
WSCHODNI ROCZNIK HUMANISTYCZNY
TOM XVI (2019), №4
s. 33-45
doi: 10.36121/azareba.16.2019.4.033

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The European Parliament elections campaign in Poland, 2019

Annotation: The purpose of these considerations is to analyze the election campaign for the European Parliament in Poland in 2019. The following items were examined: the political offer formulated by the political groups during the election campaign and the turnout. Two election committees were selected as the main subjects of the analysis: the European Coalition and the United Right. The elections to the European Parliament in 2019 are interesting because of two phenomena. Firstly, due to the mobilization of the electorate for the elections, the current average turnout did not exceed 25%. Secondly, what impact on the elections and turnout of Poles had the fact that Law and Justice, carrying out a political offer before the elections, „by accident” did not buy voters’ votes.

Keywords: election campaign, European Parliament, political offer, voter turnout.

Kampania wyborcza do Parlamentu Europejskiego w Polsce w 2019 roku

Streszczenie: Celem niniejszych rozważań jest analiza kampanii wyborczej do Parlamentu Europejskiego w Polsce w 2019 roku. Jako elementy poddane badaniu potraktowano: ofertę polityczną sformułowaną przez ugrupowania w trakcie kampanii wyborczej oraz frekwencję wyborczą. Jako główne podmioty analizy wybrano dwa komitety wyborcze: Koalicję Europejską oraz Zjednoczoną Prawicę. Wybory do PE w 2019 roku są interesujące ze względu na dwa zjawiska. Po pierwsze ze względu na mobilizację elektoratu na wybory - dotychczasowa średnia frekwencja nie przekraczała 25% poparcia. Po drugie jaki wpływ na wybory i frekwencję Polaków miał fakt, iż Prawo i Sprawiedliwość realizując przed wyborami ofertę polityczną, „przypadkiem” nie kupiło głosów wyborców.

Słowa kluczowe: kampania wyborcza, Parlament Europejski, oferta polityczna, frekwencja wyborcza.

Предвыборная кампания в Европарламент в Польше в 2019 году

Аннотация: Целью этих соображений является анализ избирательной кампании в Европарламент в Польше в 2019 году. Были рассмотрены следующие пункты: политическое предложение, сформулированное партиями во время избирательной кампании, и явка избирателей. В качестве основных субъектов анализа были

выбраны два избирательных комитета: Европейская коалиция и Объединенные правые. Выборы в ЕП в 2019 году интересны из-за двух явлений. Во-первых, из-за мобилизации электората на выборы текущая средняя явка избирателей не превысила 25% поддержки. Во-вторых, в каком степени влияние на выборы и явку Поляков имело, что «Право и справедливость», выступая с политическим предложением перед выборами, «случайно» не купило голоса избирателей.

Ключевые слова: избирательная кампания, Европарламент, политическое предложение, явка избирателей.

Introduction

Political campaigns leading up to the European Parliament elections are specifically conditioned. It is not supposed to be just a fancy statement that the European Parliament shall be the essence of the 'democracy of citizens' as its panel is a result of direct elections involving citizens of each of the member states, but also binding all EU citizens, indicating shared interests in matters such as economy, culture and politics. Such were the assumptions in 1979 during the first European general elections. Up until then, it was the national governments which delegated their representatives to the Parliamentary Assembly. The role of the European Parliament expands gradually in legislative procedures regarding e.g. improving free movement of persons, goods and capital within the EU, protecting the environment and consumers¹; forming foreign policies and establishing the Union budget. Moreover, it is the only multinational parliamentary assembly in the world².

The goal of this study is to analyse the election campaigns leading up to the European Parliamentary elections in Poland, 2019. This research focuses on: the political offer formulated by political formations during the campaign and the actual election turnout. What constituted the main subjects were two electoral committees: the European Coalition and the United Right. The 2019 elections are particularly interesting due to two specific phenomena. Firstly, the motivation for voters to participate as until now the voter turnout usually did not exceed 25%. Secondly, has the Law and Justice party (PiS) "happened" to win more votes from their supports and convince them to participate in the election thanks to delivering on one of their key promises? and how significant of an impact it may have had in the elections results³?

¹ *Parlament Europejski*, 2009, p. 5, <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/dd82e054-dc30-49ee-b374-bf5bcd694cd0/language-pl>, (accessed 8 August 2019).

² *Parlament Europejski*, 2010, pp. 3-4, <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0498b17a-8dcf-4284-872f-f4c2e15c293e/language-pl>, (accessed 8 August 2019).

