

Marcin Waszak [The Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw], 12.09.2012

Anti-politics as a prescription for the electoral success in Poland?



photo: PAP



The case of Palikot's Movement

Characterization of „alternative party“:

1. Grassroots political project

- 1.1 Weak institutionalisation*
- 1.2 Created by ‘ordinary’ citizens*

2. Unconventional political style

- 1.1 Happenings, street protests*
- 1.2 Radical, emotional rhetoric*

3. Platform focused on specific values, new ideas, besides mainstream

- 1.1 Hostility towards the political elites*
 - 1.2 Based on cultural values rather than on material interests*
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Palikot's Movement

New force on Polish political scene

Leader: Janusz Palikot

- businessman (until 2005 vice-chairman of Polish Business Board and Polish Confederation of Private Employers)
- owner of conservative Catholic weekly Ozon (2005-2006)
- member of Civic Platform (2005-2010)
- member of three Polish parliament (elected in 2005, 2007 and 2011)
- head of committee called *Friendly State* in Polish Sejm with the goal of limiting bureaucracy

First congress of Movement of Support: 2.10.2010

Forming an association and political party: 10.2010

Party registration: 1.06.2011

Parliamentary elections: 9.10.2011

Palikot's Movement

Alternative party outside, typical party inside?

The image of anti-party

- 1. Grassroots political project*
- 2. Unconventional political style*
- 3. Platform focused on new ideas, besides mainstream*

Mechanism of winning support

- > Political leader and groups engaged in politics sympathetic towards PM*
- > Media influence: age of infotainment*
- > Left-wing demands, so far underrepresented in parliament (weakness of Democratic Left Alliance)*

Palikot's Movement – *grassroots political project?*

- ❑ *Founder of the party;*
 - ❑ *Power of the leader's influence on democratic mechanism inside the party;*
 - ❑ *Ultra left-wing groups among advocates of Palikot Movement: feminists, ecologists, LGBT, anticlerical communities;*
 - ❑ *Members: entrepreneurs, people-symbols (e.g. catholic apostate, first transsexual MP, first openly gay MP), without political experience;*
 - ❑ *Popularity in Internet but far from building its own social media community of supporters;*
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Unconventional political style

- symbolic wedding ceremony of two homosexual,*
- manifestations in front of bishops' houses,*
- resignation from being a MP in 2010 as a sign of cut himself off from ruling party,*
- legalise cannabis march,*
- smoking joint in public,*
- attempts to join social movements („outraged movement”, Polish ACTA protest).*



Palikot's Movement MPs in masks of Guya Fawkesa, sybmolize Anonymous Movement. Photo. Paweł Supernak/PAP

Ideas, demands, platform...

Four main groups of postulates:

1. „Anti-political” demands
2. „Anti-clerical” demands
3. Demands regarding individual freedom and individual rights
4. Economic demands



Shocking Polish Newsweek cover:
Palikot. The Left's Messiah?

Palikot's Movement – *against the political establishment*

Among postulates:

Liquidation of state subsidies for political parties, resignation from Senate, reduction in amount of members of Sejm, replacement of the political class („the same from 20 years...”), 20% reduction in amount of members of local councils

*Palikot's Movement demanded the
delegalization of the Law and Justice party*



Palikot's Movement – *against the political influence of Catholic church in Poland*

Among postulates:

Separation of church and state, remove religion lessons from schools, prohibition of public financing of the Church (e.g. liquidation of the Church Fund), taxation of clergy, against religious symbols in the public space



Cross in Polish parliament

Palikot's Movement – *defence of individual rights and freedom. „Moral revolution”*

Among postulates:

- women's right to abortion and free contraception, reimbursement of *in vitro*, mandatory sex education in schools, civil unions (also same-sex), legalisation of marihuana, equal rights for homosexual (right to civil marriage, inheritance)



Janusz Palikot with transsexuals. Photo: Shuterstuck

Palikot's Movement – *Janus-faced economic platform*

Among postulates:

