.3 Voting Cohesion

Turning now to those legislators who choose to vote “yes” or “no,” to what extent do legislators from the same party vote together? In other words, how cohesive are parties in their voting behavior? This is the key question of this chapter. Ultimately, for party culture to be successful legislators must not only say they follow the party line when voting but actually do so.

There are a number of ways to measure the degree to which members of a party vote the same way on a given vote.\(^90\) The most common measure of cohesion is the Rice

\(^{89}\) While the party was newly created, the members of SDPL were primarily MPs from SLD and thus had experience in parliament.

\(^{90}\) Whatever the form, measures of voting cohesion are the target of a good deal of criticism. The first criticism involves the data used in their calculation. As mentioned previously, using roll call votes to make broader generalizations about voting behavior is problematic in two ways: these votes are but a small subset of all parliamentary votes, and “knowledge that an MEP’s voting behaviour is going to be published will, in addition, influence the way he or she will vote” (Hix and Lord 1997, 155). The second major criticism concerns the conclusions drawn from measures based on roll call votes. Krehbiel (2000, 225) cautions researchers against taking such measures as “evidence of party discipline, party cohesion, party strength, or party government,” arguing instead that it is likely individual preferences, not party, that are at
For each party on each vote, a Rice score is calculated by taking the difference between the proportion of all those voting either yes or no who voted yes, and the proportion who voted no, multiplying this number by 100 and then taking the absolute value.

\[
\text{Rice Index of Cohesion} = \left| \frac{(\text{Total Yes Votes}/\text{Yes} + \text{No Votes}) - (\text{Total No Votes}/\text{Yes} + \text{No Votes})}{\text{Total Votes}} \right| \times 100
\]

The individual Rice scores are then summed and the average is taken to arrive at a single Rice cohesion score for each party. Rice scores range from zero to 100, where 100 indicates perfect cohesion (all members voted together) and zero indicates an evenly split work here. I treat these measures of voting cohesion as simply what they are; measures of the extent to which legislators from the same party vote together on legislation, and not as evidence of party discipline, conditional party government, or any other factor meant to prove the influence of party. The reason is that, within this dissertation project, voting cohesion represents an element of party culture; in order to succeed in the goals of office- and policy-seeking, legislators from the same party must learn to vote together. Whether they do so because of discipline, or because of similar ideological tendencies, is not an issue because I bring other sources of data to bear on these subjects.

While the Rice index of cohesion may be the most common measure of party cohesion in legislatures, it is not without limitations. One concern is that the Rice index only considers parliamentarians who voted “yes” or “no,” and is therefore of limited utility in parliaments allowing a third option, “abstain.” To get around this problem, Attiná (1990) developed a measure of cohesion, known as the Index of Agreement (IoA), specifically for the European Parliament where Members (MEPs) have three voting options available. The Index of Agreement ranges from –33, indicating a party was evenly divided between the three options, to +100, indicating perfect voting cohesion. Interpreting Attiná’s (1990) measure is not, however, intuitive, which led Hix, Noury and Roland (2005) to develop what they refer to as the “Agreement Index (AI).” The AI simply re-scales Attiná’s (1990) IoA from zero to one, and is calculated as follows:

\[
AI_i = \frac{\text{max} \{Y_i, N_i, A_i\} - \frac{1}{2} [(Y_i + N_i + A_i) - \text{max} \{Y_i, N_i, A_i\}]}{(Y_i + N_i + A_i)}
\]

Like the Rice index, the AI produces a separate value for each party on each vote, and a single AI score is produced by calculating the mean of those individual values. Rather than ranging from 0-100 as the Rice index does, the AI ranges from 0-1 instead. The interpretation of the values is identical, however, with a score of 0 indicating a party is evenly split and a score of 1 indicating perfect cohesion. I calculated AI values for the dataset here and include those values in Table 6.3, alongside the Rice scores, for ease of comparison. The values for each party on the AI are very similar to those of the Rice index, and in fact the two scores are correlated at .960, which is highly significant. As a result, the rank ordering of parties in terms of average cohesiveness is identical to that for the Rice index. As noted above, abstentions are a relatively rare occurrence in the Sejm, therefore the high level of correlation between the AI (which accounts for abstentions) and Rice scores is not surprising.
party (half voted yes, the other half voted no). Table 6.3 provides the average Rice score and standard deviation for each of the eight parties analyzed here.

On the whole, these parties are fairly cohesive, with Rice scores ranging from 92.475 at the low end (PSL) to 98.749 at the high end (SLD). As with the figures presented in Table 6.2, the parties of the left are more cohesive, with SDPL (97.791) and UP (97.087) falling just slightly behind SLD. Parties of the right, on the other hand, are slightly less cohesive on average. PiS is the most cohesive party of the right, with an average Rice score of 96.588. PO (96.225) and Samoobrona (93.990) are slightly less cohesive, followed by LPR with a score of 94.055.

In addition to the mean, the standard deviation is useful for establishing the dispersion of each party’s Rice scores (provided in parentheses in Table 6.3). In other words, how much deviation was there on average from the party line? On the left, SLD has both the highest level of cohesion of all the parties listed and the least amount of variation, as indicated by the standard deviation of 5.168. SDPL has the next smallest standard deviation, whereas UP has a slightly higher standard deviation (11.613) than the rightist party PiS (11.020). The most widely dispersed Rice scores are those of LPR and PSL, both of which have standard deviation scores of nearly 17.

While we can easily rank the parties from most cohesive to least cohesive, the absolute differences between the parties’ cohesion scores are relatively small. Between PSL and SLD, the least and most cohesive parties respectively, there is a difference of only 6.274 points, out of a total of 100. When we compare the largest parties on the left (SLD) and right (PO), there is only a difference of 2.524 points. Are these differences between parties’ cohesion scores statistically significant? In other words, are the
differences, however slight, between parties’ average cohesion scores simply due to chance or do they reflect true differences in voting behavior among party groups?

To address this question, I conducted tests for statistical significance using two separate test statistics. The first was a t Test in non-independent samples and the second, a chi-squared test.\textsuperscript{92} The t Test measures the extent to which observed differences in the means of two groups are statistically significant. Results from the t Test indicate that the observed differences in parties’ cohesion scores are highly statistically significant (at the .00-level for a two-tailed test) for all but two pairs of parties. The exceptions were SLD and SDPL, and UP and SDPL. Given that SDPL was formed during the parliament by members primarily of SLD and was ideologically very similar to both SLD and UP, such a result makes sense. Results from the chi-squared test support those of the t Test and indicate that the differences observed between parties in their cohesion scores (however small in absolute terms) are, in fact, highly statistically significant. Thus, real differences exist across parties in the degree to which they vote cohesively.

6.3 Factors Affecting Voting Cohesion

From the data in Table 6.3 we see that, regardless of which measure is used, parties in the fourth parliament are by and large cohesive. Relatively small, but statistically significant differences do exist between parties in their cohesion levels, begging the question, what causes one party to be more cohesive than another? The same factors hypothesized in Chapter 2 to make elite commitment more or less likely should also help account for variation in the extent to which a party’s legislators vote in a

\textsuperscript{92} The samples here are dependent in that the votes for which Rice scores are calculated are the same for each party. Thus, the appropriate difference of means test is that for paired or dependent samples. The fact that the mean Rice scores in the dataset are skewed may mean a non-parametric test of statistical significance is more appropriate and so I conducted a chi-squared test for the Rice scores from all parties.
cohesive manner. A party’s ideology, size, membership in the government or opposition and coalition status will likely help to explain differences in average cohesion scores across parties. Thus, parties with stronger ideologies are expected to behave more cohesively, as are smaller parties, governing parties and parties in coalition. One further factor in explaining cross-party variation in cohesion is the extent to which party leaders have shown a commitment to party culture.

In this section, I discuss the relationship between these potential explanations and voting cohesion. Unfortunately, the nature of these data are such that I am unable to empirically test for the effect of these factors on voting cohesion, for example, using regression analysis. As a result, I rely on a bivariate correlation analysis to assess the relationship between each factor and cohesion scores.

6.3.1 Party Size

In the fourth chapter, I concluded based on evidence from in-depth interviews that discipline is easier (if not always stronger) in smaller clubs, where the task of monitoring attendance at votes and voting behavior, as well as coming to some agreement on the

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93 I am unable to assess the extent to which the factors thought to influence legislators’ decisions to adopt party culture discussed in Chapter 2, such as aspirations to hold leadership positions and close ties to particular social strata, contribute to the rates of cohesion observed here. These are individual-level factors; however, the data are aggregate-level.

94 The reason for this is twofold: first, variation in the dependent variable (aggregate voting cohesion) is limited and without variation to be explained, a statistical model is unfeasible; second, even over the course of a single parliament, most of the independent variables do not vary. Collecting roll call vote data for a longer period of time (ideally including the early years of the transition period) would allow for greater potential variation in both the dependent and independent variables. More precise quantitative measures of the independent variables are also needed if such a test were to be attempted. Collecting individual-level roll call vote data would also be helpful in that it would provide an opportunity to test for the effect of the legislator-level factors discussed in Chapter 2 (constituency interests, ambition, etc.). Here, too, measures need to be devised for these factors and appropriate sources of data identified.

95 Bivariate correlation analysis assesses the degree of association between two variables, but makes no assumption about the precise relationship between the two as would bivariate regression.
party line, is simpler. In the case of cohesion, we might expect the same relationship to hold. Indeed, the consequences of one member, or even a handful of members, defecting from the party line in a large party may not appear as great as for a small party. Yet when we consider the implications of cohesion for the outcome of a vote, it may be the case that larger parties have more incentive to vote together than smaller parties.96

Looking at the relationship between party size (measured by the number of members listed as belonging to a party at a given point in time) and voting cohesion, the correlation coefficient of .083 (see Table 6.4) indicates a positive and highly statistically significant relationship with party cohesion. Thus, the larger the party, the more cohesive it is. This is in line with our expectation; members of large parties have a greater incentive to vote together given their increased ability to influence the outcome of a vote.

6.3.2 Ideology

One of the most important and indeed, most common, explanations of variation in cohesion across parties is shared ideology. As discussed in previous chapters, high levels of cohesion are to be expected among legislators of the same party who, due to similar viewpoints, will likely vote in a like-minded manner. The stronger a party’s ideology, the more cohesive we expect its members to be in voting. According to some, then, we need look no further than ideology to understand why legislators from the same party vote together. Others would argue that voting cohesion, even in the most ideologically coherent of parties, is never perfect.97

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96 That voting cohesion might increase as a function of a party’s chances at influencing the outcome is not surprising. A deputy from PO told me that, as SLD’s problems grew, so did the opposition’s chances at influencing the outcome of votes. As a result, party leaders stressed the importance of voting as a bloc.

97 A second form of this argument claims that the type of ideology to which a party subscribes can explain variation in cohesion levels from one party to the next. Specifically, parties of the left (and communist
Following Shabad and Slomczynski (2004, 161), I divide my eight parties into one of four party families: (1) post-communist; (2) social/liberal democratic; (3) Christian/nationalist and (4) populist. On the left, SLD is considered post-communist, whereas both UP and SDPL are coded in the social/liberal democratic category. On the right, where clearly assigning parties to ideological families is slightly more difficult, PO is best considered a liberal party in the European/economic sense of the word and so is assigned to the social/liberal democratic category. Samoobrona, while clearly rightist in its leanings, is best considered in the populist category, along with PSL. LPR and PiS are both considered Christian/nationalist.