³ Even Law and Justice do not hide the fact that "implementing the so-called 'Kaczyński's five major proposals' policy announced on February 23rd was planned explicitly to ensure that some of it would affect the European Parliament elections and as for the others, such as a benefits package for <26-year-olds or PLN 500 for every child, that won them seats in Sejm and Senat elections" M. Kolanko, *Komu PiS zawdzięcza zwycięstwo w wyborach do parlamentu Europejskiego?*, „Plus-Minus”, 7.06.2019, <https://www.rp.pl/Plus-Minus/306069919-Komu-PiS-zawdzięcza-zwyciestwo-w-wyborach-do-parlamentu-Europejskiego.html>, (accessed 8 August 2019).

Political offers

Theoretical marketing theories suggest that the existence of political offers is an undeniable element of a political campaign. According to Arkadiusz Żukowski, the outline and advertising of a political offer in an environment of permanent rivalry is a basis for defining political marketing in the context of processes on the electoral market⁴. Similarly, according to Wiszniowski an electoral offer becomes, apart from researching and discovering voters' needs, the essence of the political marketing which leads to a success on the political market⁵. The concept of a political offer constitutes a result of an adaption of ideas from economical marketing. Such concepts usually concentrate on the following issues: political market (electoral), political merchandise/product (the offer), promotion and price (obtaining the mandate), merchandise, product and the political offer⁶. The assumption of the political offer is engaging voters to cast the vote (the price) for a specific candidate and at the same time, the manifesto. Up until now, the accomplishments of the political offer (in the economic domain) did not translate directly into the same fulfilment in the state policies. The fulfilment of political promises related to objectives regarding foreign policies (e.g. Poland joining NATO and the European Union), as well as specific reforms (e.g. regarding the self-governments, retirement plans⁷ or education⁸). Nevertheless, never before have the authorities attempted to put the usual bread and circuses into action prior to the election.

From the beginning of the campaign considered in the study, domestic policies are dominating the political offer. It is most likely a consequence of a lack of unified regulations regarding the election's statute (such as unified regulations of registering candidates, deeming a person eligible to vote and the rules of the electoral campaign itself)⁹. As a part of the 6th office term of the European Parliament, there was a fruitless notion to create a single constituency for the entire EU consisting of 25 candidates proposed by

⁴ A. Żukowski, *Systemy wyborcze*, Wyd. Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, Olsztyn 1997, p. 92.

⁵ R. Wiszniowski, *Marketing wyborczy*, PWN, Warsaw - Wrocław 2000, p. 17.

⁶ In Polish literature, the examples of such kind are represented by the concept of political marketing theory by J. Muszyński or election marketing concepts by R. Wiszniowski. The first one focuses on four main notions defined by Muszyński as political marketing fundamentals: political market, political merchandise (the product), distribution and advertising as well as the price of merchandise which is obtaining the mandate. However, in the concept by Wiszniowski, these are: political market, political offer, the casted vote (the price), advertising and presentation approaches (promotion) and reaching the voters during the campaign (place). The difference between the two concepts is in the way of defining the environment surrounding the campaign meaning the market (depending on the author: political or electoral) and the political merchandise. J. Muszyński, *Marketing polityczny*, Wyd. Wyższej Szkoły Zarządzania i Marketingu, Warsaw 1999, pp. 12-17, and J. Muszyński, *Teoria marketingu politycznego*, Wyd. Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej TWP, Warsaw 2004, pp. 64-65, R. Wiszniowski, *op.cit.*, pp. 17-27.

⁷ As an example, during the Civic Platform's parliamentary campaign in 2011, Donald Tusk stated that the age of retirement in Poland will have stayed the same. However, what happened was the opposite, thus the promise made to Polish people was broken. Another example of that is Andrzej Duda keeping a promise, using his political backing, to reverse to the original age of retirement.

⁸ The reform carried out by the then minister of education, Anna Zalewska arousing many more controversies that the initial acceptance of Gimnazjum school closedowns. The fact that the opposition did not use that fact is surprising.

⁹ It causes discrepancies within the member states (such as e.g. different election days, regulations regarding leading a campaign or laws permitting to vote from a different country) however it does not create favourable conditions for voters to concentrate on European matters during the election.

European political parties. A solution of this type would focus the voter's attention on European issues rather than domestic affairs during the time of the campaign¹⁰.

So far, the experiences of electoral campaigns in Poland show that a more attractive quality for subjects who are a part of the political market is the rivalry on a national level. According to Małgorzata Adamik-Szysiak, the European Parliament elections until that point¹¹, especially in 2004 and 2009, were something of a try-out for national elections. This could be a result of low expenditures on advertising, limited involvement in the campaign and the electoral calendar alignment. The party in power had an opportunity to display their political activities while the opposition was demoted to a role of an opponent attacking the current actions taken by the current government¹². Donald Tusk, who was not running in this election, played a significant role in coordinating the campaign.

