Between ignoring and remembering: Political Polarization and National Identity in light of the communist past in Poland

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November 22, 2023
(version: 4)

1   Summary

In this study we test competing but complementary theories relating to political polarization and partisan identity on how the recent authoritarian past informs political party support in the context of wider questions about national identity, specifically relating to transitional justice and collective victimhood in Poland. We use a survey experiment in Poland to test the empirical presence of a bias against the ideological side related to the communist regime. Compared to earlier studies on the same and related topics (Dinas and Northmore-Ball, 2020)and (Dinas, Martínez and Valentim, 2022), the new contribution from this study includes: (1) a randomly assigned prime on authoritarian memory ; (2) distinguishing between external pressure and internalized values; and we examine how the stigma is mediated through ideological partisan and national group identities.

2   Theory

Various strands of research both on the elite and masses suggest that in post-authoritarian new democracies the ideological brand of the old dictatorship carries a stigma. Authoritarian successor parties disband or re-brand (Grzymala-Busse, 2002), whereas new parties formed out the opposition avoid forming coalitions with authoritarian successor parties (Grabowska, 2021). Recent research suggests that the side of ideological left-right spectrum associated with the old regime is stigmatized (Dinas and Northmore-Ball, 2020; Dinas, 2017; Dinas, Martínez and Valentim, 2022). Various empirical patterns demonstrate this bias at work: individual voters as well as political elites avoid placing themselves on the side of the left-right spectrum associated with the old regime (Dinas and Northmore-Ball, 2020; Power and Zucco, 2009) and voters engage in asymmetric projection bias placing authoritarian successor parties at more extreme positions (Dinas, 2017). While

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empirical research has demonstrated the existence of these patterns, less is known about the underlying mechanisms linking the authoritarian stigma to behavioural and attitudinal outcomes. In this study we examine in the context of post-communist Poland how several decades after the collapse of communism the stigmatization of associations with the communist regime continue to influence voter party preferences and attitudes related to key policy issues like immigration. In this study we test competing but complementary theories relating to political polarization and partisan identity on how the recent authoritarian past informs political party support in the context of wider questions about national identity, specifically relating to transitional justice and collective victimhood in Poland.

The first and overarching theory we test is whether a bias against the ideological legacy from recent authoritarian past (Dinas and Northmore-Ball, 2020; Dinas, Martínez and Valentim, 2022) penalizes identifying the ideological side associated with the past either through internalized values or norm conformity. This anti-dictator bias might manifest itself as an across the board shift away from the ideological side of the dictator. We would expect to see that upon priming the memory of the communist past, people are less willing to identify as left-wing. However, anti-dictator bias can also be filtered through the dynamics of partisan identities and national group identities.

The second body of theory, rooted in the literature on affective polarization, suggests that if partisan identities are already formed, priming on the past authoritarian regime should reinforce in-group and out-group feelings between voters of parties that currently favour forgetting the past (*mnemonic abnegators*) versus those that use favour continuing to use the past in political competition (*mnemonic warriors*) (Bernhard and Kubik, 2016). In short we would expect affective polarization to increase between what would be centre or centre-right parties and right parties in Poland given their different stances towards the communist past.[1] Recent literature on affective polarization in multiparty systems argues in favour of thinking in term of polarization between ideological blocks of parties rather than between individual parties themselves (Bantel, 2023). However in contrast to the recent literature which which focuses on just ideological positions[2] being the basis of the divide, we examine whether blocks might be defined by positions towards the communist past.

Until its collapse in 2005, the main communist successor party *Democratic Left Allaince* (SLD) generally pursued rhetoric that emphasized a pluralist version of the past which included emphasizing collective culpability of the entire Polish society in the communist project as well as the democratic nature of the ex-communists role in the end of communism (Bernhard and Kubik, 2016). On the other hand, the post-Solidarity side particularly the most extreme faction led by the Kaczynski brothers followed position of menomic warriors - that is bringing up the uncomprising rejection of the communist past as the foundation of current legitimation of power. Since the collapse of SLD in 2005, and the possible end of the period dominated by the post-communist versus the post-solidarity cleavage (Grabowska, 2021), the future role of political memory politics