Looking at the results of the bivariate analysis in Table 6.4, the correlation coefficient for ideology and cohesion is -.126, indicating a weak negative relationship. Thus, parties of the left are more cohesive on average than parties of the right. This relationship, like that for size and cohesion, is highly statistically significant.

parties in particular) are more unified in their voting behavior. The reason for higher a priori levels of cohesive behavior in these parties comes from their strict adherence to a guiding ideology – Marxism-Leninism – which in turn helps to ensure their unique position as the “sole spokesman” of the working class (Meny 1990, 79). Due to the nature of my data, I am unable to test for the “like-mindedness” variant of the ideology argument here. I can say, however, that the notion that legislators from the same party will vote together out of like-mindedness may be overstated in the case of Poland. Polish parties have often been characterized by incoherent and inconsistent programmatic content over time. Recall from the fourth chapter, for example, the case of SLD where Prime Minister Leszek Miller came out in favor of a flat tax in the summer of 2004, a position inconsistent with SLD’s social-democratic ideology. In addition, the incidence of party switching among political candidates is rather high in Poland. According to Shabad and Slomczynski (2004, 162), while the majority of those switching parties move from party to party within the same political family, there are those who leave one party family for another, adjacent party family. In the post-communist political climate, such fluid ideological tendencies among politicians is not surprising and as a result, leaves room for the role of something other than ideology alone in explaining cohesion levels.

98 While SDPL emerged largely from within SLD, I choose to classify it as social/liberal democratic rather than post-communist for two reasons. First, SDPL also included members of UP, which is decidedly not a communist successor party, and second, emerging from the post-communist SLD leaves SDPL one step removed from the post-communist category.
6.3.3 Government or Opposition

Another factor that may be driving cohesion across parties is whether a party is in government or opposition. I would expect to see higher average cohesion levels for those parties in government given that they are largely responsible for introducing bills before the Sejm and, therefore, have a greater stake in seeing them passed. Both UP and SLD were members of government for the entire parliament. PSL, however, began the parliament in 2001 in coalition with UP and SLD, but was expelled in March of 2003 when it failed to support government-sponsored legislation aimed at bringing Polish roadways up to EU standards.

Looking at Table 6.4, the correlation coefficient for government membership and cohesion is .064, another weak, albeit statistically significant, relationship. The coefficient is positive, indicating that parties in government (coded 1) are more cohesive on average than opposition parties.

6.3.4 Discipline

The last and, for the purposes of this project, most important factor in cross-party variation in cohesion is party discipline. The very purpose of instituting discipline in

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99 I would also expect that a party participating in a coalition with one or more other parties would be more cohesive than would those operating independently. Voting in coalition with another party or parties may mean greater compromise, and could lead individual legislators to vote their true preferences rather than the “coalition line” in such cases, leading to lower cohesion. On the other hand, the same argument made above as to why large parties may be more cohesive than small parties may apply here. Coalitions may have the ability to determine whether or not a bill passes, making uniformity of voting more consequential. Lastly, a party in coalition may be driven to vote together in order to signal, both to current and future coalition partners, that it is a reliable partner. It is worth noting, however, that a party’s position within the coalition may matter as well. In a two-party coalition where one party is significantly larger than the other, the junior partner may feel particularly strong pressure from the senior coalition to vote cohesively. I do not test for this possibility here, however, as the parties participating in coalitions are also those participating in government.

99 Unfortunately, this confounds the results presented above for government membership; I cannot say for certain whether it is being a member of government, or a coalition partner, or both, that influences cohesion levels.
legislative parties is to overcome the collective action problem. For those parties that have established an effective system of rewards and punishments, we should see higher levels of attendance at votes, as well as greater cohesion in how those votes are cast.

Despite its importance, arriving at a quantitative measure of discipline is difficult at best. Based on the interview evidence presented in Chapter 4, I create an index of party discipline based on three separate elements: nature of the discipline advocate; process for establishing the party line; and severity of punishments for indiscipline. In each category, a party is coded according to one of three options, where a one implies weak discipline, a two moderate discipline, and a three, strong discipline. A party’s scores in each category are then summed to attain their overall value. Scores on the discipline index, then, range from three (weak discipline – a party had a score of one on all three categories) to nine (strong discipline – a party scored a three in all categories).

The first element in the discipline index involves the manner in which the party line is established. In some parliamentary clubs, consensus is the norm for most issues while in others the parliamentary party leadership takes the lead in formulating the party line. Parties are assigned a score of one for weak discipline if the party line is established for most legislation by consensus at a meeting of all deputies from the club. A moderately disciplined club on this dimension is one in which the party line is determined by consensus on some issues, and by the club leadership on others. The most strongly disciplined parties on this dimension are those in which the party line is established most often by the leadership of the club, with the rank and file weighing in only occasionally. Here, all three parties of the left are considered to have weak discipline as they reach decisions regarding the party line via consensus. Examples of moderate parties here are
PO, PSL and Samoobrona, all of which have a mix between consensus and top-down decisions depending on the nature of the vote. PiS and LPR, on the other hand, are the most disciplined in terms of establishing the party line. In both, the leadership of the club plays a prominent role.

The second element of the index deals with the role of the “Rzecznik Dyscypliny” or “Discipline Advocate.” If a party either does not have a Discipline Advocate, or if this individual has little power in the way of monitoring and punishment, the party is considered weak on this dimension and is scored a one. A party’s Discipline Advocate will be considered moderately strong if legislators are required to obtain permission from this individual to be absent from a vote. A Discipline Advocate is considered strong when his or her duties include determining whether the offending deputy should be punished and if so, how. Based on these criteria, UP, SDPL and LPR are considered to have weak discipline advocates; SLD, PO and Samoobrona are considered to have moderate discipline advocates; PiS and PSL have strong discipline advocates.

Lastly, for those individuals who choose to break discipline in some fashion, how strict is their punishment? As I discuss in the fourth chapter, each party has a variety of potential punishments at its disposal ranging from verbal and written reprimand to expulsion from the party; however, parties differ in their willingness to use the most severe forms of punishment at their disposal. I consider a parliamentary club to have fairly weak discipline on this dimension if punishments are meted out largely in the form of reprimands only. A party is considered to have moderate discipline if it goes beyond reprimands by, for example, issuing fines (beyond those of the Sejm itself) or suspending a deputy’s membership in the party. Parties are assigned to the highest category of
discipline on this dimension only if they have used the power of expulsion. Based on these criteria, UP and SDPL fall into the lowest category. PO, PSL and PiS all fall into the middle category, whereas SLD, Samoobrona and LPR are placed in the highest category based on evidence that these parties have used expulsion as punishment for a member’s lack of discipline.

Aggregating scores on these three dimensions, we see that UP and SDPL are considered to have weak discipline, both scoring a one on all three elements for a total score of three. SLD and PO, each with a score of six, are found to have moderate discipline according to this coding scheme. Samoobrona, LPR and PSL all have moderately strong levels of discipline, each one scoring a seven out of nine on the discipline index. PiS, then, is the most disciplined party scoring eight of nine possible points on the discipline index.

The results of the correlation analysis shown in Table 6.4 indicate a negative relationship between cohesion and discipline (-.064). This relationship is also incredibly weak, although statistically significant. The interpretation of the coefficient is that the more disciplined a party, the less cohesive it is, thus making it counter to expectations. Given the subjectivity of the discipline index and the fact that so little variation exists in the cohesion scores, this result may very well be a statistical artifact. Substantively, the fact that the most disciplined parties were newly established could mean that the mechanisms established by party leaders had not yet been fully adopted by the rank and file.
6.4 Voting Cohesion over Time

The discussion to this point has dealt with a comparison of parties across space; parties in the fourth parliament are largely cohesive with some differences, primarily between parties of the left and right. Would we find similar patterns in voting cohesion if we looked over time? Zielinski (2001) conducted an analysis of roll call vote data for the third parliament, which met from October 1997 to January 2001, using a dataset of 2,002 roll call votes collected from 30 sessions selected randomly from the total population (7,100 votes). Zielinski (2001) calculated Rice scores for the four largest parties in the Sejm at the time: AWS (92.84), SLD (94.91), UW (93.52) and PSL (89.80). As in the fourth Sejm, SLD had the highest level of average cohesion, and PSL the lowest. What Zielinski (2001) notes as surprising, however, is that the average cohesion scores for AWS and UW are higher than expected. Given the heterogeneity of preferences that existed among its many parties, the result for AWS is particularly unexpected.101

How do the average cohesion scores calculated by Zielinski (2001) for the third parliament compare to those for the fourth? Neither AWS nor UW was re-elected to the fourth parliament, making direct comparisons impossible. It is interesting to note, however, that each of the rightist parties in the fourth parliament (PO, Samoobrona, PiS and LPR) had higher average cohesion scores than their predecessors, UW and AWS.

100 I used the same method for collecting votes used by Zielinski (2001).

101 Given that many votes within any parliament are simply procedural issues with little real political content, Zielinski (2001) divides the sample according to type of vote. He distinguishes between four types of voting coalitions for all but PSL (although he includes PSL in his results): a “universal coalition,” where all parties vote the same way; a “solidarity coalition,” where UW and AWS vote against SLD; a “secular coalition,” where UW and SLD vote against AWS; and a “big parties coalition,” where SLD and AWS vote against UW (Zielinski 2001, 9). He writes, “Given this distinction, the basic finding of the paper is that voting cohesion of the four largest parliamentary parties varies quite considerably depending on the type of the party vote” (Zielinski 2001, 13).
Based on the in-depth interviews I conducted, I would expect such a difference given that several deputies from PiS and PO who were formerly members of AWS mentioned a desire to learn from past mistakes. In addition, rather than a coalition of many parties attempting to function as a single party (as was AWS), the four parties of the right included in my analysis of the fourth parliament are all smaller and arguably more ideologically cohesive.

A more direct comparison can be made, however, between the average Rice scores I calculated and those calculated by Zielinski for both SLD and PSL. SLD’s mean Rice score for the 1997-2001 parliament was 94.91, compared to 98.749 for the 2001-2005 parliament, showing a slight increase in cohesiveness on average. PSL had an average Rice score of 89.80 in the 1997-2001 parliament as calculated by Zielinski, compared to a score of 92.75 in the 2001-2005 parliament. In both cases, the average cohesion level increased somewhat (by 3.84 points for SLD, and by 2.95 for PSL). Looking at the standard deviation is even more telling. The standard deviation for SLD for the third parliament was 12.32, compared to 5.17 for the fourth parliament, a rather large drop and one that indicates less variation in voting cohesion. In the case of PSL, by contrast, the standard deviation of 19.86 in the third parliament had decreased to 16.78 by the fourth, a smaller decrease than that for SLD, but a decrease nonetheless.

What is interesting about these two parties is that both SLD and PSL are long-standing parties in some form or another (both trace their roots to pre-communist times and both existed throughout the communist era), yet in both the third and fourth parliaments they are at opposite extremes, with PSL being the least cohesive party and SLD the most cohesive. These results seriously undermine the argument made by some
that cohesion is likely a function of a party’s age.\textsuperscript{102} Another interesting observation here is that the cohesion scores for AWS and UW, both of which were in the governing coalition in the third parliament (at least until UW left in 2000), are lower on average than those for the governing parties in the fourth parliament, SLD and UP (as calculated between 2001 and 2005). Is this because of different ideologies, differences in elite commitment to creating party culture, or varying degrees of acceptance of that culture by the rank and file?

While I am unable to compare most parties across the two parliaments (given that UW failed to clear the electoral threshold to enter the fourth parliament and AWS ceased to exist), I can examine cohesion over time for the four parliamentary party groups that entered the parliament for the first time in 2001: PO, Samoobrona, PiS, and LPR.\textsuperscript{103} If, as I argue, party culture develops over time then we would expect to see a learning curve with respect to elements of party culture such as voting cohesion.\textsuperscript{104} To examine the extent to which this is the case, I split the votes in my dataset by year, creating four subsets: November 2001 - December 2002, January 2003 – December 2003, January 2004 – December 2004, and January 2005 – May 2005. I then calculated mean Rice scores for each party group in each time period, which are presented in Table 6.5 along with their standard deviations.\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{102} To truly gauge the extent to which cohesiveness has increased in these parties over time, it would be ideal to examine cohesion scores over their entire existence in the post-communist political context. Unfortunately, I do not have access to roll call data for the initial post-communist parliaments.

