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**Changing the official memory of Communism: Polish politics of memory under the
Kaczyński brothers and its impact on social perceptions of the past**

Master's Thesis

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Abstract

The parliamentary elections of 2005 in Poland brought the Law and Justice Party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość - PiS) into government. Its leaders Lech and Jarosław Kaczyńskis started an anti-Communist campaign that had the ideologically motivated purpose to rewrite the political narrative of the Communist times in Poland embracing and calling for a more pro-active ‘politics of history’. The aim of this paper is to analyze how this new “politics of history” was framed and implemented by the Polish government and to trace its influence on Polish public opinion concerning the Communist period. The study is theoretically framed by concepts of collective memory and its relationship with politics and power and empirically based on an analysis of party programs by the PiS, on public speeches as well as on survey data spanning the period from 2005 to 2011. The data for the analysis of public opinion and perceptions will be taken from mainly two sources, (a) the freely available data provided by the Polish Public Opinion Centre (Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej - CBOS) as well as (b) from comments made by Polish citizens on the homepage of the PiS. Both give insight into the public perceptions of crucial issues relating to the Communist past such as lustration, vetting and remembrance and unveil a deeply divided society. The analysis concludes that whereas the PiS government certainly meant a radicalization of the political narrative of Communism (one of the ways in which the Communist era has been officially remembered), the public opinion polls do not demonstrate an immediate impact of the political campaign on the way people remember and assess the Communist past.

Key words: politics of memory, Poland, Communist era, PiS, public opinion

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Introduction

The memory of historical events has always provided a basis for disagreement among those who remember. This is due to the subjectivity of memory; every individual remembers differently and puts emphasis on different events. A nation consisting of individuals faces a particular challenge to agree on a common, national memory. A nation is forced to face the challenge and potentially even re-invent its national memory in the case of political upheaval such as the collapse of the Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe beginning in 1989. At first, the newly independent states were preoccupied with their political and economic transition and were not concerned about creating a national memory of Communism. In Poland, it took several years until the political elite began to unify and rearrange their memory practices that had previously been rather diffuse and decentralized.¹ Between 2004 and 2007, the Polish political party *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* (PiS), which translates into “Law and Justice”, stated in several public statements that Poland did not have a political memory narrative of the Communist past.² Political memory is the rather homogenous narrative provided by the political elites of past events and which serves as basis for national identity. The PiS is commonly classified on the political spectrum as conservative, center-right-wing (Aronoff & Kupik 2013). They stand for economic nationalism, euro-skepticism, a national community based on traditional values and social solidarity. The party slogan is *Patryotizm - Solidarność - Nowoczesność* (Patriotism – Solidarity - Modernity). The PiS’s leaders Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński spurred on a new discussion with rather propagandistic anti-Communist slogans. The background story of the attempt to change the political memory narrative by the Kaczyńskis is that Poland became a member of the European Union and, with that, experienced an extension of its identity. Before 2004, the aim of becoming a member of the EU, which entailed the completion of transformation to democracy and national sovereignty, united the national elites.³ When the goal was finally achieved in 2004, EU membership did no longer distract the political elites from internal rifts and disagreements with regard to the memory of the Communist past

¹ Ruchniewicz (2009): p. 219

² Ruchniewicz (2009): p. 219

³ Zhurzhenko (2007)

and of the transition period.⁴ Some remembered Communism as an oppressive system that was fought by the democratic opposition, whereas others present Communist Poland more positively and the transition as intended and contrived by the Communist Party itself. With the ambiguous narratives becoming overt, each side struggled to make their version the official narrative of Poland.

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the political construction of memory from the agents' perspective. Here, the agents to be analyzed are politicians and how they use certain understandings of the past to legitimize political actions and campaigns. In other words, it will be analyzed how politicians create particular historical images for political purposes. Moreover, it will be examined how and to what extent politicians affect the society's perception of the past, using the example of Poland. Social perception is defined here as the way how the society, meaning the non-private sphere, sees and interprets a specified event. This thesis is a single case study and analyzes how the "Law and Justice" party (PiS) attempted to change the political narrative and how it influenced the public's understanding of Communist Poland. After they had won the parliamentary elections in 2005, the PiS revived anti-Communist sentiments among parts of the political elite and started an aggressive campaign aiming at demonizing the Communist system. The title of the thesis is: Changing the official memory of Communism: Polish politics of memory under the Kaczyński brothers and its impact on social perceptions of the past.

The novelty of this project lies in the temporal comparison of Polish memory construction before and during the Kaczyński brothers' attempt at re-defining Poland's political memory. It gives new insight into Polish social opinion of the Communist past by examining direct quotes by Polish citizens on the Kaczyńskis' campaign. Moreover, this thesis deepens the understanding of domestic political discourse in post-transitional Poland in particular and gains new insights into post-Communist memory construction in general. Public opinion polls are used as, however small measurement of social perceptions, which has been neglected in previous studies.

Poland is a suitable case study, because it had one of the most protracted transitional justice processes and most severe disagreement among politicians on how to deal with the past. The debate was, especially in the 1990s, marked by

⁴ Zhurzhenko (2007)

controversies and conflict. During the first post-Communist administration, opposition forces called for lustration and worse forms of punishment against former Communists as political maneuver.⁵ A decade later, the Kaczyński brothers declared their aim “(...) to uproot the *układ*, a supposed network of communist-era spies and their allies in business and the public services”.⁶ Anti-Communist rhetoric has never gone out of fashion in Poland, which supplies the researcher with extensive and expressive data.

The purpose of the study is to detect which images of Polish Communist times is being created during and after the PiS’s time in office. Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński are in the center of the analysis, because they were the leaders of the PiS, the forerunners of the anti-Communist campaign and rhetorically the most expressive ones. The following research questions are sought to be answered with this study.

- What images of the Communist past are shaped by the PiS?
- What are the major arguments, words, phrases and rhetorical tools used in the speeches given by Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński?
- Is the Communist past still relevant for the Polish public and if so, to what extent?
- Has public perception of the Communist era radicalized due to the PiS’s campaign?

Answers to these questions will be pursued in two steps. First, a content analysis of political speeches and public statements given by the Kaczyńskis between 2005 and 2011 as well as PiS party programs will be conducted. Those dates were chosen, because their campaign started in 2005 and in 2011, the PiS had to face several internal issues including the formation of splinter parties, so that the anti-Communist campaign fell behind on their priority list. Second, data from public opinion polls carried out by the *Public Opinion Research Centre* (Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej) will be used as basis for measuring whether there is a tangible change in direction in the public perception of the Communist past. Also, comments from Polish citizens on the homepage of the PiS will be taken into consideration in order to provide insight into the reactions of the people to the PiS’s new attempt at condemning the Communist era in Poland. The major

⁵ Raimundo (2012): p. 159

⁶ The Economist (2007)

data sources for political speeches and statements will be *Kronika Sejmowa*. *Kronika Sejmowa* is the official journal of the Polish parliament published every two weeks and reports on decisions of the parliament and sub-bodies, conferences, and written correspondences with the EU parliament. The PiS's homepage provides public access to party programs, interviews, party statements and speeches given by members of the PiS, mainly its leaders Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński.

The thesis is structured as follows. In the literature and theory section of the thesis, the existing literature on political memory construction and party ideology will be reviewed and theories of collective memory will be discussed in order to understand after which pattern events are being remembered. The theoretical centerpiece of this thesis is political memory construction, also called politics of memory. The term politics of memory describes the political means by which events are being remembered and refers to how politics shape collective memory. The theory part will be followed by methodology, where the empirical procedure and operationalization will be explained in greater detail. Further on, the empirical data will be presented and analyzed. Finally, conclusions will be drawn.

The most notable limitation lies in the methodological approach, according to which public opinion polls are used to measure public perception. Not all possible sources that show the opinion of the Polish people can be consulted. Also, it must be pointed out that the surveys are only one indicator out of numerous ones. The author does not claim that opinion polls show the whole truth, but is meant to give an insight into Polish perceptions of the Communist past. Concerning the comments of Polish citizens found on the PiS homepage, their representativeness is not suggested. Furthermore, the author recognizes that there are many layers of political memory, like politicians, different political institutions or non-governmental organizations, but in this study only the political narrative of one major political actor, the political party 'PiS', will be analyzed. Another limitation is that the speeches do not cover the entire extent of the campaign, but rather show and analyze the motivation behind the Kaczyńskis' campaign and the substance of their arguments. Due to the length of this paper, it is not possible to include the other aspects of the campaign such as the change in mandate of the parliament established Institute of National Remembrance (*Instytut Pamięci Narodowej* - IPN) or the attempt at implementing a new lustration law.

Chapter I: Theory and literature review

The theoretical construct of politics of memory combines theories of political and social memory. The discussion of these theories is essential for the understanding of memory construction and its underlying patterns. The complexity of politics of memory is based on the connections of the theories are interlinked. However, the focus of this study lies on the linkage of political memory and social perception, which is part of the greater phenomenon of social memory. They describe different levels of memory. Political memory is a comprehensive term for political, national and cultural memory and refers to the creation of memory narratives by political agents.⁷ Social memory refers to the social dimension of memory. It analyzes social actors including individual, family, interactive group, and how they construct their memory narrative. In a democracy those two processes influence each other; social and political actors aim at changing the respective other's narrative to fulfill their particular interests. Hence, social and political memory are connected and intertwined. The directions of influence are called top-down and bottom-up processes. Whereas the top-down process describes how political memory influences social memory, the bottom-up process refers to the opposite direction and explains in what way and to what extent social memory changes political memory. Only the top-down process will be of interest for this paper; the bottom-up process will not be discussed, except the dimension of social memory. Also, individual memory will not be conceptualized here. Neither are historical memory and legal justice procedures of interest for this paper.

This chapter is subdivided into the aspects important for this research. First, the concept of collective – both social and political - memory will provide the theoretical basis. Collective memory must be detached from the idea of history.⁸ Timothy Snyder's approach is the most suitable, because he examined the issue in the light of Communism, on which this thesis centers. The difference between social and political memory, will be analyzed. Aleida Assmann's approach has been chosen, because she focuses on the interaction of political and social memory, which is central to this study. Then, various theoretical approaches to politics of memory will be discussed. Next, power in relation to memory and

⁷ Compare with Onken (2010): p. 280, Figure 1

⁸ Snyder (2004): p. 39

politics will be defined. Finally, the different aspects constituting the politics of memory will be conflated. The effects of power on memory will be analyzed on the basis of the classic power theorists Bacharach and Baratz (1962: 950) and their concept of “mobilization of bias”. This approach seems to be the most suitable one, since it deals with political myths and influence in politics, which is in the center of this thesis. The concepts and theories of memory are then brought into context of Polish post-Communist memory. This structure is considered the most useful one, because the complexity of the multi-dimensional construct of politics of memory is best understood when the different aspects of it and how they relate to each other are first comprehensively unraveled.

1.1. Collective memory

Memory is the subject of analysis in many fields such as psychology, sociology, politics, and history, which results in an unclear amount of different approaches. Collective memory has in the academic literature also been referred to as, among others, ‘social memory’ (Barry Schwartz 1982), ‘official memory’ (Henri Rousso 1991), ‘public memory’ (John Bodnar 1992), or ‘cultural memory’ (Jan Assmann & Aleida Assmann 2004). The approaches in memory studies are extremely diverse, but one of the most relevant traces back to Maurice Halbwachs in “*Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire*” (1925). He defined memory as a way of reconstructing the past. The American historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage agreed with Halbwachs and defined social memory as “organized, explicitly public representation of the past”.⁹ As student of the sociologist Émile Durkheim, Halbwachs was among the first to study how the social context influences and changes individual, as well as collective memory. He argued that memory is necessarily a social construct and it is for this reason that memory must change with the social context. Halbwachs contended that memory is flexible and interchangeable. Memory is replaced by another memory, depending on the social environment. Halbwachs rejected the notion of individual memory as an isolated concept. He argued that a single person is not capable of remembering outside the context of a social group. Frederick Bartlett (1932) also studied how society influences individual minds and, thus, memories. He thought along the lines of

⁹ Brundage (2000): p. 24

Halbwachs and maintained that people acquire, recall, recognize, and localize their memories in society. He, however, called collective memory “reconstructive memory”.¹⁰ Collective memory itself is rooted in the following two concepts: the first one is the organic memory of the individual that evolves out of a socio-cultural environment. The second one is memory that is created through interaction, communication, media, and institutions within social groups, and cultural communities commonly relating to the past. However, scholars disagree whether or not the concepts of individual and collective memory are bridgeable, since individual memory is always affected by others and, hence, must be collective in some way.¹¹ Maurice Halbwachs, among other scholars, argued that individual memory and collective memory are inseparable concepts. Individual memory is always influenced by the social and political environment and, thus, cannot be seceded from collective memory. In turn, collective memory is practiced by the individual.

Following the tracks of Maurice Halbwachs, Aleida Assmann (2006) argues that social memory has a limited time frame (span of a lifetime), because it is created through social interaction and communication. This communication does not have to be personal, but can be transmitted through different kinds of media such as pictures, books, or diaries. She refers to Harald Welzer who said that social memory may not even be noticed or intentional, but rather is incidental and subliminal.¹² Social memory is a “publicly available social fact” (Onken 2010: 280) and is mediated through symbols, commemorative rituals, and practices. It provides a “sense of shared beliefs and values” (Onken 2010: 280), which is similar to the concept of public opinion, which also based on morals and convictions (beliefs). Ideology must be considered in the context of top-down processes of memory. The exact interrelations will be discussed in greater detail later on.

History and collective memory are understood in the Halbwachsian sense as two conflicting ways of dealing with what is in the past. According to Halbwachs, “history starts when social memory and continuous tradition stop operating and dissolve”.¹³ From this perspective, social memory covers the time

¹⁰ Ost and Costall (2002)

¹¹ Lavenne (2010): p. 2

¹² Assmann (2006): pp. 28-29

¹³ Holtorf (1998)

period that living people can remember. History, in contrast, has a much broader timeframe. Yet, the timely demarcation between living and disembodied memory seems to miss the main differences. This is why the strict distinction between history and memory has been challenged and a more imbricated approach has been suggested by scholars such as John Nerone (1989) and David Thelen (1989). Both consider it impossible to fully separate those concepts from each other and added further dimensions that separate history from memory. Also Pierre Nora vastly disagrees with Halbwachs' argument. Nora (1989: 8) said that memory is alive in the living, whereas history the reconstruction of the past, is never easy or complete. History is the past organized and made sense of by historians. It is more based on facts and details, rather than myths. Whereas historians make the attempt to reveal indisputable historical facts, collective memories have room for differing views on the past. Alternatively, history is committed to facts; memory, in contrast, serves a purpose and changes with it.