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[1] We are not attaching partisan labels to the authoriarian prime thus the prime is not an explicit partisan cue (Bäck et al., 2023), however in so far as positions towards the communist past have been an integral part of party elite discourse since 1989, voters will be aware to some extent of how the different positions past link to party positions on the past. So we might have bi-directional process where voters adjust their position to the past based on party cues but also may choose to support parties to match their own position. The word *komuna*, which is our prime, is used widely in public discourse and it has a broad meaning that cannot be literally translated as *communism* into English. Rather is conjures up broad associations with the stagnation repression and greyness of life under the Polish People's Republic (*PRL*)

[2] Bantel (2023) demarciates four political camps in Western democracies: the Radical Left, Mainstream Left, Mainstream Right, Radical Right, with a particularly strong emphasis on the relevance of the Radical right divide. Bantel (2023)'s analysis however excludes post-communist countries.

has been less clear. However, the dynamics of the 2023 Polish parliamentary elections, suggest that the memory politics underlying the pre-2005 cleavage are being reincarnated in a new form as a split within the post-Solidarity side, where to use Grabowska (2021)'s words, the centre-right Civic Coalition is being unwittingly "sucked into the vaccum" left by SLD, and finding the position of a *mnemonic abnegator* increasingly difficult to sustain. The renewal of the cleavage is centered around the memory on the 1989 transition with competing narratives about the Roundtable agreement as a necessary prudent compromise for the sake of bringing democracy versus a sell-out to the incumbent communist elites (Bernhard and Kubik, 2016; Wenzel and Żerkowska-Balas, 2021). The current PiS rhetoric seeks to cast Civic Platform as the inheritors of the Solidarity wing that allowed the former communists preserve advantaged through the corrupt privatization process of the 1990s thus shifting the stigma of association with communism from the former communists to the their ex-Solidarity rivals.

Applying the paradigm of affective polarization, we would expect that priming on the communist past would reinforce affective polarization between the two competing post-Solidarity sides perhaps *despite*[3] expressed ideological proximity on the non-dictator side e.g. centre, centre-right, right. In line with the formation of a block of parties in reaction to PiS's anti-communsit rhetoric, we might expect a reduction in affective polarization between opposition parties/election coalitions[4] including The Left (*Lewica*, Civic Coalition (*Koalicja Obywatelska*, and Thirdway (*Trzecia Droga*).Stated willingness or actual coalition formations by parties are a key elite cue which reduces affective polarization between supporters of the coalition member parties (Bantel, 2023; Gidron, Adams and Horne, 2023). At the same time affective polarization is not necessarily linked to ideological and issue positions - voters might hold relatively proximate positions on specific issues and yet be divided by strong affecive polarization across parties or otherwise defined blocks (Comellas and Torcal, 2023). We take this possible disjunction further to examine whether there might be a tension between affective blocks organized around parties and preferences with regards to self-identification with ideological labels. Recent literture shows increasing evidence of ideological grouping around the labels "Left" and "Right" and the consequent formation of supra-party affective "ideological blocks" in the fragmented party sytems. However, if a stigma is attached to the ideological label associated with the past authoritarian regime, we would expect tension between the pressure to coaelsce into a block "falls to the left" of the attacking *mnemonic warriors* and self-identifying the stigmatized "Left" label. Thus secondly we might expect that being primed on the authoriarian past will increase the level of dispersion in ideological proximity among Thirdway and Civic Coalition supporters reflecting the cross-pressure of avoiding the stigma of communism while others re-acting defensively increasing in-group feeling in line with the theory on affective polarization and moving away from the right towards the left.

The final theory also related group identities is focusing on national identity and the understanding of the nation as the ultimate in-group, and where perceptions of external threats will provoke a doubling down on in-group identities and increased out-group prejudice (Schori-Eyal, Klar and Ben-Ami, 2017). According to this last understanding the communist past is a key part of Polish nation narrative of perpetual collective victimhood [5] (Zechenter, 2019), as communism constitutes an oppressive regime imposed by the external enemies of the Polish nation (Jasku-

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[3]I would guess that a large block of Polish voters who support Civic Coalition and Thirdway would like to a firmly centrist if not centre-right position. Here we have a reason to bring back in questions on ideological position e.g. self and party placement on l-r spectrum and positions on key issues such as EU membership, church-state relations, and support for welfare, refugees

[4]Should I ask all questions about the individual parties making up electoral coalitions?