\textsuperscript{103} As SDPL did not form until February of 2004, there is not a sufficiently extensive period over which to examine changes in the group’s voting cohesion.

\textsuperscript{104} The time needed for this learning to take place is unknown and likely differs from one party to the next.

\textsuperscript{105} Roll call vote data for the fifth parliament, elected in September 2005, would provide a clearer picture of this learning process.
Beginning with PO, we notice a distinct trend over time; with each year the average cohesion scores increase while the standard deviation decreases. In the first year of the parliament an average of only 94.18 percent of PO deputies voted with one another, compared with an average of 98.17 percent by the final year of the parliament, a difference of nearly four percent. At the same time the variation in cohesion scores, as measured by standard deviation, decreases by over half over the same period of time from 15.49 in the first year to 7.82. The same trend is seen for LPR, which increases its average cohesion score over the course of the parliament from an average of 93.16 in year one, to 96.29 in the final year, a difference of three points. The standard deviation also declines over this period from 18.80 to 13.57, although there is a small increase between the second and third years of .4 points.

For both Samoobrona and PiS, we also see an increase in average cohesion scores from the first to the last period, and a corresponding decline in standard deviation; however, for both parties cohesion increases in the second period only to decline somewhat in the third. For Samoobrona, average cohesion scores increase from 91.77 to 95.72 whereas for PiS, cohesion scores increase from 95.22 to 97.75 between the first and fourth years. Samoobrona’s average cohesion score in the second year is 96.58, compared to 95.32 for the third, a difference of 1.26. In the case of PiS, in year two the average score is 97.24, while in year three it drops down to 96.21, a difference of 1.03, before hitting a high of 97.75 in the final year. The same trend is true of the standard cohesion scores.

What I find particularly interesting about the results for PO (greater average cohesion and less variation over time) is that the observed behavior is in line with my expectations given information provided in my in-depth interviews. Both parliamentary deputies I interviewed mentioned that discipline within PO had grown since the start of the parliament in 2001 and both attributed this growing discipline to a change in leadership within the parliamentary club.
deviation values for these four time points; the standard deviation decreases from the first to fourth years (18.46 to 12.29 for Samoobrona; 14.36 to 7.23 for PiS) but increases between the second and third years (10.49 to 12.91 for Samoobrona; 8.85 to 12.09 for PiS).

One potential cause of this discrepancy may be the types of issues on which votes were taken in these two periods, or even intra-party dynamics, that account for higher levels of cohesion in the second year as compared to the third. One final possibility is that these four parties, all part of the opposition, grew more cohesive as the ruling coalition of SLD/UP grew more and more unpopular. In this way, then, increased cohesion would reflect a strategic decision to appear more cohesive vis-à-vis the left leading up to the parliamentary elections of September 2005. Regardless of the cause, it appears that the new parties in this parliament did “learn,” becoming more cohesive in their voting behavior over time.

As for returning parties, (UP, SLD, and PSL) for all but UP the average cohesion score is higher for the final year than for the first, although we see less consistent upward trends from the start to finish of the parliament.\textsuperscript{107} To truly assess the extent to which these three parties experienced a learning process would require data from all parliaments in which they had participated.

6.5 \textbf{When the Price of Discipline is too High}

The evidence presented in the previous section indicates that parties in the fourth parliament did, for the most part, become more cohesive over the course of the four-year

\textsuperscript{107} Note that while UP had been a member of the 1993-1997 parliament, it was not a member of the 1997-2001 parliament as it failed to cross the 5 percent threshold.
term. Outside of legislators “learning” party culture, or opposition parties becoming more cohesive in the face of a weakened governing majority, why might parties become more cohesive over the course of a parliament? One possible explanation for growing party cohesion over time is party switching. Recall from Chapter 2 that legislators who find the costs of abiding by party discipline too great always have the option of exit, leaving their current party for one in which they are more comfortable. Party switching is likely to decline over time for two reasons. First, as parties and politicians develop stable political identities over time, there should be less divergence between the interests of the party as a whole and the individual legislator. Second, legislators should have a better sense of party leaders’ expectations of them (in terms of rules and norms) over time, and those legislators choosing to stay within a party should, for the most part, be on board with the party culture established by party leaders.

Whether in the electoral or legislative context, party switching is generally viewed as harmful for democratic consolidation. The “new party formation and . . . party dissolutions, splits and mergers” associated with party switching at the electoral level “have offered the electorate a confusing kaleidoscope of choices, thereby impeding the development of stable partisan alignments among voters” (Shabad and Slomczynski 2004, 169-70). Within the legislature, high levels of party switching are thought to make it difficult for parties to offer “the stability and clarity necessary to generate short- and long-term consensus in policy” (Herron 2001, 1).

In the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, party switching is common at the electoral level, either because “politicians switch parties voluntarily for reasons of self-interest and/or weak political identities” or because they are “forced to
shift their partisan affiliation by structural changes of the party system itself due to party dissolutions, splits and mergers” (Shabad and Slomczynski 2004, 152). Party switching is not limited to the electoral arena, however; as Shabad and Slomczynski (2004, 152) note, “News reports, as well as studies of legislators, document the high frequency with which parliamentarians abandon their political clubs and switch to other party groups, form new ones or become independent.”

The chapter to this point has examined the extent to which legislators cooperate with the culture established by party leaders in terms of attendance at votes and voting with the party line. Yet it may be the case that legislators who are unwilling to cooperate choose instead to defect from their current parliamentary group in favor of one in which the party culture is more to their liking. If this is true, we might expect voting cohesion to be higher in the party from which a legislator switches, given the likelihood that while still a member of that party he or she chose not to vote with the party line.108

How prevalent was party switching in the fourth parliament? Given the limits of my data, which reflect party- rather than individual-level votes, I can only speak to the variation in total party membership over the course of the parliament. This fluctuation in party size may reflect legislators choosing to leave one party and join another (or become independent) voluntarily, or by force as the result of being expelled from the parliamentary club. The minimum and maximum number of members in each party in the fourth parliament is presented in Table 6.1. For UP, PSL and PiS, the range in membership was four legislators over the entire parliament, indicating low levels of

108 On the other hand, voting cohesion for the party to which the legislator switches may be lower after such a switch, particularly if the mechanisms of discipline in the new party are poorly developed, thereby allowing the legislator to vote against the party line (Mershon and Heller 2001, 7).
switching either to or from these parties. PO had a slightly higher range with 10, whereas LPR and SO had a range of 22 and 23 members, respectively. These numbers appear to indicate high levels of party switching; recall from the fourth chapter, however, that LPR had expelled several members from its parliamentary club over European Parliament elections, whereas Samoobrona had expelled over 20 individuals from the ranks of the parliamentary club since entering parliament in 2001. The greatest variation in membership in the fourth parliament was SLD, with a range of 50 members. Most of the individuals who left SLD did so, however, to form a new party, SDPL, which had a membership between 31 and 33 from its formation in February 2004 to the end of the parliament in summer 2005.109

Despite the fact that party switching did take place in the fourth parliament, although to varying degrees and often due to unique circumstances, we still observe relatively high levels of voting cohesion across the board. The most likely explanation is that party switching by this point in time does not reflect divergent political identities or dissatisfaction with party discipline, but rather strategic behavior on the party of legislators who, aware that their current party has fallen out of favor with voters, may choose to switch to a party they see as having a better chance at winning re-election. Indeed, this is Zielinski, Slomczynski and Shabad’s (2005) finding.

109 A question in the 2000 survey asked respondents whether they had changed parliamentary clubs during the course of the parliamentary term (between 1997 and 2000, the time of the survey). Of the 402 deputies responding to this question, only 20, or five percent, said they had changed parties during the current parliamentary term. Given the high response rate to this survey (407 of 460 total deputies, 88 percent), it appears that the number of individuals who admit to switching parliamentary party groups during this parliament is relatively small.
6.6 Conclusion

Based on the analysis of voting data from the fourth parliament (and secondary evidence from Zielinski’s 2001 study of the third parliament), I conclude that deputies from the same party do tend to vote together in large numbers. They also tend to turn out for votes regularly and rarely abstain. It appears, then, that deputies in the Sejm have in large part adopted party culture. In addition, average cohesion levels have increased over time, providing some support for the notion that parties undergo a learning process.

To be even more confident in these results, however, I would like to have data on recorded votes for all sessions of parliament in the post-communist era. While access to these data for earlier parliaments may be difficult to come by, the fifth parliament began its work following parliamentary elections in September of 2005, providing additional data to compare to that for the third and fourth parliaments. With the electoral success of parties of the right, particularly PiS and PO, both of which entered the Sejm for the first time in 2001, an interesting question for future study will be how these parties’ cohesion levels in the fifth parliament compare to those of the fourth. While extending the time frame of the analysis beyond 2005 is outside the scope of the current project, I can extend the study of legislative party institutionalization beyond the case of Poland. In the next chapter, I do just that, looking at legislative parties in the Czech Republic and Hungary.
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<th>PARTY</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEVIATION</th>
<th>MIN</th>
<th>MAX</th>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
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<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
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<td>41</td>
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<td>53</td>
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<td>.89</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.67</td>
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<td>37</td>
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*Table 6.1 Party Membership in the Sejm, 2001 – 2005*
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<th>DIDN’T ATTEND MEAN</th>
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<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td>.004</td>
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<td>.01</td>
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<td>.02</td>
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**Table 6.2. Voting Patterns in the Sejm, 2001 – 2005**
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<th>AGREEMENT INDEX</th>
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<td>94.05 (16.74)</td>
<td>.928</td>
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**Table 6.3. Measures of Cohesion**

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<tr>
<th>RICE SCORE</th>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>IDEOLOGY</th>
<th>GOVERNMENT</th>
<th>DISCIPLINE</th>
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</thead>
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<td>.064**</td>
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**Table 6.4. Bivariate Correlation Analyses**
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<td>(9.04)</td>
<td>(7.82)</td>
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<td>(16.48)</td>
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<td>(13.57)</td>
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**Table 6.5 Rice Cohesion Index Over Time**
Pkt 1. porz.dzien. WYBÓR MARSZAŁKA SEJMU

Głosowanie nad wyborem pana posła Marka Borowskiego na stanowisko marszałka Sejmu

Głosowało - 455 Za - 377 Przeciw - 77 Wstrzymało się - 1 Nie głosowało - 5

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<th>Liczność</th>
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<th>Przeciw</th>
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**FIGURE 6.1 SAMPLE VOTING RECORD (AGGREGATE)**

**FIGURE 6.2 SAMPLE VOTING RECORD (INDIVIDUAL)**

*Vote from October 19th, 2001 on the election of Marek Borowski to the position of Marshall of the Sejm. For the aggregate level record, each row represents a different parliamentary party and the columns list (from left to right) total membership, number voting, for votes, against votes, abstentions and those not attending.*
CHAPTER 7
POLAND IN COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

The preceding chapters provide evidence from Poland supporting my theory of legislative party institutionalization. The question remains, however, whether the theory of legislative party institutionalization developed in Chapter 2 applies outside the confines of the Polish case. In this chapter, I examine the development of parties and party systems in two of Poland’s neighbors, the Czech Republic and Hungary, in order to gage the extent to which legislative party institutionalization has taken place. Through a survey of the existing literature, I find evidence to suggest legislative party institutionalization has taken place in both the Czech Republic and Hungary. While Poland appears to lag behind both countries in terms of the degree of party system institutionalization (and electoral party institutionalization), the same can not be said for the institutionalization of legislative parties. This finding challenges the conventional wisdom and provides important support for my argument that we must be careful to define party as well as institutionalization.