Timothy Snyder (2004) conceptualizes collective memory and history and provides a comprehensive differentiation. First, Snyder (2004: 39) differs between “mass personal memory” and “the organisational principle that nationally conscious individuals use to organise the national history”. The latter is, in contrast to the former, organized and less scattered. He says that, although history is a prerequisite of memory, they are separable concepts. Generally speaking, history presents past events as facts, whereas memory is the perception and interpretation of the past. Historical facts are the result of research and retrospect and are devoted to the highest possible amount of objectivity. Memory, on the other hand, is more subjective compared to history. The variety of memory derives from the differing conceptions of past events of groups such as victims, bystanders, or perpetrators. Memory as a whole embodies memories of all sides from all available sources. Timothy Snyder adds another important dimension, which he calls “sovereignty over memory”. The concept of sovereignty over memory means the precedence of future endeavors over the claims of the past. He understands “memory not as individual recollections, not as a collective phenomenon, nor as a reaction to communism, but as a political problem which could be addressed in a future independent Poland by political means”¹⁴. In order to carry on with the future, the past must first be understood. With the words of

¹⁴ Snyder (2004): p. 55

former German President Richard Weizsäcker: “Who closes the eyes for the past, becomes blind for the future”¹⁵. However, if the past dictates something else than the future does, the demands of the future must be followed. For example, the preservation of national sovereignty for the future is more important than reclaiming what has been lost in the past. Hence, memory has not only political implications; it mainly is a political issue. This observation leads to the notion of the politics of memory.

1.2. Politics of memory

When we talk about memory in the political context, it needs to be noted that politics of memory is not a concept as such. It rather is a complex construct that combines numerous aspects and theories from different disciplines. Before the construct in itself can be conceptualized, a differentiation between “politics of memory” and “the political in memory” must be made. Tzvetan Todorov (2000) is one of the scholars who developed a comprehensive definition of both concepts and explained their innate characteristics. The “politics of memory” and “the political in memory” are two separated, yet connected concepts. The former signifies the act of creating a collective memory through institutions, political acts and public discourses. The latter points to how memory is manipulated as a political means. The political in memory also refers to constant change that memory is subject to. Politics of memory resemble a process of constant re-considering of the past as a result of social and political change. Politics are supposed to stabilize, but memory functions as a wrenching counterforce. Todorov also argued that the politics of memory is never neutral: events are always directed, they are never presented equally. Some are shown and highlighted and others are kept aside.

The political construction of memories has different dimensions that need to be distinguished and defined. First, the official and unofficial construction of memory needs to be distinguished. Although official and unofficial, also called popular¹⁶, memories are defined in their own lines; they are not entirely separable since they interact with each other. The difference between official and unofficial

¹⁵ Stolzmann (2012). The original says (1985): „Wer vor der Vergangenheit die Augen verschließt, wird blind für die Gegenwart“.

¹⁶ Yow (2005): p. 54

memory is mainly defined by the initiator. Official memory is created by, among others, governmental institutions, parties, or military and religious elites, whereas unofficial memory is shaped by civil agents. Alon Confino (1997: 1393) wrote in “Collective memory and cultural history: Problems of method” that memory is subjective¹⁷ and provides power, because a social group, such as the political elite, decides what is remembered how, why, and by whom. Valerie Yow (2005: 54) argues against it and states that popular memory, in opposition to official memory, is shared by a group of people who do not inevitably possess power. The tools to form official memory can be, for instance, historical textbooks, public speeches, transitional justice policies, and commemorative acts such as public holidays. The unofficial construction of memory, on the other hand, includes artistic productions such as movies or books and other socially produced actions.

Political memory is “a form of structural power that works through radical selection and simplification, high symbolic intensity and emotional appeal” (Onken 2010: 280). The tools used to create and control public memory that conform to a certain political direction are, among others, history education, public commemoration including, for example, national holidays, and museums. Onken (2010: 282-284) differentiates between four types of memory agents. Those types differ in their awareness of their memory role, which Onken (2010: 282) refers to as “memory consciousness”. They are also distinct in their amount of social capital and the ability to mobilize it. Social capital is, according to Bourdieu & Wacquant, “the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition”.¹⁸ This distinction is useful to show the plurality of the very diverse memory actors and represent heterogeneity of memory narrative debate due to the pluralistic and liberal nature of democracies (Onken 2010: 286). However, types 1 through 3 are irrelevant for this thesis, since they describe societal actors and their influence on the political memory (bottom-up process). Type 4 refers to the political and intellectual elites such as politicians, journalists or artists. They are called the interpretative elite (*Deutungselite*) and have the monopoly on the nation’s narrative.

¹⁷ There is disagreement among scholars about the subjectivity of memory. Pierre Nora, for instance, agrees with Alon Confino, but Aleida Assmann argues against it.

¹⁸ In: Claridge (2004)

Aleida Assmann (2006: 37) refers to national memory as an aspect of political remembering. National memory is constituent for the identity of a nation and, thus, there can only be one perspective or interpretation of the past, which, in turn, is official memory. A nation's memory is not analytical and based on a rather selective set of facts; it is, on the contrary, mythologized. Myths, in the context of national memory, are understood as not falsified, but rather simplified narratives that serve the purpose to create loyalties among the people. Assmann expresses it in this way: history is heightened to a myth (2006: 40). In other words, myths are the interpretations of historical experiences, altered in order to create a national identity. They are subject to change and are constantly replaced by other myths. She also points out that myths are based on either major defeats and capitulations or great victories. In short, it is "triumph and trauma"¹⁹. Those defeats and victories are being celebrated or mystified through monuments, sacred places, and memorials. All defeats or victories necessarily stand in relation to the significant other ('them'). In other words, political memory "tends towards homogenous unity"²⁰. The others can either be different ethnicities or alien nations. Closely connected to the antagonism of trauma and triumph is the differentiation between the two concepts of the memory of victims ("victim identity"²¹) and of the memory of perpetrators. Choosing a glorious victory or a major, traumatic defeat as basis for the creation of national memory and identity defines whether a nation has a victim or a perpetrator identity. Applying the two previous points to the Polish case, it can be stated that the Kaczyńskis and the PiS are trying to create a memory of victimization, but the issue at hand is that the perpetrator ("the other") is part of the nation and, hence, cannot be excluded from national memory. In the case of Communist Poland, the definition of the other is not easy. As Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and member of the PiS, said:

"Communism was an alien force, the force turned against the independence of the Republic and it is difficult to free, independent, democratic and respecting its tradition of honoring the country for the

¹⁹ Assmann (2002): p. 28

²⁰ Assmann (2002): p. 26

²¹ Assmann (2002): p. 27

possibility of people who clearly and blatantly were advocates of Poland's foreign and destructive ideology".²²

On the one hand, Communism is considered a foreign force, which led to a memory of victim or even martyrdom in Poland, but, on the other hand, the PiS's campaign is directed against the domestic political opposition. When it comes to Communist times in Poland and how it is remembered, "the other" comes in form of a different ethnicity or of an inimical nation. Of course one could argue that Russia is blamed for most of it, but as much as the Kaczyńskis rampage against Russia, their campaign is directed towards domestic opponents.

It is important to understand the dynamics of and differences between social memory and political memory. Social memory is determined to a large extent by political memory through the exercise of political power, although it changes due to numerous other factors. The characteristics of political and social memory differ in the following way. In political memory, a rather straight narrative prevails and only the most important events are being remembered. Social memory, on the other hand, is vastly based on individual memory and therefore very diverse and diffuse. Social and political memory may consider different events relevant and worth remembering. In her paper "Four formats of memory", Aleida Assmann (2002: 23-24) says that "the change of generations is paramount for the renewal and reconstruction of societal memory". But a change in societal discourse and, subsequently, a transformation of social memory can as well be reached within a generation.²³ Tragic events that cause national traumas such as, for example, the plane crash near Smolensk when Lech Kaczyński and other members of the political and military elite of Poland died in 2010 may also initiate the creation of new national memories. If we compare political and social memory on the basis of their pace of transformation, it becomes obvious that they differ significantly. While social memory changes with generations, a different political memory may result from a new government. Hence, it is argued here that alterations, if not in the overall, in certain aspects of the social and political memory do necessarily not happen parallel due to their different paces and different agents. Therefore, they do not instantly influence each other, but instead affect each other with some delay. Also, social and political memory change due

²² 30.03.2007 | Wywiady (Interviews) | Rząd (Administration) (2005-2007) | Źródło (Source): Polish Radio Pr 1. PiS website.

²³ Assmann (2002): p. 24

to different factors. Governments may amend national memory, but are unlikely to change it entirely, even if they are in power for a considerable amount of time. National memory is simplified and, therefore, quite constant. Noteworthy literature contributions on agents to try to control and influence memory and perceptions of the past have been made by scholars such as Brüggemann & Kasekamp 2008, Onken 2003, Petersoo & Tamm 2008.

Coming back to the idea of ideology, one needs to remember the relationship between changing social discourses, practices and expectations. Due to its changeable and flexible character, memory can be formed for political purposes. Depending on a certain ideology, memory can be manipulated. Patrick J. Geary (1994) mentioned that each and every form of memory is always made for something. It may have the purpose of creating a national identity or may be used politically. When memory is used in politics, it is subjected to ideology and is exploited for political aims. Most scholars carefully avoid the word manipulation when they talk about “influencing the collective memory”²⁴ of a social group, because influence is more neutral and less negatively connoted than manipulation. Nevertheless, manipulation is not necessarily inaccurate. Depending on how and to what extent collective memory is influenced to serve political purposes, one can say that memory is politically manipulated. Geary (1994: 12) argues that history is presented in an analytical and rational way, whereas memory is formable through rhetorical tools: “If the writing of modern historians appears analytic, critical, and rational, the reason is that these are the rhetorical tools that promise the best chance of influencing the collective memory of our age”. Gildea (1994) goes along the lines of Geary when he argues that “policy goals have a decisive influence on how memory is constructed” (quoted by Müller 2004: 59). Politicians and the intellectual elite create the national identity by interpreting the past in a particular way. Those interpretations, in turn, serve as legitimizations for policy decisions. Gildea claims that history is constantly rewritten in order to justify their political initiatives and decisions. Correspondingly, Henry Rousso presents in detail the many ways of how memory is used for political objectives.²⁵ As much as political memory attempts to create a congruent national narrative, there is always room for different interpretations of the past. Disagreement over

²⁴ Geary (1994): p. 12

²⁵ *In: Confino (1997): p. 1394*

how the past is being remembered goes along ideological lines. Ideology falsifies and manipulates the memory of historical events. In other words, memory is relative in the sense that the perception of past events is dictated by ideology. In Poland, the division of political memory goes along party lines; whereas the Democratic Left Alliance (*Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej* - SLD), a post-Communist party, wants to remember communism positively, the PiS, a post-Solidarność party, aims at a negative interpretation of history. The division that exists in Polish political memory equals the division in social memory between those who accuse and condemn Communism and those who do not. Subsequently, the question arises to what extent those strains of collective memory can differ. Interpretations of history can only be made in the framework of historical facts. Also, what are the differences and what are the congruities of the memories suggested by the different parties? Do their views on the Communist past actually differ to a measureable amount? After all, Poland's major parties share the rejection of Communism as a political option.

1.3. Political power

Herbert Goldhammer and Edward Shils agree on defining power as “the ability to influence the behavior of others in accordance with one's own ends”²⁶, based on Joseph Nye's definition, according to which power is “the ability to achieve one's purposes and goals”²⁷. The complexity of the concept of power, however, is that it has numerous dimensions. The most profound and prominent distinction was made by Bacharach and Baratz (1962). They claimed that power has two faces, on one of which political scientists focus on: the exercise of power. They add the dimension of what they call the “dynamics of non-decision-making”, which sees power not only as violent force, but also as tool to prevent conflicts.²⁸ Talcott Parsons followed this distinction and pointed out that power is always exercised against some sort of resistance and that augmentation of power in one actor necessarily results in the loss of power in the respective other. This brings Parson close to the realist approach to power. What differentiates him from

²⁶ Goldhammer and Shils (1937): p. 171

²⁷ Nye (1990): pp. 25-26

²⁸ Bacharach & Baratz (1962): p. 952

Morgenthau, among others, is that he separates coercive from consensual power. It is understood that coercive power is equal to force or the threat thereof. Consensual power, on the other hand, describes the act of convincing someone to want the same as oneself does. However, power should not be confused with influence. Influence, in contrast to power, is the attempt of persuasion, which, however, is not necessarily effective.

The above mentioned includes the essential understanding of the concept of power in social and political sciences. Relevant for this thesis, however, is the dimension of bias, introduced by Bacharach and Baratz. The so-called “mobilization of bias” means that “the dominant values and the political myths, rituals, and institutions which tend to favor the vested interests of one or more groups, relative to others”.²⁹ In other words, influential actors control political agendas according to their respective interests; some issues are stressed, some are dropped. Cristian Tileagă (2012) argues that, when it comes to historical justice, the aim of political elites is not necessarily about interpreting the diverse meanings of Communism, but rather how it can serve their political desires and goals. Collective memory construction and political power relate to the Polish case study in the sense that the Kaczyńskis try to reshape the political memory by reviving the topic of lustration. The aspect of “mobilization of bias” is important for this particular study of Polish politics of memory, because the Kaczyńskis’ anti-Communist campaign starting in 2005 appears in a different light, when mobilization of bias is considered. The question arises why the Kaczyńskis chose to prioritize memory politics over other topics on the agenda. Possible answers will be given in the section ‘The PiS and politics of history: Background’.

To sum up, politics of memory describes how political memory influences social memory through power politics. Power politics are the tool to change the current and prevalent political narrative of history. This can only be done due to the flexibility of memory. This shows that the representations of history, however, are not necessarily committed to the truth and historical facts, but are subject to political interests and influenced by party ideology.