[5]Even before the new narratives about WW2 and communism, the Polish poet Adam Mickewicz dubbed Poland as the Christ of nations

lowski and Majewski, 2023). In the first instance we would expect priming on the communist past to increase fears of ex-communist influence in Polish government e.g. through increased support for lustration. We would also expect increased fear of external influence particularly by Poland's historic enemies such as Russia and Germany. Priming on the authoritarian past should also increase overall patriotic in-group feeling, reinforce exclusive understandings of national belonging, out-group prejudice and re-inforce competitive victimhoom. Where group e.g. national identities are built around an integral narrative of national victimhood, comparisons with victimhood of outgroups can lead to trivialization and dismissal of outgroup suffering. In Poland, glorification of the failed Warsaw Uprising and Home Army (WW2 resistance) is tied to narratives of Polish suffering and oppression by the hands of two totalitarian sides - the German Nazi as well as the Russian Soviet communism - which is perceived as equal if not exceeding that of the Jews during the Holocaust. Additionally the doubling down on in-group identity in response to the prime of the communist past could be expressed through a shift towards more exclusive understandings of Polishness e.g. more racialized understandings emphasizing whiteness (Jaskulowski, 2021) and increased out-group hositility towards non-white refugees. This last theoretical perspective suggests that the *menomonic warrior* rhetoric of the Law and Justic party (PiS) might still affect the more centrist voters who would prefer to take on more of the position of *mnemonic abnegators* like Civic Platform and de-emphasize the role of historic memory.[6] PiS's 2015 electoral victory over Civic Platform is in no small part atrributed to PiS's successful anti-refugee rhetoric that criticised PO for agreeing to EU refugee quotas. Again here we see would expect that priming on the communist past triggers cross-pressures for centrist voters on the one hand pushing them towards doubling down on Polish nationalism that emphasizes victimhood and fear of external historic external enemies like Russia and Germany and prejudice towards out-groups like Jews or non-white/Muslims refugees.

3 Experiment Design

We field a survey experiment in Poland. We use a two-way factorial design and independently randomize exposure to priming of authoritarian memory and information environment (public or private). We collect measures about ideological placements (self and party)[7], party preferences, attitudes towards historic events and national identity, sociodemographics and political engagement. This section presents a concise overview of the key items and instructions. Details about our measurement strategy and survey workflow can be found in the online survey template: `https://osf.io/gnfcm`.

For the outcomes, we use identification ideological labels, affective party preference, attitudes on transitional justice, foreign influence in relation to political parties, and national identity.

For the affective polarization outcome, we use a set of social distance measures (Druckman and Levendusky, 2019). For the treatment, we randomly assign respondents to (1) a prime about life under the ex-dictator in the authoritarian past, and (2) a prime about the privacy of her/his

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[6]Tellingly the Civic Coalition's pre-election March of a Million Hearts in October 2023 chose to congregate underneath the Home Army flag of "Fighting Poland" - perhaps the most potent symbol of Polish national-patriotism today on the roundabout dedicated commemorating the "Radosław" resistance group that played a key role in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, while playing the 1990 pop-song "I Love Freedom". This stunt was probably a reaction to Law and Justices's attacks on Civic Coalition and accusations that Donald Tusk is a foreign agent and unpatriotic. Tusk's rally speech unsurprisingly focused on the theme of patriotism. `https://oko.press/marsz-miliona-serc-notatnik-pacewicza`

[7]Add back in self and party placement on l-r spectrum?

(anonymized) response. For other types of information we use common measures in the field. We also include attention and manipulation checks in appropriate places.

3.1 Outcome I: Ideological Identity

To most directly and explicitly capture ideological identity without conflating it with issue positioning (Mason, 2018), we ask respondents to specify their level of attachment to ideological labels on scales based on the measure used by Comellas and Torcal (2023). We ask three questions:

- How much do you identify with the following political/ideological label: [LEFT/RIGHT][8]?

    - a. Very much
    - b. Somewhat
    - c. A little
    - d. Not at all
    - e. Prefer not to say/Don't Know

We then transform the two measures into a single measure of identification with the DS (left-wing) versus the non-DS (right-wing) side. We take the difference between the RIGHT [scale 0 to 3] and LEFT identification [scale 0 to 3], and the resulting variable runs from 3 (most right-wing) to -3 (most left-wing).