Why the Czech Republic and Hungary? These three states stand out as having made the most successful transitions from communism among the new democracies of East Central Europe. All three consistently have the highest Freedom House scores for political and civil liberties in the region, were among the first to be invited into accession
talks with the European Union, and were the first post-communist states to become members of NATO. According to Lewis (2001, 554), these three states (along with Slovenia) “can without great difficulty be counted as the post-communist democracies furthest along the path to consolidation.”

Despite these similarities in the relative success of their democratic transitions, a closer look at Poland’s party system reveals lower levels of stability than that of either the Czech Republic or Hungary. Specifically, the Polish party system exhibits higher levels of party turnover (parties do not compete from one election to the next), fractionalization (many parties, none of which captures a large share of the vote), and electoral volatility (a high degree of change in parties’ vote share between elections) (Toole, 2000). In narrowing the realm of party institutionalization to the legislature, will the same pattern, whereby Poland falls short of its neighbors, appear? The goal of this chapter is to shed some light on this question by examining the degree of legislative party institutionalization in both the Czech Republic and Hungary.

The remainder of the chapter proceeds as follows. I begin by providing a brief overview of the development of party systems in both the Czech Republic and Hungary, as I did with Poland in Chapter 3. The bulk of the chapter examines the extent to which Czech and Hungarian legislative parties exhibit signs of institutionalization. From here, I attempt to reconcile the conventional wisdom regarding party (and party system) institutionalization in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland with my findings regarding legislative party institutionalization.
7.1 Parties and Party Systems in the Czech Republic and Hungary

Prior to undertaking the empirical analysis of legislative party institutionalization in Poland, I offered an overview in Chapter 3 of the Polish party system and the parties that feature in the analysis. The purpose of doing so was to provide a richer context within which to interpret the results of my analyses, which center on the parliament from 2001 to 2005. Such a detailed examination of parties in the Czech Republic and Hungary is outside the scope of this project; however, providing some background on party system development in the two cases is useful for understanding the discussion of legislative party institutionalization in Section Three.

7.1.1 Czech Republic

As was the case throughout Eastern Europe in the aftermath of World War I, the newly created Czechoslovakia (formed only in 1918) had its first experience with liberal democracy during the interwar period. Unlike the rest of the region, where democratic experiments were short-lived, Czechoslovakia was unique in that it “consistently held free and fair elections with universal suffrage during the interwar period” (Rose and Munro 2003, 120). The collapse of the Communist regime, which had grown increasingly repressive following the Prague Spring in 1968, came about in large part due to the events set in motion in Poland, East Germany and Hungary. There were no opposition parties to speak of in Czechoslovakia and thus it was left to two relatively newly formed mass opposition movements, Civic Forum in the Czech lands and Public Against Violence in Slovakia, to usher in a new era of democracy in 1989.

Inaugural parliamentary elections in June 1990 were contested using closed-list proportional representation electoral rules inherited primarily from the interwar period.
Civic Forum and Public Against Violence, contesting elections in the Czech lands and Slovakia, respectively, were (along with the Communist party) the clear winners of the first democratic election. By the time of the second democratic elections in June of 1992, however, both had split into several smaller political groups. Not long thereafter, Czechoslovakia itself split into its constituent parts, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Party system development in the Czech Republic followed a similar pattern to that of other communist successor states in the region, with a plethora of parties emerging to contest elections early on and a subsequent period characterized by party splits and mergers (Klíma 2000). This period of instability was relatively short-lived in the Czech Republic; since the mid- to late-1990s the party system has shown a high degree of continuity (Bakke and Sitter 2005). Four of the five parties elected to parliament in the June 2006 elections, for example, had participated in every parliament elected from 1992 on, including the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), the Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD), the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM) and the Christian Democratic Party-Czech People’s Party (KDU-CSL). Only for the Green Party is representation in the parliament a new experience. In addition to the continuity of parties elected to parliament, the Czech system is notable for the relative ease with which party competition has taken on a left-right dimension similar to that seen in Western Europe, with the CSSD the dominant party of the left and ODS dominating the right (Bakke and Sitter 2005, Klíma 2000, Kitschelt et. al. 1999).

110 The KSCM was elected in 1992 as part of the Left Block, which it subsequently left in 1994.

111 ODS formed in 1991 with the split of Civic Forum and was led by then-Prime Minister, later President, Vaclav Klaus. Another offshoot of Civic Forum, Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA) won seats in the legislature between 1992 and 1998.
7.1.2 Hungary

Hungary’s experience in the interwar period differed drastically from that of Czechoslovakia. As part of the newly defunct Austro-Hungarian Empire, independent Hungary’s status as a defeated power following World War I created an environment of uncertainty in which the quest to regain lost territory was a central concern. Democracy was implausible in such an atmosphere and instead, authoritarian rule marked by anti-Semitism and fascism characterized Hungarian politics in the interwar years, which eventually led Hungary to side with Germany in World War II.

Also unlike Czechoslovakia, where the ruling Communists took an orthodox approach in the wake of the Prague Spring, Hungarian Communists became increasingly liberal from the 1960s on. By the late 1980s, several opposition political parties had formed: the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) in 1987, the Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz) and the Alliance of Young Democrats (Fidesz) in 1988. These three parties joined the ruling Communists in Roundtable negotiations, the result of which was the end of the Communist regime. Hungary’s first democratic election was held in March 1990 (with a second round the following month) using a mixed electoral system, whereby 176 of the 386 seat national legislature is elected using plurality rules in single-member districts and the remaining seats are selected using proportional representation rules, primarily in multi-member districts. The three opposition parties succeeded in gaining seats in the legislature, as did the reformed Communists, newly renamed the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP), and a few smaller parties.  

112 “In addition to these four parties, the Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP) and the historical Independent Smalholders’ Party (FKgP) were represented in parliament until 1998 and 2002, respectively” (Bakke and Sitter 2005, 246).
The party system that emerged in the wake of founding elections in Hungary has been remarkably stable in terms of continuity, with all but one of the parties elected to parliament in the post-communist period having been established prior to 1990, the exception being the extreme right-wing Justice and Life (MIEP) party (Bakke and Sitter 2005). Patterns of party competition have been somewhat less stable in Hungary, however, with Fidesz shifting to the right in 1995, thereby creating a two-bloc system similar to that of Czechoslovakia (Bakke and Sitter 2005).

7.2 Legislative Party Institutionalization in the Czech Republic

I relied on deductive reasoning in developing the theory of legislative party institutionalization laid out in the second chapter, then went on to test it in the case of Poland. The results of my analysis indicate that the reality of legislative party institutionalization in Poland holds up nicely against the theory. It is, however, possible that Poland is the exception to the rule and that the theory will not hold outside the Polish case. As the theory is meant to explain the process of legislative party institutionalization in new democracies generally, I examine the Czech and Hungarian cases to determine just how well the theory performs beyond the case of Poland.

When undertaking research involving the internal workings of legislative parties in Central and Eastern Europe, it quickly becomes clear that information is scarce (a fact that necessitated my in-depth interviews with party elites in Poland) and the Czech Republic is no exception. Legislative party meetings in the Czech Republic are held behind closed doors and “most of the parliamentary parties do not have formally written rules of proceedings which specify the conduct of their business” (Kopecký 2001, 183). With information on the internal workings of Czech parties so scarce, I rely on existing
studies to examine the decision-making process within Czech legislative parties and the use of selective incentives by party leaders for rewarding and/or punishing the behavior of their MPs.

7.2.1 The Role of Party Leaders

Looking first at the way in which decisions are made regarding issues up for debate and/or vote, as was the case for most Polish parties, Czech parties hold meetings of the parliamentary party membership prior to floor debates in order to arrive at a position. Kopecký (2001, 180 – 81) describes these meetings as “crucial, acting as a sort of collective decision-making arena.” It is within these meetings that MPs have an opportunity to debate the various sides of an issue, rather than waiting until the issue is put to a vote to voice their opinion and possibly dissent. While decision-making via consensus is fairly common practice in Poland’s legislative parties, there were some parties in which decisions were often made by parliamentary party leaders and passed down to MPs. This does not appear to be the case in the Czech Republic, where parliamentary party leaders clearly have more influence than the rank and file, but do not appear to “hold a commanding position in the internal decision-making of parliamentary party organizations” (Kopecký 2001, 181).¹¹³

As we might expect, however, the position ultimately adopted on any given issue by a legislative party may in large part depend on the opinions of individuals within the party tasked with monitoring that piece of legislation. These individuals are often seen as experts on the issue by their fellow party members and as a result, MPs will often defer to

¹¹³ Survey results appear to confirm these conclusions. Seventy-six percent of Czech MPs identified the parliamentary party meeting as the center of decision-making in their party, whereas only five percent pointed to parliamentary party leaders as the source of decision-making power (Kopecký 2001, 180 – 81).
their expertise when forming an opinion on the party’s position. This is the case in Poland and appears to have been the case in the Czech Republic in the early- to mid-1990s as well (Kopecký 2001). On issues where the “expert’s” opinion meets with resistance from the larger membership of the party, however, the party line is decided by majority vote of all the party’s MPs and “at least on important and highly politicized matters, MPs were supposed to conform to the collectively established party line” (Kopecký 2001, 182).

Do Czech parties monitor whether their MPs are voting with the party line on such matters and if so, how? According to Kopecký (2001), parliamentary party leaders often took on the role of whip, primarily in terms of guaranteeing sufficient numbers to see that the party’s position on legislation carries. Formal mechanisms of discipline, however, appear to be absent in the Czech case because the Constitution “stipulate[s] that MPs exercise their mandate personally, according to their conscience and convictions, and are not bound by any orders” (Kopecký 2001, 183). The exception appears to be ODS, which requires certain steps be taken to deal with MPs who exhibit a lack of discipline. These steps include notification of the parliamentary party leadership for undisciplined voting behavior generally, and notification of the regional party organization (the central nominating body) when an MP fails to follow the party line on particularly important issues (Kopecký 2001, 183). What is to be done once the appropriate group has been notified appears to be less well specified, however.

Moving on to selective incentives explicitly, legislative party leaders in the Czech Republic appear far more limited in their use of punishments for undisciplined behavior than leaders of Poland’s legislative parties. Given that such punishments (for example,
verbal and written reprimands, fines and expulsion) would be considered unconstitutional, it is understandable that their use would be virtually unheard of in the Czech Republic. That is not to say, however, that leaders of Czech legislative parties are without the means to promote cohesion. Rather than “sticks,” Czech party leaders rely on “carrots,” choosing to reward MPs with promotion within the ranks of the party over negative sanctions.114 Writes Kopecký (2001, 188), “it was not punishment for deviant behavior, but rather rewards for a good behavior that produced the MPs’ compliance with their parliamentary parties.”

7.2.2 The Role of Legislators

Kopecký’s (2001) survey of parliamentarians in the Czech Republic115 offers evidence of the degree to which Czech legislators have adopted party culture and includes questions pertaining to the relative advantages and disadvantages of parliamentary party membership and voting when of a different mind than the party, among others. These questions correspond nicely with those in the 2000 and 2005 Polish surveys, as well as the survey of Hungarian legislators discussed below.

The first question of interest here asked Czech MPs to identify both the advantages and disadvantages of parliamentary party membership. Responses were open-ended and subsequently coded into a number of categories, including “collective power,” “service and expertise,” “material and financial backup” and “specialization.” The majority of respondents (61.9 percent) identified the “advantages” as “collective power,” which included “answers referring both to collective strength in pushing through

114 According to Kopecký (2001), a successful career as a legislator is often the precursor to a future post in the cabinet or to a position in the upper ranks of the civil service.