The electoral offer was similarly designed in the 2014 European Parliament elections where again, it was focused on national issues. The campaign was led by Donald Tusk and Radosław Sikorski. Another contributing factor strengthening the position of Civic Platform (PL. Platforma Obywatelska - PO) while at the same time taking the wind of the opponent's sails was the Ukrainian crisis. Civic Platform presented the European Union as a safety net, protecting Poland from the East. In case of this party, there was a mixture of both European and national issues. An amalgamate was used, the EU – modernisation, and its equivalent is Civic Platform¹³. The response from Law and Justice was a discernible intensification of local meet-and-greets with the voters. The PiS chairman raised the following topics: re-industrialisation of Poland, more favourable agriculture policies as well as issues resulting from a coalition of the Civic Platform and

¹⁰ According to Marcin, Rulka, the EU legislative acts regarding the European Parliament elections are barely existent. During the previous terms for the European Parliament and the proceedings of the appropriate Commission regarding the unification project, the goal of which would be to unify all national electoral regulations, it was impossible to reach a consensus. As stated by Rulka, the change of regulations had happened in 2002 when a proportional electoral system was introduced. M. Rulka, *Regulacja wyborów do Parlamentu Europejskiego w prawie Unii Europejskiej*, „Studia Wyborcze”, issue 16/2013, pp. 54-55.

¹¹ During the 2009 European Parliament elections, contrary to 2004, Eurosceptic political formations suffered a bitter defeat due to the fact that the predictions previously made by these parties did not come true after the first years of joining the Union. In 2009, the biggest victory was ensured by political parties already present in the Sejm – Civic Platform, Law and Justice, Democratic Left Alliance (in coalition with the Labour Union) and the Polish People's Party. Predominantly, Polish people were not invested in the Treaty of Lisbon ratification, only 37% considered this issue important. Civic Platform consciously did not offer any complex European programme being fully aware of the lack of interest on the voter's part on these issues. Focusing on national affairs was directly translated to campaign slogans: Civic Platform used slogans such as “Civic Platform for Poland” (2004), “Choose Poland” (2009), while Law and Justice opted for “Respectable representation in Europe” (2004) and “More for Poland” (2009). Both parties had a discernible image, especially regarding European issues. Civic Platform was seen more as pro-integration while Law and Justice was considered more of a Eurosceptic formation. Civic Platform was the only party associated with the idea of evolving as a Union. Nevertheless, agriculture and other subsidies as well as patriotism were highlights in campaigns of both parties. *Marketing polityczny teoria i praktyka*, I. Hofman (Ed.), Wydawnictwo UMCS, Lublin 2011, p. 112.

¹² M. Adamik-Szysiak, *Media elektroniczne w polskich kampaniach wyborczych do Parlamentu Europejskiego*, “Political Preferences”, issue 2/2014, pp. 123-136.

¹³ It is worth noting that in 2009, the equivalent of modernisation and the role of the Civic Platform was a human factor, meaning the election of Jerzy Buzek as European Parliament Chairman.

Polish People's Party while also trying to engage the small-town and agriculture areas to vote in the election (without those demographics, PiS would not have managed to win the Euro elections). According to Piotr Zaremba, the PiS campaign authors did not succeed in finding a slogan, symbol or a message being able to counter against the then government's proposals. As he states, what was missing in 2005 was an advertisement of "an empty fridge" or a slogan of a "social Poland"¹⁴.

The European Parliament elections was another test after the self-government elections of 2018¹⁵. Despite the United Right convention under the slogan "Poland the heart of Europe" held on 18 December 2018¹⁶. The current coalition leaders - the prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki, Jarosław Kaczyński and Jarosław Gowin - all took part. Then, the eminent words regarding the upcoming political offer were said, that the party is supposed to be the Polish people's dream. The aim of this convention was presenting a general brief of the United Right manifesto focusing on Europe, increased incomes and modernisation of Poland¹⁷. During the convention on February 23rd, 2019, Jarosław Kaczyński clearly defined the political offer. He announced the so-called 'Kaczyński's five major proposals' which concerns the further development of the 500+ programme (PLN 500 for the first child), an additional (13th) gross payment of retirement pensions amounting to PLN 1100, excluding the Personal Income Tax for <26-year-olds, increasing a threshold for tax-exempt allowance and reinstating local bus routes¹⁸. Putting "Kaczyński's five major proposals" into action started on 1 May 2019 from payment of an additional, "13th retirement pension" to every pensioner. On July 1st, the 500+ programme for each child launched, and on 19th of the same month, local bus routes were reinstated by law. On August 30th, new law lowering the Personal Income Tax was introduced¹⁹. It could be easily asserted that achieving the postulated political offer began before the vote²⁰. We could analyse it through various criteria. In the interview of

¹⁴ P. Zaremba, *Parlament Europejski a sprawa polska. Kilka uwag po ostatnich wyborach*, "Horyzonty Polityki", issue 11/2014, pp. 165-166.