3.2 Outcome II. Social Distances

For the third measure of outcomes capturing the social distances between partisans within and between partisan camps, we further adopt the distance measures used in Druckman and Levendusky (2019) and ask respondents about how party politics affect their daily life using the following type of questions:

- Below we show you a few scenarios involving people close to you. For each scenario, please indicate how comfortable you are with the persons' party preferences: extremely comfortable, somewhat comfortable, not too comfortable, or not at all comfortable.

    - How comfortable are you [SITUATION] who support [LEWICA/ PLATFORMA OBY-WATELSKA / TRZECIA DROGA / PRAWO I SPRAWEDLIWOSC/ KONFEDER-ACJA]? Are you not at all comfortable, not too comfortable, somewhat comfortable, or extremely comfortable?

with SITUATION corresponding to one of the three situations: being close personal friends with, having neighbors on one's street who are, and having one's son or daughter married to someone who support [PARTY] (necessarily text adjustments apply). The measures will be combined into indices by party [LEWICA/ PLATFORMA OBYWATELSKA / TRZECIA DROGA / PRAWO I SPRAWEDLIWOSC/ KONFEDERACJA].

We then calculate affecive polarization at the level of dyads between the respondents in-party and out-parties (Bantel, 2023). The respondent's in-party is the most liked party on the pre-treatment feeling thermometer. Thus each respondent yields as many dyads as parties/coalitions.

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[8]Explicitly ask for centrist identity? It does make forming a single outcome scale difficult and gives explicit choice to avoid left/right.

The maximum level of polarization will be 3 = 4 (extremely comfortable) - 1 (extremely uncomfortable)[9].

3.3 Outcome V. Fear of External Enemy Influence

To measure fear of Poland's external enemies such as Germany/EU and Russia/USSR,[10] we have one question that asks about concern of influence generally and within specific parties.[11] This is a question I have designed myself as we do not have a precendent.

- How concerned are you that Poland's the decisions of Poland's politicians are influenced by interests hostile to Poland:

    - a. Extremely concerned
    - b. Very concerned
    - c. Somewhat concerned
    - d. Not too concerned
    - e. Don't know
    - f. Prefer not to say

- How concerned are you about the vulnerability of [LEWICA / PLATFORMA OBYWATELSKA / TRZECIA DROGA / PRAWO I SPRAWEDLIWOSC/ KONFEDERACJA] to influence by any interests hostile to Poland's national interest:

    - Extremely concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, not at all concerned. Prefer not say, don't know.

3.4 Outcome V. Fear of Communist Influence

To measure the fear of communist influence we use questions based on the previously fielded questions on support for transitional justice in Poland by CBOS one the main academic surveys.[12]

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[9]Use a different scale with center point? Any issues with using this measure of affective polarization as opposed to a standard feeling thermometer? Also what should the targets of affect be? Electoral coalitions? the constitutive parties? The problem is in Poland these electoral coalitions vary in stability and some even re-register as parties.

[10]For context: In the summer of 2023 before the parliamentary election PiS proposed a legislation that calls for the creation of government commission that would investigate Russian influence on Poland between 2007 and 2022. This proposal was nicknamed "Lex Tusk" as it was aimed at Donald Tusk and the legislation was embedded in a narrative about how Tusk vetoed NATO expansion while being President of the European Commission due to Russian influence. https://www.irreview.org/articles/lex-tusk-is-not-going-to-stop-donald-tusk-from-fighting-for-democrac

[11]I am still thinking how to integrate the party influence variable into the analysis. I am sure that the fears vary by party and of course depend on the respondents in-party.

[12]Use scale rather than yes/no? Collapse into one question? Also one would think that the issue of lustration should be no longer relevant given so many decades have gone by. I have only found data from around 2008 where the majority still supported lustration. Has "communist influence" been handed down to children of ex-communists who are part of the "corrupt elite" that gained wealth in the 1990s? At the same time annectotally one gets the impression people still have an aversion to ex-communists/collaborators.

