

**Maciej Hartliński**

## **THE SELECTION OF PARTY LEADERS IN POLAND: DEMOCRATISATION OF RULES AND PREDICTABILITY OF RESULTS**

DOI: 10.1515/ppsr-2015-0018

### **Abstract**

The objective of this analysis is to examine political party leadership with reference to the rules and results of its selection process in post-communist Poland. The exploration of these matters is based on qualitative and quantitative data concerning 16 different political parties and 80 selections they conducted in the years 1990-2013. The comprehensive research methods employed for this study ranged from in-depth analysis of particular election results to analysis of constitutional and structural party variations. This extensive investigation enables the reader to draw conclusions about Polish intra-party politics and to understand the vetting processes that Polish politicians must undergo. The findings indicate that political parties tend to address wider selectorates; and that the rules of selection are transparent, democratic, and empirically predictable.

**Keywords:** party leader, leadership selection, political parties, Central and Eastern Europe, Poland

### **Introduction**

To explore the interesting phenomenon of politics and party systems in post-communist countries, one must first attempt to understand the procedures and identify the stages of the processes that determine the selection of political party leaders. Only then can one's knowledge increase and is one able to explore various paths chosen to attain the most important positions in a party and consequently in the country.

Party leaders become crucial actors in a parliamentary democracy, especially in post-communist countries, in many cases becoming prime ministers and presidents. The intra-party competition for the position of a leader is essentially a struggle for power in the country. It can be confirmed that contemporary politics emphasises the value of an individual politician. The significance of political leaders, including party leaders, is a prominent phenomenon in contemporary politics (Wattenberg 1991; Stewart and Clarke 1992; Mughan 2000; Poguntke and Webb 2005; Karvonen 2010, Pakulski and Körösiényi 2012). Their leading role in the decision process and influence on the voters' perception of a party cannot be overlooked (Bean and Mughan 1989; Jenssen and Aalberg 2006; van der Brug and Mughan 2007; Lobo 2008; Lehrer 2012).

This article is the first attempt at describing the selection process of political party leaders in Poland. It is one of very few academic articles referring to post-communist countries, some of which concern Romania (Chiru and Gherghina 2012; 2014) and Hungary (Ilonszki and Várnagy 2014).

However, this subject has been studied more widely with reference to the experience of several parliamentary democracies in Western Europe, such as Austria (Müller and Meth-Cohn 1991; Ennser-Jedenastik and Müller 2014), Belgium (DeWinter 1993; Wauters 2014; Pilet and Wauters 2014), Denmark (Bille 1997), France (Thiebault 1993), Germany (Detterbeck and Rohlfing 2014), Ireland (Marsh 1993b), Italy (Sandri, Seddone and Venturino 2014), Norway (Strøm 1993; Allern and Karlsen 2014), Portugal (Lisi and Freire 2014), Spain (Colomé and Nieto 1993; Barberà, Rodríguez-Teruel, Barrio and Baras 2014), and the United Kingdom (Punnett 1992, 1993; Stark 1996; Quinn 2012; Bale and Webb 2014).

Other countries and continents are also represented in similar studies; for instance Australia (Gauja 2014), Canada (Courtney 1995; Cross 2014), and Israel (Kenig and Rahat 2014).

There are very few studies that explore the intra-party success (through quantitative measurements) of candidates who can maintain control and remain competitive throughout electoral campaigns. In addition to the scarcity of general research studies on this topic, the subsequent lack of data makes comparing the abilities of Polish leaders in this regard to those of other candidates for similar offices across the world quite difficult. The few examples on the subject (various configurations of content and time ranges, as well as describing parties) can be found in Polish literature (Nalewajko 1997; Bichta 2010; Sobolewska-Myślik, Kosowska-Gąstoł and Borowiec 2010; Hartliński 2011, 2012, 2013).

The content of this article is divided into six sections. After the literature overview, the discourse framework of leadership selection in modern political parties will be delineated. Then, the research questions and data addressing the leadership selection processes of the chosen political parties will be presented. This in turn gives an opportunity to analyse the statutes of the political parties taking into account the trends that some parties adopt in the selection process of their leaders. Thus, conclusions based on solid data can be drawn and answers to research questions formed.

## **Party leadership selection**

The research into political party leadership points to two significant trends for the success of a party with regard to winning public support in elections. On the one hand, it can be stated that modern politics emphasises the value of an individual politician who can ensure success for his or her party. On the other hand, the whole process is accompanied with transparency and openness towards common citizens and ordinary party members. Changes have been noticed which have resulted in the growth of the significance of party members, not only in the process of selecting candidates but also when it comes to party leaders (Cross 1996; LeDuc 2001; Bille 2001; Pennings and Hazan 2001; Rahat and Hazan 2001; Hazan and Rahat 2010; Cross and Blais 2012a; 2012b).

Primarily, the analysis of Western countries concentrates on how parties designate those with potential, and choose their electable leaders to run for office. One of the main objectives of this study is to see how various political parties allow their members access and/or authorisation to choose a leader (Kenig 2009a). Uncovering the truth about the

varying degrees of inclusion or exclusion within a party regarding selection of leadership helps one to frame the image.