¹⁵ The wheels of the electoral "machine" were in motion since spring, 2018. As a part of "There is only one Poland" plan, the PiS activists managed to organise 800 meet-and-greets with the voters. *Archiwum spotkań*, spotkania.pis.org.pl, (dostęp 22.08.2019). <http://pis.org.pl/aktualnosci/polskajestjedna-harmonogram-spotkan-pis>, (accessed 8 August 2019).

¹⁶ Even though, the electoral calendar announced by the president, Andrzej Duda, took place on February 25th, 2019, it did not interfere with conducting earlier pro-campaign actions.

¹⁷ M. Kolanko, „Polska sercem Europy”: *Marzenia PiS na 2019 rok*, "Rzeczpospolita", 16.12.2018, <https://www.rp.pl/Prawo-i-Sprawiedliwosc/181219435-Polska-sercem-Europy-Marzenia-PiS-na-2019-rok.html>, (accessed 8 August 2019).

¹⁸ D. Bochen, „Piątka Kaczyńskiego”. *Jakie propozycje znalazły się w obietnicach PiS i kiedy zostaną wprowadzone?*, 19.03.2019, <https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/piatka-kaczynskiego-jakie-propozycje-znalazly-sie-w-obietnicach-pis-i-kiedy-zostana-wprowadzone-6360749894059649a.html>, (accessed 8 August 2019).

¹⁹ *Piątka Kaczyńskiego w realizacji*, <https://www.tvp.info/41623418/piatka-kaczynskiego-juz-w-realizacji>, P. Orlikowski, *PKS-y wracają, wchodzi w życie ustawa*, <https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/pks-y-wracaja-wchodzi-w-zycie-ustawa-adamczyk-walczymy-z-wykluczeniem-6403874152986753a.html>, (accessed 22 August 2019), *Adamczyk: „walczymy z wykluczeniem”, Sejm przyjął projekt ustawy obniżającej PIT dla wszystkich podatników*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/finanse/sejm-przyjal-projekt-ustawy-obnizajacej-pit-dla-wszystkich-podatnikow> (accessed 22 August 2019).

²⁰ What differentiates the Polish society from the Western democracies in the 2005 elections was that the society did not expect their representatives to look after an individual's economic interests. Exit

professor Antoni Dudek with "Gazeta Prawna" newspaper, he states clearly that he is worried that it will become a rule and not only for PiS but also for other political formations. According to Dudek "PiS opened a door to a new populist model: direct distribution. Voters may become dependent on it, addicted as if to a hard drug because nothing tastes better than cash in hand. Thus, from now on, a significant part of the country will now be expecting more and more money with every election²¹. For the first time such measure was taken. It only goes to show the level of determination of the then government who wanted to win and engage the voters in the European Parliament elections as well as to smooth the way for the national parliamentary campaign later in the year. The 500+ programme, now including a first child and not only the second and further, was a key factor in obtaining the broadest demographic, especially those who did not choose to vote before. The goal of the 500+ programme is to even social inequalities, exclusion and poverty. Although launching it just before the election brings to mind certain associations with the social psychology, notably the reciprocation rule²².

The response of the European Coalition to the offer of the United Right was an extensive political programme addressed to a diverse demographic. The main theme of the campaign was to make Poland one of the EU leaders. The slogan read "The future of Poland. The great choice". The argument behind it was that Poland's isolation would finally end, positive relations with other state members would be rebuilt. In order to match Polish people's standard of living with the Western countries, European Coalition suggests the increase in income by reinforcing a unified market, common trade areas, investments and services where Polish people and companies could play to their strength. Additionally, they declared the protection of the European funds and subsidies, introducing cheap and clean energy while protecting the environment and the creation of a European Programme Against Cancer. This party presented the Union as an opportunity for agriculture, an advocate for human rights, equality for disabled and minorities. The Coalition also included a notion related to security (EU's shared defence and strengthen the alliance with the US in NATO). With regards to the youth, the Coalition included in their programme an objective to foster Europe travels by introducing a common university and school students' card ID standard ensuring unified concessions as well as warranting health insurance for them throughout Europe. The offer concluded on a demand concerning a revolution in Polish transport, ensuring all Europeans, including Polish people, appropriate railway, road and telecommunication connections²³.

polls from 2001 seem to prove that. Based on these surveys, it was concluded that the Poles, in general, did not see a direct correlation between economic policies and their family's financial situation, despite firmly believing in such correlation to exist. P. Grzelak, *Głosowanie ekonomiczne w Polsce*, [in:] *System partyjny i zachowania wyborcze. Dekada polskich doświadczeń*. R. Markowski (Ed.), Wyd. Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Warsaw 2002, . 236.