²⁹ Bacharach & Baratz (1962): p. 950

Chapter II: Methodology

Research will be conducted after the following scheme in order to test the theory that is described above. Contemporary speeches and official documents from the PiS and particularly from the Kaczyński brothers related to the Soviet past will be examined to show how they are trying to alter the perception of the Communist past and use of memory as a populist tool. After all, it was mainly Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński who introduced and shaped the historical narrative in Poland between 2005 and after. Data will be collected from key policy documents concerning or mentioning the Communist past and political speeches given in the Sejm and in public by party representatives. The pool of data is limited to parliamentary debates and party programs. The dependent variable is 'public opinion'. The independent variable is 'Kaczyński's anti-Communist rhetoric'. A content analysis of the speeches and documents will be conducted to retrieve expressive data. Certain words and phrases indicate how history is remembered in the present day discourse. Hence, key policy documents will be analyzed for their language and narrative patterns. Special attention will be paid to a possible ideological subtext that is supposed to influence and manipulate the public-political discourse in favor of the speaker. Access to the relevant documents is provided by the online archives of the Polish Parliament Kronika Sejmowa. Kronika Sejmowa is the official journal of the Polish parliament published every two weeks and reports on decisions of the parliament and sub-bodies, conferences, and written correspondences with the EU parliament. Another important source is the homepage of the PiS (www.pis.org.pl), where political documents are available to the public as well.

In order to measure the effects of the Kaczyńskis' populism on the Polish public opinion, both the period before and during their time in office must be taken into consideration and compared with each other. The relevant timeframe is 1994 until the present day. 1994 was chosen as a starting point, because that year accessible and representative data was first collected and right after the collapse discourse was only secondary after political and economic transition. More importantly, though, in 1997 Poland's new constitution was adopted marking the end of the political transition. The second phase started with the 'return to Europe' or EU membership. 2011 is considered a suitable endpoint, because the era of the

Kaczyński brothers ended with Lech Kaczyński's death in a plane crash in Smolensk and retreated from the political center stage. Also, the Communist past still played a role in the 2011 Party Program. Moreover, comments made by Polish citizens on the homepage of PiS will also be taken into account. They are meant to show what rather right-wing oriented Poles think about the Kaczyńskis' anti-Communist campaign. Those comments will provide more specific insight into what some parts of the Polish society think about the new lustration attempt of the PiS. It is probable that the interest among politicians as well as in the society in the Communist era and how to deal with its heritage is deteriorating.

1.1. Operationalization

In order to empirically evaluate the political speeches, a text content analysis will be conducted. It is considered to be the best approach, because it is the most common when in the context of political text study. However, content analysis is a general term that includes several different approaches, only two of which will be used.

According to Hofstetter (1981), the behavior of public figures such as politicians and historical personalities is in the center of content analysis. Klaus Krippendorff's "Content Analysis: An introduction to its methodology" (2003) is the standard work for researchers dealing with text analysis. He differentiates between qualitative and quantitative content analysis. A combination of the two approaches will be applied to the primary text sources. Whereas the qualitative method focuses on the subtext of a text, the quantitative style measures the frequency of specific words and how they are spread throughout the text. Analyzing words such as "Communism" and the regularity of their appearance is a quantitative method. Connecting those words to a meaning and analyzing underlying connotation, however, is qualitative.

The qualitative approach can be followed after three independent schemes; directive, conventional, or summative. The directive method is most commonly used in the political field and is comparative in its core. Different documents about a particular legislation or policy are linked to each other along the lines of predefined aspects. The conventional approach, however, collects data through qualitative interviews with open ended questions. Finally, the summative style is

both quantitative and qualitative in nature. It is quantitative in the sense that certain words are looked for in a text and their usage explored. It is qualitative insofar that the usage of those words is interpreted and given a meaning. For this thesis, the directive and the summative method will be combined.

In content analysis, language is the medium to deliver a message in the political context. When texts are used to provide data, the following method after Grimmer and Stewart (2013) appears applicable. Seven steps need to be followed when conducting a content analysis of political data. First, suitable and relevant documents need to be acquired. Those are most commonly, legal documents and bills, party statements, or written speeches. The next step is preprocessing, which includes making a list of relevant words, abolishing word order, punctuation, capitalization and the like. Also, the words are cut to their stems, endings indicating adjectives or past tense, for example, are not in the researcher's interest. Further on, the research objectives are defined. Those criteria may either be sampling, recording, or context units.³⁰ Those objectives are classified after known and unknown categories. The relevant material will then be gathered. The collected information is, as a next step, classified according to those criteria and treated like numerical data. The underlying danger at this stage is that it is statistically manipulative. Also, ideological scaling plays an important role at this stage. To measure the degree of ideological bias, the speeches will be submitted to a fact check. A fact is any kind of statement that can be verified.³¹ Fact-checking, therefore, describes the act of verifying all the facts in a manuscript.³² In order to do so, claims made in the speeches will be compared to facts given by historians and available in history books. Eventually, the data will be analyzed. Finally, conclusions will be drawn.

All the previous steps describe the process from gathering significant documents to subjecting them to statistical techniques. A major issue that already occurs at an early stage is the amount of texts. Too few documents are not sufficient to satisfy empirical requirements, whereas too many make it impossible to carry out the study due to lack of time. With the so-called dictionary method the undertone of key words is studied. The researcher's task is to figure out whether a word is positively or negatively connoted. Dictionaries are helpful in

³⁰ Hofstetter (1981)

³¹ Flynn (2005)

³² Flynn (2005)

performing this job. However, context must be considered, since words may have different connotations in dissimilar settings.

According to Lasswell's classic communication model (1948), the content researcher studies the sender, content, medium, recipient, as well as the effects of communication. The sender is the source of communication. Information about the sender is important to understand possible intentions and manipulations of the communication through the sender. For instance, political actors may shape their text to achieve a certain goal. Different methods of persuasion are summarized under the terms *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*. An argument using *logos* aims at appealing to the audience's reason. *Ethos* refers to ethics and can be thought of as attempt at convincing of the trustworthiness of the person making the argument. *Pathos* appeals to the emotions and the sympathetic imagination, as well as to beliefs and values. The content shows the characteristics of the message that has been sent. However, not only the amount of words is relevant, but also and foremost the meaning of it. Bias is a major concern at this point. The message needs a medium with which it can get from the sender to the receiver. Those media can be words transmitted through radio, television, or newspapers or the message can also be sent through pictures. How those messages are sent is not the single important aspect, but also how its content changes, is analyzed in content analysis. Discourse analysis helps to understand the effects of a message sent. The message is studied according to its grammar, word and sentence structure, and context, among others. Here, history and socio-psychological aspects play an important role.

The validation issue can ideally be dealt with by dividing the data sets into three subsets. Slapin and Proksch (2008) suggest several and substance centered assessments. In order to assure validity, social, cultural and audience indicators need to be compared. Therefore, analysis results must be put into context of audience perceptions and behavioral effects.³³ Information about all the previously mentioned levels of communication must be acquired to interpret a text as accurately and realistic as possible. All in all, the content analyst studies the intentions of the sender, the perception and intellectual processing of the recipient and, finally, the cultural and social context in which the communication takes place.

³³ Krippendorff (1980): p. 23

1.2. Public opinion polls

In sociology, opinions are measured through public opinion polls. The opinion survey claims to represent transparently the accurate tendencies of the public (i.e. Panagia, 2006). The two main issues that researchers have to face when conducting opinion poll surveys are the problem of induction and the one of validity. A rather small sample of individuals is representative for the relevant social group. Choosing a representative group of individuals is a challenge that social researchers tackle with statistical techniques such as randomness. The other important issue is validity – ontological and predictive validity.³⁴ Ontological validity describes the concern of mirroring the real, established views of the society. Predictive validity relies on the survey's capability to make a prediction on the outcome of elections and policy responsiveness. Rather high levels of policy responsiveness can be found, which means that public policies often reflect public opinion as represented by polls (i.e. Brooks & Manza 2006). The most commonly used statistical technique is the so-called probability sampling (Hallahan, 2010). The basic idea of probability samplings is randomness. Polls are used to make scientific, general statements about attitudes and likely actions of the members of a social group. If the same survey is conducted repeatedly with a reasonable time span, changes in the results can express shifts and trends in public opinion. Public opinion polls are indispensable to determine the effects of public relations campaigns.

It is argued here that the data retrieved from the CBOS opinion polls provide an indication, however minor, for the much broader concept of social memory. Social memory expresses itself in numerous ways like it is influenced by various factors. One way of how it is revealed and, hence, can be measured, is public opinion polls. Other, more symbolic, signifiers of social memory are, for instance, national holidays, commemorative manifestations, declarations, charters, history textbooks, biographies, as well as art and fiction.³⁵ By defining public memory as memory available in the public sphere, the state gets the role of an engineer of social memory.³⁶ The connection between public memory and public opinion is that they are not only both part of the public sphere, they are even mutually

³⁴ Perrin (2011)

³⁵ Blagojević (2012)

³⁶ Universiteit Leiden (2008)

determent. As Edward Casey (2004: 24) argues, social memory contributes, together with individual and collective memory, to public memory. Thereby, social memory becomes part of public memory and the public itself. Das (1972), however, studied the opposite direction - how public memory influences social memory. He claims that public memory is momentary in its nature; it comes and is eventually replaced by another. Yet, if it remains due to its social usefulness, it becomes social memory.³⁷ Bogajević proves the connection of public opinion by stating that “[t]he choice of events that become objects of public attention, evaluative meanings they reflect, the public interest in selecting precisely these events rather than some others and, finally, ongoing and competing politics of social memory decisive for constructing present-day national identity”.³⁸ In other words, events that make it into the public consciousness are constantly evaluated and eventually become social memory. An important observation is that public memory, and with it social memory, is created through ongoing interchange of ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and opinions – public opinions.³⁹

Public memory is connected to public opinion in the sense that public memory provides the social context in which we form our opinions. After all, public memory starts as public opinion, and public opinion, in turn, gets shaped in society, where rivaling opinions and perspectives contend for supremacy.⁴⁰ Jeffrey K. Olick (2007) pointed out that social memory is shaped by social, economic, and political circumstances as well as by beliefs, values, opposition and resistance. He considers it an interaction of worldviews. Public memory, in turn, is manifested in public opinion and, hence, can be measured through public opinion polls. Therefore, political, socio-cultural, and discursive circumstances make social memory a public affair.

Opinion polls are a legitimate indicator for social memory, because they reflect the ambiguity and diversity of social memory that is seldom without contradictions, especially in the context of Communism in Poland. Surveys also take into account the flexible character and the presumption that social memory is under permanent construction of social memory by conducting the same poll repetitively over a certain period of time. Hence, a comparative, temporary

³⁷ Das (1972): p. 223

³⁸ Blagojević (2012)

³⁹ Casey (2004): p. 30

⁴⁰ Mackowski (2011)

dimension will be added. It will be studied how the answers to the same question have changed from one year to another. In order to measure alterations in the public perception before and during the Kaczyński era, surveys conducted in 2000 and 2009, for instance, will be applied on the analysis.

1.3 Empirical data

Public opinion polls are included in the analysis to show whether or not the anti-Communist campaign of the Kaczyńskis had any effect on the Polish social perception. They are relevant and expressive, because they ask specifically about the issues the Kaczyńskis aimed at changing the memory of. The opinion polls are chosen according to their relevance to the topic. The polls show the general attitude of the Poles and reflect possible contradictory or ambiguous opinions of the Communist past.

The survey data has been obtained from the Warsaw based *Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej* (Public Opinion Research Center - CBOS). The center conducts public opinion polls on political and social issues and publishes them on their website www.cbos.pl. The data is available to the public in both Polish and English. CBOS is a non-profit organization, although their work is supervised by members of the Sejm, the Senate, the Prime Minister, and the President of the Republic. The research of the Centre is based on surveys carried out in the years between 1994 and 2009. Their chosen design was a random address sample. On a nation-wide basis, 1000 or 1500-adults were questioned to receive representative data. The questions in these surveys ask specifically about opinions about and attitudes towards the Communist past. The results of the following opinion polls are included in the analysis: Have the changes taking place in Poland since 1989 brought people more gains or losses? Connected to this was the question: In what way have the following changed since 1989: a) Our relations with other countries, b) Polish economy, c) politics, d) your town/village, e) relations between the authorities and people? This particular survey was carried out in 1994, 1997, and 1998 and, therefore, shows trends in the general attitude among the Polish population towards the Communist era. Another survey on evaluation and judgment of Communist Poland was conducted in 2000 and 2009 and will serve as argument later on in the analysis section.

The survey conducted in 1994, in 1996, in 1997, in 1999, in 2002 and, lastly, in 2005 was directed towards policy measures related to vetting and de-Communization: Should vetting be performed in Poland now, i.e. should it be checked whether the persons who occupy important positions in the state authorities collaborated with the Communist special services in the past? What do you think about de-Communization in Poland? Should persons occupying high positions in the former Communist Party and officers of the Communist Special Services be excluded from public service in the government, local government, foreign service, state-owned companies and the public media or not? The polls show only marginal changes in the Polish public opinion and a continuation of contrasting attitudes among the Poles.

Chapter III: Analysis

According to Aleks Szczerbiak (2003), the political memory in Poland has always been characterized by a polarization depending on the ideological attitudes towards the Communist past, with lustration and de-Communization being central elements of the disputes.⁴¹ In other words, post-Communist Poland was dominated by contrasting and competing political interpretations of and how to reckon with the past. The ideological cleavages ran between the center-right wing and the leftist political spectrum, which will be discussed in greater detail later on. Lustration and de-Communization are means to achieve justice in transitional countries just as legal prosecutions, memorials, or lustration policies. Lustration policies serve to clean the political system from the previous one and to restore credibility and legitimization for the new regime. In Poland, lustration is commonly understood as detecting whether or not an occupant of or candidate for a particular post, primary for the state, has in the past worked for or has collaborated with the Communist security services.⁴² De-Communization, in comparison, refers to “the removal and exclusion of people from office for having been functionaries of the Communist party or related institutions”.⁴³ The actions that were taken with the intention of de-Communization included removing Soviet

⁴¹ *In*: Raimundo: p. 162

⁴² Williams, Szczerbiak, Fowler (2003): p. 4

⁴³ Williams, Szczerbiak, Fowler (2003): p. 4

monuments, changing street names that, allegedly or not, glorify Communism and/or the Soviet Union, and the foundation of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) in 1998. The IPN is an institution established by the Polish Parliament (Sejm) with the purpose to prosecute crimes committed against the Polish nation and is, hence, one of the creators of memory and agents to achieve (post-) transitional justice through its legislative power. However, there was a lack of any symbolic acknowledgement of the end of Communist rule in the form of nationally celebrated holidays.⁴⁴ Other terms that are used in the context of dealing with the Communist past and need to be explained are vetting and screening. Those two processes are similar, however not the same. Whereas screening only describes background checks, defined as formal and thorough examination, vetting results additionally in the exclusion from public office of those individuals who have a proven association with the past.⁴⁵ The Polish process of dealing with the past and its different phases through which Poland went will be shown shortly to provide the historical background. The previous sections dealt with the construction of memory, but in this part, the content of the narrative will be discussed.