- Do you think people performing important functions in the country who were informants of the Security Service:

  - a. Should be removed from their position
  - b. Can continue working in their position
  - c. Don't know
  - d. Prefer not to say

- Does it trouble you if former members of PZPR hold key positions in politics today country who were informants of the Security Service:

  - a. Should be removed from their position
  - b. Can continue working in their position
  - c. Don't know
  - d. Prefer not to say

3.5 Outcome VI. Inclusive/Exclusive National Identity

To measure whether understandings of national identity tend towards the inclusive or exclusive (Ariely, 2020; Citrin, Reingold and Green, 1990; Piwoni and Mußotter, 2023) we use the standard ISSP battery of questions on national identity characteristics with the addition of a racial/Whiteness charcteristic (Jaskulowski, 2021).[13] Eight survey items reflect the possible content for national identity categories. The order of the items will be randomized in the survey.

- . Some people say that the following things are important for being a true Pole. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is? [Not important at all, not very important, fairly important, or very important]

  1. Being born in Poland
  2. Having Polish ancestors
  3. Being fluent in Polish
  4. Feeling Polish
  5. Following Polish customs and traditions
  6. Having a white-skin colour
  7. Being Catholic
  8. Respecting Polish law and institutions

Using factor analysis we will first explore the dimensionality. We will use a difference score (exclusive national identity subtracted from a inclusive national identity) to show individual preference for a more inclusive (civic) versus a more exclusive (ethnic/racial) national identity (Kunovich, 2009). Civic conceptions of nationhood are captured by items revolving around the importance of feeling a member of a national community [4] or respecting national laws [8]), and being fluent in

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[13]The precise selection of items differs across comparative surveys and tailor-made country specific surveys e.g. (Lindstam, Mader and Schoen, 2021). We choose the items used in the Polish CBOS/ISSP surveys to maximize comparability with existing over time data (excepting the racial item).

the national language [3], whereas ethnic/ethnocultural notions may be measured by items center-
ing on the importance of having national ancestry (including place of birth) [1 and 2](Reeskens and
Hooghe, 2010) adhering to the dominant religion [7], (Lindstam, Mader and Schoen, 2021; Reeskens
and Hooghe, 2010) and being of the dominant racial group [6] (Jaskulowski, 2021).[14]

3.6 Outcome VIII. Outgroup feeling/Support for refugee intake

To capture the feelings towards non-Polish outgroups we add a question on support for non-White
immigration via the EU refugee quotas. This question has been used in the Polish CBOS surveys.
[15]

- Due to the large influx of refugees from the Middle East and Africa to some countries of the
  European Union, these countries are unable to cope with this problem. In your opinion think
  Poland should accept some of the refugees coming to Europe.
    - a. Definitely yes
    - b. Probably yes
    - c. Probably not
    - d. Definitely not
    - e. Prefer not to say/DK

3.7 Outcome VIII. Competitive Victimhood

A direct question on relative victimhood taken from (Bilewicz and Stefaniak, 2013) asks respondents
to compare Polish suffering to Jewish suffering.

- "Do you think the Jewish nation was victimized as much as the Polish nation, more than the
  Polish nation or equally as much?"
    - a. Much more frequently
    - b. More frequently
    - c. Less frequently
    - d. Much less frequently
    - e. Don't know

[14]We could perhaps just use two items instead of the standard battery "exclusively people of Polish origin"
or "all citizens of Poland, regardless of their origin" to cpature inclusive versus exclusive dichotomy with just
wo questions following (Jamróz-Dolińska et al., 2023). I am concerned about the length of the survey and
sustaining treatment effects so perhaps reducing these questions would help. Interestingly Jamróz-Dolińska
et al. (2023) finds that priming Poles on the multi-ethnic nature of Poland's history increases support for
inclusive national identity. Although priming on WW2 and Aushwitz does not improve social distance
feelings towards Jews suggesting evidence of competitive victimhood dynamics.

[15]So far Poland has not accepted refugees under the EU quotas, and making the payments in lieau continue
to be a political isse culminating in a referedum attached to the Cotober 2023 parliamtary election on the
issue. 96% voted against the accepting refugees however the turnout was only 40% below the minimum
validity threshold. If this question precedes the battery of question on Polish national identity, I would think
there might strong question order effects. Also there might be ceiling effects e.g. most respondents already
clustering in the anti-refugee category... In the interest of reducing the number of questions this question
might be dropped due to the potential for order effects/ceiling effects and perhaps the national identity
question is enough to capture what we need.