115 Kopecký (2001) also offers data from a parallel survey of legislators in the Slovak Republic.
policies and the collective forum; e.g. not just power which parliamentary party membership gives them, but also consultations with colleagues, forming opinions on issues, moral support and a sense of belonging” (Kopecký 2001, 176). Service and expertise was the second most frequent response category (19 percent), followed by policy specialization (7.1 percent) (Kopecký 2001, 176). Looking at disadvantages, the overwhelming response was that there were no disadvantages (57.1 percent); party discipline, however, was seen as a disadvantage by 13.1 percent of Czech MPs, the third most frequent category behind “none” and answers unable to be categorized (Kopecký 2001, 177). The advantages to parliamentary party membership, it appears, clearly outweigh the disadvantages in the eyes of Czech MPs; however, a small minority cited party discipline as a clear disadvantage.

The more relevant survey question for this discussion of legislator attitudes in the Czech Republic asked respondents, “How should an MP vote in case of a difference of opinion with his parliamentary party?” As in the Polish surveys, Czech MPs were asked this question with respect to a number of different issue areas, including economic issues, constitutional issues and moral issues. In general terms (that is, without reference to a particular policy or issue area), Czech MPs chose one’s “own opinion” (50 percent), followed by “it depends” (39.3 percent) and “opinion of parliamentary party” (10.7 percent) (Kopecký 2001, 185). When reference was made to economic or constitutional issues, however, Czech MPs chose “opinion of the parliamentary party” (53.8 percent and 55.4 percent, respectively) over either “own opinion” or “it depends” (Kopecký 2001, 185). On moral issues, opinion was overwhelmingly in favor of voting one’s own opinion, with 83.1 percent of MPs selecting this option, 16.9 percent saying it would
depend and no MPs choosing the opinion of the party (Kopecký 2001, 185). These results, then, correspond fairly well with the equivalent question from the Polish surveys, where most respondents chose the parliamentary club’s opinion on every policy issue save “ideological” (read “moral”) issues.

Turning now to the behavior of Czech legislators, this section examines attendance at votes, voting cohesion and party switching in the Czech parliament between 1992 and 1996. Looking first at attendance rates, Kopecký (2001) uses data on the number of MPs “registered” to vote (measured by the electronic voting machines in parliament) to arrive at figures for “average participation.” Average participation rates for the four governing parties ranged from a low of 66.43 percent to a high of 75.24 percent, with three of the four parties averaging around 75 percent; for the six opposition parties, the range was between 47.41 and 76 percent; and for the three parties no longer in existence, the range was between 57.45 percent and 63.84 percent. Participation rates are clearly higher on average for governing parties than for either opposition parties or “extinct” parties.\footnote{An attendance rate of 75 percent is low when compared to Poland (see the previous chapter), where the range of attendance scores was between 80 and 93. Of course, the time frame for comparison differs; data from the Czech Republic were collected between 1992 and 1996, as opposed to data from Poland between 2001 and 2005. Different methods for calculating attendance scores could also account for the observed differences across the two cases.}

As for voting cohesion, Kopecký (2001, 178) calculates a measure he calls “average similarity,” which “represents the average size of the majority of a parliamentary party voting one way or another.” Kopecký (2001, 178) explains that if a party voted in favor of legislation by a margin of 75 percent to 25 percent, its majority was 75 percent, whereas a party evenly split 50/50 would have a majority of 50; the
average similarity score, then, is equal to the mean value of these majority scores across a set of votes.\textsuperscript{117} For the period between 1992 and 1996, voting cohesion was fairly high across all Czech parties; whereas identifiable differences between parties in the governing coalition and opposition emerged in terms of average participation scores, variation in average similarity scores is considerably lower when comparing coalition and opposition parties. For example, similarity scores for the governing coalition ranged from 90.65 percent to 93.98 percent, whereas scores for the opposition parties ranged from 85.75 percent to 96.73 percent (Kopecký 2001, 179).\textsuperscript{118} Voting cohesion across all parties in the parliament elected in 1996 increased to an average of 90 – 95 percent (Klima 2000).

Lastly, party switching was not uncommon in the Czech parliament between 1992 and 1996. According to Klima (2000), some 35 percent of MPs (70 of a total 200) switched their party affiliation at some point during the parliament. The incidence of party switching was due in large part, however, to a variety of party splits and mergers during this time. As evidence of this phenomenon, the parliament began with nine parliamentary parties in 1992 and increased to 12 in 1994, only to diminish to nine prior to legislative elections in 1996.

\textsuperscript{117} Kopecký’s (2001) average similarity measure differs from more common measures of cohesion, such as the Rice index or the Index of Agreement (both of which I calculated for Poland in the previous chapter). The primary difference lies in the treatment of abstentions. The Rice index uses only “yes” and “no” votes, whereas the Index of Agreement is calculated using votes of “yes,” “no” and “abstain.” The average similarity measure treats abstentions as no votes (Kopecký 2001, 201). This method for dealing with abstentions could affect the overall calculations slightly; however, assuming abstaining is a relatively uncommon practice, the differences between “average similarity” scores and either Rice or AI scores should be minimal.

\textsuperscript{118} Recall that in the Sejm from 2001 to 2005, the range of voting cohesion scores (measured by the Rice Index) was between 92.48 percent and 98.75 percent (see Chapter Six).
Institutional changes put into effect with the election of a new parliament in 1996 were intended to dissuade MPs from switching parties or forming new ones. With the approval of new standing orders in 1995, the number of MPs required to form a parliamentary party increased from five to 10 members, and newly created parties were to be left out of the distribution of funds within parliament, as well as participation in committees and other organizational structures in parliament. As Kopecký (2001, 175 – 76) notes, “There is no doubt that the adoption of such restrictive formal rules will make it less attractive, if not impossible, for individual MPs to leave their parliamentary parties and/or set up wholly new ones.”

7.3 Legislative Party Institutionalization in Hungary

As was the case in both Poland and the Czech Republic, information about the internal workings of parliamentary parties in Hungary is difficult to come by. I was, however, able to locate within the extant literature some information regarding the efforts of Hungary’s parliamentary party leaders to create discipline in a general sense, the decision-making process regarding issues of policy, and the use of expulsion as a punishment for undisciplined behavior.119

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119 In looking at the role of parties in Hungary’s legislature, one must not lose sight of the confounding influence of the electoral system, whereby 176 members of the 386-seat legislature are elected in single-member districts using plurality electoral rules. As discussed in Chapter Two, strong parties capable of disciplining their members are much more likely where proportional representation rules are in place, rather than plurality rules.
7.3.1 *The Role of Party Leaders*

Ágh (1999, 170) clearly sees party leaders in the Hungarian parliament working to manufacture discipline among their members, a process that, at least early on in the first parliament, was “undermined to a great extent” by “the obscure nature of party identity.” Nonetheless, leaders of governing parties in particular took it upon themselves to impose discipline on the rank and file, which began with the decision-making process; parliamentary party leaders made decisions regarding the party line at the top and subsequently expected the backbenchers to adopt that position as their own.\(^{120}\) This practice differs from what we see in the Czech Republic and for most Polish parties. In the second parliament, party leaders appeared to recognize the alienating effect of pursuing a top-down, authoritarian decision-making process and implemented a “more democratic decision-making process” (Ágh 1999, 183).

In looking to the rewards and punishments legislative party leaders may (or may not) have put in place for establishing party culture, evidence from the first parliament (1990 – 1994) indicates the most severe punishment available to the legislative party leadership, expulsion from the parliamentary club, was used on a number of occasions.\(^{121}\) These expulsions did not, however, reflect a lack of discipline on the part of the expellees.

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\(^{120}\) This strategy backfired (as I discuss below regarding legislator behavior) and ultimately led to a restructuring of the parties, the result of which were far more coherent parties.

\(^{121}\) Lomax (1995, 82) notes that the process of party development within parliament between 1990 and 1994 included a number of expulsions and was “marked by bitter debates and conflicts within the parties and, in some cases, by internal fights and occasional litigation.” One notable example was the expulsion of playwright István Csurka (and several of his supporters) from the MDF parliamentary fraction in June 1993. Csurka, who was a leader within the MDF, had become a liability of sorts not only for his ultranationalist and anti-Semitic views, but also for his critique of the state of the country under the MDF’s governance (Lomax 1995, 95 – 96). Another example is the internal dispute within the Smallholders (ISHP) over restitution of property seized by the Communists in the collectivization campaigns post – 1947, which led to the expulsion of several MPs from the parliamentary faction, who went on to create a new parliamentary party grouping as a result (Lomax 1995, Szarvas 1995).
per se; rather, they symbolized the search for an ideology and coherent programmatic nature so much a part of party development in the early years of the post-communist transition. In fact, when presented with instances of highly undisciplined behavior, like that described by Ágh (1999) whereby MPs from governing parties submitted interpellations and parliamentary questions of their own government, and voted against the party line, offending MPs were not expelled from the party faction as they most certainly would have been in a more established democracy. Whereas Ágh (1999, 177) takes this lack of action as evidence of “big intraparty tensions on some policy issues,” the fact that he describes the motivation for governing party MPs to behave in this manner as “revenge” for being kept out of the decision-making process may instead indicate legislative party leaders lack the means to expel MPs for undisciplined behavior.

Despite an unwillingness on the part of governing parties to expel MPs for “bad” behavior, the strict voting discipline governing parties put into place in the first parliament appears to have led to the development of more coherent parties in the long run, as MPs unwilling to toe the line chose to leave and join a new party or remain independent (Ágh 1999). By the time the second parliament came into office in 1994, MPs appear to have accepted the importance of discipline and by 1996, only one MP had been expelled from a parliamentary faction (the Independent Smallholders) for disciplinary reasons (Ágh 1999).

7.3.2 The Role of Legislators

Ilonszki and Judge (1995) report the results of a survey of Hungarian MPs conducted in 1992, which included several questions pertaining to the influence of the party on legislators’ attitudes and behaviors. In discussing these survey data, we must
keep in mind the fact that some MPs in Hungary are elected in single-member districts using plurality rules and others from party lists using proportional representation and as a result, there may be important differences between these two groups.

The first question of note here asked Hungarian MPs “which, if any, of the following they thought they primarily represented: the nation (all citizens of the country); a particular social stratus; an ethnic group; a political party; an organized or interest group; a city or region; or a specific electoral constituency” (Ilonszki and Judge 1995, 145). Approximately one-third of the 117 respondents (32.5 percent) identified the nation as their primary concern, with another 22 percent pointing to an electoral constituency and 17 percent to the party as their primary focus of representation (Ilonszki and Judge 1995, 145). Identifiable differences exist between those MPs elected from single-member districts and those elected on party lists. Looking specifically at one’s political party as the focus of representation, 24.6 percent of MPs elected using proportional representation rules from party lists identified the party as their primary focus, whereas only 8.9 percent of single-member district MPs did the same (Ilonszki and Judge 1995, 145). On the other hand, nearly 43 percent of single-member district MPs identified an electoral constituency as their primary focus compared to only 3.3 percent of party list MPs who did the same (Ilonszki and Judge 1995, 145).122

A second question, which parallels the Polish surveys nicely, asked Hungarian MPs about the influence of a number of different groups on their voting behavior,

122 Ilonszki and Judge (1995, 146) further identify differences in response to this question according to whether an MP is a member of a governing or opposition party. Government MPs identified constituency as their primary focus in larger numbers than opposition MPs, who “were twice as likely to identify party as their primary focus as government MPs.” This result, however, appears to be driven by mandate, with the majority of government MPs coming from single-member districts and most of those in the opposition from proportional representation districts.
including the national interest, constituency interests, and the opinion of one’s party, interest groups and social strata. Specifically, the question stated, “In reaching a decision on a vote in parliament which of the following factors are the most important?” MPs were asked to identify the importance of each group on an eight-point scale where one indicated “most important” and eight “least important” (Ilonszki and Judge 1995, 147). For all MPs, regardless of mandate, national interest was identified as most important with a mean value of 2.08, followed by constituency opinion (3.62) and opinion of one’s party faction (3.78) (Ilonszki and Judge 1995, 147). While the mean value for opinion of one’s party faction is higher than that of national interest (and only negligibly higher than constituency interest), it appears that MPs in Hungary still identify the party’s opinion as an important consideration in their voting calculus.