1.1. The four phases of memory politics in transitional Poland

Samuel Huntington stated that Eastern Germany and Romania were the only countries that had pursued transitional justice after the collapse of their respective Communist regimes. The others, in contrast, had followed a policy of “forgive-and-forget”.⁴⁶ The latter also accounts for Poland during the period of transition, yet not for the time following the finalization thereof. Filipa Raimundo (2012) called this new phase, in which previous settlements and the forgive-and-forget policy were challenged and justice demanded, “post-transitional justice”; Poland could no longer be considered post-Communist after the completion of economic and political transition and their return to Europe, marked by the EU accession.

Scholars most commonly divide the process of post-Communist lustration and vetting in Poland into four phases. The first phase (1989 - 1993) is best described

⁴⁴ Ochmann (2013)

⁴⁵ Stan (2006): p. 2

⁴⁶ *In*: Williams, Szczerbiak, Fowler (2003): p. 5

by the term “*gróba linia*”, most commonly translated into “thick line”, introduced by the first post-Communist Prime Minister of Poland Tadeusz Mazowiecki. The Communist past was supposed to remain part of the past and should not further have an effect on present politics. Moreover, Poland had no explicit lustration policy or made any attempt to come clean with the past. Although the government passed a lustration law in 1990, ensuring that police officers and prosecutors involved in repressing opposition activity would be excluded from their work, it was too soft to be considered an actual attempt at justice. This is the reason why the 1990s in Poland are by scholars like Ewa Ochmann (2013) referred to as the years of collective amnesia.

The second phase started when the severe conflict between the ones contended with the reckoning of the past and those who say that more needs to be done becoming more and more apparent in the years between 1993 and 1997. The cleavage runs along the lines of the anti-revisionist post-Communist and the revisionist post-Solidarność parties. Hence, political party bias decided over the interpretation of the past. The SLD, for instance, is an example for a party emerging from old Communist parties. The PiS, on the other hand, is one of the successor parties of the Solidarność. The outbreak of conflict was most likely triggered by the victory of the post-Communist SLD party in the 1993 parliamentary elections that appalled the revisionists. The revisionists were in favor of background checks and removing people from public office who were proven to have served the Communist regime. They demanded public punishment for all collaborators, the opening of archives and a more drastic lustration law. One of the most prominent representatives of the revisionists was Jan Olszewski, Vice Chairman of the Solidarność and third Prime Minister of Poland. He voted for a more radical lustration and de-Communization. They argued that “the truth will free us”⁴⁷ and that the lack of lustration will keep Poland from becoming a fully democratized state. The anti-revisionist group, on the other side, sounded a note of caution and argued that archives would not provide complete reliability and would have the potential to destroy lives and could be used to arbitrarily discredit public figures.⁴⁸ The political atmosphere of post-Communist Poland has

⁴⁷ Stasiński (2013). The original says: “Die Wahrheit wird uns befreien.”

⁴⁸ Konnander (2007)

been infiltrated with detestation, which more and more mirrored the various frustrations of the new political class with the alleged lack of justice.⁴⁹

Poland entered a new, third phase in 1997 by implementing the first legal document concerning lustration that the government could agree on. Yet, the law was quite ineffective and only addressed the old Communist state security agencies, leaving the ruling parties, the military, and the counter-intelligence services unaffected.

Scholars such as Adam Czarnota say that in 2001 a new phase started with elections that brought the post-Communists back into the government. President Aleksander Kwaśniewski submitted a proposal that called for “limiting the range of lustrable offenses and restricting the powers of the lustration agency”.⁵⁰ The lustration law was adopted in September 2002. The law was further amended in 2006, when the anti-Communist parties Law and Justice (PiS) and The League of Polish Families (LPR) were governing. The 2006 amendment covered a wider range of people than the lustration law of 1997 and applied to journalists, teachers, academics, and state company executives, to name a few.⁵¹

1.2. The political narratives before 2005

In order to understand how the transitional and the post-transitional political narrative in Poland differed, the background to the campaign starting in 2005 and how the political narrative of the Communist past before the Kaczyńskis tried to change it will be discussed now. It will be answered what kind of rhetoric and arguments were used before 2005 using public speeches and official statements from 1989-2005.

After 1989, two main narratives prevailed, which Kenneth Burke named the “frame of acceptance” and the “frame of rejection”.⁵² The former is defended by post-Communist parties and former servants of the Communist regime and stretch the context and social and economic reconstructions as positive aspects of the Communist system rather than abuses and wrongdoings. Marian Orzechowski,

⁴⁹ Walicki (1997): p. 187

⁵⁰ Nalepa (2011): p. 10

⁵¹ Stan (2006): p. 2

⁵² *In*: Ornatowski (2011): p. 33

Poland's Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1985-1988 and representative of the Polish United Workers' Party, said:

*“For the creation of the new to succeed, it is necessary to preserve a balance between continuity and change. Nobody suggests, that the past 45 years in Poland, was a period of only achievements and successes. But an equally great exaggeration would be to declare, and such voices exist, that it was an unbroken chain of failures, that everything up to now – has been unsuccessful and bad.”*⁵³

In short, he maintains that not everything was bad and votes for remembering the achievements as well. According to him, people who demonize Communism are exaggerating, Further on, he argued that the accomplishment of the

“political and economic reforms, initiated eight years ago [that is, in 1981, the year martial law was declared by the Jaruzelski government] and presently [that is, with the installation of the non-communist Mazowiecki cabinet] deepened and accelerated”.⁵⁴

Mieczysław Rakowski, the last Prime Minister of the PRL, argued along the lines of Orzechowski and claimed that without the martial law announced in 1981 there would have been no perestroika in the Soviet Union and the democratic transition would not have been possible in Poland or anywhere in Eastern Europe.⁵⁵ This narrative is the result of the negotiated, not violent, character of the transition, the Roundtable Accords, and makes it easier to represent it retrospectively as the outcome intended by the old elite.⁵⁶ The opposition's role was degraded to being partners or simply followers of the democratic process.⁵⁷ The latter narrative, the frame of rejection, was mainly communicated by the former political opposition, one representative of which is Bronisław Geremek, counselor of the Solidarność and one of the leading negotiators in the Roundtable Agreement Talks:

“One should rather speak, what is the balance of decades of consolidating and conserving a system that is contrary to the laws of life. One should speak of the injustices [done] to people and wrongs

⁵³ In: Ornatowski (2011): p. 32

⁵⁴ In: Ornatowski (2011): p. 34

⁵⁵ In: Ornatowski (2011): p. 34

⁵⁶ Ornatowski (2011): p. 34

⁵⁷ Ornatowski (2011): p. 34

*[done] to the nation, of the waste of efforts, [of] the alienation of the sense of human labour”.*⁵⁸

Kenneth Burke argues that the narrative that finds itself in the “frame of rejection” puts focus on the legitimization of the active and moral opposition to the Communist system and defends the viewpoint and memories of those who have suffered under it.⁵⁹

In short, the Polish political sphere has not experienced any systematic de-Communization, which has been an unacceptable condition that the Kaczyńskis tried to change beginning in 2005, introducing a fifth, post-transitional phase.

1.3. The PiS and ‘politics of history’

1.3.1. Background

It was the Kaczyński brothers who had considerable influence on the political memory in Poland in the 2000s. They used the term “politics of history” (*Polityka historyczna*), which describes “(...) the conscious attempt to present historical events and their narrative in such a way as to strengthen collective identity and a sense of national purpose”. Jarosław Kaczyński defined de-Communization as “an extension of the restrictions for former employees of the party apparatus”.⁶⁰ The “politics of history” of the Kaczyńskis was explicitly opposed to the so-called “policy of micromania”, supposedly promoted by the liberal elites on the other side of the political spectrum, according to which the Polish identity deriving from their common history is one of humiliation and defeat.⁶¹ In other words, the PiS’s intention was to re-interpret history that is more comely and strengthens the national sense. Another declared aim of the Kaczyńskis was to break with certain aspects of the old narrative. A rather prominent example is the change of the narrative of the massacre of Katyń. During the 1990s in Poland, political declarations, media attention, and academic studies sought to find out the truth about massacres committed by the Communists, such as Katyń, Kharkov, and Miednoye. This was necessary since the truth was concealed by the Soviets who accused the Nazis of having committed the crime. As a consequence, official

⁵⁸ *In*: Ornatowski (2011): p. 33

⁵⁹ Ornatowski (2011): p. 33

⁶⁰ 11.01.2007 | Aktualności (News) | Rząd (Administration) (2005-2007) | Źródło (Source): PAP. PiS website.

⁶¹ Stanley (2012)

cemeteries for victims of those massacres were opened. Especially Katyń is memorized as symbol of Soviet evil-ness and, hence, highly mystified. Lech Walesa stated in 1995 that “throughout the years of the conspiracy of silence surrounding the Katyń crime the Poles had always heard its silent cry”.⁶² Lech Kaczyński stated in 2010 that:

*“Hiding the truth about Katyń - on the decision of those who perpetrated it - became a pillar of Communist politics in post-war Poland: the foundation myth of the PRL”.*⁶³

Katyń has been a “forbidden historical memory”⁶⁴ throughout the period of Communist rule in Poland.

However, it must be noted that it was not only the PiS who advocated a fresh discourse, the PO also granted memory a relevant position on their agenda beginning in 2005, in a less populist manner anyway. The PiS’s official motivation to bring the topic back to the Sejm was to “return historical memory to the Polish society”⁶⁵. However, it is not only the memory of the Communist times, but also of the transition period that the Kaczyńskis aimed at correcting. They argue that both the political memory created in the 1990s and the political transition were done in the wrong matter and needed to be revised.⁶⁶ The Kaczyńskis claimed that the Polish political system needs to be cleaned from former Communists in order to finalize the democratic transition.⁶⁷

There are several possible reasons that could explain why the Kaczyńskis made a comparatively late and radical attempt at post-Communist justice. Monika Nalepa (2010) argues that they were sure that no one in their own ranks would be affected by lustration (“no skeletons in the closet”). The PiS is a non-collaborating, post-Solidarność party, which means that its representatives can be expected not to be former Communist collaborators and, on the contrary, rather anti-Communist. It can further be argued that people affected by lustration are from the opposition, which provided the PiS with a political competitive advantage. They believed that their ideologically motivated fight against Communism legitimizes their right to rule in post-Communist Poland. In Poland,

⁶² Ricketson (2001): p. 493

⁶³ Euobserver (2010). Translated by Rettmann.

⁶⁴ Ricketson (2001): p. 500

⁶⁵ Raimundo (2012): p. 186

⁶⁶ Raimundo (2012): pp. 186-189

⁶⁷ Puhl (2007)

calls for lustration came from rather small minority groups such as radical right-wing post-Solidarity groups excluded from the first post-Communist government.⁶⁸ Andrzej Walicki claims that “they needed a spirit of ideological crusade and a demonized picture of the enemy”.⁶⁹ For the supposedly moral defenders that proclaimed that any compromise with the post-Communist parties was completely unacceptable; it was considered a pact with evil, including a betrayal of moral values and an adulteration of national identity.⁷⁰ Moreover, the PiS’s right-wing, anti-Communist ideology and their populist nature demands it. Wiktor Osiatyński, among others, argues that it might be motivated by revenge.⁷¹ Valentinas Mite (2007) says that the Kaczyńskis were “driven by resentment against an entire generation of older politicians, the Kaczyńskis are happy to see them purged from offices and replaced by their own loyalists”. It is commonly suggested (e.g. Walicki 1997) that Jarosław Kaczyński was at least partly motivated by personal frustration rooting in the conflict with intellectuals such as Adam Michnik. Moreover, in the eyes of the Kaczyńskis, “the Round Table Agreements appeared not as tremendous victory, (...) but rather as a shameful, cowardly deal, bordering on a national betrayal.”⁷²

Nonetheless, even within the PiS party, there was disagreement on how extensive and radical the lustration law should be. The Kaczyński brothers and their circle were in favor of maintaining certain limitations, particularly with regard to privacy. The younger generation, in contrast, demanded a more radical approach to lustration with no restrictions.⁷³ The Kaczyńskis’ reserve can be explained with their awareness of legislative constraints. That the younger generation was even more drastic in their demands is not surprising considering that the Kaczyńskis, when they founded the party in 2001, chose young people on the far right as their primary target group.⁷⁴ Those young, highly ideologically motivated, rightists served in the discussion on the new lustration law as agitators in order not to seem soft for right-wing oriented voters.

⁶⁸ Williams et al. (2003); p. 11

⁶⁹ Walicki (1997); p. 186

⁷⁰ Walicki (1997); pp. 190-191

⁷¹ Nalepa disagree with Osiatyński.

⁷² Walicki (1997); p. 191

⁷³ Raimundo (2012); p. 194

⁷⁴ Wiktor Osiatyński *in*: The New York Times on January 22, 2007

1.3.2. Speech and word analysis

The objectives of the analysis is to examine what kind of image the Kaczyński brothers draw of Communist Poland and with which rhetorical tools they attempt at creating it. In order to reach these objectives, political documents will be quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. The documents were chosen if they met the following criteria. According to the directive approach, party programs and public statements provided by the PiS and speeches given by the Kaczyńskis that dealt with the same policy are suitable for the analysis. They are suitable if they include expressive statements on Communism. Keywords such as Communism, PRL and lustration were used to separate relevant surveys from irrelevant ones. In the *Kronika Sejmowa* (The parliamentary chronicle), a search for the word “Kaczyński” was made. In speeches and statements of them fast search for relevant words (context units), which are *Komunizm* (Communism), *Dekomunizacja* (de-Communization), PRL and *lustracja* (lustration). After stemming they were cut down to “Kommuniz*”, which covered both Communism and de-Communization, “PRL” and “lustrac*”. These three terms are part of one context unit. They are really general terms, but this can be justified with the very broad topic that deals with the general pictures of Communist times and not anything more specifics. The second aspect of the summative approach was then applied and the context and connotation considered.

