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Political representations of Europe. Analysis of electoral conventions before European Parliament Elections, 2019

Annotation: The subject of the article is the analysis of speeches of politicians representing three main political parties/election committees, on electoral conventions. The theoretical background for analysis is the theory of social representations which explains how elusive objects and concepts (such as Europe and European-ness) can become the object of imagination and everyday voter discussions. Three images (ideal types) of Europe / European Union have been distinguished that may have appeared during political speeches: 1) model of cooperation of nation-states, 2) model of Europe integrating on the basis of common heritage and values, 3) model of post-national Europe building identity on «new» objects of identification. Elements of all models were present during the election conventions of Law and Justice, the European Coalition and the Spring of Robert Biedroń.
Keywords: Political representations of Europe, European Union, electoral conventions, European Parliament Elections

Polityczne reprezentacje Europy. Analiza konwencji wyborczych przed wyborami do Parlamentu Europejskiego w 2019 roku
Streszczenie: Przedmiotem artykułu jest analiza wystąpień polityków trzech główny polskich partii politycznych/komitetów wyborczych, podczas organizowanych przez nie konwencji wyborczych do Parlamentu Europejskiego. Teoretycznym zapleczem dla analizy jest teoria społecznych reprezentacji, która wyjaśnia sposób w jaki nieuchwytne obiekty i koncepcje (takie jak Europa i europejskość) mogą się stać przedmiotem wyobrażeń i codziennych dyskusji wyborców. Wyróżniono trzy obrazy (typy idealne) Europy/Unii Europejskiej, które mogły pojawić się podczas politycznych wystąpień: 1) model współpracy państw narodowych, 2) model Europy integrującej się na bazie wspólnego dziedzictwa i wartości, 3) model postnarodowej Europy budującej tożsamość na „nowych" przedmiotach identyfikacji. Elementy wszystkich modeli były obecne podczas konwencji wyborczych Prawa i Sprawiedliwości, Koalicji Europejskiej i Wiosny Roberta Biedronia.

Słowa kluczowe: Polityczne reprezentacje Europy, Unia Europejska, konwencje wyborcze, eurowybory.

Политические представления Европы. Анализ избирательных конвенций перед выборами в Европейский парламент в 2019 году

Аннотация: Предметом статьи является анализ выступлений политиков трех основных польских политических партий / избирательных комиссий во время их избирательных конвенций в Европарламенте. Теоретической основой для анализа является теория социальных репрезентаций, которая объясняет, как неуловимые объекты и концепции (такие как Европа и Европейскость) могут стать объектом воображения и повседневного обсуждения избирателей. Были выделены три образа (идеальных типа) Европы / Европейского Союза, которые могли появиться во время политических речей: 1) модель сотрудничества между национальными государствами, 2) модель интеграции Европы на основе общего наследования и ценностей, 3) модель постнациональной Европы, формирующей идентичность на основе «новых» объектов идентификации. Элементы всех моделей присутствовали во время избирательных конвенций «Права и справедливости», «Европейской коалиции» и «Весны Роберта Бидроня».

Ключевые слова: Политические представительства Европы, Евросоюза, избирательные конвенции, евро Выборы.

1. Introduction

   Modern election campaigns are a common routine in democratic systems. They are essentially a period of time in which candidates seeking mandate attempt to encourage citizens and interest them in the subject of politics. Apart from being the obvious tools of persuasion, campaigns are largely meant to convey messages such as a preferred political stance, values and the ways of assimilating them, most likely in a form of a less or more comprehensive manifesto. From a public opinion perspective, this allows for choosing a vision of the future state, society and resources distribution by indicating which candidate, party or committee seems to match our beliefs the most accurately and at the same time is most likely to fulfil those expectations. On the other hand, from a systemic perspective, a successful campaign will allow for obtaining the mandate to those who will govern and who will concurrently be entitled to implement their policies on behalf of the citizens.