Two additional questions from the 1992 survey are useful for assessing the attitudes and behaviors of Hungarian parliamentarians with respect to their party. In response to one question asking MPs to gage the extent to which they vote against the party line, on average, Hungarian MPs estimated that they voted against the party line on 12.5 percent of all votes cast (Ilonszki and Judge 1995, 149). Looking at results from the second question, only nine percent of MPs “believed party discipline to be a ‘very important’ factor in determining their vote, while 38 percent maintained that discipline was ‘of little importance’” (Ilonszki and Judge 1995, 149).\(^{123}\) Discipline, it appears, plays a minor role in the vote calculus of Hungarian MPs at this time. This result is not,  

\(^{123}\) As Ilonszki and Judge (1995, 149) rightfully point out, however, the bulk of the work in parliament at this time dealt with legislation of a practical nature, whereby distinct party differences were unlikely. In addition, as Ágh (1999) illustrates, Hungary’s legislative parties were in a state of flux during this period as they worked to develop coherent positions.
however, surprising in light of the revelation above that legislative party leaders failed to use expulsion from the parliamentary club as a punishment for undisciplined behavior.

In Chapter 6, I examined the extent to which Polish legislators have adopted party culture by looking at their behavior, specifically, the frequency with which legislators attend votes and vote with their party. In the case of Hungary, attendance at votes the first year of the first democratic parliament (1990 – 1991) averaged roughly 60 percent across all parties, with government MPs attending more frequently than opposition MPs. Ágh (1999) notes a decline in overall attendance at votes over the life of the first parliament124 (1990 – 1994) and further observes lower rates of attendance among opposition MPs than for those in the government. In the second parliament, elected in 1994, attendance at votes continued to be lower in opposition parties than governing parties; however, overall rates of attendance were higher than in the first parliament (Ágh 1999).

Observable differences between Hungarian MPs in government and those in opposition in the first parliament also extended to the manner in which they voted (Szarvas 1995, Ágh 1999). Szarvas (1995, 126) writes, “the Hungarian government party factions voted together very frequently, to the extent that we can talk about them behaving like a voting machine. By contrast, the opposition party MPs vote together a little less than the government party MPs, while the independents have the lowest rate of unanimity.” Specifically, statistics on average cohesion (measured as the percentage of total party members voting together) in 1990 show a range from 86 percent for

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124 Ágh (1999, 175) does point out, however, that the workload for MPs in the first parliament was “heavy” and that it only increased for the second parliament.
independent MPs, to a high of 97 percent for government MPs; opposition parties were somewhere between the two, averaging between 89 and 94 percent. Average cohesion scores in 1991 increased for every group in parliament with the exception of the independents, who averaged 81 percent. Unanimity of government MPs increased to 98 percent and the range for opposition parties in 1991 was between 93 and 97 percent (Szarvas 1995). In the second parliament, high rates of voting cohesion continued to characterize governing parties, with opposition parties lagging behind (although exhibiting higher levels of cohesion than the opposition parties of the first parliament) (Ágh 1999). These patterns mirror those in the Czech Republic over the same period of time, where governing parties voted together more often than opposition parties on average and where the absolute levels of cohesion increased over time.

Such disciplined voting behavior on the part of governing parties did not necessarily extend to parliamentary activity more generally. Power was highly centralized in Hungary’s parliamentary parties at this time, particularly in governing parties, which led MPs to take “revenge for their situation as a silent and loyal majority not involved in decision making but disciplined in and through voting procedures” (Ágh 1999, 176). Governing MPs did so through the use of private motions and parliamentary questions initiated against the government, although such behavior was more common among individuals elected from single-member districts, as opposed to party lists (Ágh 1999). As noted earlier, however, the leadership of Hungary’s governing parties failed to take action against offending members. In the second parliament, the incidence of MPs “acting out” decreased significantly as a result of party leaders taking greater pains to ensure the involvement of backbenchers in the decision-making process (Ágh 1999).
Another factor to consider in terms of legislator behavior and party culture is the incidence of party switching. Recall from Chapter 2 that individuals who object to discipline within their party have the option of exit and can either switch to another party in parliament or choose to remain unaffiliated with a party. Party switching should decrease over time as a function of the increased coherence of party programs, which should leave little room for the disjuncture between legislator preferences and party positions that might exist in the early years of democratic transition. At the same time, switching is less likely the more time party culture has to develop. Legislators who may be unfamiliar with the culture may choose to leave, but as that culture takes root, there is more information available to the would-be legislative party member about that culture, and thus less need for switching.

Between 1990 and 1994, 56 MPs switched party affiliation in parliament, with the vast majority of these doing so of their own accord and not because they were expelled from the parliamentary party (Szarvas 1995). Of these 56, 22 switched to another party (either one already in existence or a new party they chose to create); the majority of switchers, interestingly enough, became independents. As Szarvas (1995, 132) notes, “Some of them were disappointed by party discipline or by the rigidity of the decision-making process while others, especially those who have been organizers of separate new parties, left their party because of changes in their own political aims.” As compared to the first parliament, party switching in the second parliament was relatively rare. After two years (1994 – 1996), eight individual MPs had left their party (one of these due to expulsion) and another 15 split from the MDF to create a new faction, the Hungarian Democratic People’s Party (Ágh 1999, 181 – 82).


7.4 Comparing Legislative Party Institutionalization

According to the theory of legislative party institutionalization developed in Chapter 2, for a political party to institutionalize in the legislature requires party leaders to establish mechanisms of discipline central to party culture and the party’s legislators to subsequently adopt that culture. Based on the (admittedly limited) information on legislative parties in the Czech Republic and Hungary, it appears that leaders of Poland’s legislative parties have gone the furthest towards establishing the selective incentives associated with party culture. Legislative party leaders in Poland have established the equivalent of a Whip (the “Discipline Advocate”) tasked with monitoring the behavior of the party’s legislators. Whether such a position exists in either the Czech Republic or Poland is largely unclear, although it appears that parliamentary party leaders in the Czech Republic took on this role in an informal sense.

As for the mechanisms for rewarding and punishing members, Poland also appears to be more developed than its neighbors. Leaders of Poland’s parliamentary clubs use anything from reprimands to fines to expulsion as a means for punishing undisciplined MPs, but also reward consistently good behavior with promotion and high placement on the party list. Evidence from Hungary suggests that legislative party leaders saw the value of party discipline, but failed to act against MPs who showed a lack of discipline. In the Czech Republic, party leaders are constrained by the Constitution when it comes to punishing MPs and have instead relied almost exclusively on positive sanctions.125

125 One potential explanation for these observed differences at the elite level is that legislators in the Czech Republic and Hungary do not need to be disciplined, for example, because legislators share a similar outlook and will vote together in the absence of any formal mechanisms of discipline. Over time, as party
Turning to the role of the legislative rank and file in adopting party culture, I looked to surveys of parliamentarians for insight into the extent to which legislators say their party influences their voting behavior. In Poland and the Czech Republic both, legislators acknowledge that the party’s position should take precedence over the legislator’s own opinion when it comes to voting on most issues, the exception being moral issues. An equivalent question is unavailable for Hungary, although in response to a question regarding the influence of various groups on voting decisions, legislators placed their party on the “more important” end of the spectrum, although below both national and constituency interests. Without an identical survey question, it is difficult to draw clear comparisons across all three cases; however, the fact that nearly half of Hungarian MPs are elected in single-member districts may account for the diminished influence of party.

As for legislator behavior, attendance at votes across all parties in both the Czech Republic and Hungary started off low and increased over time, although was consistently higher for governing MPs than opposition MPs. In Poland, a similar pattern appears whereby opposition parties’ MPs attend votes somewhat less frequently than governing parties’ MPs, although the overall levels of attendance exceed those of either the Czech Republic or Hungary. Voting cohesion shows a similar pattern in all three cases, where culture becomes more established, we might expect to see the need to invoke formal rules of discipline diminishing; however, particularly in an environment where both parties and legislators alike are still finding their political identity, rewards and punishments will likely be needed to signal to the party’s members those behaviors that are permissible and those that will not be tolerated. If it were the case that legislators shared such a common outlook, we should not see party switching or the splits and mergers of parties we did in fact see in both the Czech Republic and Hungary at this time. With a unified group of legislators, there would also be no need to hold meetings of the parliamentary party prior to floor debates and votes in order to establish the party’s position, along with very limited disagreement at such meetings. If this were the case, then, we would not see procedures in place for dealing with such disagreements, such as the majority voting practice in place in the Czech Republic. Thus, arguing that formal mechanisms of discipline are less well developed in the Czech Republic and Hungary due to less need for such discipline seems unsound.
absolute levels of cohesion increase over time and governing parties’ legislators vote together more often than those in opposition parties. Lastly, party switching was relatively common in all three cases in the early years of the transition, but declined over time as party identities crystallized.

On the whole, then, Poland’s legislative parties compare favorably to those of both the Czech Republic and Hungary and, in some respects, appear to be further along in the process of legislative party institutionalization. I must point out, however, that making direct comparisons across these cases has its limits, both in terms of the available data and the time frame involved. The evidence available on Czech and Hungarian legislative parties is secondary, compared to the more detailed primary source information I collected on Poland’s legislative parties. Secondly, the time frame of the analysis of Czech and Hungarian parties covers the early years of the post-communist period, compared to the Polish data collected for the parliament elected in 2001 and dissolved in 2005. It stands to reason, then, that the conclusions reached might differ were I to have earlier data for Poland and/or more recent data for the Czech Republic and Hungary.

The limitations of this secondary source information precluded me from offering explanations for variation in legislative party institutionalization in the discussion of individual party systems above. I can, however, offer some preliminary discussion of explanations for variation across our three party systems. Recall from Chapter 2 that the primary factors likely to influence institutionalization at the level of the party system include the strength of committees, the type of electoral system and whether the executive was presidential or parliamentary. Parliamentary parties will likely be less well
institutionalized in parliaments with strong committee systems. Proportional representation (PR) electoral systems should produce more institutionalized legislative parties than plurality systems, with mixed electoral systems somewhere between the two. We further expect to see a higher degree of legislative party institutionalization under closed-list PR (where the power of the party in determining the list is greater) than in open-list PR. Lastly, parliamentary parties should be more institutionalized in parliamentary systems than in presidential systems given the importance of the parliamentary party to maintaining the executive in parliamentary systems. Semi-presidential systems, then, would be somewhere between the two in their level of legislative party institutionalization.

If we compare the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland on these three criteria, Czech legislative parties should be the most institutionalized of the three. The Czech Republic is a parliamentary system using closed-list PR, whereas Hungary’s parliamentary is elected using mixed electoral rules. As a result, the institutionalization of legislative parties in Hungary may lag behind that of the Czech Republic somewhat. According to these criteria, legislative party institutionalization should be the weakest in Poland. Polish elections are contested using open-list PR, the committee system is relatively strong, and the executive is semi-presidential (albeit relatively weak semi-presidentialism).

Yet when we compare legislative party institutionalization across these three cases, it appears that Poland’s legislative parties are more institutionalized than those of either the Czech Republic or Hungary. This finding supports my argument that elite commitment is the key to explaining legislative party institutionalization. The type of
electoral system, executive structure, and committee system may place constraints on party leaders, making it more or less likely they will establish mechanisms central to party culture; however, it is ultimately up to the party elites to determine whether this culture gets off the ground or not.

7.5 Placing the Analysis Within the Literature

The assertion that Poland’s legislative parties are equally, if not more, institutionalized than those of either the Czech Republic or Hungary contradicts the conventional wisdom, which sees Poland’s parties and party system as lagging significantly behind its neighbors in the area of institutionalization. As mentioned briefly at the start of this chapter, the conclusion that Poland’s party system is less stable and poorly institutionalized by comparison rests on a few key indicators, all of which center on parties at the electoral level, including rates of party turnover, levels of fractionalization and the degree of electoral volatility. In this section, I explore in greater detail the claims made within the existent literature regarding the institutionalization of Poland’s parties and party system.

