

Summary of the doctoral thesis " Democratic Left Alliance 1999–2015. From triumph to extra-parliamentary existence".

Author: Dorota Halicka, M.A. under the supervision of prof. UAM dr. hab. Tadeusz Wallas.

Faculty of Political Science and Journalism of the University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań.

The subject of the doctoral thesis concerns the activities of the Democratic Left Alliance (hereinafter: SLD) from 1999 to 2015, i.e. from the establishment of the party with that name until its defeat in the parliamentary elections, in which the party did not introduce its deputies to the Sejm of the Republic of Poland. The main research task was to learn about the activities of the Democratic Left Alliance in the years 1999–2015 in order to determine the causes of the crisis and collapse of this political party. In particular, important were the changes that took place within the party (including ideological, organizational, interpersonal, statutory) each time before the upcoming election campaigns, mainly parliamentary ones, and those that took place after the elections to the Sejm and Senate of the Republic of Poland in 2005.

In the research process, the author of the dissertation sought to find answers primarily to the following questions:

1. Why was a party representing a left-wing orientation in a rapidly developing country (especially in the context of the processes and consequences of political transformation) unable to maintain popularity in Polish society at a level similar to 2001?
2. What was the reason for the collapse of a strong and one of the few parties that achieved the highest voter confidence index in the history of Polish parliamentary elections after 1989?
3. Why was SLD unable to regain popularity despite the announced electoral programs that were necessary for the development of the country?
4. Did people of the "left" (SLD members, sympathizers, people coming from the same party camp) spontaneously lead to the collapse of the party?

The time scope of the hearing concerns primarily the period from the establishment (as a registered party) of the Democratic Left Alliance in 1999 to 2015, when, as a result of the parliamentary elections, it did not cross the electoral threshold for the Sejm of the Republic of Poland. Nevertheless, in order to properly present the above considerations, the author of the work briefly outlined the ideological, personal and organizational genesis of SLD, reaching back to the period before 1999. Assuming the existence of an objective reality with the possibility of knowing it, in order to achieve the goals assumed in the work, characteristic research methods were used for political science, in particular: static (quantitative) method, systemic analysis, historical method and institutional and legal method. Other research methods and techniques were also used in the doctoral thesis, such as: secondary analysis of sources, observation and survey research on the target group (surveys deputies and senators belonging to the SLD party in the years 1999-2005). The source base included legal acts and other documents, scientific studies in Polish and English, as well as press materials and internet sources. The work consists of an introduction, five chronological and problem-oriented chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and a list of tables and charts.

In the course of the analysis, the author showed that political parties are a necessary and permanent element of the institutional structure of a democratic political system, and play a very important, fundamental role in modern democratic systems. Without maintaining the basic elements that constitute the characteristics of the party, they will be prone to crises. As was the case with SLD.