The facilitation for more groups to participate in the election of party leaders is not dynamic in all countries. However, in those countries in which greater facilitation is practised, there are some identifiable conditions which favour it. Political parties are likely to widen the electoral group if they have suffered electoral defeats and lost voters' support, and when they were in the opposition or if they are new on the political scene (Cross and Blais 2012a).

Both widening and narrowing the pool of people deciding on leadership have their consequences. An attempt to answer this question requires analysis concerning the democratisation of selecting party leadership. It can be concluded that opening up the option to vote for a leadership position to more members increases the number of candidates that will run for it, but decreases competitiveness (Kenig 2009b).

The variety of methods used during party leadership elections shows dependence between including party members in this process and strengthening their participation. It can be stated that a larger group of people eligible to participate in party leadership elections and vote relying on a simple majority, not distorted by a negotiated proportion of votes, stimulates an increase in the number of party members (Carty and Blake 1999).

Adopting certain procedures when it comes to selecting party leaders has its implications regarding the personal profile of candidates and prospective leaders (O'Neil and Stewart 2009). The modification of voting habits has influenced the profiles of candidates as well as future winners in the competition for the party leadership (McSweeney 1999). This can be seen in the example of changes introduced by the conservative party in the United Kingdom. In this case, they were younger and spent a shorter period of time in government and parliament.

However, taking into account changes in party leadership it is also necessary to underline that there are several strategies and approaches that may prove successful (Bynander and t'Hart 2007). Additionally, in the case of political activity in Denmark, the data suggest that leadership alternation can have roots in different sources. For instance, defeats of parties in popular elections do not always determine elections of a new leader, and as the author points out, these changes do not have an influence on party behaviour (Bille 1997).

Another crucial point in the study of party leadership consists of comparative studies carried out on the basis of uniform assumptions. The recent research on party leadership selection in particular countries allows us to draw important questions and conclusions. Two major initiatives aimed at the diagnosis of the problem in terms of the comparativist perspective were undertaken by Michael Marsh, Jean-Benoit Pillet, and William Cross. These studies have considerably broadened the knowledge on selection processes occurring in individual countries. The main questions about the selection of party leaders were pointed out in their publications. Marsh (1993a) suggests that it is important to understand: who the leader is and what office does the leader fill? How is the leader selected? Is the process of selection more or less inclusive, competitive, and regular? In a similar way, Pillet and Cross (2014) deal with analysis in the context of: leaders, rules, contests, demographics, and the tenure of party leaders.

Thus, the selection of party leaders is examined from different angles. The above-mentioned aspects of this issue explore numerous areas influenced by the adoption of certain solutions to the selection of party leaders. The conducted research demonstrates that parties rely on solutions that grant the right to choose a party leader to a much wider group. However, the conducted analysis also shows how such changes influence political parties in many ways.

## Research questions and data

The aim of this analysis is to examine political party leadership with reference to the rules and results of its selection process in Poland. In our country, it is simple to point to a party leader. Depending on the terminology, it is usually the president or chairman of a given party. Hence, the article focuses solely on this leadership position. Every time a leader or a leadership position is mentioned, it is assumed that this refers to the chairman/president of the party. The presented selections concern only this party position. The author did not address the subject of selecting candidates for parliamentary or presidential elections, as well as for other party positions, such as the secretary or parliamentary group leader.

The priority is to answer two main research questions. RQ1 aims at addressing the issue of formal (statutory) conditions of selecting a party leader, while RQ2 focuses on the selection process itself and the conclusions that can be drawn on its basis.

As a result, referring to RQ1 in greater detail, it is essential to analyse party statutes with a focus on all statements that directly or indirectly refer to presidents/chairmen of the discussed parties. In other words, factors such as: who is voting and how many votes are needed to win. The chief determinant is related to who is voting. Within each party there are varying degrees of members' inclusion in the leadership selection process. Not every party member of every political party has the right to vote. In the present study, a claim is made that the more open a party is to the inclusion of all party members in the decision-making process, the closer it is to following classic democratic procedures. If a party removes all statutes of exclusionary purposes, and any basic restrictions, the procedure becomes transparent by default.

When it comes to addressing RQ2 in a more detailed way, analysis should focus on the number of candidates running in the elections, the degree of competitiveness, the incumbent re-running success rates, and the propensity for leadership turnover. When a combination of these factors is analysed, competition within a party for leadership selection can be described. Cross-referencing the number of elections and the number of candidates in each election can clarify how much competition for the leadership is actually prevalent. The results highlight the success rates in consecutive elections for incumbent officials. In terms of competition, it is critically important to spend time reviewing the character features of the potential candidates.

The research exhibited in this article concerns the history and operational practices of 16 different Polish political parties between the years 1990-2013. Determining the parties to be presented, a criterion of parliamentary significance was chosen. To completely understand this criterion, one must remain aware of the fact that the analysed parties were

those which had their candidates chosen independently at least once to the Sejm, the lower house of parliament, or had achieved it as the main power of a coalition of political parties. The criteria are defined in the above manner to distinguish the most significant voted groupings that participated in seven of the elections held to date. The elections under review took place in 1991, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2007, and 2011.