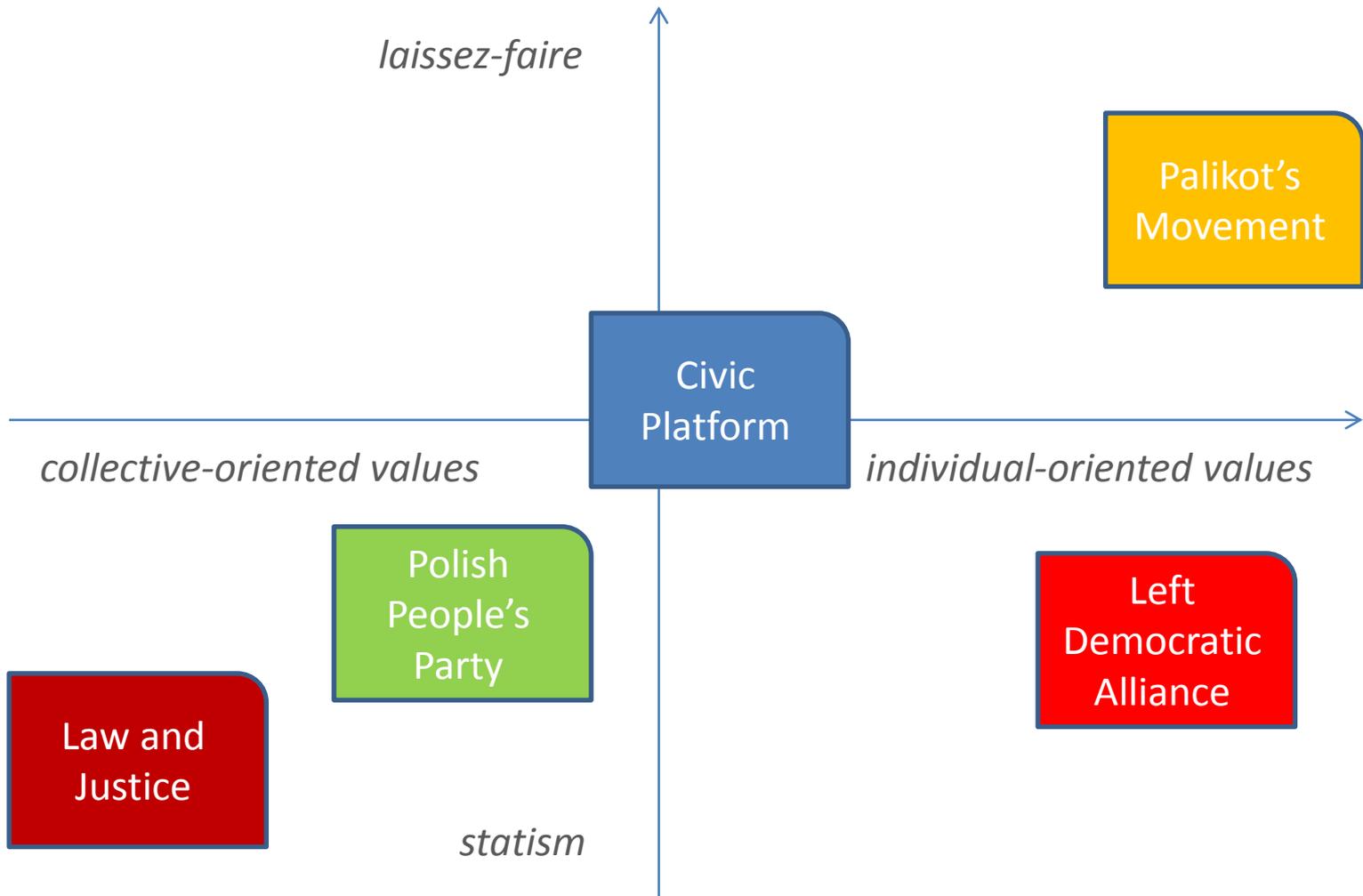
-flat tax 3x18%, facilities for people who set up their first business (exemption from taxes, insurance), privatization of public health system

- on the other hand: equal payments for men and women, „zero unemployment” policy (state investments), solidarity tax for owners of „bigger fortunes”, criticism towards „wild capitalism”, liquidation of „junk contracts”

Palikot's Movement – successful project

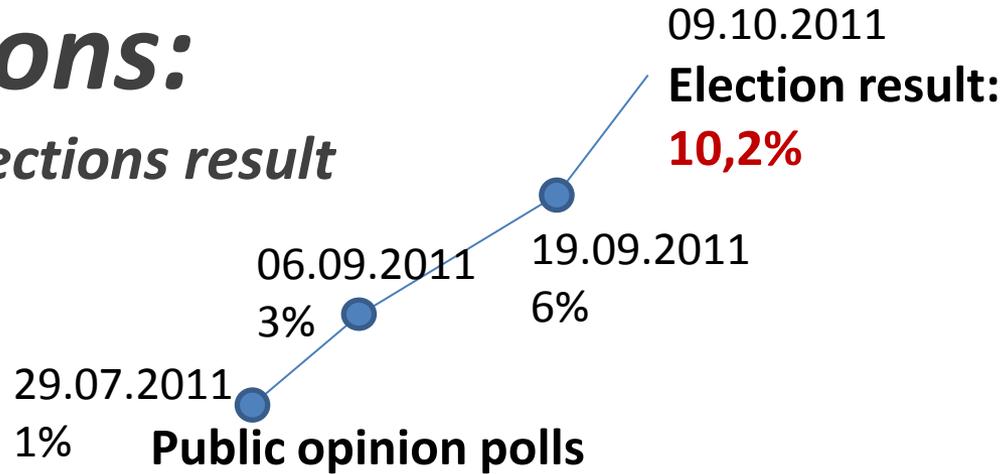
- ✓ *10,2 % votes and 40 seats in Polish parliament obtained in election 2011*
 - ✓ *Third popular party (behind Civic Platform and the Law and Justice)*
 - ✓ *Breaking the blockade of Polish party system (first time newly established party wins seats in parliamentary elections under system of state subsidies for political parties, introduced in 2001)*
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Conclusions:

- anomaly in elections result



- electorate of Palikot's Movement: young men from middle cities

- change of Poles' mentality?

- carefully planned political project?

Thank you for your attention