One key indicator of a party system’s level of institutionalization (and one oft-cited to support the notion that Poland’s party system is weakly institutionalized) is the index of electoral volatility, which “measures the extent to which party strengths change from one election to the next, and represents the sum of the differences between each

126 As discussed earlier in this project, party system institutionalization often takes the specific parties within the system for granted.

127 As Shabad and Slomczynski (2004, 151) note, “The continual formations of entirely new parties, some of which acquire ‘overnight’ success, and the ongoing disappearance, schisms and mergers of established parties, together with high rates of electoral volatility, attest to the under-institutionalization of the party systems of new democracies in East Central Europe.”
party’s share of the vote in two successive elections presented on a percentage basis” (Lewis 2000, 84). Estimates of electoral volatility often differ significantly, as Lewis (2000) aptly illustrates, primarily because the splits and mergers typical of parties in the region can make tracing a party across elections a real challenge (Birnir 2005, Lewis 2000). Lewis’ (2000, 85) own estimates of volatility over the last three elections (between 1991 and 1993, and 1993 and 1997 in Poland, for example) indicate that between the first and second election, volatility in the Czech Republic was 19 percent, in Hungary 22 percent and in Poland, 28 percent; between the second and third elections, these numbers are 15 percent for the Czech Republic, 28 percent for Hungary and 30 percent for Poland. Furthermore, Lewis (2000, 86) claims that if one traces the splits and mergers of the post-Solidarity parties, “a more distinct learning process can be identified as stable constituencies emerge in the new party environment, with Polish volatility in this context declining in general aggregate terms to 22 per cent between 1993 and 1997 and citizens’ volatility to 15 per cent.” To conclude from these numbers that Poland’s party system is significantly more volatile than those of either the Czech Republic or Poland, then, may be unwise; however, electoral volatility in Poland is somewhat higher than in these other two states.

Another indicator typically associated with the relative lack of party system institutionalization is parliamentary fragmentation, as measured by the effective number of parties.128 According to much of the literature, Poland’s party system fares poorly according to this measure as well. Kopecký (2003, 151), for example, describes Poland’s

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128 A related measure is that of fractionalization, which implies that a large number of parties win elections, although each has only a small share of the vote. Given electoral thresholds, it is unlikely that many such parties would enter parliament. Thus, the more relevant measure is that of parliamentary fragmentation.
Sejm as “the parliament with perhaps the most notorious fragmentation of parliamentary parties anywhere in the region.” Effective parties are those “of sufficient size and parliamentary weight to be relevant for viable coalition-building and government formation in the parliamentary body” (Lewis 2000, 87). The fewer effective parties in a parliament, the less fragmented it is considered to be. In 1992, the effective number of parties in the Czech Republic was 3.4, in Hungary 3.8 and in Poland, 10.9 (Lewis 2000, 88). These numbers appear to support Kopecký’s (2003) assertion. Yet by 1999, the effective number of parties in Poland had decreased significantly to only 2.9, whereas Hungary had 3.0 effective parties and the Czech Republic, 3.7 (Lewis 2000, 88). Again, it is difficult to say that Poland’s party system is considerably less institutionalized when compared to those of the Czech Republic or Hungary based on this measure. Furthermore, “In themselves, measures of the number of effective parties gave little indication of party system development or successful democratization” as evidenced by the relatively low number of effective parties in Albania and Bulgaria, neither of which can be said to have particularly consolidated democracy (Lewis 2000, 89).

A final indicator of party system institutionalization worth discussing in this context is turnover, or the degree to which parties enter and exit the electoral arena. The practice of parties entering and exiting the system is said to be antithetical to party system institutionalization “where voters and party leaders know and can develop relationships through iterated interactions” (Birnir 2005, 917). Thus, turnover is intended to reflect the degree to which parties have strong ties in society. Measuring turnover, like volatility, is difficult in post-communist East Central Europe because rarely is it the case that a party contesting an election for the first time is entirely new. According to Bakke and Sitter
(2005), all four parties in the Hungarian parliament, and four of five in the Czech Republic, are considered “long-standing” parties, compared to only three such parties of seven total in Poland. Yet one could argue party turnover in Poland is lower than at first appears given the splits and mergers among the post-Solidarity parties over time. Thus, Civic Platform and Law and Justice were both technically new parties in 2001; however, both emerged from within the broader structure of Solidarity Electoral Action and before it, the Solidarity movement. At the same time, turnover in Hungary is underestimated because Fidesz significantly shifted to the right after the 1994 elections and was, in many ways, a new party when it contested elections in 1998.

As with the institutionalization of legislative parties, there are a number of potential factors accounting for variation in the degree of party system institutionalization across systems. If party system institutionalization is equivalent to low levels of turnover, volatility and fragmentation, then it stands to reason that electoral rules may contribute to party system institutionalization. For example, in the absence of an electoral threshold, parliamentary fragmentation will be high, whereas the higher the threshold for parties to win seats, the lower the fragmentation. Plurality, PR and mixed electoral rules all have an influence on the party system as well. Per Duverger’s (1954) law, the number of viable parties should be lower under plurality rules and higher under PR; mixed systems are expected to have fewer parties than pure PR systems, but not as few as plurality systems. Birnir (2005, 932) offers one additional factor in party system institutionalization, that of public funding for parties, and finds that “the introduction of public funding does increase institutionalization of the party system in that it stabilizes vote shares of parties between elections.”
If we look across our three cases here, the mixed electoral system in Hungary should contribute to a smaller number of viable parties than either the open-list or closed-list PR systems of Poland and the Czech Republic. All three now have a threshold for entry to parliament for a single party; five percent in both the Czech Republic and Hungary and four percent for the PR seats in Hungary. The absence of a threshold of any kind in Poland’s first free elections in 1991 contributed to a high degree of fragmentation that perhaps delayed the institutionalization of its party system when compared to those of the Czech Republic and Hungary. In addition, where thresholds for coalitions of parties are high, we should expect to see greater party system institutionalization. In the Czech Republic, a coalition of two parties must earn seven percent of the vote to win seats in parliament, three parties need nine percent of the vote and four parties must earn 11 percent of the vote to enter parliament (Rose and Munro 2003). In Hungary, coalitions of two parties need 10 percent of the vote, while three or more parties must earn 15 percent of the vote to earn seats on the PR ballot. In Poland, coalitions must earn eight percent of the vote to enter parliament, regardless of the number of parties comprising the coalition. These structural factors, then, may explain why Poland’s party system institutionalization lags somewhat behind that of either the Czech Republic or Hungary, rather than any particular features of the parties themselves.

7.6 Conclusion

The information on Czech and Hungarian legislative parties presented in this chapter appears to support the theory of legislative party institutionalization developed in Chapter 2. In Hungary, legislative party leaders in the early years of the first parliament attempted to keep decision-making power for themselves and expected the rank and file
to support their decisions, a move that subsequently alienated MPs and led to a high
degree of undisciplined behavior and party switching. This behavior continued as a result
of the unwillingness and/or inability of legislative party leaders to punish offending MPs
(who appeared largely unconcerned with discipline according to survey results). Only
when legislative party leaders recognized that the rank and file would only follow the
party line if they had some input in establishing it, and therefore opened the decision-
making process up somewhat, did rates of party switching and other forms of
undisciplined behavior decline.

In the case of the Czech Republic, the Constitution places constraints on the
ability of legislative party leaders to discipline members and necessitates instead a
reliance on rewards over punishments, although were we to know more about the internal
workings of these parties, we may find informal mechanisms for punishing undesirable
behavior do exist.\textsuperscript{129} Czech legislators do, however, acknowledge the importance of
voting cohesion in both word and deed, although at lower levels than we see in Poland.

The focus in the existing literature is not on legislative parties, however, but on
the institutionalization of party systems. A lack of institutionalization at the level of the
party system holds important consequences for democratic consolidation and the overall
quality of democracy, primarily in terms of the continuity of parties participating in
elections and the resultant ties between parties and voters. It is in this sense that Poland
is often seen as lagging behind its neighbors, the Czech Republic and Hungary. I have
argued here, however, that the measures most frequently used as indicators of party

\textsuperscript{129} The fact that approximately 13 percent of respondents in the survey of Czech MPs identified party
discipline as a disadvantage to parliamentary party membership may be an indicator that such punishments
are in place.
system institutionalization, including electoral volatility and the effective number of parties, should be used with caution. In addition, looking at these figures over time and within the context of developments within each country, the degree of institutionalization of Poland’s party system is not nearly as weak as has been argued in the literature. Furthermore, as discussed above, structural factors within these three states play an important role in the institutionalization of parties and party systems, electoral laws being chief among them, and therefore cannot be overlooked when making cross-national comparisons.

Even if we accept that Poland’s party system lags behind those of the Czech Republic and Hungary in its degree of institutionalization, the analysis in this chapter (and the project as a whole) indicates that despite turnover at the electoral level, Poland’s parties show a relatively high level of institutionalization in the legislature (and at levels equal to or greater than those in the Czech Republic or Hungary). Ultimately, it is the ability of political parties elected to the legislature to produce democratic outputs that may matter most for democratic consolidation and the quality of democracy.
CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

That political parties are a central feature of modern democracy is widely accepted. Parties provide a key linkage between citizens and government by bringing together groups of like-minded individuals and working to represent their interests through election to public office.\textsuperscript{130} Once in office, parties organize their legislators as they set about the tasks of legislation and governance. In new democracies, parties are particularly important, for the way in which they perform the linkage and representative functions may hold important implications for the mere survival of democracy, let alone its future success.

In looking at the new democracies of post-communist East Central Europe, it becomes clear that despite a lack of parties under communism, there was no shortage of parties to contest the first democratic elections in these states. The bigger issue was whether or not these parties could establish themselves and therefore offer consistent choices to voters and consistent representation in office. How, though, do political parties become institutionalized? It is this question that served as the motivation for this project.

\textsuperscript{130} Or so the classic mass party model would argue.
Prior to understanding the how or why of party institutionalization, it is necessary first to define it. The existing literature offers a number of definitions for “party institutionalization,” all of which appear to build upon Huntington’s (1968) reference to “value and stability.” The most comprehensive of these is Randall and Svåsand (2002), who identify four features of institutionalization: systemness, value infusion, decisional autonomy and reification. Yet it was the authors’ simple definition of party institutionalization, in which they “suggest that institutionalization should be understood as the process by which the party becomes established in terms both of integrated patterns of behaviour and of attitudes, or culture” (Randall and Svåsand 2002, 12) that provided the point of departure for my definition of party institutionalization and the subsequent theory of how and why party institutionalization takes place.

My conceptualization of party institutionalization focuses not merely on institutionalization, but on party as well. Following a number of scholars, I distinguish between the party in office and the party in the electorate on the grounds that the attitudes and behaviors central to institutionalization will differ accordingly. I choose to focus on the party in office given that it was within parliament that parties in East/Central Europe were first created and the party in parliament that continues to be the primary political actor in these new democracies. In addition, the institutionalization of legislative

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131 Recall that this is a different literature from that on party system institutionalization, which is by far the more developed of the two.

132 Systemness, then, involves developing consistent patterns of behavior within the party, while value infusion refers to the party becoming valuable in and of itself (rather than as a means to an end for members). Decisional autonomy and reification, on the other hand, deal with a party’s external features; autonomy from outside forces and the extent to which the public identifies the party as such, respectively.

133 The decision of a number of Polish legislators to create a new party in the spring of 2004, SDPL, is a good example of parliament as the central arena for party activity in East Central Europe.
parties contributes significantly to the success of democracy through its effects on the quality of representation and accountability, as well as the quality and efficiency of legislation and governance.