Annually, each political party with aspirations to remain recognised by the state (and in the Polish Political Party Registry) must submit documentation to the District Court in Warsaw. Many of the parties in this study no longer exist as a result of either disintegration or lack of activity. Consequently, they have been removed from the District Court in Warsaw Party Registry. Below is a list of the parties that will be examined in this study. The parentheses include the years within which a given party operated.

The following political formations were included: Democratic Union (Unia Demokratyczna; UD 1990-1994); Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland (Socjaldemokracja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej; SdRP 1990-1999); Christian National Union (Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe; ZChN 1990-2006); Centre Agreement (Porozumienie Centrum; PC 1990-1997); Confederation of Independent Poland (Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej; KPN 1990-2003); Liberal Democratic Congress (Kongres Liberalno-Demokratyczny; KLD 1990-1994); Labour Union (Unia Pracy; UP 1992-2006); Freedom Union (Unia Wolności; UW 1994-2005); Movement for Reconstruction of Poland (Ruch Odbudowy Polski; ROP 1995-2005); Self-defence (Samoobrona; S 1999-2008); League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin; LPR 2001-2007); Polish Peasants' Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe; PSL 1990-); Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej; SLD 1999-); Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość; PiS 2001-); Civic Platform of the Republic of Poland (Platforma Obywatelska Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej; PO 2002-); Palikot Movement (Ruch Palikota; RP 2011-).

It is worth emphasising that the above parties vary considerably when it comes to the years in which they functioned and the period their activity lasted. Some of them were active only at the beginning of the transformation, while others were founded before the recent parliamentary elections in 2011. This indirectly points to changes of the party system visible in the full spectrum of shifts in political parties which lived for a moment, collapsed, and became divided or united. All this has its influence on the selection process of party leaders.

The information on the rules of selecting a party leader included in Part 4 is presented on the basis of statutes of political parties. The data necessary to analyse the selection process in Part 5 was retrieved primarily from documents submitted by political parties with reference to changes of their leaders.

Both these statutes as well as changes of political leaders are documented by parties and submitted to the register of political parties conducted by the Regional Court in Warsaw, VII Civil Registry Department. Thus, research in the archives was the basic tool when collecting data. In special infrequent cases, when there were no documents of the parties that functioned at the beginning of the 1990s, the author used press reports of the main national daily newspapers that followed changes in party leadership.

## Rules of selection

The leader of a political party in Poland is also known as a chairman/president of that organisation. However, different parties' statutes sometimes distribute the leader's power and responsibilities between several figures of importance. Of the 16 parties analysed in this study, 11 operate in a manner that define a party leader as an independent one-person organ in the structure of the party. Of the five remaining parties that do not have a central figure who is autonomous and has the power to guide the direction of the party alone, only SLD has no regulation in their internal constitution that would address any criteria that the leader must meet.

In 15 of the 16 parties in this study, the national congress/convention is the caucus of members within the party that is responsible for choosing the leader and other cabinet positions. The national congress/convention is often an important part of the political party's leadership selection process. Apart from a few minute discrepancies of a nominal nature, the only ideological exception is PO, which introduced the practice of exclusive general elections in 2013.

However, in some parties apart from the above-mentioned organ, the election of the leader may be performed by a different body. Such exceptions refer to statute solutions in PSL, SdRP, and SLD. In PSL, the General Council is the highest functioning caucus of the party during the stretches of time between the convening of its National Congress. This General Council holds the authority to choose and dismiss the president of the party. In SdRP, a similar power is held by what is known as the Supreme Convention. Separate from the national congress of the party, the Supreme Convention is a special group granted the responsibility of choosing both the party leader and secretary of the party in between the periods of mandated national congress conventions. Lastly, SLD gives its national convention the power to change the party leader in the case of retirement, or a decided motion of no confidence.

A relatively new method of choosing leadership that is gaining popularity amongst Polish political parties are internal general elections in which all registered party members take part. This regulation was first included in a recently (2011) enacted constitution of SLD. This statute allows for two possible paths for the selection of a party leader, while in PO, general elections are the only way to choose the leader.

As a rule, general elections for the SLD chairperson are announced by the National Council and run by the National Governing Board. The candidate must be a party member recommended by no fewer than 100 other members on their respective lists of people they support for the position. The right to be chosen is granted to any SLD member who is registered as such and has paid all the member fees. Ultimately, at the end of the process, the winner that is declared needs to have received a majority of the votes. If there is no majority obtained, then the power to select the leader comes back to SLD's Congress, which chooses between the two candidates that had each received the most votes.

PO's statute permits only general elections for the chairperson. Party members have the right to run in the elections if their applications are supported in a written form by at least 10 members of the National Council. The chosen candidate has to receive an absolute majority of votes.



When the specifications of who can be elected a party leader in each different party are analysed, it can be seen that 13 of the parties in this study confer this capacity to any of their members; only PC, UP, and SLD do not. In these three parties, only the members of the National Congress/Convention can be elected.

The statutes of three parties (PO, SLD, PSL) define various processes of nominating candidates. In PO, the nomination of a candidate is valid with written support from at least 10 members of the National Council. During general elections in SLD, members can candidate for the leader's position if they submit a petition with signatures of at least 100 party members. PSL requires candidates for leadership positions to be nominated by either the congressional electoral committee or at least 50 members of the National Congress.