   Even though it is appropriate to indicate the dramatisation and the ritual character of the campaigns, along with the campaign conventions, they uphold the public assumption that a dialogue, meet-and-greet events with politicians and complex public party programmes are the right, justified and legitimate way of gathering support leading to a realisation of those promises and programmes. It is assumed that in order to deem elections open and honest, the electorate should be presented with a programme allowing for an adequate understanding of candidates, parties and relating manifestos[1]. This is why the analyses of all messages conveyed by parties to voters during the political conventions remain inadvertently one of the most crucial tasks for researchers[2].

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[1] G. B. Powell, *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*, Yale University Press 2000.

[2] The afore-mentioned assumptions are valid if we consider the model of the public holding parties electorally accountable. A representative item is a book by A. Ranney *The Doctrine of Responsible Party*

Within this attempt, it is fairly interesting to ponder whether the programmes of the Polish parties which participated in the European Parliament elections in 2019 present a somewhat unified prospect of Europe – its representation, coherence and if the 'European' is not just the fancy name while in fact, the campaign should be considered national as the main themes for discussions were concerning local issues rather than the European ones.

2. The role of the programme in the party conventions

What we could say about party programmes in general is that they could be remarkably educational, however, only to those who read them. They are exceptionally underestimated as a source of information not only by experts, analysts and parties themselves but even more so by the voters whose motivation derives usually either from "religion" (trust and faith in the party) or a selection where they focus on one or more key aspects of the programmes highlighted by the media[3].

A presentation of medialised and very heavily trimmed versions of party programmes during election conventions became a rule, especially for the main political formations. Despite the fact that not all parties organise such conventions, all of them attempt to present their vision of the state, policies and the desired community of citizens. Regardless whether they are a speech or in a written form, programmes, being a pragmatic political offer, constitute a contract between the parties and the voters – they lawfully bind a parliament member or a senator to implement them.

The programmes combine four types of information 1) foreign policies, relations with external contractors including military efforts towards building international alliances, essentially concerning more or less amicable relations with other countries, 2) related to domestic policies (changes, reforms, continuations) in various domains such as: public health, legal system, education, public safety, country's defences or funding, 3) related to a political stance on key policies such as being 'for' or 'against' gender equality, a specific family model, minimal wage, abortion or green energy which leads the parties to positioning themselves on a rhetorical axis – left or right, liberalism vs. conservatism which in turn allows for recreating the ideology behind it, 4) they also indicate the priorities of the party in terms of policies to be implemented and the topics they embark on which is reflected not only by the fact that they are present in the party's programme[4], but also the level of detail given to some of those issues highlighted by it. It is of high importance given that it

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Government: Its Origins and Present State (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1954). Later on, many more academics undertook this course of study, including : V. O. Key, (*The Responsible Electorate: Rationality in Presidential Voting*, 1936-1960, New York: Vintage Books 1966), D. R. Mayhew (*Congress: The Electoral Connection*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1974; *Divided We Govern*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1991), L. N. Cutler („Some Reflections About Divided Government", Presidential Studies Quarterly, 17(3) 1988) or M. P. Fiorina (*Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1981; *Divided Government*, Boston: Allyn and Baconn 1996).

[3] This phenomenon is indicated by regular reports from surveys done by Center of Public Opinion Research (CBOS Poland) such as K. Pankowski, *Motywy głosowania w wyborach dla Parlamentu Europejskiego*, 97/2019; A. Cybulska, K. Pankowski, *Motywy głosowania na partie polityczne*, 63/2018, K. Pankowski, *Motywy głosowania na poszczególne partie i komitety wyborcze*, 179/2015.

[4] It is worth to mention that political parties are largely attempting, with almost encyclopaedic diligence, to make references to nearly all of those subject areas.

remains in close relation to the actual budget and funding in the following years[5].

Such types of information happen to serve yet another function: they integrate party members and their supporters, create an organisational identity and become a starting point for a discussion over possible coalitions as well as constitute an *ex ante* credibility assessment of the party, attract media attention and encourage voters.