The following two questions are modelled on Polish CBOS survey questions on Polish attitudes towards the Holocaust [16]

- In your opinion, is the Jewish holocaust in our country sufficiently commemorated or not?

    - a. Definitely yes
    - b. Probably yes
    - c. Probably not
    - d. Definitely not
    - e. Prefer not to say/DK

- People like you might have different associations with the word "Oswiecim/Auschwitz". Is this for you: [STATEMENT]

    - a. Definitely agree
    - b. Somewhat agree
    - c. Somewhat disagree
    - d. Definitely disagree
    - e. Prefer not to say/DK

with [STATEMENT] including three variants: "Above all, the place of martyrdom of the Polish nation", "Primarily the site of the extermination of the Jews", and "The place of suffering for many nationalities."

We will do factor analysis on the items measuring competitive victimhood and combine accordingly into a single index.

3.8 General Feelings toward Parties

To identify partisan leaning towards parties before the treatment, we ask respondents to express their feelings towards main parties/coalitions in Poland running in the October 2023 election with a standard feelings thermometer from survey section "Pre-treatment Questions":

- Below you can see one such thermometer next to the name of a party. Ratings between 50 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorably and warm toward that party; ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorably toward that party. You would rate the party at the 50-degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the group. Please use the feeling thermometer to indicate your feelings toward the parties.

under which two sliders with an identical 1-100 range are shown for each of the parties. The sliders will be clearly distinguished by the party names annotated.

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[16]The original questions asked by POlish CBOS survey include " In your opinion, is the Jewish holocaust in our country sufficiently commemorated or not? " (Definitely yes to definitely not) and "What do you primarily associate the word "Oswiecim/Auschwitz" with? Is this for you: Above all, the place of martyrdom of the Polish nation, Primarily the site of the extermination of the Jews, The place of suffering for many nationalities , A concentration camp, Nazi crimes, Tragedy, The fall of humanity, I don't know anything about Auschwitz, Hard to say. These questions are more nuanced but harder to code and less direct.

3.9 Party classification by mnemonic stance

For now we propose a binary classification of party stance towards the past *Memory* based on Bernhard and Kubik (2016) which captures [1] parties that are most aggressive in using the memory of the communist past in political competition (Law and Justice and Confederation[17]) versus [0] those parties that might prefer to forget the past (Civic Platform) e.g. the *mnemonic abnegators* or those that do not unambiguisly reject the past (before its collapse this was the position of SLD the main communist sucessor party). Korycki (2019) proposed that PSL (Agrarian party), which is part of the electoral coalition *Third Way/ Trzecia Droga*[18] and Razem/Together which is party of the *Lewica* coalition have not actively used the communist past in electoral competition.

3.10 History framing: 1989 transition

To capture the divisions about the nature and legacies as of the 1989 transition (Bernhard and Kubik, 2016; Wenzel and Żerkowska-Balas, 2021; Törnquist-Plewa, 2021)[19] as a new frame through which the communist stigma might be brought forward into the current content we ask a CBOS battery of questions on attitudes towards the 1989 Roundatable:

- What was the 1989 Roundtable? Tell me how much you disagree or agree with the following [strongly agree, agree, neither/nor, disagree, strongly disagree, prefer not to say/DK]:

  - a. An agreement to resolve the political crisis and further development of the country
  - b. The beginning of the process of Poland getting closer to Western democracies
  - c. Compromise with former communists, which allowed them to maintain their position
  - d. The first step towards admitting foreign capital to Poland
  - e. Fulfilling the ideals of Solidarity
  - f. Operation of the communist special services
  - g. Agreement to resolve the political crisis and further developmennt of the country
  - h. The beginning of the process of Poland getting closer to Westerm democracies

Using factor analysis we will first explore the dimensionality. We will use a difference score capturing a positive versus a negative view of the 1989 Roundtable negotations. [20]

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[17]Confederation is an eclectic party/coalition so their stances are bit harder to define. They are generally considered far-right and libertarian

[18]For context: *PSL* is a very interesting party for our general theory on the stigmatization of the past and left-right positioning. It is an agrarian party that was founded in the 19th century. And it evensurvived during the communist period as a satellite part of the of the PZPR/POlish United Worker's Party, and then it continued after 1989. It participated in coalitions with SLD the communist successor and then later it moved to right. Law and Justice seems to be willing to offer a coalition with it currently and the anti-communist discourse is not aimed at it. PSL is anti-abortion and probably anti-LGBTQ+ rights.