Also unique to PSL is a requirement that in elections there must be at least two candidates that aspire to the leadership position. In all the other parties, there are no minimum requirements as to the number of candidates who must run for office. They only state that the elections concern an unlimited group of candidates.

When the rules of selection are considered, all 16 parties share a rule that votes for leadership positions are submitted in a secret ballot. The method of voting for leaders is mandated to be conducted this way. KPN and ROP are exceptions in this respect, as they do not have such a regulation in their statutes.

Yet another issue is the majority that needs to be granted to be declared a chosen leader. Among all of the possibilities, there are three variants pertinent to the presented parties. The first way to win is via plurality (relative majority). All that is necessary in this case is to win more votes than one's opponent (KLD, S). The second way is by absolute majority. This type of victory calls for a candidate's number of votes to add up to more than half of the number of all the valid votes in the ballot box. Nine of the parties in this study select winners using this method: UD, SdRP, PSL, UP, UW, SLD, LPR, PO, and RP. The final method is by declaring a winner by qualified majority, which means that a fixed ratio of how many votes will be necessary to win is determined in advance (most commonly two-thirds or three-fifths). Although these methods are most common for the parties in this study, some of the parties do not have precise statutory regulations as to the delivery of this process. ZChN, PC, KPN, ROP, and PiS all fail to provide specific requirements in their publicly accessible statutes on this matter.

## **Leadership selection in practice**

For the 16 parties studied, a total of 80 party leadership elections have taken place since 1990. In 73 of these elections, the victor was declared after the first round of voting. A second round was necessary for PSL in 2005, SLD in March and December 2004, and for ZChN in 1995, 2000, and 2006. A third round has only been necessary once, and that was for an election of the ZChN party leadership position in 1996. It thus seems that the person becoming the leader-elect is likely to be elected by an absolute majority in the first round. This conclusion is supported by the evidence of only 3 of the 16 parties needing more than one round to select a leader in 23 years of elections under review.

Between 1990 and 2013, 80 elections took place under the combined 161 years of collective existences for these 16 political parties. This yields an average of a new election taking place every two years. With regard to a particular party's election frequency, KPN averaged an election every 3.2 years, ROP every 2.5, PO and PiS both respectively tended to have a new election, on average, every 2.4 years, while PSL averaged a new election every 2.3 years. PSL held 10 elections, the most of any party in this study, with both UP and ZChN having held nine. While in-line with being the youngest political party, RP has held the smallest number of elections at just one.

**Table 1.** Party Leadership Selection

| Number of cases  | 1     | 2     | 3    | 4     | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9 | 10 |
|--|-------|-------|------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|----|
| Number of parties with this quantity of elections                                      | 1     | 1     | 2    | 4     | 4   | 0   | 1   | 0   | 2 | 1  |
| Number of elections with these particular quantities of rounds                         | 73    | 6     | 1    | -     | -   | -   | -   | -   | - | -  |
| Number of elections with this particular number of candidates                          | 49    | 21    | 7    | 2     | 1   | -   | -   | -   | - | -  |
| Number of individuals who participated in these numbers of elections                   | 49    | 11    | 4    | 4     | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | - | -  |
| Success rates for individuals who participated in these particular number of elections | 16/49 | 16/22 | 9/12 | 15/16 | 5/5 | 5/6 | 7/7 | 7/8 | - | -  |

All together, there were 125 candidates who ran in 80 elections. In 49 of these cases (62%), only one candidate ran for the position, while in 31 cases (38%) there was competition for the position. Most often, in 21 elections, there was competition between two candidates. In 2004, SLD had the largest number of candidates on record for an election with five candidates. The previous high was with ZChN in 1995 (four candidates). PiS, RP, S, ROP, KPN, and UD only recorded elections with one candidate running for office.

In each successive election, the average number of candidates running for office increased in the parties that had at least two candidates vying for one position. The greatest number of candidates running in the respective parties elections were PSL with 22, SLD with 18, and ZChN with 17. However, the parties with the highest average number of candidates running for leadership were SLD (who due to their smaller amount of elections provided a higher average) at 2.6, PSL with an average of 2.2, followed by ZChN with 1.9.



Dividing the 125 candidates that ran for potential election in the 80 total campaigns during the 23 years in question, gives an average of 1.56 candidates per election. If one considers specifically the parties with at least two candidates, there were 102 candidates in the 58 elections, with an average of 1.75 candidates per election, during the time span in question.

It is important to consider that these figures merely empirically show the tendencies in the studied elections. For further accurate conclusions, it is necessary to represent the quantitative analysis with the tangible electoral consequences of the discussion. This can be done by looking at how many times the same candidates ran for each office. Looking at the 125 candidates across each party running for respective offices between 1990 and 2013, it can be seen that these were actually only 73 different people. The difference between the two figures is accounted for by the fact that the 73 people ran in multiple elections (in the same party as well as in other parties); 67% (49 of the 73) of these people ran for office only once.

The most attempts at running for an office in a single party is held by Waldemar Pawlak, who campaigned to be president of PSL six times. Recording eight attempts, Donald Tusk ran for office more than anyone else, followed by Jarosław Kaczyński who did so seven times. Tusk lost only once in all his cited attempts at running for office, which include running three times for leadership of KLD, once of UW, and four different times of PO; while Jarosław Kaczyński ran three times for office of PC, and four times in pursuit of office in PiS, winning all seven times. In Tusk's case his only loss was in 2000, in his only attempt for office in UW. After this loss, one year later, Tusk co-formed PO, a party which has since played a very important role in Polish politics.