Stage presence and the medial nature of electoral conventions are an opportunity to advertise and highlight some of the points or a chance for sharing a direct reaction to current events which make the parties stand out and attract public interest. Providing the bulky electoral programmes are incredibly tedious even for those who deal with those sorts of documents on daily basis, party conventions are aimed to present clear objectives in a concise and comprehensible way which will allow for its prompt assessment by journalists, experts – and then eventually voters[6]. This cycle is perfectly aligned to the process of engaging supporters and voters while implementing the democratic system "in action".
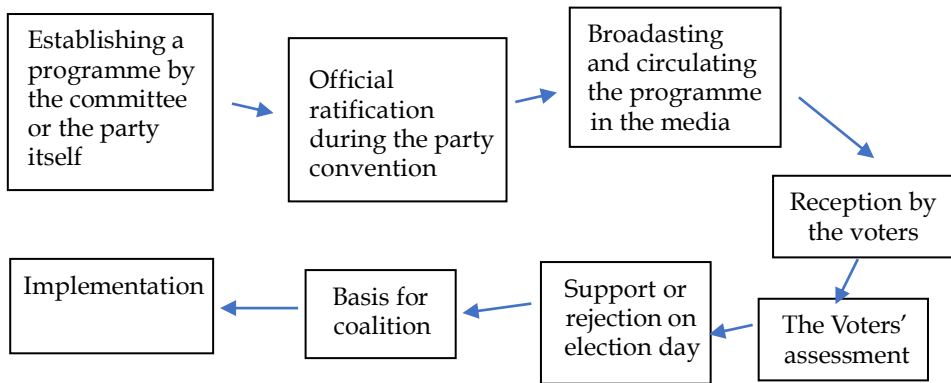

fig. 1. The lifecycle of electoral programmes as per: M. Dolezal in "The Life Cycle of Party Manifestos: The Austrian Case", West European Politics 35.4 2012, pp. 869–895; N. Merz, The Manifesto-Media Link: How Mass Media Mediate Manifesto Messages, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Berlin 2017, http://dx.doi.org/10.18452/18863.

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[5] Such correlations we could observe not only in Poland after the 2015 elections but also e.g. in Great Britain (R. I. Hofferbert, I. Budge, „The Party Mandate and the Westminster Model: Election Programmes and Government Spending in Britain, 1948–85, *British Journal of Political Science* 22/2 1992, pp. 151–182), in Italy (F. Russo, L. Verzichelli, "Government Ideology and Party Priorities: The Determinants of Public Spending Changes in Italy", *Italian Political Science Review / Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica* 46/3 2016, pp. 1–22) other European countries (A. Horn, C. Jensen, "When and Why Politicians Do Not Keep Their Welfare Promises", *European Journal of Political Research* 56/2 2016, pp. 381–400).

[6] See e.g. I. Budge, M.D. McDonald, „Choices Parties Define. Policy Alternatives in Representative Elections, 17 Countries 1945–1998", *Party Politics* 12/4 2006, pp. 451–466; Ciż, „Conceptualising and Measuring 'Centrism' Correctly on the Left–Right Scale (RILE) - without Systematic Bias. A General Response by MARPOR", *Electoral Studies* 31/3 2012, pp. 609–612; A. Volkens, H.D. Klingemann, "Parties, Ideologies, and Issues. Stability and Change in Fifteen European Party Systems. 1945-1998", *Political Parties in the New Europe*, K.R. Luther, F. Muller-Rommel, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002.

In this lifecycle, the formal acceptance of the programme during the party convention remains one of the key stages after which it is distributed by the media to be received and assessed by the voters.

The programme is supposed to constitute and agenda for debate, it presents issues which are supposed to help establish superiority of the party over its competitors while at the same time it paints a picture of the most pressing issues along with their definition which. If affirmed by the voters, it could be a deciding factor for the win of the party which has proven proficient in the art of programme-creation. It is easily noticeable that ultimately, we are not examining here the hundred-pages-long-programmes but references and elaborations on problems which take the form of easily-absorbed heuristics, indicators and assessments schemas of various phenomena.