²¹ G. Osiecki, *Politolog: PiS otworzyło nowe wrota populizmu: Dawanie wyborcom gotówki [WYWIAD]*, 27.05.2019, <https://www.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/1414352,antoni-dudek-o-populizmie-i-wyborach-europarlamentarnych.html> (accessed 22 August 2019).

²² People receiving even the smallest of gifts such as a free sample of breakfast cereal feel the obligation to buy the whole package. K. Hogan, *Psychologia perswazji. Strategie i techniki wywierania wpływu na ludzi*, Wyd. Jacek Santorski & CO, Warsaw 2001, pp. 38-39.

²³ *Program wyborczy Koalicji Europejskiej*, <https://wiadomosci.radiozet.pl/Eurowybory-2019/Wiadomosci/Program-wyborczy-KE-2019-wybory-do-Parlamentu-Europejskiego-PROGRAM-POLITYCZ>

Turnout

The 2019 European Parliament elections in 2019 involved one other surprising factor- a sharp, almost 100%, increase in turnout comparing to previous occurrences. There are different arguments which could justify this phenomenon. Nevertheless, in the beginning, it is worth to ponder on the reasons behind the absences in the previous elections. In the Euro elections of 2004, there was the lowest ever recorded turnout. The Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) shared the following reasons given by respondents: the feeling of dismay regarding the political situation in the country (43%), unfamiliarity with candidates (21%) and lack of interest in politics (25%). Only a modest group of respondents (21%) voiced their discouragement to vote due to the actual content of the electoral offer and way the elections themselves were regarded by the candidates (as an easy way of getting a well-paid job). Nonetheless, 18% of respondents declared that they had not found candidates they were willing to support. Additionally, 15% of voters refrained from voting due to e.g. unfamiliarity with the manifestos of the electoral committees and their candidates. Only 14% of the eligible voters did not participate in the vote due a lack of knowledge related to the European Parliament while 5% did not express any interest in the EU matters and equally the same number of respondents declared a negative attitude towards Poland's integration with the EU²⁴.

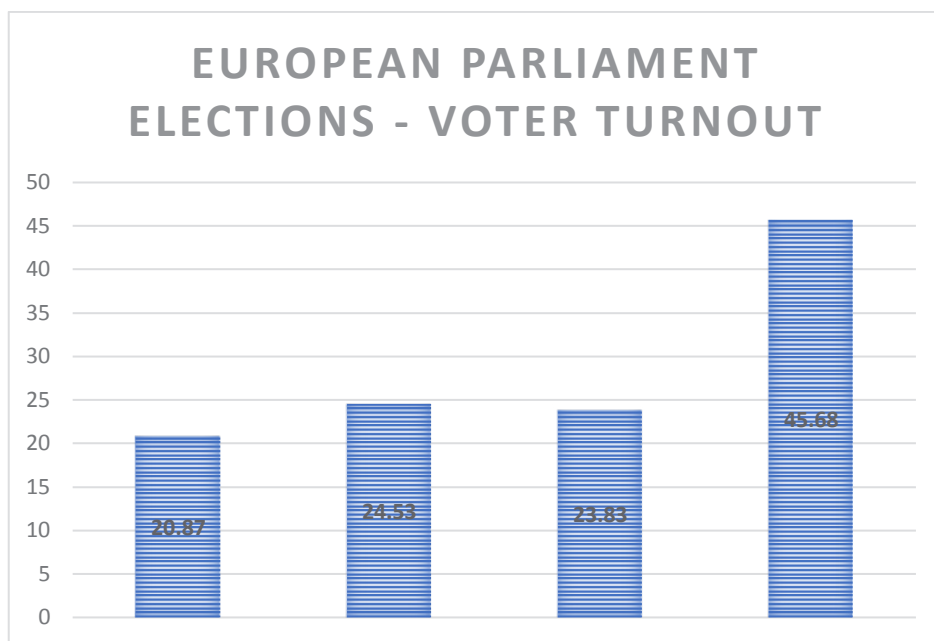


Fig. 1 Voter turnout in the European Parliament elections 2004-2019

NY-KOALICJI-EUROPEJSKIEJ, (accessed 22 August 2019).