The least successful aspirants have been Marek Dyduch of SLD and Jan Łopuszański of ZChN. They have both run for leadership in their respective parties multiple times without success. Interestingly, Janusz Piechociński of PSL has been the most persistent party leadership seat applicant, running for office three different times over 16 years and finally winning in 2012 after unsuccessful tries in 1996 and 2004.

As for the matter of gender in this study of political leadership, the only woman to be party chairwoman during the period of time in question was Izabela Jaruga-Nowacka from UP. She was chairwoman for 13 months between April 2004 and May 2005. The only other time a woman has attempted to run was when Joanna Senyszyn unsuccessfully attempted to gain office in SLD in 2011.

In all of the recorded cases, the chances of success increased significantly for candidates who ran for leadership a few times. Only one-third of the candidates who ran for office only once succeeded. This is in comparison to 72% and 75% for those who ran for office a second and third time. When a candidate ran for office four times, the percentage decidedly rose to 93%, i.e., they almost always won the chosen position.

These findings require further explanation, providing some data concerning the issue of incumbency. The status of an incumbent office holder's effect on political leadership party elections is paramount to understanding the aforementioned statistics. In the 80 elections leading to this point, an incumbent office holder was involved 41 times. In 87% of these 41 cases, the incumbent leader won re-election. In the 12 cases in which an incumbent faced

a competitor, the status of incumbency seemed to be correlated with their success, but insignificantly. The incumbent competitor won only in 7 of the 12 cases.

**Table 2.** Ability to Maintain a Party Leadership Position

|                     | Number of elections | Maintained | Failed to maintain |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Number of elections | 41                  | 36         | 5                  |
| With opposition     | 12                  | 7          | 5                  |
| Without opposition  | 29                  | 29         | 0                  |

When discussing the whole process of party leadership selection, one can build a schema reflecting competitiveness in the parties. First, one needs to differentiate two factors. The first concerns the number of leaders and points to parties that had one or more leaders. The other concerns the number of candidates and divides parties into those with one candidate and those with more than one candidate per elections.

**Table 3.** Typology of Political Parties with Respect to the Number of Leaders and Candidates

|                  | One candidate          | Multiple candidates                           |
|------------------|------------------------|---|
| One leader       | UD, KPN, ROP,<br>S, RP | PC  |
| Multiple leaders | PiS                    | KLD, SdRP, ZChN, PSL, UP,<br>UW, SLD, LPR, PO |

Adopting the above schema, one can identify the following division of party leadership in Poland. In Table 3, there are four groups delineated based on the selection processes. Group I is comprised of parties that represent low alternation (leadership turnover) because they could have only one leader and had only one candidate fill that position during the study's time scope. Group II represents political parties that had many candidates run for office against the incumbent, but because none were able to defeat him, the parties in this category had only one leader. Group III represents political parties who had only one leader but have had many candidates win the elections and occupy that position; while the largest group in the study (with nine parties being included), Group IV, represents parties who could have a number of leaders and have seen many candidates run for those offices successfully, in turn, prognosticating their high levels of alternation.

In Group II, the quadrant filled only by the political party PC, it must be noted that because of the lopsided victory of Jarosław Kaczyński (368 votes) over Janusz Andrzejko-

wicz (40 votes), it was difficult to even have considered it competition. The need for Group III is interesting. It addresses the fact that PiS changed leadership only once, between siblings Jarosław Kaczyński and his brother Lech Kaczyński. Despite these idiosyncratic changes, these races like all the others illustrated in the table point to some form of competition in the elections.

In the 10 parties that had many candidates run for elections (Group II and IV in Table 3), it is very important to consider the levels of relative competition. This can be done by looking at the difference between the victor and the next closest competitor. The competitive index takes this factor along with several others into account to compare the relative amounts of competition for each race of each party in the study. Following the formula: the percentage of votes obtained by the second place competitor is divided by the percentage of votes obtained by the candidate who received first place in the race. The quotient will yield a value between 0 and 1. The greater the quotient, the more competitive the competition for the office was. Conversely, the lower the value yielded, the less competitive the race was.

The data in Table 4 present that by the formula's determinants, 16 cases across the parties' respective elections showed high instances of competitiveness (values below 30 percentage points). While in 10 of the cases there was a low level of competitiveness (a difference between the winner and second place candidates above 50 percentage points). Notably, ZChN recorded the closest election (the election with the smallest distance of percentage points between the winner and second place finisher), SLD had two examples of nearly as similar intense competitions, and PSL had a medium or low degree of competitiveness in each of their elections (except in the case of their last one).

The data in Table 4 display the different levels of competitiveness in each party's respective years of election. For example, PSL experienced both high levels of competition in some years (e.g., 0.98 in 2012), as well as very low levels in other years (0.12 in 2000). SLD has recently witnessed an overall increase in competitiveness in their intra-party elections, with a rise of 0.95 level of competition in 2004, preceding the 0.9 level of competition in 2008.