[19]Looking that the narratives used by Law and Justice as well as Confederation the story is taken beyong the Roundtable to imply the privatization process in the 1990s was corrupt and gave unfair advantage to the ex-communist elites who enriched themselves. For Law and Justice voters " remembering" might go beyond remembering the communist past but also what comes after it as a continuation of the tainting of what came after the transition by communism and ultimately of the entire "Third Polish Republic."

[20]If only I can get access to the CBOS data I think it would be prudent to check the dimensionality and relationship to left-right and party preferences. I would like to have an empirical basis for the significance of this issue beyond the qualitative literature.

3.11 Treatment I. Norm Priming

For the first priming treatment on information environment (social norm), we assign respondents to the treated (public) and control (private) conditions via the following item (also from survey section "Block III:Treatment"):

- We will continue with some questions about Poland's history and politics. Before you answer the questions, we would like to inform you that [treated → a; control → b]. We will notify you when the results become available on our website [link].

  - a. Your responses to this survey will be posted on our website, including some open-ended responses will be posted on our website.[21]
  - b. [PASS] [22]

3.12 Treatment II. Memory Priming

For the second priming treatment on authoritarian memory[23] (ideological legacy), we assign respondents to the treated (primed) and control (unprimed) conditions via the following item (from survey section "Block III: Treatment"):

- TREATED → a; CONTROL → b.

  - a. Today in Poland we hear people use the word *komuna* when refering to aspects of Poland's history between 1945 and 1989. What does the word *komuna* mean to you? Please tell us in your own words. [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE REQUIRED]
  - b. [PASS] [24]

As an additional measure to sustain treatment effects we include photos of the communist period in the margin starting on the first screen after the open-ended response following the example of Haas and Linstam (2023). See 1. The banners at the top and bottom will continue throughout the section with treatment outcomes.

3.13 Checks: Attention and Manipulation

We check respondent's attention to survey questions with the following simple-task item halfway into the survey (from section "Attention Check"):

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[21]Respondents are de-briefed at the end.

[22]In the previoius iteration of the experiment we had the following. Treatment: "Your responses to this survey will be posted on our website." control "The anonymized results of this survey will be posted on our website. Results will be reported as percentages only, so your individual response to the survey will remain anonymous." However we got very weak treatment effects. The manipulation check detected faint effects. We now go for a stronger treatment with a 'pure control' rather than placebo.

[23]Previous treatment wording yielded null/weak results. Previous treatment wording. Today in [COUNTRY] we have many political parties. This has been the case for many years. [TREATED → a; CONTROL → Pass]. The two largest of them are [PARTY A] and [PARTY B]. We want to know how you feel about these two parties.

- a. But this was not the case back in [EX-DICTATOR]'s days.

[24]Here I am opting for a 'pure control' rather than placebo. Keep the years of the period of history or no? Main purpose is to maximize the treatment effect here.

Figure 1: Image A. Jaruzelski Image B Queue Image C Empty Shop

- To help us know you are reading our questions, please pick both "Extremely interested" and "Not at all interested" as your answer to the following question, from the list of answers below it: How interested are you in sports?

  - a. Extremely interested
  - b. Very interested
  - c. A little bit interested
  - d. Almost not interested
  - e. Not at all interested

with those picking the stipulated options deemed attentive enough to our prompts.

We check the extent of manipulation success in the first treatment , authoritiarian prime, with the following item at the end of the survey (from section "Survey Diagnostics"):[25]

- Some of the questions you were asked during this survey were open-ended, which of the following themes is closest to what you were asked to write about?

  - a. The Polish People's Republic (PRL)
  - b. Warsaw Uprising
  - c. Polish history
  - d. Political parties

We also check the extent of manipulation success in the crucial second treatment, norm/information, with the following item at the end of the survey (from section "Survey Diagnostics"):

- [W]hile responding to our questions, how much were you concerned about the confidentiality of your responses?