How, then, do legislative parties institutionalize? To summarize the argument, institutionalization is equivalent to the establishment of party culture, or the rules and norms guiding the party’s behavior, by party elites and the subsequent acceptance of such rules and norms by the rank and file members. For the legislative party, these rules and norms are designed to overcome the challenge of the collective action problem, whereby legislators choose to free-ride, rather than bear the costs of pursuing the party’s interests in the legislature themselves, and consist of the rewards and punishments more commonly known as party discipline. Legislative party leaders establish these rewards and punishments because they are the ones with the power to do so. Thus, leaders signal to members the behaviors deemed appropriate and inappropriate and the corresponding rewards and punishments. The key, then, is elite commitment; without it, the rules and norms of party culture will not be established and institutionalization will not take place. If they fail to do so, the ability of the party to pursue its goals successfully in the legislature is at risk, and in all likelihood, the party will cease to function. If, however, legislators adopt party culture, incidences of free-riding behavior will be minimized and the party will act as a largely cohesive whole when performing its functions in the legislature.

### 8.1 Findings

In order to examine this theory of legislative party institutionalization empirically, I employed a multi-methodological research design in the study of a single new
democracy, Poland. The in-depth examination of a single case was most appropriate here as it allowed for a closer look at the process of institutionalization over time, both within and across parties, and the effect of a variety of within-system factors (ideology, party size, government and coalition status, etc.). It further controlled for systemic factors that may contribute to legislative party institutionalization across systems, such as the nature of the electoral system, whether a state is presidential or parliamentary and the relative strength of committees versus parties.

To gauge the role of elites in establishing party culture, I conducted a series of in-depth interviews with Polish party elites. These included Members of Parliament, Cabinet Ministers, party Secretary-Generals, and other top-ranking party officials. Through the course of these interviews, I discovered that legislative party leaders in Poland had taken the necessary steps to create party culture, although precisely how they chose to do so, and how consistently they enforced those rules, varied. Thus, legislative party leaders had developed rules for deciding on the party line, be it via consensus among all members or a top-down decision. Leaders also had rules in place for when legislators were expected to vote according to the party line or face consequences (the budget), and when it was acceptable to vote according to one’s own conscience (moral or religious issues, such as abortion). Polish party leaders have also established a means for monitoring the behavior of legislators and oftentimes, for recommending an appropriate punishment for bad behavior, through the position of the Discipline Advocate. The Discipline Advocate is the equivalent of a whip, and depending on the party, plays a role in monitoring the voting behavior of the party’s legislators. Lastly, Polish legislative party leaders have established rules and norms for rewarding and punishing behavior.
Punishments include verbal and written reprimands, fines, and expulsion from the parliamentary club whereas rewards may involve internal promotion and a favorable position on the party list.

Through these interviews, I also examined the factors hypothesized to influence whether party leaders would establish mechanisms of discipline, including ideology, size, whether in government or opposition, and whether a member of a coalition. Identifying clear patterns in party culture based on these factors was difficult. Thus, some small parties appeared less concerned about mechanisms of discipline (Union of Labor (UP), for example), whereas others (Samoobrona) had well-established mechanisms of discipline. Parties of the left appeared to use consensus more than parties of the right, which often employed a top-down decision-making model, but no clear distinctions emerged in terms of the overall mechanisms established. The only parties in coalition were those in government, which also happened only to be parties on the left, which makes teasing out the impact of these factors all the more difficult.

What clearly did emerge from my interviews, however, was the central role the party’s leadership played in establishing mechanisms of discipline. For example, when the newly created Civic Platform (PO) entered parliament for the first time in 2001, it was regarded as relatively undisciplined. According to MPs from PO, that image changed dramatically with the choice of Donald Tusk as the new legislative party leader, who set about creating formal mechanisms of discipline where few had existed before and succeeded in doing so. Leaders of other parties that had emerged from within the Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) coalition had taken a similar tack, working to
establish and enforce discipline, noted a number of other interviewees, explicitly because they wanted to avoid becoming an undisciplined party as AWS had been before them.

As for the role of the rank and file, I examined the extent to which Polish legislators had adopted party culture in both word (attitudes) and deed (behavior). According to data from two surveys of Polish parliamentarians, conducted in 2000 and 2005, the vast majority of legislators agree that when a legislator has a different opinion on an issue up for vote than his or her parliamentary club, the party line should take precedence. The exception here was moral issues or issues of conscience, where a legislator’s own opinion is given priority over that of the club. I also discovered that Polish legislators are generally very accepting of party discipline in their party and recognize the value it serves in achieving the party’s goals. In terms of behavior, I used an original dataset of roll call votes from 2001 – 2005 to measure rates of attendance at votes, abstentions, and voting cohesion. Overall, I found that Polish legislators are disciplined in their behavior. Participation in votes is generally high and abstention rates low. In addition, legislators from the same party vote together in remarkably high numbers, with average cohesion scores across the more than 4,000 roll call votes in the dataset ranging from a low of 94 percent to a high of 99 percent. Despite the seemingly small differences in average cohesion scores across parties, two separate tests of statistical significance revealed these differences were, in fact, statistically significant. Moreover, for every party elected to parliament for the first time in 2001, average cohesion scores were higher in the last year (2004 – 2005) than in the first (2001 – 2002).

When attempting to evaluate potential sources of variation, such as party ideology, size, etc., however, the fact that the dimensions of difference are coinciding
rather than cross-cutting makes the task nearly impossible. Thus, parties of the right were almost all new parties, were in the opposition and were relatively small. Using bivariate correlation analysis, I examined the relationship between the variables hypothesized to have an impact on legislator acceptance of party culture (other than elite commitment): ideology, size and membership in government. The results indicated very weak relationships between each of the variables and cohesion. To more accurately gage these relationships requires additional data and the use of a multivariate model.

Finally, to determine whether the process of legislative party institutionalization specified by the theory holds outside the case of Poland, I looked at legislative parties in both the Czech Republic and Hungary. These two cases, along with Poland, are considered the success stories of the transition, yet both the Czech and Hungarian party systems are said to be far more stable and better institutionalized than that of Poland. Using evidence from existing studies of parties and party systems, I found support for the argument that legislative parties have become fairly institutionalized in both the Czech Republic and Hungary. Given the limits of these secondary source data, I was reluctant to make direct comparisons between these two and Poland, as well as to assess the relative impact of factors such as party size and ideology. Based on the degree of legislative party institutionalization in all three states, however, I can conclude that Poland compares favorably to the Czech Republic and Hungary, a finding that clearly contradicts the conventional wisdom regarding the institutionalization of parties and party systems in these cases.

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134 Given that the only parties in coalition were those in government, there was no need to test for this relationship between that of government and cohesion.
8.2 Avenues for Future Research

The results of this study (however preliminary) suggest the institutionalization of legislative parties, a heretofore-unexamined area of party institutionalization, warrants further research. Looking first at the process of legislative party institutionalization within systems (be it in Poland or another new democracy), the analysis conducted here could be expanded to include additional time periods, ideally going as far back as the early years of the transition to democracy. In-depth case studies of legislative parties that have both institutionalized and those that have failed to institutionalize would also be useful as a means to better isolate the factors (ideology, size, government status, etc.) contributing to the creation and adoption of party culture.

As for comparing legislative party institutionalization across party systems, a more comprehensive analysis of the post-communist states (the more and less successful alike) would provide for a better understanding of how factors such as electoral system and executive type (presidential or parliamentary) constrain the behavior of legislative party leaders and legislators, while controlling for the impact of the Communist legacy. An analysis of legislative party institutionalization in new democracies more generally would further be useful in that it would ensure that the theory holds beyond post-communist East Central Europe.

One further extension of this research worth mentioning here involves connections between the institutionalization of individual parties and that of party systems. The two are not mutually exclusive; however, the literature tends to treat one or the other as a given. Yet the results of the analysis of Poland point to an interesting paradox: how do we explain the existence of relatively well-institutionalized legislative
parties within a poorly institutionalized party system? While a detailed analysis of this question is outside the scope of the current project, one potential explanation is that the seeming fluidity of parties at the electoral level fails to account for the continuity of party actors over time. For example, Law and Justice (PiS) and Civic Platform (PO) may have been “new” parties in 2001, but the party leaders and many of those elected to office were, in fact, experienced politicians. As a result, the party system may appear to be poorly institutionalized, whereas these parties in the legislature may be relatively well institutionalized.

Another potential explanation for the disjuncture between institutionalization of the party system, particularly in terms of turnover, and the institutionalization of legislative parties has to do with the broader economic and political context. Voters may choose to “throw the bums out,” opting to allow a different party or coalition of parties to govern out of dissatisfaction with the growing pains associated with a transition to democracy and market capitalism. Indeed, this is what Poles have done in every election since 1991. As a result, party system institutionalization will be low even if legislative party institutionalization is relatively high. Whatever the cause, it is clear that additional research is needed if we are to reconcile the conventional view, whereby Poland’s parties are poorly institutionalized, with the picture that emerges from this research of relatively well-institutionalized legislative parties.
APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE FROM POLISH PARLIAMENTARIAN WEBSURVEY 2005
INTERNET STUDY AMONG POLISH PARLIAMENTARIANS

1. Parliamentarians define objectives they want to accomplish in the Sejm in a variety of ways. Please mark below how much do you agree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Should a parliamentarian:</th>
<th>Complete disagreement</th>
<th>Complete agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Please put X in the appropriate cell</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A – exercise control over the government’s activities
B – create the law
C – represent interests of all citizens
D – shape political views of citizens
E – represent interests of specific social and occupational groups
F – attempt to accomplish objectives of his/her political party
G – be an intermediary between the parliament and the society

2. Let assume that a Sejm member could represent „people” and „issues” seperately. In the case of the „people” representation – what groups do you want to represent in the first place?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One answer, X</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A – local and regional community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B – specific social and occupational groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – all electorate who voted for your party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D – all Poles—their basic interests and aspirations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E - other people, who?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. How important it is for the Sejm composition to mirror the composition of the society with respect to generations, social classes, and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important it is for the Sejm to mirror the composition of the society with respect to the proportions of:</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Somewhat unimportant</th>
<th>Simply unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A – different generations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B – social classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – men and women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please put X in the appropriate cell

4. Some parties and other political groupings have established a specific threshold (bottom limit) for the proportion of women who, on their behalf, should seek Sejm membership. Is this initiative good or bad? Why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A – good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B – bad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why?

5. What arguments for and against the idea that Sejm should mirror the composition of the society are voiced in your parliamentary club?

Answer
6. When you do not have a clear opinion how to vote on a new bill concerning the nation economy, to whom do you turn for advice most often?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Up to three answers, X</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A – other parliamentarians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B – politicians from the government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – politicians from your party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D – officials in appropriate ministries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E – independent experts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F – experts from parliamentarian clubs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G – business organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H – trade unions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I – your friends whom you trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J – other people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. If a parliamentarian has a different opinion on a given issue that his or her parliamentarian club, should he/she follow the club’s opinion, or his/her own judgment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How a parliamentarian should vote in the case of:</th>
<th>In agreement with the club’s opinion</th>
<th>In agreement with his/her own stance</th>
<th>It depends on the circumstances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please put X in an appropriate cell*

| A – budget |   |   |
| B – governmental program |   |   |
| C – ideological issues |   |   |
| D – appointments for important positions |   |   |

8. What do you think about the discipline in your parliamentary club? Should this discipline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A – be stronger than it is now</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B – remain as it is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – be weaker than it is now</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Please express your opinion what objectives are achieved, or could be achieved, through exercising discipline in parliamentary clubs.

**Answer**

10. Last question pertains to the motivation of parliamentarians to obey the discipline of their parliamentarian clubs. Why do they obey the discipline or why they do not?

**Answer**
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Gerring, John. 2002 “What is a Case Study and What is it Good For?” Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.