Examining the parties that had at least two leaders, it is necessary to focus on the changes in party leadership. Between 1990 and 2013, 28 leadership changes transpired across the respective parties. The PSL, SLD, and the ZChN, who each changed their leaders five times, catalysed this level of alternation. The PiS, PO, KLD, and LPR contributed the least to the 28 overall changes, each only changing leaders only once.

Admittedly for certain parties there were not many changes, but an index alternation change could be pre-calculated according to the formula:  $IA = LE/LCE - 1$ . IA stands for the alternation index, LE – the number of elections leading up to the power alternation, and LCE – the entire number of elections. The closer the value is to 1, the more often a change in leadership occurred.

**Table 4.** Difference in Votes and Competitiveness in Party Leadership Selection

| Party<br>(total<br>sum of<br>elections) | Difference<br>in votes | Distance in intervals |       |       |       |     | Competitiveness | Competitiveness in intervals |          |          |          |        |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----------------|------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|--------|
|   |                        | 0-10                  | 11-20 | 21-30 | 31-50 | 51< |                 | 0.50<                        | 0.51-0.7 | 0.71-0.8 | 0.81-0.9 | 0.91-1 |
| PSL<br>(10)                             | 15                     |                       | X     |       |       |     | 0.71            |                              |          | X        |          |        |
|   | 23                     |                       |       | X     |       |     | 0.54            |                              | X        |          |          |        |
|   | 25                     |                       |       | X     |       |     | 0.56            |                              | X        |          |          |        |
|   | 25                     |                       |       | X     |       |     | 0.59            |                              | X        |          |          |        |
|   | 76                     |                       |       |       |       | X   | 0.12            | X                            |          |          |          |        |
|   | 11                     |                       | X     |       |       |     | 0.8             |                              |          | X        |          |        |
|   | 41                     |                       |       |       | X     |     | 0.41            | X                            |          |          |          |        |
|   | 65                     |                       |       |       |       | X   | 0.19            | X                            |          |          |          |        |
|   | 1                      | X                     |       |       |       |     | 0.98            |                              |          |          |          | X      |
| ZChN<br>(9)                             | 4                      | X                     |       |       |       |     | 0.89            |                              |          |          | X        |        |
|   | n/a                    |                       |       |       |       |     | n/a             |                              |          |          |          |        |
|   | 15                     |                       | X     |       |       |     | 0.73            |                              |          | X        |          |        |
|   | 1                      | X                     |       |       |       |     | 0.97            |                              |          |          |          | X      |
|   | n/a                    |                       |       |       |       |     | n/a             |                              |          |          |          |        |
| SLD<br>(7)                              | 13                     |                       | X     |       |       |     | 0.66            |                              | X        |          |          |        |
|   | 2                      | X                     |       |       |       |     | 0.95            |                              |          |          |          | X      |
|   | 28                     |                       |       | X     |       |     | 0.55            |                              | X        |          |          |        |
|   | 5                      | X                     |       |       |       |     | 0.9             |                              |          |          |          | X      |
|   | 65                     |                       |       |       |       | X   | 0.15            | X                            |          |          |          |        |
| UW (5)                                  | 29                     |                       |       | X     |       |     | 0.54            |                              | X        |          |          |        |
|   | 13                     |                       | X     |       |       |     | 0.76            |                              |          | X        |          |        |
|   | 42                     |                       |       |       | X     |     | 0.39            | X                            |          |          |          |        |
| PO (5)                                  | 68                     |                       |       |       |       | X   | 0.18            | X                            |          |          |          |        |
|   | 59                     |                       |       | X     |       |     | 0.25            | X                            |          |          |          |        |
| SdRP (4)                                | 82                     |                       |       |       |       | X   | 0.05            | X                            |          |          |          |        |
|   | 55                     |                       |       |       |       | X   | 0.26            | X                            |          |          |          |        |
| KLD (4)                                 | 63                     |                       |       |       |       | X   | 0.22            | X                            |          |          |          |        |
|   | 37                     |                       |       |       | X     |     | 0.45            | X                            |          |          |          |        |
| LPR (3)                                 | 63                     |                       |       |       |       | X   | 0.22            | X                            |          |          |          |        |
| PC (3)                                  | 79                     |                       |       |       |       | X   | 0.1             | X                            |          |          |          |        |
| UP (9)                                  | 81                     |                       |       |       |       | X   | 0.1             | X                            |          |          |          |        |
| -                                       | -                      | 5                     | 5     | 6     | 3     | 10  | -               | 14                           | 6        | 4        | 1        | 4      |

In view of the produced results concerning the number of leadership alternations, these changes occurred to the greatest degree in SLD (0.83) and UW (0.75) and the least in PO (0.25) and PiS (0.25).

**Table 5.** Alternation of Party Leadership

| Party                                | PSL  | ZChN | UP  | SLD  | UW   | PO   | PiS  | SdRP | KLD  | LPR |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|
| Number of elections                  | 10   | 9    | 9   | 7    | 5    | 5    | 5    | 4    | 4    | 3   |
| Number of elections with alternation | 5    | 5    | 4   | 5    | 3    | 1    | 1    | 2    | 1    | 1   |
| Index of alternation                 | 0.55 | 0.62 | 0.5 | 0.83 | 0.75 | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.66 | 0.33 | 0.5 |

## Conclusions

Having analysed all the data, it can be said that there is not a uniform manner in which all Polish political parties determine their leaders. All the intricacies that make Poland's political picture as diverse as it is give unique insight into the political climate of the country. It shows that applying the same procedures does not lead to the same results.