3. Social representations of Europe

What kind of effect could politicians possibly want to evoke by presenting the programme objectives during party conventions? Apart from the ultimate goal which is the support of their voters by casting the right ballot, the party is also expected to build a socially acceptable, convincing vision of the world and key issues – a vision in which the party finds the answers to the most pressing questions and has access to a credible instrumentation thanks to which the major part of the problems could be resolved. The more people share these partisan representations of problems (which are to become problems of the society), the more the chance that the party itself and its programme will be successful.

Presenting electoral programmes is not only about a profound analysis, such as the formal legal conditions for implementing a European directive regarding "posted workers abroad", understanding the protective state or even whether "it would concern the exact number of days of work for each individual posted worker and not the period of time counted starting from the day when the first worker arrives at the workplace until the departure of the last worker, including the breaks as suggested by the European Commission and Parliament"[7]. Ultimately, it is about creating a narration in which the European Union introduces a law which discriminates against Polish workers. In all messages of such kind, it is about the extreme simplification since it is meant to become a part of the common language, daily conversations between the Polish people. It is intended to justify the attitude towards the European Union and, by doing so, shape the behaviour of the voters. On the other hand, an average person does not need such knowledge on daily basis and so what those people use, are a common-sense adaptations or social representations which, even if they are deeply simplified or utterly false, help to make the choice or at least do not work against it. Such an ability to construe social representations – "cognitive systems with a logic and language of their own" is considered a key ability needed for human communication and knowledge integration as per Serge Moscovici[8].

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[7]   https://serwisy.gazetaprawna.pl/transport/artykuly/1116816,ue-dyrektywa-o-pracownikach-delegowanych-przyjeta.html via @gazetaprawnapl [September 10th, 2019].

[8]   Ethnomethodologists mention a different kind of "common" procedures or interpretation rules thanks to which humans can communicate to each other and interpret reality. See M. Czyżewski, *Socjolog i życie potoczne. Studium z etnometodologii i współczesnej socjologii interakcji.* Łódź: Uniwersytet Łódzki 1984.

Social representations "do not represent simply 'opinions about', 'images of' or 'attitudes towards' but 'theories' or 'branches of knowledge' in their own right, for the discovery and organisation of reality (…) they are systems of system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function; first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among the members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history."[9]

Due to this, representations take form of *sui generis* cognitive systems as tools needed to understand and communicate phenomena, ideas and matters. In the context of elections, an especially important role is played by coherent and "ready-to-use" programmes – a collection of images, terms, categories and ideas transferred from the political logic to the common thinking.

An average voter is usually faced with many contrasting representations of the same phenomena. For some of them, law and order involve ideas such as equality, freedoms of conscience, religion as well as opinion, and are inherently expressed through actions by the authorities based on and within the boundaries of law. For others, however, the will of the nation conveyed through the medium of election results is somehow superior to constitution, and so the authorities elected need not to comply to constitution. The sense and meaning of the same definitions are the environment and social differentiations which are especially visible through political rivalry. Parties during the time of the campaign create an utterly opposite maps symbolically and ideologically which are supposed to guide their supporters through reality[10]. Nevertheless, even the most fervent supporters of a party know disparate interpretations and definitions of phenomena due to the existence of a medialised public sphere which could be best described as diverse, mobile, open while it also involves a more and more extensive flow