²⁴ A. Cybulska, *Głosujący i niegłosujący o swoich wyborach do Parlamentu Europejskiego – analiza powyborcza*, BS/114/2004, pp. 8-9, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2004/K_114_04.PDF, (accessed 22 August 2019).

Author's own elaboration based on: *Frekwencja w wyborach do Parlamentu Europejskiego w 2004*, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/pl/in-the-past/previous-elections>, (dostęp 12.08.2019), *Frekwencja w wyborach do Parlamentu Europejskiego w 2009*, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/pl/in-the-past/previous-elections>, (dostęp 12.08.2019), *Frekwencja w wyborach do Parlamentu Europejskiego w 2014*, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/pl/in-the-past/previous-elections>, PKW, (dostęp 12.08.2019), *Wybory do Parlamentu Europejskiego 2019*, <https://wybory.gov.pl/pe2019/pl/frekwencja/pl>, (accessed August 12, 2019).

In the 2009 European Parliament elections, voters indicated that not taking part in the elections is motivated by a feeling of dismay towards the political situation in Poland (28%) and a lack of interest in politics in general (26%). An additional discouraging factor seemed to have been a belief that politicians are only interested in obtaining remunerative positions (19%). Moreover, 16% of respondents indicated unfamiliarity with the candidates while 15% did not participate in the vote due to the lack of knowledge regarding the European Parliament. Only 4% of respondents claimed that they did not express any interest in the European matters (4%) or they have negative attitude towards the Poland's integration with the EU (1%)²⁵.

In 2014, CBOS survey showed that according to respondents, being "overwhelmed with duties" or too busy as well as absence on the day of the vote were the primary reasons behind not casting the ballot (26%). The subsequent reasons were lack of interest in politics in general (19%) and, yet again, a discouragement caused by a belief that the elections are simply an opportunity for politicians to gain a highly profitable employment (18%). The following reasons declared by the respondents are: a general negative attitude towards the political situation in the country (17%), the inadequacy of candidates (17%) or unfamiliarity with them (15%). Other answers in the survey included the lack of knowledge regarding the competence of the European Parliament (12%) or the electoral programmes (8%) as well as some indicated the absence due to illness or disability (10%). Additional reasons stated were the lack of interest in the EU matters (5%) or the low importance of these elections as well as the low impact of the European Parliament on the situation in the country (4%). As many as 2% of the respondents indicated that they did not cast the ballot as they are opposed to Poland being an EU member²⁶.

Regarding the lack of participation in 2019 European Parliament elections, the reasons stated by participants of the survey were again being "too busy" or "overwhelmed with duties" and being away on the day of the vote (31%). A subsequent reason for not taking part was the lack of interest in politics in general (26%). The third most frequent argument was indisposition or disability (19%). As before, 11% claimed that they do not have adequate knowledge regarding European Parliament institutions which resulted in the absence. The discouragement and disappointment over the political situation in the country were a rationale for 8% of the respondents. For a modest (6%) part of the eligible voters, the main issue was the unfamiliarity with the candidates or their inadequacy. Other reasons were: the lack of interest in EU matters (4%), unfamil-

²⁵ B. Roguska, *Wybory do europarlamentu w powyborczych deklaracjach Polaków*, BS/110/2009, p. 11, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2009/K_110_09.PDF, (accessed 22 August 2019).

²⁶ A Cybulska, *Wybory do Parlamentu Europejskiego w powyborczych deklaracjach Polaków*, NR 96/2014, pp.13-14, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2014/K_096_14.PDF, (accessed 22 August 2019).

ilarity with the programmes of political parties or electoral committees (4%), associating the candidates with opportunism and careerism (3%) while some highlighted the low impact of the European Parliament on the national policies (2%). As a differentiating factor, none of the respondents refuse to take part in the election due to their negative attitude towards Poland's membership in the EU²⁷.