Analysis of practices of the political parties shows that when the procedure for selecting a leader is open and democratic (not subject to any fundamental limitations), some parties will still have polarising results. Now, more than ever before in Poland, within political parties, there has been a tendency to allow more people to vote for the internal leadership. SLD in 2012 and PO in 2013 took groundbreaking steps in this respect. Political parties in Poland have adopted the practices of other parties from well-established parliamentary democracies.

Charting the selection processes of the various political parties allows one to understand more about the general nature and trends of leadership selection in Poland. From the major findings of this article, it transpires that when a candidate wins the first round of intra-party leadership elections in a Polish political party, he/she gains a decisive advantage and usually wins the election. Moreover, the study's exploration on competitiveness shows that there have rarely been cases of true rivalry between candidates requiring multiple rounds and uses of by-laws to decide who won. Furthermore, the study has shown that in two of Poland's more powerful political parties, PiS and PO, there was little leadership turnover throughout the period examined.

Concluding, the rules governing the political party leadership selection processes in Poland are changing and intra-party democratic processes here are improving. Influences of theories and practices from all over the world have led to more transparency in the practices of Polish political party leadership selection processes. While quite sound in theory, the results provided in this study explain that the more open an election is in Poland, the more predictable it ultimately becomes.

## References

- Allern, E. H. and Karlsen, R. (2014). 'Unanimous, by acclamation? Party leadership selection in Norway'. In: Pilet, J. B., Cross, W. eds. *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge, pp. 47-61.
- Bale, T. and Webb, P. (2014). 'The selection of party leaders in the UK'. In: Pilet, J. B., Cross, W. eds. *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge, pp. 12-29.
- Barberà, O., Rodriguez-Teruel, J., Barrio, A. and Baras, M. (2014). The selection of party leaders in Spain. In: Pilet, J. B., Cross, W. eds. *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge, pp. 108-123.
- Bean, C. and Mughan, A. (1989). 'Leadership effects in parliamentary elections in Australia and Britain'. *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 83, No. 4, pp. 1165-1179.
- Bichta, T. (2010). *Struktura Organizacyjna Partii Politycznych w Polsce po 1989 roku*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej.
- Bille, L. (1997). 'Leadership change and party change: the case of the Danish Social Democratic Party 1960-95'. *Party Politics*. Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 379-390.
- Bille, L. (2001). 'Democratizing a democratic procedure: myth or reality?' *Party Politics*. Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 363-380.
- Bynander, F. and t'Hart, P. (2007). 'The politics of party leader survival and succession: Australia in comparative perspective'. *Australian Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 47-72.
- Carty, R. K. and Blake, D. E. (1999). 'The adoption of membership votes for choosing party leaders: experience of Canadian parties'. *Party Politics*. Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 211-224.
- Chiru, M. and Gherghina, S. (2012). 'Keeping the doors closed: leadership selection in post-communist Romania'. *East European Politics & Societies*. Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 510-537.
- Chiru, M. and Gherghina, S. (2014). 'Let's not risk too much: the selection of party leaders in Romania'. In: Pilet, J. B., Cross, W. eds. *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge, pp. 141-155.
- Colomé, G. and Nieto L. L. (1993). 'The selection of party leaders in Spain: socialist cohesion and opposition turmoil'. *European Journal of Political Research*. Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 349-360.
- Courtney, J. C. (1995). *Do Conventions Matter? Choosing National Party Leaders in Canada*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Cross, W. (1996). 'Direct election of provincial party leaders in Canada, 1985-1995: the end of the leadership convention?' *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue Canadienne de Science Politique*. Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 295-315.
- Cross, W. (2014). Party leadership in Canada. In: Pilet, J. B., Cross, W. eds. *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge, pp. 171-188.



- Cross, W. and Blais, A. (2012a). *Politics at the Centre: The Selection and Removal of Party Leaders in the Anglo Parliamentary Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cross, W. and Blais, A. (2012b). 'Who selects the party leader'. *Party Politics*. Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 127-150.
- Detterback, K. and Rohlfing, I. (2014). Party leader selection in Germany. In: Pilet, J. B., Cross, W. eds. *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge, pp. 77-92.
- DeWinter, L. (1993). 'The selection of party presidents in Belgium: rubber-stamping the nominee of the party elites'. *European Journal of Political Research*. Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 233-256.
- Enns-Jedenastik, L. and Müller, W. C. (2014). The selection of party leaders in Austria: channeling ambition effectively. In: Pilet, J. B., Cross, W. eds. *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge, pp. 62-76.
- Gauja, A. (2014). Leadership selection in Australia. In: Pilet, J. B., Cross, W. eds. *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge, pp. 189-205.
- Hartliński, M. (2011). *Przywództwo Partyjne w Polsce*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek.
- Hartliński, M. (2012). *Przywództwo Polityczne: Wprowadzenie*. Olsztyn: Instytut Nauk Politycznych Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego w Olsztynie.
- Hartliński, M. (2013). 'Contemporary >>Prince<<. Influence, the Position and Authority of Party Leaders'. *South-East European Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 131-146.
- Hazan, R. Y. and Rahat G. (2010). *Democracy Within Parties: Candidate Selection Methods and their Political Consequences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ilonszki, G., Várnagy, R. (2014). Stable leadership in the context of party change: the Hungarian case. In: Pilet, J. B., Cross, W. eds. *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge.
- Jennsen, A. T. and Aalberg, T. (2006). 'Party-leader effects in Norway: a multi-methods approach'. *Electoral Studies*. Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 248-69.
- Karvonen, L. (2010). *The Personalization of Politics: A Study of Parliamentary Democracies*. London: ECPR Press.
- Kenig, O. (2009a). 'Classifying party leaders' selection methods in parliamentary democracies'. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties*. Vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 433-447.
- Kenig, O. (2009b). 'Democratization of party leadership selection: do wider selectorates produce more competitive contests'. *Electoral Studies*. Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 240-247.
- Kenig, O. and Rahat, G. (2014). Selecting party leaders in Israel. In: Pilet, J. B., Cross, W. eds. *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge, pp. 206-221.
- LeDuc, L. (2001). 'Democratizing party leadership selection'. *Party Politics*. Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 323-341.