Extracts of speeches, party programs, and public statements will be analyzed under these aspects, following the tracks of Lasswell’s communication model: What is the type of speech or statement? What is the occasion? Who is it directed to – potential voters, fellow politicians, commemoration participants, or others? First, the central message of the speech will be outlined. Second, answers to the following questions will be given, following the summative approach: What does the speaker emphasize in his statement? How are central words connoted? How does the speaker contrast aspects to present choices to the listeners? What are the major arguments, words, phrases and rhetorical tools used in the speeches? Third, all findings will be summarized. Ideological bias is presumed in all documents, because they are tools serving a populist, anti-Communist campaign by a center-right wing political party.

It is maintained here that yet another phase began in 2005 with the PiS winning the parliamentary elections and trying to introduce a more populist anti-

Communist political memory. Their proclaimed aim was to remove former Communists and collaborators from any position of power. Jarosław and Lech Kaczyński promoted a new lustration process, whose necessity they mainly justified with moral obligation; “*jakość moralna*” (moral quality)⁷⁵ and “*rewolucja moralny*” (moral revolution)⁷⁶ were often used catchphrases. The 2009 PiS Party Program says:

*“This [jakość moralna] requires both a fair settlement of the communist past and the purification of public life in the Republic of degeneration associated with changes in the system after 1989. It is not possible to build a democratic Poland with a functioning market economy without the strength to overcome the Communist past.”*⁷⁷

The party program addresses Polish voters and, therefore, it is rhetorically considerably strong and aims at influencing the voters’ opinion. “*Jakość*” is defined as a certain degree of perfection.⁷⁸ “*Moralny*” in the political context means not only moral, but also pure, noble, clean, or decent.⁷⁹ If the Kaczyńskis’ campaign is pure and decent, it is implied in reverse that everything Communist is the opposite – impure, dirty, and corrupt.

As much as the Kaczyński brothers reinvigorated the past, their aim was to put an end to the Communist era that was still ruling Poland in their eyes. Lech Kaczyński said in 2005 that:

“Poland absolutely needs to establish a moral order, and this moral order also means our efforts to deal with the burden of the past by rejecting it. This can be achieved by political screening. Vetting must be carried out with all determination”.⁸⁰

Lech Kaczyński puts emphasis on the PiS’s claimed moral mission to establish morality in Poland by introducing stricter vetting and screening procedures. This statement is taken from his inaugural speech given in the Sejm and, thus, directed towards parliamentary members (MPs) and fellow politicians. The choices that are presented to the listeners are, one, further political screening that leads to a moral

⁷⁵ PiS Party Program 2009. PiS website.

⁷⁶ Puhl (2007)

⁷⁷ PiS Party Program 2009. PiS website. The original says: *Wymaga to zarówno uczciwego rozliczenia komunistycznej przeszłości, jak i oczyszczenia życia zbiorowego w Rzeczypospolitej z wynaturzeń towarzyszących zmianom systemowym po 1989 r. Nie da się zbudować demokratycznej Polski ze sprawnie działającą gospodarką rynkową bez zdecydowanego przewyciężenia komunistycznej przeszłości.*

⁷⁸ Centrum Jakości (2013). The original says: *Jakość jest to pewien stopień doskonałości.*

⁷⁹ Definicja (2002). The original says: *Bezgrzeszny, szlachetny, czysty, przyzwoity.*

⁸⁰ Raimundo (2012): p. 194

system or, two, no screening allegedly resulting in the rule of immorality. This moral revolution was supposed to be carried out through a new lustration law, the so-called purification law.

According to Jarosław Kaczyński, uncovering the truth or “*showing the evil communist period is a big task; the further course of events showed how fateful the adoption of this method as a true and false in the public consciousness is mixed*”.⁸¹ This statement is directed towards (potential) voters of the PiS. Hence, his intention is to demonize (“evil”) Communism and spread this image of the past among the people. This particular rhetorical tool is called ethos, which describes the means of convincing an audience of an argument by establishing oneself as ethical or moral center. His viewpoint is rather undifferentiated and he provides, typical for a populist point of view, a rather black and white scheme. He suggests that everyone who does not share his perception of Communism is misguided. In other words, the choices that he is presenting to the audience are condemning Communism and being right or disagreeing with him and being blind for the truth. Kaczyński claims to fulfill a higher purpose and serves fate (“fateful”). He exaggerates in order to legitimize the anti-Communist witch-hunt. The PiS claims the monopoly on who is Communist and how Communism should be remembered and perceived: “*Restore historical memory, we will show who was who. Recall, what the essence of Communism and the PRL is*”.⁸² Again, the addressee is the Polish population in general.

Another catchword was “pakt”, which translates into “the pact”. According to the Kaczyńskis, the pact was the network of Communists ruling the Third Republic that allegedly still exists. They claim that post-1989 Poland is still ruled by a conspiratorial clique consisting, for the most part, of the old apparatchiks. Old alliances and networks survived the transition and explain the success of people, who understood to translate their former political connections into business contacts.⁸³ According to the interpretation of the Kaczyńskis, the Communist system was not a system with rules but viewed instead as system of personal connections.⁸⁴ In their rhetoric, the pact is made responsible for

⁸¹ 21.02.2007 | Aktualności (News) | Rząd (Administration) (2005-2007) | Źródło (Source): PAP. PiS website.

⁸² 31.10.2006 | Rząd (Administration) (2005-2007). 365 dni realizacji programu Solidarnego Państwa (365 days of the realization of the United State Program). PiS homepage. The original says: *Przywrócimy pamięć historyczną, pokażemy, kto był kim. Przypomnimy, na czym polegała istota komunizmu i PRL.*

⁸³ Ornatowski (2011): p. 37

⁸⁴ Walicki (1997): p. 190

everything that goes wrong in Poland.⁸⁵ The term “pakt” in the political sense is connoted quite negatively. It describes being concluded with an ally or even agreeing to a devil's offer.⁸⁶

A considerable reason for the PiS's electoral success in 2005 was that they said the root of the corruption problem in Poland is the pact and the system infiltrated with corrupted Communists. Jarosław Kaczyński said in 2006 in a speech given in parliament:

*“A ruthless and, until recently, very effective defense mechanism employed in maintaining the status quo also with regard to those who had smoothly been transferred from the old regime to the new, without any ‘lustration’ whatsoever. (...) Members of that [Olszewski] government did not comfort themselves with the naive belief that after 1989 a miracle occurred in Poland and the old state apparatus suddenly became the apparatus of a democratic state (...) We shall fight against that [the pact]. We want to destroy it. We want to use legal methods, the methods appropriate for a country that believes in the rule of law. Our first goal is to discredit that network as immoral”.*⁸⁷

Words referring to the supposedly moral obligation as justification for a more severe lustration reoccur considerably often. The repetitiveness of morality as single argument for their campaign shows the lack of other legitimizing arguments. The electoral success of the PiS can, hence, be explained with their promise to fight corruption and not with their radical approach towards former Communists, since it was not a priority in the previous electoral campaigning. According to Raimundo (2012: 173), the PiS electoral manifesto of 2005, called ‘Justice for all’, was one of the few documents that showed the rather radical attitude of the PiS towards Communists and the Communist past. The PiS's victory rooted in their ability to use the transition anxieties and disappointments of some parts of the population. Then, in the following years of 2005, de-Communization and lustration became major parts of the new political agenda. The PiS's Party Program 2009 stated:

“Therefore, the need to constantly preach de-communization, or actual abolition of the former communist nomenklatura privileges and liquidation of informal social networks in the Third Republic created by people who were associated with the Communist Party apparatus

⁸⁵ Puhl (2007)

⁸⁶ Definicja (2002). The original says: *Zawierany z sojusznikiem. Oferta czarcia do zawarcia.*

⁸⁷ Raimundo (2012): p. 189

and its subordinate special services, the obvious foreign connections. We stand for vetting, defined as the disclosure of potential links with departments playing an important role in social and public life in free Poland.”⁸⁸

“Potential links” indicates a presumption of guilt. In the eyes of the Kaczyńskis everyone is suspicious of being involved in the former Communist network. The nomenklatura includes, according to the Kaczyńskis, all those people who wanted to enrich themselves while continuing to rule the country indirectly behind the scenes.⁸⁹ The voter is given the choice between being ruled by mafia-like cliques aiming at their own profit and the rule of the PiS that promises the end of corruption.

This is the reason why scholars like Nalepa (2011: 10) call the Kaczyński’s new attempt at lustration a “witch-hunt”. The Kaczyńskis belong to those politicians for whom evil had to appear in the shape of post-Communist politicians. The PiS provided their plan of how Communists and the Communist should ideally be dealt with in the 2009 party program under the section called ‘Truth in public life’:

“A nation that has no memory cannot normally grow. During the last two decades of efforts to "amputate" the memory of the Polish nation dealt with both our post-war history and earlier periods. After winning the election, we review the legislation establishing the scope of the various types of classified information, as well as rules preventing non-citizens' access to the secret information held by public bodies, removing any unnecessary restrictions. After 1989, a kind of state secret conspiracy of silence and trying to surround the sphere of knowledge about the mechanisms of oppression of the Nation and society by Communism and the people who participated in such activities. Prohibitions and obstacles created by a kind of "front of national censorship", made up of influential politicians, journalists, lawyers, etc., and unworthy of ways to discredit individuals and institutions to know the truth do not have counterparts in other countries of our culture. Fear of elites against disclosure of the truth about important public issues can occur, as it turns out, not only in totalitarian systems. In our opinion, the only justification for the restrictions may be to protect the data on health and family life and

⁸⁸ PiS website. The original says: *Dlatego niezmiennie głosimy potrzebę dekomunizacji, czyli zniesienia faktycznych przywilejów byłej komunistycznej nomenklatury i likwidacji nieformalnych sieci społecznych stworzonych w III RP przez osoby, które były związane z aparatem PZPR i podporządkowanymi jej służbami specjalnymi, o wiadomych powiązaniach zagranicznych. Opowiadamy się także za lustracją, rozumianą jako ujawnienie ewentualnych powiązań z owymi służbami osób odgrywających istotną rolę w życiu społecznym i publicznym wolnej Polski.*

⁸⁹ Walicki (1997): p. 190

intimate are officially communist repression and surveillance, or the sake of the current security requirements of an independent state.”⁹⁰

In short, the PiS voted for a so-called Truth and Justice Commission, extending lustration to journalists, opening all files of all public officials, revealing all functionaries and collaborators, and lustration of politicians and their families. All these aims are summarized in the “Memory and responsibility Program” of the PiS, which is part of the 2005 Party Manifesto. The key words here are: amputation of memory, conspiracy of silence, censorship, and disclosure of the truth. The PiS evokes certain fears of the Polish voters. Pathos is a rhetorical tool that aims at persuading an audience by appealing to emotions such as pity, guilt, anger, or love. In this case, the Kaczyńskis try to evoke anger and a feeling of being treated unfairly among the Polish population. They predict that democratic liberties are taken away (“censorship”), the Polish society is being lied to (“disclosure of the truth, conspiracy of silence”) and others brutally and illegitimately taking away something that belongs to them (“amputation of memory”). Differently speaking, the voters can decide between the continuation of totalitarianism and the end of an unfair and suppressive system.

A more concrete example that is the most emotionally discussed aspect of the Communist past. It can be argued that the Kaczyńskis used Katyń in a populist matter, since it provokes nationalist, anti-Russian sentiments in Poland. But that is not necessary since the political elites agreed on the same narrative of the events. Even the post-Communist parties are not ideologically blinded in that matter. The SLD representative Jerzy Szmajdzinski expressed in 2010 expectations from the Russian government to start an open and honest debate on the dark side of Soviet history.⁹¹ Another member of the SLD, Ryszard Kalisz said that “Katyń remains a

⁹⁰ PiS website. The original says: *Naród, który nie ma pamięci, nie może się normalnie rozwijać. W mijającym dwudziestolecu działania na rzecz „amputacji” pamięci Narodu Polskiego dotyczyły zarówno naszej powojennej historii, jak i okresów wcześniejszych. Po wygraniu wyborów dokonamy przeglądu przepisów ustanawiających zakres różnego rodzaju informacji niejawnych, a także przepisów utrudniających dostęp obywateli do nieobjętych tajemnicą informacji posiadanych przez instytucje publiczne, usuwając wszelkie zbędne ograniczenia. Po 1989 r. swoistą tajemnicą państwową i złą milczeniem próbuje się otoczyć sferę wiedzy o mechanizmach zniewolenia. Narodu i społeczeństwa przez komunizm oraz o ludziach, którzy w takich działaniach uczestniczyli. Zakazy i przeszkody tworzone przez swoisty „front cenzury narodowej”, złożony z wpływowych polityków, publicystów, prawników itd., a także niegodne sposoby dyskredytowania osób i instytucji działających na rzecz poznania prawdy nie mają odpowiedników w innych państwach naszego kręgu kulturowego. Strach elit przed ujawnieniem prawdy o istotnych sprawach publicznych może występować, jak się okazuje, nie tylko w systemach totalitarnych. Naszym zdaniem jedynym uzasadnieniem ograniczeń może być ochrona danych dotyczących zdrowia oraz życia rodzinnego i intymnego ofi ar komunistycznych represji i inwigilacji lub względ na aktualne wymogi bezpieczeństwa niepodległego państwa.*

⁹¹ Das Polen Magazin (2010)

tragic place for Poles”.⁹² Lech Kaczyński said in his last speech in 2010 on Katyń before he anticipated attending a commemoration ceremony:

“Over 21,000 Polish prisoners were in April 1940 taken from the NKVD's [the Soviet secret police] camps and prisons and murdered. This crime of genocide was perpetrated by the will of Stalin, on the orders of the highest authorities of the Soviet Union. The alliance of the Third Reich, the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact and the aggression against Poland of 17 September 1939 culminated in the shocking Katyn crime”.⁹³

The speech was directed towards the public in general and family members of victims in particular. Further on, they promoted the removal of all Communist signs and put them on the same level as Nazi symbols. Jarosław Kaczyński said:

“Communism was a genocidal system that led to the murder of tens of millions of people. No symbol of communism has a right to exist in Poland, because these are symbols of a genocidal system that should be compared to German Nazism”.⁹⁴

“Politicians from [the PiS and the PO] have said that, because more people died under communism than under fascism, the law is justified (...) so far no one has published an official list of exactly which symbols are outlawed. Critics have complained that the law is too hazy to actually be applied”.⁹⁵ The comparison of Communism in Poland and National Socialism in Germany may be inaccurate, yet expresses the radical attitude of the Kaczyński brothers. It can be doubted, though, that the majority of the Polish population supported these radical stances. Jerzy Jedlicki put it this way: “Such comparisons, trivializing Auschwitz and Treblinka, are, in my view impermissible. In this question I have behind me a majority of the enlightened public opinion in Europe”.⁹⁶ It, however, supports the democratic narrative, according to which the transition was a political liberation from an oppressive, illegitimate, totalitarian system to a democratic one, hard-won through years of popular struggle.⁹⁷ Jarosław Kaczyński went as far as to call it a monster:

⁹² EurActiv (2011)

⁹³ Euobserver (2010). Translated by Rettmann.