From the turnout perspective, the declared motives for the spike in the participation numbers and the support for the United Right appear to be more interesting. The reasons provided by the potential voters related to the following: concern for the country (29%), political sympathies (28%), trust and credibility (23%), programme implementation (21%), personal traits of the candidate (12%), convergence of views (9%), patriotic values and ideas (9%), as well as the common sense (as in "hear, hear"; 8%), anti-Civic Platform (5%), respectable representation of Poland in the EU (4%), the influence of family and friends (3%), lack of alternatives and so choosing "the lesser evil" (3%) and last but not least "hard to say" (1%)²⁸. Respondents declaring support for the European Coalition indicated mostly: personal traits of the candidate (27%), trust and credibility, general sympathies (23%), anti-Law and Justice (17%), a more respectable representation of Poland (13%), the programme (13%), the presence of the party they support (Polish People's Party, Civic Platform or Democratic Left Alliance; 10%), convergence of views (9%), positive traits (such as e.g. competent, resourceful, modern, pragmatic; 8%), "the lesser evil" (7%), to bring "law and order" (5%), uniting the opposition (4%), the influence of family and friends (1%)²⁹. It could be concluded from the declarations made by the voters that their decision was pre-emptive as more than a half had decided based on the candidate's party affiliation. Moreover, according to respondents, the importance of these elections significantly risen as they recognised the impact of those elections on shaping the policies of the state³⁰.

It is easy to conclude that these are not the only reason for this sharp upsurge in the participation. It was a result of the PiS campaign team, the leader of which was again Tomasz Poręba with the help of Piotr Matczuk, Anna Plakwicz³¹, Paweł Szefernaker, prof. Waldemar Paruch (the chairman of the government founded Strategic Analysis Centre), Piotr Agatowski and last but not least Tomasz Matynia (Government Information Centre). The success of PiS was based on creating an original model of exit polls.

²⁷ A Cybulska, K. Pankowski, *Decyzje w wyborach do Parlamentu Europejskiego. Przyczyny absencji wyborczej*, 94/2019, pp. 13-14, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2019/K_094_19.PDF, (accessed 22 August 2019).

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

²⁹ K. Pankowski, *Motywy głosowania w wyborach do Parlamentu Europejskiego*, 97/2019, p. 2, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2019/K_097_19.PDF(accessed 22 August 2019).

³⁰ A Cybulska, K. Pankowski, *op. cit.* pp.1-2.

³¹ They have been working with PiS since 2011. They were previously the Chancellery of the Prime Minister while Beata Szydło was in office. They founded a company named Solvere which was the author of the "Fair Courts" (PL. "Sprawiedliwe Sądy"). However due to the conflict with the law, the company violated the anti-corruption act which led to the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau (CBA) to investigate). Currently, the company is being liquidated but they returned to work for the Chancellery with the next prime minister - Mateusz Morawiecki. LR, *Odeszli z Kancelarii Premiera po konflikcie z Beatą Szydło, założyli firmę PR-ową i odpowiadali za kampanię „Sprawiedliwe sądy”*. Teraz wracają do KPRM, żeby naprawić wizerunek rządu, 15.03.2018, <https://www.newsweek.pl/polska/polityka/anna-plakwicz-i-piotr-matczuk-nowi-doradcy-morawieckiego/3lzc46>, (accessed 22 August 2019).

As a first step, they created a map of districts to which they added a layer of a map of provinces and later on added subsequent layers of political support opinion polls. The combination of focus groups and quantitative research led to an emergence of six main types of the electorate (such as: senior citizens, youth, small and medium-sized towns and agriculture areas inhabitants). During the campaign, the opinion polls were observed on regular basis and by the end of the campaign, the surveys were conducted every day. In order to motivate the electorate a call centre³² was created, the goal of which was to entice the structures in specific constituencies. Volunteers would call the supporters or voters to convince them that “the victory is possible, but we need to get people motivated”³³. The opposition suggests however, that the success of PiS lies in employing foreign political advisories from Great Britain and the United States. The European Coalition was led by Marcin Kierwiński with the support of the Civic Platform: Cezary Tomczyk, Robert Tyszkiewicz, Sławomir Nitras, Mariusz Witczak and Piotr Borys. The campaign team was joined by representatives of the other political parties namely: Anna Maria Żukowska from Democratic Left Alliance, Piotr Zgorzelski from the Polish People’s Party and Sławomir Potapowicz from Modern. The Coalition’s representatives openly speak about the mistakes made during the campaign: the lack of a catchy slogan and definitive message, the lack of a charismatic leadership as well overusing the overused anti-Law and Justice patterns³⁴ and the lack of frequent and intensive meetings with voters³⁵.

During the campaign there were a couple of moments that could change the result of the vote. Primarily, launching the LGBT freedom campaign, an important film directed by the Sekielski brothers exposing paedophilia cases in the Catholic Church, Gay Pride marches – especially the one in Gdańsk instead of inciting doubt in the PiS voters, they led to an even more decisive shift towards traditional values and a motivated electorate. Suspending the campaign in the Southern regions of Poland due to flooding became one of the cleverest decisions of the PiS campaign team. The European Coalition were not as lucky, at first publicly attacking their opponents for using people’s misfortune to their own advantage and then appearing on river embankments using them for self-promotion³⁶.