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[9] S. Moscovici, „Foreword", [in:] *Health and Illness: A Social-Psychological Analysis,* C. Herzlich (Ed.), London/New York: Academic Press 1973, p. xiii. Even though the cited fragments give an impression of being a definition of social representation, they really are not. Moscovici intentionally avoided to clearly define them. In his work, a few other terms could be observed which are intended to clarify this concept. For example, in his early, 1963's article, we could read that social representation is an elaboration "of a *social object* by the community for the purpose of behaving and communicating" ("Attitudes and Opinions", *Annual Review of Psychology 14*, p. 251), and in 1981 Moscovici claimed that "By social representations, we mean a set of concepts, statements and explanations originating in daily life in the course of inter-individual communications." („On social representations", [in:] *Social Cognition: Perspectives on everyday understanding*, J. P. Forgas (Ed.), London: Academic Press, p. 181). However, in his book from 2001 we can read that "social representations appear as a "network" of ideas, metaphors and images, more or less loosely tied together, and therefore more mobile and fluid than theories." (S. Moscovici, *Social Representations. Explorations in Social Psychology*. New York: New York University Press 2001, p. 153). All efforts made to define the representation are undertaken by his students, continuators and colleagues. Denise Jodelet, for example, considers social representations to be an effect of social practices; they are images of meanings which allow humans to interpret the world around, categorisation of reality, theories, outlook on the world which in turn help to establish the knowledge about it, see *Madness and Social Representations. Living with the Mad in One French Society*, as translated by. T. Pownall. Berkeley: University of California Press 1991, pp. 6-22.

[10] S. Fish, *Interpretacja, retoryka, polityka. Eseje wybrane,* as translated by K. Abriszewski, A. Derra-Włochowicz et al. Kraków: Universitas 2002.

of information. The saturation of media communications in the public sphere, easier options for movement and establishing contacts lead to different segments of voters move from one dimension and reality to another, and by doing so, they are confronted with different convictions, meanings as well, reality representations[11].

With how many different visions of a united Europe and meanings of the word 'European' were citizens faced in the latest European Parliament elections?[12] The analysis of EU documents shows three such representations.

Firstly, a vision of a European Union as an international organisation "uniting" national states, the aim of which is "to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples" and creates "an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers, in which the free movement of persons is ensured in conjunction with appropriate measures with respect to external border controls, asylum, immigration and the prevention and combating of crime", as well as "It shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child. It shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States." (Article 3, The Treaty of Lisbon signed on December 13th, 2007).

In this context, the 'principle of effective nationality' organises the logic of discussion regarding the European Union – an institution which, in a limited way, could 'interfere' in the functioning of the member states as by the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality which respect their equality under the Treaties, while also "The Union shall respect the equality of Member States before the Treaties as well as their national identities, inherent in their fundamental structures, political and constitutional, inclusive of regional and local self-government. It shall respect their essential State functions, including ensuring the territorial integrity of the State, maintaining law and order and safeguarding national security. In particular, national security remains the sole responsibility of each Member State. (Article 4, the Treaty of Lisbon signed on December 13th, 2007, in Lisbon).

The state and the nation together remain a key subject with its language, culture, traditions as well as identity and solidarity. A united Europe is an interesting cooperative for as long as it is considered beneficial. In that way, it is closer to the Charles de Gaulle's concept of "Europe of nations". When this project's nature becomes somewhat adverse, then the functioning of a united Europe appears questionable and their members could consider national states as the only mainstay of freedom and source of law. This particular perspective, in a situation of gaining power by populist or nationalist movements, could easily lead to an EU disintegration or an open, rather than concealed, conflict between different countries. The European Union as a hegemonic institution, in reality led by Germany and France – will need to dissolve.

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[11] See more about social representation theories in R. Szwed, *Społeczne reprezentacje opinii publicznej*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2012.

[12] From the perspective of political sciences, three visions of Europe were suggested after I.P. Karolewski and T. Mehlhausen ("Między polityką kreowania a asertywnością. Polskie debaty o Europie na przykładzie europejskiego traktatu konstytucyjnego i wojny na Ukrainie", *Przegląd Politologiczny* 2/2017, pp. 55-78). From the perspective of sociology, see e.g. R. Szwed, "Tożsamość europejska czy narodowa? Transformacja tożsamości zbiorowych w Unii Europejskiej", pp. 310-344, [in:] E. Hałas (Ed.), *Konstruowanie jaźni i społeczeństwa. Europejskie warianty interakcjonizmu symbolicznego*, Warszawa: Scholar 2005.

A second conception for a united Europe underlines the community of countries as in the phrase "uniqueness in diversity" deriving from a fundamental "European heritage" based on philosophical and legal achievements as well as the culture and shared, universal values.