⁹⁴ Curry (2009). It must be noted that the amendment was not proposed by the PiS but by a member of the PO, Izbieta Radziszewska. It includes the prohibition of the distribution, production, sale or possession of symbols of totalitarian regimes.

⁹⁵ Voice of America (2009)

⁹⁶ Walicki (1997): p. 225

⁹⁷ Ornatowski (2011): p. 35

“It is plain that a post-communist state has arisen in Poland, a post-communist monster so to speak. A monster in which the social dominance, obtained by the nomenklatura, very quickly turned into political dominance and paved the way to their return to power”.⁹⁸

Jarosław Kaczyński is convinced that:

“They obviously are guilty, we are in favor of vetting, as this would not absolve these people but on the other hand those most guilty of being in the background and do not bear any consequences of their actions. In short, we want to hit hard”.⁹⁹

Those words directed towards the voters are supposed to show the strength and the PiS’s commitment to fight against the criminal and the bad, embodied by the (ex-) Communists. Lech Kaczyński proclaimed that “Communism in Poland fell on September 12, 2005, the day PiS won the elections”.¹⁰⁰ Jarosław Kaczyński found strong words to describe the (post-Communist) opposition:

“We are dealing with an unprecedented bastardization of the political and cultural establishment. These are the people who came out of Communism with a variety of deep-hidden complexes by their own fault. (...) Our unfortunate peripherals, imitative, mimic elite believe that they cannot escape moral arguments”.¹⁰¹

The repetitive theme of moral monopoly versus immoral and quite despicable nature of Communism is illustrated here. The words used here do not serve a political purpose anymore, but, instead, seem to be expressions of a deeply rooted detestation (“imitative, mimic elite”).

To sum up, the analysis included three aspects: quotation, description and interpretation. The objective of the analysis is to examine how Communism is presented and what kind of picture of Communist Poland is drawn by the PiS in general and the Kaczyński brothers in particular. The Kaczyńskis demonize the Communist regime (PRL) and argue that the Polish state is not yet fully democratized and parts of the former corrupt and totalitarian system have prevailed. The words and phrases that the Kaczynskis use the most are the

⁹⁸ Raimundo (2012): p. 188

⁹⁹ 11.01.2007 | Aktualności (News) | Rząd (Administration) (2005-2007) | Źródło (Source): PAP. PiS website.

¹⁰⁰ Rosiak (2006). The original says: *Komunizm w Polsce upadł 12 września 2005, czyli w dniu, w którym PiS wygrał wybory*.

¹⁰¹ Kublik (2012). The original says: *Mamy do czynienia z niebywałym skundleniem polityczno-kulturowego establishmentu. To są ludzie, którzy wyszli z komunizmu z różnymi głęboko ukrytymi kompleksami własnych win (...) Nasze nieszczęsne peryferyjne, naśladowcze, małpiarskie elity uważają, że nie uchodzi używać argumentów moralnych*. In: “The Poland of our dreams” (2011).

negatively connoted terms “moral quality” and “pact”. Moreover, they present themselves as single alternative, as the only ones who can put a definite end to it.

1.4. The Polish society and ‘politics of history’

The aim of this section is to answer the following questions: Is the Communist past still relevant for the Polish public and if so, to what extent? Has public perception of the Communist era radicalized due to the PiS’s campaign? Was the Kaczyński’s proclaimed aim to change the perception of the Communist times successful? The three following outcomes are possible. Either the population has become increasingly indifferent towards the Communist past or they considered the Kaczyński rhetoric to be too radical and inappropriate. Or lastly, they are influenced by the campaign and the radicalization of the political memory has led to a new social narrative. In order to measure the impact survey data from before and during the Kaczyński era will be compared. Data from 1994, 2002, 2005, and 2009 seem suitable, because they show the development before, during and after the rule of the Kaczyński and cover a timeframe that permits to make a reliable statement about observable trends and changes in the public opinion.

1.4.1. Nostalgia

Political nostalgia never actually prevailed in Poland; no political party, not even the post-Communist ones like the SLD, suggests the return to a Communist or socialist system. On the social level, in contrast, nostalgic sentiments among some Poles have evolved over the past decade. Leszek Koczanowicz (2008: 8) claims that post-Communist nostalgia in Poland depends largely on political and/or economic disappointments and problems and does not necessarily derive from a genuine longing for the PRL era. According to Christine Esche (2013), it is particularly the older generation and the more rural population that sees the Communist past with certain sentimentalism. Karolina Slovenko (2007) argues that sentimentality developed, especially among elderly people, due to a number of economic, social and political disappointments in the new, democratic system following the PRL. Most people miss the social cohesion and equality, cheap

health care, lack of security that the old regime had provided. Particularly old Poles feel politically stigmatized, suffer the loss of their identity, and experience economic disadvantages. Seeing exclusively the negative sides of the past would mean to take away positive things from many years of one's own life. Tadeusz Puczkowski (2009) states that "[i]t was bad, but it was bad for everybody". Puczkowski is expressing his opposition to the narrative of the Kaczyńskis by claiming that people growing up in the PRL are today in the firing line of politicians since they are considered part of the old system. This is where the political stigmatization originates from: "People think if the times were bad, the people living then were also bad" (Niczke, 2009). Justyna Kopczynska argues that although young people in Poland know that the Communist government was repressive, they are reviving it now is more about freedom and personal style.¹⁰² Yet, the narrative among young people differs from the older ones. Communism is for them is more a fashionable trend, rather than a political system. Among young people Communism has become an apolitical fashion source. Fruzsina Müller (2007) writes in: "Retro Fashion, Nostalgia and National Consciousness" that "it is important to know that there is not only personal nostalgia but also a collective one". According to Dr. Duda (2009) young people cannot feel nostalgic, because they do not have active memories of the Communist era: "For young people, (...) you cannot really call it nostalgia, because for nostalgia you have been living in the times". Yet, what can be said against this argument is that by seeing images in the public sphere, it is possible for many members of society to feel nostalgia for times of which they did not have any personal experiences.¹⁰³ Further on Müller argues that the "development of collective nostalgia is very likely when personal lifelines are crossed by a large historical event or sudden change in society that evokes similar fears or answers in the people".

Generally speaking, rather diffuse opinions and relations dominate among the Poles when it comes to their Communist past. Although a certain trend towards nostalgia cannot be denied, the Polish collective memory of the Communist past is predominantly negatively associated with "long lines, political prisoners, censorship, poverty, martial law, cruelty, absurdity, and misery".¹⁰⁴ In the social

¹⁰² Voice of America (2009)

¹⁰³ Müller (2007)

¹⁰⁴ Esche (2013)

narrative, Communism is mostly reduced to ridiculousness and shabbiness, taking pride in strength of both the people and Solidarity.¹⁰⁵

1.4.2. Trends in Polish public opinion of the Communist past

In the following section, the survey data collected by CBOS will be presented and evaluated in order to measure tendencies and changes in the Polish population concerning the Communist past. The Polish society is divided between people with a positive and those with a negative view of Communist Poland. According to Ryszard Stemplowski (2010), it is mostly young people who have a negative attitude, whereas elder Poles tend to have good memories of that time.¹⁰⁶ A possible explanation that is suggested here is that the people growing up in the Communist era were, to a certain extent, affected by the Communist propaganda and ideology.

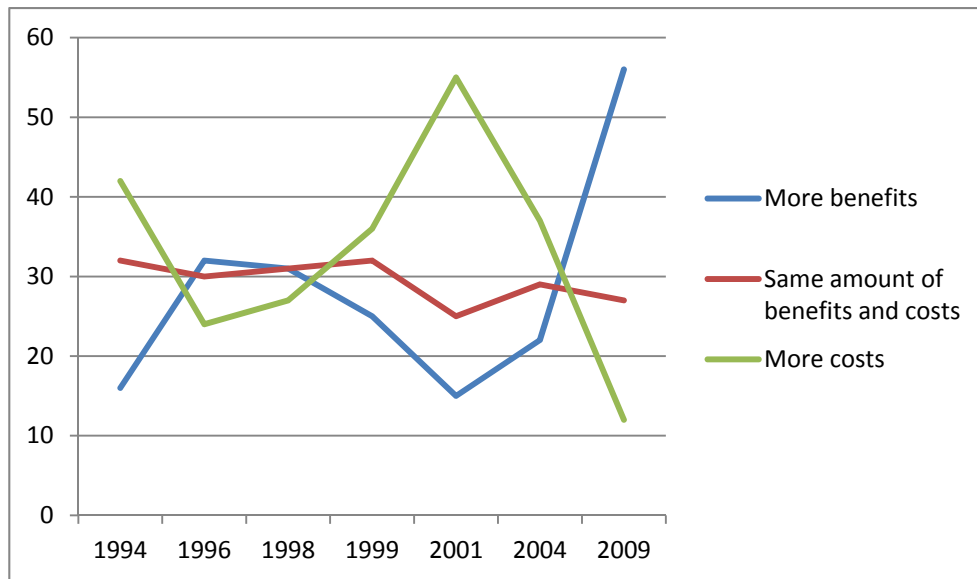
LIFE IN THE PRL COMPARED TO NOW

The first survey that will be discussed here investigates the public's opinion of the political and economic transition of Poland. Have the changes taking place in Poland since 1989 brought people more gains or losses? In 1994, a majority of the respondents (42%) thought the changes had brought more losses than gains. For 32% the transition caused about the same amount of losses and gains. Only 15% of the interviewees saw the positive things resulting from the events in 1989. Compared to 1997, the general attitude towards the transition period was more positive, with 22% of the questioned persons claiming that they were better off before 1989 than after. For 40% losses and gains kept the balance. A quarter of the interviewees experienced more gains than losses. 13% had no opinion on that. Only one year later, in 1998, most of the respondents' view on the political, economic and social changes affirmative. The majority (32%) chose answer a), in comparison to 27% who answered with c). 31% said that there has been the same number of gains and losses after 1989.

¹⁰⁵ Esche (2013)

¹⁰⁶ Stemplowski (2010): p. 327

Graph 1: Did the post-1989 transformation bring more costs or benefits?



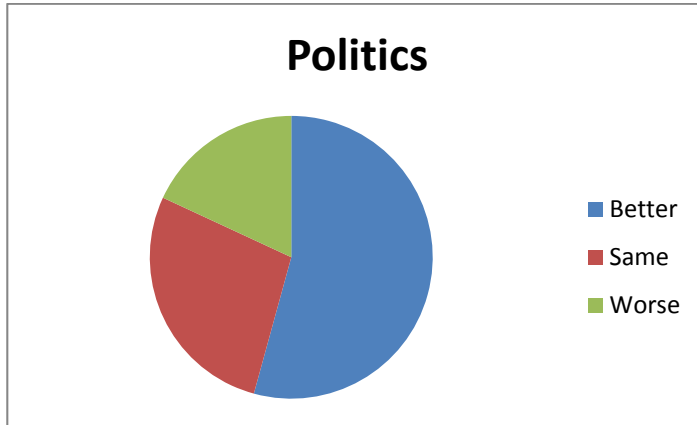
Data source: CBOS (2009)

One can see on the graph that over the years the opinions on whether the regime change in 1989 brought more gains or losses altered significantly between the years of 1994 and 2009. The number of people in favor of the transition increased largely between 2004 and 2009. Whether or not this is due to the Kaczyńskis' campaign is difficult to evaluate. Other possible explanations are the membership to the European Union in 2004 that brought various political, economic and also social benefits that are only possible in a democratic Poland.

The second question included in the survey was: In what way have the following changed since 1989: a) Our relations with other countries, b) Polish economy, c) politics, d) relations between the authorities and people? Generally speaking, the numbers indicate that the vast majority of respondents saw advancement in all categories. 76% were convinced that relations with other countries had improved since the collapse of the Communist regime, compared to 3% who thought that relations had deteriorated. 7% did not identify any change. Concerning the Polish economy, 61% observed an enhancement, 9% noticed no change, and 23% thought it was taking a turn to the worse. In the political context, people tended to see the situation ameliorating (51%). 17% disagreed with them. 16% were rather neutral. 26% did not remark changes and 17% claimed that the situation has degraded. When it came to relations between the authorities and the people, the interviewees were less opinionated. 41% of the polled assessed an

augmentation in that matter. More saw a decline in the relations between officials and the people (26%) than no change at all (22%).

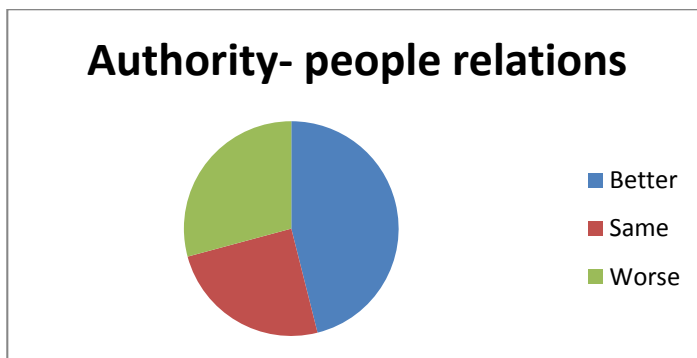
Graph 2: In what way have politics changed since 1989?



Source: CBOS (1998)

When it came to relations between the authorities and the people, the interviewees were less opinionated. 41% of the polled assessed an augmentation in that matter. More saw a decline in the relations between officials and the people (26%) than no change at all (22%).

Graph 3: In what way have the relations between the authorities and the people changed since 1989?