  - a. Not at all
  - b. A little
  - c. Somewhat
  - d. A great deal

with those whose post-manipulation beliefs conform to their assigned statuses (low confidence for the public condition and high confidence to the private condition) deemed successfully manipulated under this regime.

As an additional manipulation check we monitor visits to our project website via the link provided right after the public/private treatment.

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[25]This is a very rough idea of the manipulation check. Suggestions for improvement?

3.14   Other Questions

We also collect further relevant information from our respondents, including a wide range of socioe-conomic and demographic indicators (including region of residence), religiosity and sophistication indicators (from sections "Pre-treatment Questions" and "Demographic Questions") and open-ended thoughts and comments about our survey (from section "Survey Diagnostics"). We use these additional information to augment and extend our main analyses.

4   Empirical Strategy

The first key idea we test is that there is a penalty on identifying with the label attached to the dictator's (communist) side .

$$
\begin{aligned}
IdeolId_i = \alpha + \delta Prime_i + \theta Public_i + \\
+ \lambda Prime_i \times Public_i + \\
+ v_{ip}
\end{aligned}
\tag{1}
$$

where the outcome is the $IdeolID_i$ self-identification with the "right" labels versus "left" on a scale running from 3 to -3. $Prime$ refers to the prime on the communist past while $Public$ switches on for the public condition.

We are thus interested in the following quantities of interest:

- (1) δ: the additional internalized (appears within the private condition) bias against the label on the dictator's side upon priming of the authoritarian past

- (2) θ: the additional externalized bias (when in public) against the label on the dictator's side .

- (3) λ: the internalized and externalized bias against the label on the dictator's side upon priming of the authoritarian past

Secondly, we test the effect of the authoritarian prime under public/private conditions on af-fective polarization between "camps" of parties (Bantel, 2023): $Memory$ is dichotomous variable that captures (1) affective polarization across the divide over memory of communism between the *menomonic warrior* camp versus the others and(0) affective polarization within the two camps.

$$
\begin{aligned}
Polarization_{ip} = \alpha + \gamma Memory_p + \delta Prime_i + \theta Public_i + \\
\zeta Memory_p \times Prime_i + \phi Memory_p \times Public + \lambda Prime_i \times Public_i + \\
\xi Memory_p \times Prime_i \times Public_i + v_{ip}
\end{aligned}
\tag{2}
$$

where the outcome is the dyad-level affective polarization $Polarization_{ip}$ which is nested within individuals. Each individual rates all parties/coalitions on the ballot including their own — ob-viously these parties vary in terms of how they are placed by experts on the left (in the case the dictator's/communist side) and right (opposing side/ anti-communist) but also they vary in terms of their attitude towards the communist past. We take the difference between respondent's in-party rating and the respondent's rating each of the other parties. Then the $Memory$ indicator captures ratings across the political memory divide with Law and Justice (and Confedration) on side and

the rest grouped. We re-run the model controlling for position towards the Roundtable in 1989. We cluster standard errors by individual.

Finally we look the treatment effects on various aspects of national identity. Secondly we look at understanding of national identity as inclusive versus exclusive, positions on accepting refugees through EU quotas, and fear of communist/external influence. Finally we look at competitive victimhood.

$$
\begin{aligned}
Y_i = \alpha + \delta Prime_i + \theta Public_i + \\
+ \lambda Prime_i \times Public_i + \\
+ v_{ip}
\end{aligned}
\tag{3}
$$

Where Y_i is a measured of an aspect of national (group) identity: inclusive vs exclusive national identity, fear of external/communist influence, support for admiting refugees, and competitive victimhood.

We are thus interested in the following quantities of interest:

- (1) δ: the effect of priming of the authoritarian (communist) past

- (2) θ: the social norm effect (difference between pubic and private conditions) .

- (3) λ: the combined effects of the memory of the authoritarian/communist past (prime) and the social norm effect

For all tests we set $\alpha = 0.05$.

5   Checks

We will conduct two types of checks. In the first case we check whether respondents' attentiveness affects our main results. We will do this by including a dummy term in the model (2) that indicates whether respondents have passed the attention check. We also check manipulation success and its impact on main results in a similar way. In the second case we check whether model specification and measurement choices affects our results.

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