"The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail." (Article 2, The Treaty of Lisbon signed on December 13th, 2007).

Providing the first idea of EU focuses on its function and responsibilities, the other underlines the values, namely the bond within the community outside their legal regulations. Its sources date back to genesis of the European integration project where at the beginning the states were the most important, however with time, as "intended" by Jean Monnet, they will be efficiently replaced by a united organisation. This vision is much closer to the Churchill's "United States of Europe" according to which the close cooperation will lead to forging a new collective identity based on a socio-economic cooperation and solidarity. The ultimate effect of this process could be even a federation of European states.

This image of Europe is in the Treaty of Lisbon are softened by the statement that even though the EU "shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced" but having in mind the respect of its cultural and linguistic diversity, it will conduct activities "only" to support, coordinate and supplement the member states in that domain. (Article 3)[13]

A third, post-national idea for Europe underlines an "everyday" functioning of its societies connected by law, environment and ways of life which take a form of a free flow of goods and persons with European institutions and one currency in common as well as the free market etc. The basis for this community and its "generator" is a more or less institutionalised public and legal order (materialised through e.g. specific regulations, directives, treaties and constitutions). This perspective does not assume the basis of traditions, culture or other normative notions but instead it has more of a descriptive nature.

It would be quite difficult to miss the efforts leading up to expanding this "pragmatic" idea which in turn is supposed to lead to new factors allowing for a collective identification. Apart from the well-known elements constituting symbols of a unified Europe such as the EU flag, the anthem "Ode to joy", a common currency – "Euro", a holiday celebrated on 9th of May as well as a euro-lottery called "Euro Jackpot", a programme for student exchange (e.g. Socrates), partner cities within the EU, a European Academy for Arts, Sciences and Humanities, or such as post stamps with EU emblems and universally standardised documents (passports, ID, driving license), signs (regis-

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[13] The EU evolution could be observed in the process of creating a community which overstepped "particular" or "national" limitations. Even before signing the Treaty of Lisbon, there was a notion of reinforcing European identity in the collective consciousness of Europeans, even despite the diversity of nationalities and cultures. However, after 2007, the EU abstained from this idea limiting its scope to activities contributing to "to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity" (art.167).

tration plates, road signs, specimen documents) as well as institutions and organisations such as the European Tribunal of Justice, the Central Bank and even the popular *Champions League*. While making a reference to the concept of social representations, we speak here of an "objectification" of the idea of Europe – attempting to make it not only an imaginary reality but also a genuine, practical subject of a collective identity. Objectification[14] is a mechanism in which an abstract, unattainable, elusive objects, concepts or features of matters (such as Europe, Europeanism or the European Union itself) alter their character. They become 'full of reality' through becoming specific and genuine pieces of reality[15]. As a result, everything which is not known not only becomes known but also, as stated by Michael Billig, becomes "material" and "discernible"[16].

Each of the listed ideas for a unified Europe – an international organisation forming a union of national states, a community based on a European cultural heritage or a post-national structure constituting a new kind of identity could have appeared in electoral programmes presented during party conventions running in the European Parliament elections. Were they present? And if so, were they coherent? What is Europe supposed to be in a politician's discourse AD 2019?

4. Europe according to politicians

In order to reconstruct social representations of a unified Europe emerging from the pre-election conventions, several means were chosen such as television broadcasts, internet sites of the parties and committees as well as publishing minutes of the convention's proceedings on social media.

Parties' and committees' conventions analysed in this study are the ones which managed to surpass the electoral threshold and are the following: 12 conventions of Law and Justice Party (PL: Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS), 9 conventions of the European Coalition (PL: Koalicja Europejska, KE) and 4 conventions of the political party Spring led by Robert Biedroń which all took place between February and May, 2019.

Research, the aim of which was to create a corpus of public speeches during all these conventions was a very challenging task: as it turns out only PiS diligently and in an organised way recorded and published on their website the proceedings of their conventions. All other parties only published highlights, summaries or commentaries. In order to make proper analysis, recordings of conventions with a supplement of publications by supporters or average observers were indispensable.