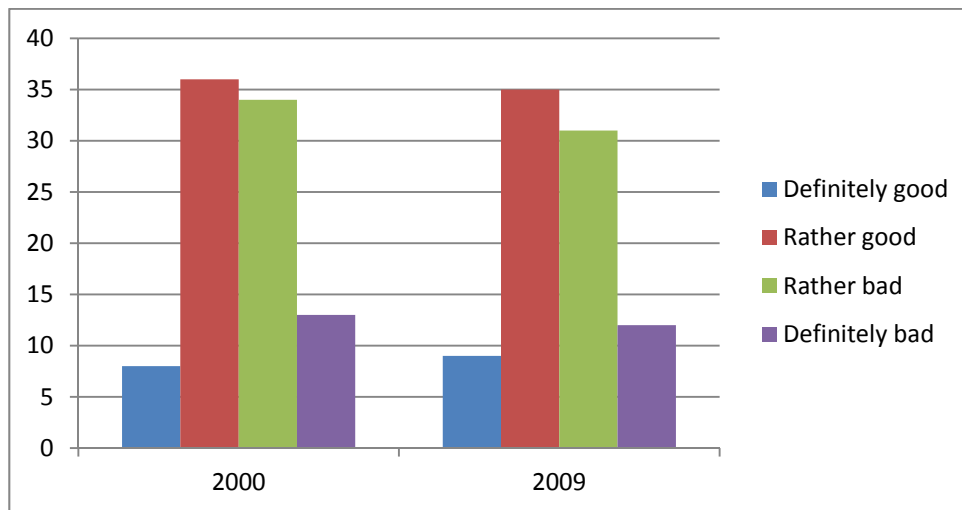
Source: CBOS (1998)

EVALUATION OF THE PRL

Over the years, the general attitude towards the PRL has largely remained the same. In 2000, 47% remembered the PRL period in a negative light compared to 44%, who have (rather) good memories of that era. In 2009, however, slightly

more people had a positive attitude (44%) towards the PRL than a negative one (43%). If the political and economic context is considered, this change in perception can easily be explained. With the economic crisis hitting Europe in 2008 and after the enthusiasm about EU membership turned more and more into skepticism, the ‘good old times’ appeared to be more appealing. So far, it seems like the radicalization of the political narrative towards anti-Communism runs counter the development of the social narrative. Popular views on the time of the PRL are illustrated on the following graph.

Graph 4: Evaluation of the PRL (data comparison of 2000 and 2009)



Data source: CBOS (2009)

The percentage of people answering with ‘rather good’ decreased slightly. The most severe drop was measured in responses ‘rather bad’ and definitely bad. Solely the number of people answering with ‘definitely good’ increased. This data can be interpreted in the way that the Kaczyńskis might have had a slight effect on the society’s view of the PRL, which became a bit more negative.

LUSTRATION

Since the end of Communist rule in Poland, the Polish society discusses the question of how to deal with people who had served the Communist regime. The topic reached public attention with the Kaczynskis’ campaign, because the core of it was an amended, more radical lustration law. In 1997, a lustration law was introduced and has since then been expanded several times. The Institute of

National Remembrance (INP) disclosed a list of those who had collaborated with the special services. Subsequently, the support for vetting increased measurably among the Poles afterwards. The Polish society is divided into supporters and critics of lustration in general and the lustration law of 2006 in particular. But also Poles supporting the idea of vetting, disagree on the extent and scope of it. The two positions can be summarized as follows. The ones against argue that “existing laws are sufficient. We should have limited ourselves to [vetting] people who hold public office -- MPs, ministers, directors who pursue national interests”.¹⁰⁷ The ones, among whom is Kaminski, in favor say that Poland still has “(...) problems with our past. This past is not finished yet. There are some problems with former security officers, with former agents, some unknown links between them; there are some problems in politics, in economy (related to the former security services). People have the right to know who was a traitor and who [was not]”.¹⁰⁸

The public opinion is running overwhelmingly against the radical nature of the extended lustration law and against the style of the Kaczyński government itself.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, as Adam Czarnota argues, the target of lustration law introduced by the Kaczyńskis differs from the aim that the Polish public pursues.¹¹⁰ Whereas the lustration law is supposed to provide security of the state and the elimination of potential political blackmail, Poles hope for the realization of justice. However, there still is reason to argue that the new lustration law is the result of public demand. The majority is in favor of lustration. The approval has been particularly high in the years of 1997 (78%) and 2005 (68%). Disapproval was most common in 1994 (38%) and 1999 (30%). 58% have agreed to lustration throughout the years. The height in consent (~50%) was in 1997, after the first lustration law was implemented.

Table 1: Which of the following groups should be included in the lustration process?

Who should be affected by lustration?	% of Poles in favor
Premier & deputy premiers	85
Ministers & deputy ministers	85
Parliamentary deputies & senators	84

¹⁰⁷ Mite (2007)

¹⁰⁸ Mite (2007)

¹⁰⁹ Komorowsky (2007)

¹¹⁰ *In*: Duthie (2007): p. 30

Senior public officials	82
Judges & procurators	82
Diplomatic service employees	79
Local council members	65
Public TV & radio journalists	51
Teachers	36

Source: CBOS (1997)

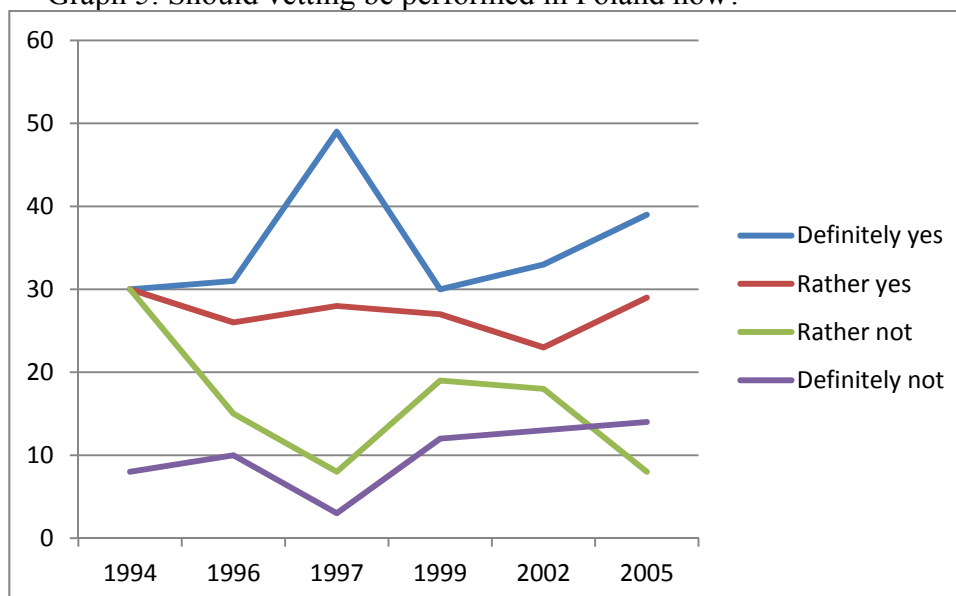
VETTING AND DE-COMMUNIZATION

The surveys on vetting and de-Communization seem relevant, because, as Szczerbiak (2003) argues, the attitudes towards the Communist era play an important role in determining voting behavior among Poles. Hence, radical attitudes towards vetting and de-Communization most likely lead to self-placement on the right side of the political spectrum, which is reflected in the party of choice in elections. Approval of or opposition to the Kaczyńskis can, therefore, be read from the data base.

As mentioned before, almost a quarter of the Polish population is not opposed to granting former Communist civil servants positions in the new democratic state. The majority of the Poles think that vetting should be performed. There were ups and downs in approval rates between 1994 and 2005, but all in all, they answered with definitely yes. Those who responded with ‘definitely no’ never exceeded 15%. In May 1999, CBOS found that 53% of respondents supported removing from public office those who had admitted to past collaboration with the security services (23% were against). Correspondingly, a PBS survey from September 1999, 52% of all Poles felt that lustration should advance, in comparison to 27% who consider it unnecessary.¹¹¹ In October that year, CBOS found a majority (52% to 33%) agreeing with the proposition that anyone who was under suspicion of having concealed such links should resign from office while their lustration trial was in progress. In 2000 poll conducted as the presidential candidates were being lustrated, PBS found that 52% of voters viewed the process as essential, while only 36% disagreed.

¹¹¹ *In*: Williams, Szczerbiak, Fowler (2003): p. 15

Graph 5: Should vetting be performed in Poland now?



Data source: CBOS (2005)

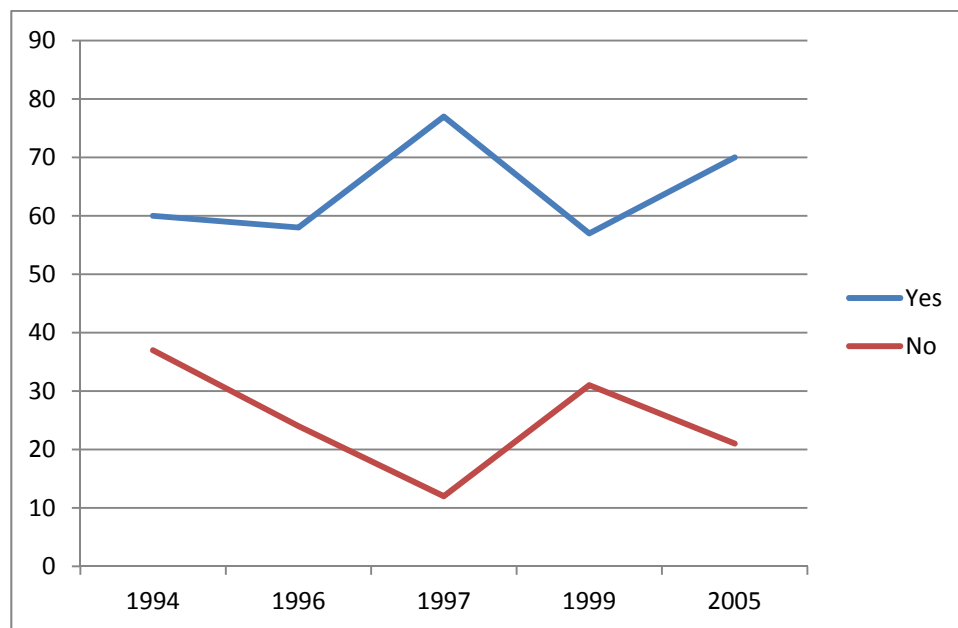
When it comes to de-Communization, the Polish society is in favor of de-Communization affecting former party officials and members of the Special Services. Poles were asked whether persons occupying high positions in the former Communist Party and officers of the Communist Special Services should be excluded from public service in the government, local government, foreign service, state-owned companies and the public media or not? 56% responded with yes, whereas 22% denied former Communist officials the right to hold a public position.

Overall, the respondents tended to be in favor of doing background checks of state officials to prevent collaborators with the Communist regime to occupy relevant positions. In 2005, approval reached its height with 70% of the Poles being in favor. The strong increase within a year can be explained with the adoption of the Poland's new Constitution that marked the end of the Communist era and finalized the political transition phase.

The relatively high support for background checks can also be explained with the new lustration law that was introduced in 1997. The respondents answering with no decreased with the years and reached a low in 1997 with only 12%. The number of persons opposed to vetting was highest in 1994 (37%), and in 1999 and 2002 (31%). The Polish society seems to be in disagreement whether or not and what degree people who served the Communist regime should be judged and should be accounted for. CBOS argues that the rather negative attitude towards

vetting and disclosing identities of collaborators in particular is due to ongoing conflicts within the society, inflicted by the politicians. Poles have apparently grown weary. Moreover, people seem to find it rather difficult to judge people in an adequate manner who were in power at that time. However, Poles generally prefer moral evaluations, denunciation and legal punishment. There is still major disagreement on the disclosure of the identity of collaborators.

Graph 6: Should background checks of state officials be performed? This question was asked in 1994, 1996, 1997, 1999 and 2005.



Data source: CBOS (2005)

More than three-quarters (76%) of the interviewed Poles were convinced that the judgment of the People's Republic period should stop and should be a matter exclusively for historians. Only 18% argued that judgment should continue, because it has not been sufficient. Closely connected to the previous question is: From today's perspective, is it possible to fairly judge people in power during the People's Republic period? Close to half of the respondents (48%) regarded it rather impossible to judge and 16% were sure that it was definitely impossible. Only 31% claimed that it is definitely or rather possible to judge two decades after the collapse of the Communist regime.

People were then asked what judgment should consist in: a) Moral evaluation, denouncing what was evil; b) Putting to trial people who broke the law of that

time; c) Disclosing identity of collaborators of security service. Most respondents voted for a moral evaluation and denunciation of what was 'evil' (56%) and supported trials against people who broke the law of that time (50%). 43% were in favor of disclosing the identity of collaborators with the security service. 26% were against a moral evaluation and 33% against putting people to trial. 38% voted against disclosing identities.

It is particularly state officials and politicians that the Polish citizens want to know whether or not they were involved in the Communist regime and should further be prevented from occupying the same or similar position.

1.4.3. Popular responses to the PiS's campaign

In this section, some examples of comments from Polish citizens concerning the Communist past will be given. Those statements are not meant to be representative, considering that they are published on the PiS homepage. However, they provide information and insight on what rather right-wing oriented Poles think about the topic. Coming back to the three possible effects of the Kaczyńskis anti-Communist campaign mentioned in the beginning of the analysis, arguments can be found for all of them and will be discussed below.

Firstly, arguments for the Polish population becoming increasingly indifferent will be presented. The generation that does not have active memory of the PRL is slowly taking over power and influence. The younger generation's interest in confronting former Communist officials to justice is rather small, because they were not immediately affected or victims of the system themselves. Also, other issues might be more pressing to the younger generation like, for instance, economic challenges, education or social inequality. It can also be argued that the Polish society is growing reluctant of constant fights among the political elite. Almost a quarter century has passed since the collapse of the PRL, which takes away the urgency of the topic. No evidence of can be given through comments published on the PiS's homepage an attitude of indifference.