³² In the United States, call centres are used as an instrument of gaining political support as often as using letters, mails or canvassing.

³³ M. Kolanko, *Komu PiS zawdzięcza zwycięstwo w wyborach do parlamentu Europejskiego?*, „Plus-Minus”, 7.06.2019, <https://www.rp.pl/Plus-Minus/306069919-Komu-PiS-zawdzięcza-zwycięstwo-w-wyborach-do-parlamentu-Europejskiego.html>, (accessed 22 August 2019).

³⁴ It is worth highlighting that from the aforementioned CBOS surveys conclusions, the anti-Law and Justice message is accepted by 17% of the electorate voting for the Civic Platform (in the European Parliament elections).

³⁵ A. Kublik, I. Szpala, *Opozycja przegrała na własne życzenie*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 29.05.2019, <http://classic.wyborcza.pl/archiwumGW/9040330/OPOZYCJA-PRZEGRALA-NA-WLASNE-ZYCZENIE-Material%20archiwalny>, (accessed 22 August 2019).

³⁶ P. Wroński, *PiS nie musi wygrać jesienią. Rozmowa z prof. Rafałem Matyją*, 31.05.2019, classic.wyborcza.pl/archiwumGW/9040679/PIS-NIE-MUSI-WYGRAC-JESIENIAMaterial%20archiwalny, (accessed 22 August 2019). M. Kolanko, *Komu PiS zawdzięcza zwycięstwo w wyborach do parlamentu Europejskiego?*, „Plus-Minus”, 7.06.2019, <https://www.rp.pl/Plus-Minus/306069919-Komu-PiS-zawdzięcza-zwycięstwo-w-wyborach-do-parlamentu-Europejskiego.html>, (accessed 22 August 2019).

Conclusion

To conclude this analysis of selected elements of the 2019 European Parliament elections, it is worth noting a couple of details. Most of all, the models concerning motivating voters used until now were abandoned. There has been a sharp upsurge in numbers of voters who, until now, did not participate in the Euro elections. It appears that a large part of the success of motivating United Right voters was a change in the collective consciousness regarding the significance of the European Parliament elections³⁷. There was a shift in the way voters were positioned. Most likely, it was dictated by research concluding clearly that the United Right obtained the support of all potential voters on the electoral market. Supposedly, the so-called "iron" electorate of PiS amounts to 28% of voters which is not enough to win the elections. Thus, there was a need to generate new electorate groups. It is important to keep in mind that PiS also gained supporters of a centre viewpoint, however they could always shift their preferences. In case of the European Coalition, there was a lack of a decisive leadership, a cohesive, efficient campaign using the achievements of the political marketing instrumentation.

The political offer of PiS constituted the "voter's dream" for the defined supporter groups. Thanks to their participation, the party achieved their success. Using a socio-economic division, social inequalities, an impossible amount of qualitative and quantitative research as well as the available means as the then party in power (legislative powers, managing the budget) became an instrument to motivate new voters which in turn led them to victory in the parliamentary elections of 2019. Looking back at the self-government campaign from 2018, it was highly beneficial in terms of insight towards improving the newly created system. The difficulty of the self-government campaign was based on the fact that the average voter is more likely to recognise a person from the government or a prominent MP rather than the candidates from the local structures. This is why in the European elections, the known figures from the Sejm or the European Parliament helped to ensure the success in the European Parliament elections. It needs to be highlighted that the key factors in that success were a direct campaign and the meet-and-greets with the voters. Conventions, numerous events of the party's leadership with the candidates as well as the media relations all contributed to this result. We could observe similar effects of the effort from the Coalition's MEPs: Bartosz Arłukowicz who received many more votes than Joachim Brudziński, or Elżbieta Łukacijewska who ran from the Podkarpacki region constituency. The European Coalition acted based on predictable schemas used in all of the previous campaigns. There was a lack of through effort from the campaign team, there was no original instrumentation to ensure the win. There was no attempt at generating new voters. The overall message of the campaign was vague and incohesive.

It appears that one month before to the elections, it is quite challenging to forecast the results. The instrumentation formed by the PiS campaign team could prove to ensure a spectacular electoral win providing there will not be any unforeseeable circumstances (such as e.g. an inappropriate behaviour during a natural disaster, weakened international relations etc.) which could potentially stop the 'democracy of the polls' development in Poland.

³⁷ It appears that the Public Television played a significant educational role, if not even used its tools for persuasion. Public Television used repetition techniques of specific content in its news broadcasts.

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