In the very beginning, we find that if very involved and yet undecided voters searched for a first-hand information of such kind, in case of the European Coalition and Spring, they would be forced to rely on media relations which in fact, could not be controlled by those parties. However, on social media profiles managed by all parties

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[14] Objectification also appears in the concept of institutionalisations of social reality by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman. They make a reference to Hegel's *Vergegenstandlichung*, translated as "subjectification" which renders Moscovici's intentions. See P. L. Berger, T. Luckmann *Społeczne tworzenie rzeczywistości*, as translated by. J. Niżnik, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy 1983, p. 113.

[15] S. Moscovici, On Social Representations…, pp. 198-203; S. Moscovici, The Phenomenon of Social Representations…, pp. 37-43.

[16] M. Billig, „Studying Thinking Society: Social Representations, Rhetoric, and Attitudes", [in:] *Empirical Approaches to Social Representations*, G. M. Breakwell, D. V. Canter (Eds.), Oxford: Oxford University Press 1993, pp. 50-51.

respectively, what we could observe were tweets, Facebook discussions or YouTube films – more or less sensational, sometimes outrageous, showing contempt for the rivals, essentially evoking rage or joy. Despite the social media buzz, a medial brouhaha or harsh comments being necessary to attract attention which is so much needed during the campaign, they cannot possibly constitute a coherent strategy of the party. This is why it the electoral programmes and the party conventions used in order to broadcast them are so vital.

4. 1. Europe according to Law and Justice (PiS)

The party's slogan during the 2019's European Parliament elections was "Poland, the heart of Europe" and during the party conventions it was highlighted many a time by the party's leader Jarosław Kaczyński and other participants. From the perspective of this analysis, the slogan itself, it is a somewhat basic idea of Europe, even though it only refers to the subject of Poland.

Indeed, during the PiS convention speeches, a coherent and clear description of a basis for a unified Europe emerges as well as the outline of its current state and vision for the future. It is conveyed through 12 programme objectives 1) Europe of values, 2) Europe of families, 3) the support for European agriculture areas, 4) the EU budget to be favourable to Poland, 5) European common market, 6) Safe European borders, 7) Europe independent energetically, 8) identical quality of products within Europe, 9) Europe of equal chances, 10) fair climate policies in Europe, 11) Sustainable growth – a fundament for a strong EU and finally 12) stop to illegal immigration.

How does PiS see relations between the EU and Poland? It is based on partnership, cooperation and mutual respect as per the article 4 of the Treaty of Lisbon, however the speeches by the party's leader – Jarosław Kaczyński (JK) are dominated by an adverse discourse towards the EU, and the EU itself being a source of many dangers:

"We want Europe, in which Poland will not be taking anyone's orders, Poland will be independent, it will not be anyone's client. It will be free to look after its own interests […] We don't need an ideological Europe, by this I mean the Europe which will dictate how we are supposed to raise our children. The parents are responsible for that; we don't want to sexualise children from the kindergarten age, we don't want all these inconceivable ideas, we don't want these ladies who say that pornography is good for primary school pupils […] We don't want this kind of Europe and we will work our hardest for it to be different. We don't want 'Euro' in Poland. This experiment proved useful to a couple of countries […] in Poland it would be a disaster […] [We don't Europe – RS] with uncontrolled immigration, under sharia law. We want a Europe of freedom in all areas, on the Internet as well, not any of this ACTA 2 nonsense […] Freedom itself is not only at risk on the Internet. Not only at risk, but in fact banned in many European countries. It even sometimes involves criminal law, and even if it doesn't, we are still dealing with a radical limitation of freedom in higher education facilities and also other areas. This will not stand in Poland. If some countries want that – fine - but it cannot be imposed." (Cracow May 19th, 2019)