Secondly, indications for support and even radicalization of at least some parts of the Polish society can be found in the following statements of Polish citizens, found on the homepage of the PiS. Rather right-wing oriented Poles have

criticized the mildness of de-Communization in Poland. They consider it a “condemnable lack of resoluteness, stemming from an incomprehensible forgetfulness of past evils and thereby preventing Poland from becoming ‘truly Polish’”.¹¹²

Edward from Canada (30/03/2007), for instance, says:

*“As one of those for whom Communism made it impossible to live in the PRL and who was forced to make the difficult decision to leave the country in 1962, I strongly support the Polish de-Communization of the symbols of the criminal system. Let no thieves, like the SLD and their comrades in the Communist Party, pour tears over the destruction of the "historic symbols." As we know, nowhere in the world are monuments with swastikas and streets for famous Nazis. Why do there have to be ones for the Stalinists and their successors?!”*¹¹³

For him, the Nazi and the Communist regime are equally criminal and genocidal systems that should be remembered and legally treated in the same way. He fully supports the campaign of the Kaczyńskis.

Stan (24/02/2007) supports the PiS’s campaign and says that “*Jarosław Kaczyński is right, because many years of lying leftists and liberals led Poland to destruction.*”¹¹⁴ Stan is in favor of cleaning the system from the Communist past in order to restore the Polish system that is free from corruption and lies. Stanisław from Canada (21/2/2007) points out the early Communist years when people were sent to Soviet forced labor camps, the so-called gulags:

“Remembering and learning about the tragic fate of young people deported to gulags and starving there, killing the best patriots liquidation elites and replacing them by a quarter-intellectuals with diplomas as "doctors", loutishness and demoralization of the society, corrupt every branch of society and the state, the fight against

¹¹² Walicki (1997): p. 185

¹¹³ 30.03.2007 | Wywiady (Interviews) | Rząd (Administration) (2005-2007) | Źródło (Source): Polskie Radio Pr 1. Rozmowa z Kazimierzem Michałem Ujazdowskim w „Sygnałach dnia” (Interview with Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski in "Signals of the day"). The original says: *Jako jeden z tych, którym komunizm uniemożliwił życie w PRLu i zmusił do podjęcia b. trudnej decyzji opuszczenia kraju w 1962 roku, gorąco popieram odkomunizowanie Polski z symboli tego zbrodniczego systemu. Niech żadne złodzieje, z SLD i ich towarzysze z PZPR, nie leją łez nad niszczeniem "symboli historycznych". Jak nam wiadomo nigdzie na świecie nie ma pomników ze swastykami i ulic dla słynnych hitlerowców. Dlaczego miały by być dla stalinowców i ich następców?!*

¹¹⁴ 21.02.2007 | Aktualności (News) | Rząd (Administration) (2005-2007) | Źródło (Source): PAP. Pokazywanie zła okresu komunizmu to wielkie zadanie (Show evil communist period is a big task). The original says: *Ma rację Jarosław Kaczyński, bo wieloletnie kłamstwa lewaków i liberalów prowadziły Polskę do zguby.*

*religion, etc., etc., is necessary. Do it by talks, exhibitions, lectures, and through the media, the purification of the traitors is a priority.”*¹¹⁵

In his memory, Communism was a system in which cronyism and corruption ruled. Stanisław also calls for purification through historical education and the media.

Szymek (21/02/2007): *“Showing evil...let’s start with it already. I want to see you in the media, from morning to night and every day. (...) It is high time to raise awareness.”*¹¹⁶ Szymek demands a more radical approach and higher media coverage in order to raise historical consciousness.

Jacek from Canada (11/01/2007) asserts: *“In my opinion this should be extended to all officers paid by the Communist Party and other extended affiliates.”*¹¹⁷ Jacek votes to extend the span of people being part of the screening and vetting process.

Wiesław Pilate-Opole (18/01/2007) demands to:

*“Eliminate "security agencies", places of retreat, UB men, esbeks [official of the PRL state security] and spies. No one needs them because of the so-called protection directives, formed by the scum leftist order to give them a "soft" landing; this applies to all the services. (...) We are waiting on the move, when will it happen??? Also ban the leftist scum. Throw them mercilessly out of all sectors of the economy, because they sabotage everything you want to repair, change. (...) Cut them out without sympathy.”*¹¹⁸

Wiesław wants to make Communism and everything related to it become irreversibly part of the past. He expresses his opposition to protective directives that are supposed to prevent the punishment of innocent people. He also votes for

¹¹⁵ Aktualności. 21.02.2007 | Aktualności | Rząd (2005-2007) | źródło: PAP. Pokazywanie zła okresu komunizmu to wielkie zadanie. The original says: *Przypominanie i uczenie młodzieży o tragicznym losie wywiezionych do gulagów i tam zagłodzonych, mordowaniu najlepszych patriotów, likwidacji elit i zastąpieniu ich ćwierć-inteligentami z dyplomami nawet "doktorów", schamieniu i zdemoralizowaniu społeczeństwa, skorumpowaniu każdej gałęzi życia społecznego i państwowego, zwalczaniu religii, itd, itd., jest KONIECZNOŚCIĄ. Róbcie to przez rozmowy, wystawy, wykłady i poprzez media, których oczyszczenie ze zdrajców jest priorytetem.*

¹¹⁶ Aktualności. 21.02.2007 | Aktualności | Rząd (2005-2007) | źródło: PAP. Pokazywanie zła okresu komunizmu to wielkie zadanie. The original says: *Pokazywanie zła, no to zacznijcie wreszcie pokazywać. Chcę Was widzieć w mediach od rana do nocy i każdego dnia. (...) Czas najwyższy do uświadamiania społeczeństwa.*

¹¹⁷ Aktualności. Materiał zdjęciowy. 11.01.2007 | Aktualności | Rząd (2005-2007) | źródło: PAP. Prezentacja deklaracji programowej PiS. The original says: *Moim zdaniem powinno to również objąć wszystkich płatnych funkcjonariuszy PZPR i innych satelickich przybudówek.*

¹¹⁸ Aktualności. Materiał zdjęciowy. 11.01.2007 | Aktualności | Rząd (2005-2007) | źródło: PAP. Prezentacja deklaracji programowej PiS. The original says: *Zlikwidować "Agencje ochrony", matecznik, ubowców, esbeków i szpicli. One są nikomu nie potrzebne, ponieważ ptryzepisy o tzw. ochronie, powstawały na tej swoloczy lewackiej zamówienie, by mieli "miękkie" lądowanie, dotyczy to wszystkich służb. (...) Czekamy na to posunięcie, kiedy to nastąpi??? także na delegalizację lewackiej swoloczy. Wywalić ich bez pardonu z wszelkich dziedzin gospodarki, ponieważ sabotują wszystko co chcecie naprawić, zmienić. (...) Ciąć ich bez litośnie.*

a more radical penalty affecting a wider range of (potential) servants of the Communist system.

Vladimir Kudaj (18/01/2007) alleges that “*Despite the rule of PiS we are still far away. (...) It would be more desirable to deal with their representatives as active in law enforcement and more.*”¹¹⁹ For Vladimir, the reinforced lustration law and other initiatives of the PiS are not sufficiently far-reaching.

The previous statements show that the majority of the center-right-wing oriented Poles votes for an even more radical lustration process or strongly supports the Kaczyńskis’ anti-Communist campaign. It is something they have been waiting for a long time.

Thirdly, it can be argued that the radical campaign of the PiS has the opposite effect on the population. There are voices among the Poles interested in the PiS who argue that the new lustration law goes too far. They think a further radicalization leads to an unjust situation and to further dividing the Polish society. For instance, Katarzyna Podkowińska (11/01/2007) declares:

*“Are the PiS politicians going to take revenge on the widows and children of former SBs? Because I must admit that these ideas to deprive people who often are sick and elderly, without providing them any right to defend themselves, without taking into account even individual evil that particular person has committed sounds scary. It's hard to deny that the communist regime was a bad system that destroyed Poland; it did not give opportunities for the individual to human beings. On the other hand, if that's what it took 95% of the officers of the Interior Ministry PRL (surveillance, wiretaps, recruitment agents) justifies such a radical retaliation and deprivation often old and sick people to live on? Even more disgusting sound the ideas, the victims of that retaliation have become their family. Do the widows of the SBs have to respond generously for the evil that perhaps one day their husbands did? And no matter what anyone has done exactly? Of course we must settle the story of a bygone era. But elementary humanity must be kept here.”*¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Aktualności. Materiał zdjęciowy. 11.01.2007 | Aktualności | Rząd (2005-2007) | źródło: PAP. Prezentacja deklaracji programowej PiS. The original says: *Pomimo rządów PiS (...) nam jeszcze daleko. (...) Bardziej pożądanym było by zajęcie się aktywnymi ich przedstawicielami tak w organach ścigania jak i nie tylko.*

¹²⁰ Aktualności. Materiał zdjęciowy. 11.01.2007 | Aktualności | Rząd (2005-2007) | źródło: PAP. Prezentacja deklaracji programowej PiS. The original says: *Czy politycy PiSu mają zamiar również mścić się na wdowach i dzieciach b. SBków ? Bo przyznam, że te pomysły, aby pozbawiać ludzi nieraz chorych i w podeszłym wieku, nie dając przy tym żadnego prawa do obrony, bez uwzględnienia nawet indywidualnego zła, jakie konkretna osoba popełniła brzmią przerażająco. Trudno zanegować, że system PRLu był zły, że niszczył Polskę, nie dawał możliwości rozwoju poszczególnym jednostkom ludzkim. Z drugiej jednak strony, czy to, czym się zajmowało 95 % funkcjonariuszy MSW PRL (inwigilacja, podsłuchy, werbowanie agentów) usprawiedliwia tak radykalne działania odwetowe jak pozbawienie nieraz starych i chorych ludzi środków do życia ? Tym bardziej obrzydliwie*

Katarzyna is against the anti-Communist sentiments and argues that the policy is unfair and would lead to the punishment of innocent people. Moreover, she maintains that people did not have a choice and votes against a less judgmental and a more humane attitude. Yet, she acknowledges the flaws and crimes caused by the Communist regime.

Generally speaking, the numerous attempts of anti-Communist campaigning had the opposite of the intended effect. Instead of supporting the witch-hunt, people became increasingly skeptical of the rightness and appropriateness of the collective punishment.¹²¹ Opinion polls have shown that the majority prefers political stability and national reconciliation over a new lustration process.¹²² For most (apolitical) Poles memories of the PRL included both good and bad sides; in their eyes it has been corrupt and inefficient, but calling it evil and morally condemnable goes too far for most.¹²³ However, generalizations on the topic of public reactions to the Kaczyńskis' campaign can only be made with certain limitations due to the ambiguous results that they deliver. Most comments suggest that there is still more that needs to be done, others suggest that the campaign is too extensive and might run the risk to affect innocent people.

Conclusions

The aim of the paper was to examine the political and rhetorical means through which the political party PiS and its leaders Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński attempted to change the political narrative of the Communist past and what kind of consequences it had on the Polish public perception. This thesis analyzes contemporary politics of memory and its effects on public perception. The link between political memory narrative and public opinion polls has remained unconsidered in previous studies. Since the indicator is not particularly expressive, it can only be recommended for further research as minor argument.

An actor-oriented top-down approach underlies this thesis. This thesis focuses solely on politicians as political memory agents, not considering other members of

brzmią pomysły, gdy ofiarami tegoż odwetu mają stać się ich rodziny. Czy wodwy po SBekach mają odpowiadać dzieci za zło, które być może kiedyś uczynili ich mężowie? I to bez względu na to, co kto konkretnie uczynił? Trzeba oczywiście rozliczyć historię minionej epoki. Ale zachwajmy tu elementarny humanitaryzm.

¹²¹ Walicki (1997): p. 187

¹²² Walicki (1997): p. 187

¹²³ Walicki (1997): p. 186

the interpretative elite. The analysis was done mainly through political speeches, party programs and statistics. Their empirical evaluation is based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to text content analysis. The analysis of political speeches provides a valuable insight into how politicians use rhetorical tools to influence societal memory and how they seek control over the people's perception and interpretation of the Communist past. Trends and possible changes in Polish public opinion can be observed by means of nationwide statistics from the CBOS, conducted repeatedly over the course of 15 years, between 1994 and 2009. A noteworthy aspect of the methodological approach is the application of comments of citizens to validate arguments on Polish public perceptions. Comments from Polish citizens allow insight into actual opinions and helps representing the diversified and wide-ranging opinions concerning the Communist past.

The speech analysis revealed that the Kaczyńskis' anti-Communist campaign was justified by moral fight against the corrupt, former Communist network that has survived the PRL. The image of the Communist past shaped by the PiS was one of a corrupt system, ruled by a group of few – the nomenklatura and comparable to the Nazi regime in its genocidal nature. Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński argued that unless Poland is free from Communist structures, that allegedly have prevailed, Poland will remain a corrupted, undemocratic system. The black-and-white-scheme that became apparent in the Kaczyńskis' speeches suggested that who is not on their side, is a Communist and, hence, suspicious. The words and phrases that occurred most often were morality, pact, and nomenklatura. The main rhetorical tools included ethos by claiming moral supremacy and pathos by evoking feelings of anger.

The analysis of the effects of the Kaczyńskis' anti-Communist campaign on the social narrative of the Communist past was more ambiguous than the speech analysis and led to mixed results. The Polish society reacted very differently to the radicalization of the political narrative. The opinion spectrum ranges from support to rejection. The Polish society is as divided by their attitude towards the PRL as is the Polish political elite. The campaign has intensified the memory cleavage that runs along the lines of age, political affiliation and historical awareness existing in the Polish society since the end of the PRL. There are people who are in favor of vetting and de-Communization and there are those who argue that the

PiS's campaign is a cynical and unjustified witch-hunt. Whereas for older and right-wing oriented Poles attached value to the topic, younger and rather moderate Poles consider the issue part of the past. With a new generation coming up, however, the topic becomes less and less relevant, if not, at least less emotional. Political memory has become more radical under the rule of the PiS, but the Polish population has not, at least not in the same pace. Hence, it can be concluded that the public perception of the Communist era has not radicalized due to the PiS's campaign and the hypothesis, according to which it can be expected that the interest in the topic is likely to deteriorate among politicians as well as in the society, can only partly be confirmed. Parts of the society have become reluctant, but the campaign had an effect by starting a series of new debates among politicians. It can be stated that the aim of the campaign, which was changing the social perception of Communist Poland, was not reached. The Kaczyńskis did not cause institutional changes, e.g. the lustration law was not implemented. By taking it too far the PiS party "has killed lustration in Poland".¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Raimundo (2012): p. 177

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