- Lehrer, R. (2012). 'Intra-party democracy and responsiveness'. *West European Politics*. Vol. 35, No. 6, pp. 1295-1319.
- Lisi, M. and Freire A. (2014). The selection of party leaders in Portugal. In: Pilet, J. B., Cross, W. eds. *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge, pp. 124-140.
- Lobo, M. C. (2008). 'Parties and leader effects: impact of leaders in the vote for different types of parties'. *Party Politics*. Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 281-298.
- Marsh, M. (1993a). 'Introduction'. *European Journal of Political Research*. Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 229-230.
- Marsh, M. (1993b). 'Selecting party leaders in the Republic of Ireland: taking the lid off party politics'. *European Journal of Political Research*. Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 295-316.
- McSweeney, D. (1999). 'Changing the rules changed the game: selecting conservative leaders'. *Party Politics*. Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 471-483.
- Mughan, A. (2000). *Media and the Presidentialization of Parliamentary Elections*. Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Müller, W. C. and Meth-Cohn, D. (1991). 'The selection of party chairmen in Austria: a study in intra-party decision making'. *European Journal of Political Research*. Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 39-65.
- Nalewajko, E. (1997). *Protpartie i Protosystem? Szkic do Obrazu Polskiej Wielopartyjności*. Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN.
- O'Neill, B. and Stewart, D. K. (2009). 'Gender and political party leadership in Canada'. *Party Politics*. Vol. 15, No. 6, pp. 737-757.
- Pakulski, J. and Körösenyi, A. (2012). *Toward Leader Democracy*. London: Anthem Press.
- Pennings, P. and Hazan R. (2001). 'Democratizing candidate selection: causes and consequences'. *Party Politics*. Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 267-275.
- Pilet, J. B. and Cross, W. (eds.) (2014). *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge.
- Pilet, J. B. and Wauters, B. (2014). The selection of party leaders in Belgium. In: Pilet, J. B., Cross, W. eds. *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge, pp. 30-46.
- Poguntke, T. and Webb, P. (eds.) (2005). *The Presidentialization of Politics: A Comparative Study of Modern Democracies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Punnett, R. M. (1992). *Selecting the Party Leader: Britain in Comparative Perspective*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Punnett, R. M. (1993). 'Selecting the party leader in Britain. A limited participatory revolution'. *European Journal of Political Research*. Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 257-276.
- Quinn T. (2012). *Party Electing and Ejecting Leaders in Britain*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rahat, G. and Hazan R. Y. (2001). 'Candidate selection methods: an analytical framework'. *Party Politics*. Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 297-322.
- Sandri, G., Seddone, A. and Venturino, F. (2014). The selections of party leaders in Italy, 1989-2012. In: Pilet, J. B., Cross, W. eds. *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge, pp. 93-107.

- Sobolewska-Myślik, K., Kosowska-Gąstął B. and Borowiec P. (2010). *Struktury Organizacyjne Polskich Partii Politycznych*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.
- Stark, L. P. (1996). *Choosing a Leader: Party Leadership Contests in Britain from Macmillan to Blair*. Basington: Macmillan.
- Stewart, M. C. and Clarke H. D. (1992). 'The (un)importance of party leaders: leader images and party choice in the 1987 British election.' *Journal of Politics*. Vol. 54, No. 2, pp. 447-470.
- Strøm, K. (1993). 'Competition ruins the good life: party leadership in Norway' *European Journal of Political Research*. Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 317-347.
- Thiebault, J. L. (1993). 'Party leadership selection in France: creating a >>president's party<<'. *European Journal of Political Research*. Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 277-293.
- Van der Brug, V. and Mughan, A., (2007). Charisma, leader effects and support for right-wing populist parties. *Party Politics*. Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 29-51.
- Wattenberg, M. P. (1991). *The Rise of Candidate-Centred Politics: Presidential Elections of the 1980s*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Wauters, B. (2014). 'Democratizing party leadership selection in Belgium: motivations and decision-makers.' *Political Studies*. Vol. 62, pp. 61-80.