Being an EU member must mean being able to be 'the man of the house' in its own country and it cannot be in contradiction with sovereignty considered as a possibility of conducting internal policies regarding e.g. a family model, upbringing, morality as well

as the currency, internal affairs and immigration. Political correctness, imposing liberal social norms and permissiveness lead to a possible EU disintegration and, what is more, constitute a conflict with the idea which was at the roots of the integrating process. This idea is naturally a Europe of common values: "[…] we want it to be Europe representing values on which it was founded, and it was founded mainly on Christianity, Roman law and Greek philosophy. What we could say we have today is a 'march-off' [from these values in Europe – RS]. We don't want this march-off. We want Europe based on these values" (JK, Cracow May 19th, 2019). Values seemed to be a regular theme appearing continuously throughout the PiS campaign[17]. Almost always referenced by Jarosław Kaczyński and Mateusz Morawiecki. However even for instance Marek Suski during a Radom convention highlighted the christian roots of Europe by making a note of the 12 stars on the EU flag are a reference to Christianity[18].

"Europe was founded on values [Christian values – RS], and not only on free movement of capital and persons. Europe needs to be built and reformed not only to defend our economic interests but eventually all principles based on which EU founded, to remind everyone of them. Because without them the EU will fall and will be nothing more than a patchwork of loosely connected living people or it will be a powerhouse. But it could only be a powerhouse having a strong ideological backbone and assuming a mutual respect. And only then, if based on those values, there could be a European solidarity where we could compete against the rest of the world and advance, just like the rest of the world - hand in hand, together, as partners" (Radom, May 23rd, 2019).

What 'Europe' means for PiS is a "European standard of living for Poles" (Jarosław Kaczyński), and also "European level of income and affluence" (Mateusz Morawiecki March 18th, 2019). Income equality of Polish families comparing to Western Europe, such a pragmatic element of the programme, constituted a leitmotiv during the time of the PiS campaign. Government activities toward evening out the development stage comparing to other EU member states appears to justify proposals to support the society by more "pluses" and "fives". This is exactly the reason for objecting to the "two-speed Europe" and the claim that "Poland's affiliation with the EU is actually a responsibility of the Polish patriotism" (JK, Poznań April 27th, 2019). Both Mateusz Morawiecki and Jarosław Kaczyński are conveying a clear message of why Poland is an EU member: "Being an EU member is our choice and there is no alternative. We are part of the Union. But why? Not because we have to, but to carry out this programme [Kaczynski's five major proposals – RS], to ensure that at the heart of Europe we have a European standard of living and we will put our best efforts towards that goal" (MM, Radom March 19th, 2019). As highlighted by JK, both NATO and EU memberships allow Poland to look after Polish interests, increases its level of security, status and position.

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[17] It is most of all equality (within EU members such as the case of German washing powders and equality for all citizens), freedom (from poverty and scarcity) and tolerance (meaning acceptance rather than affirmation of individuality).

[18] The Economist's author makes a reference regarding the fact that the flag designer - Arsène Heitz, allegedly told the "*Lourdes*" *magazine that what served as an inspiration to the project was a piece from the Saint John's Book of Revelation*, in which the Holy Mother is presented as "a woman clothed with the sun...and a crown of twelve stars on her head (*Real Politics, at last?* October 24th, 2004 [September 10th, 2019]).

4. 2. Europe according to European Coalition (KE)[19]

If we assume that the election slogan indicates the main theme of the political campaign, then the KE "The future of Poland – the great choice" focuses rather on domestic topics with Europe and the EU serving a role of a mere background.

This is what the analysed material suggests. To say that "the goal of the European Coalition is to permanently establish a nationalist but at the same time individual fate of Polish men and women in the West. To ensure the same conditions: privileges and responsibilities, equal standard of living, possibilities for development and security – as available to other European citizens until now" which means that the starting point for discussion and the goal towards which the Coalition would work is establishing Poland and Poles themselves in the local context, to outline the activities by the KE politicians which are aiming at reaffirming them in the European Union.

Focusing on domestic affairs is confirmed also by the programme of the KE which included 10 objectives: 1) Poland among EU leaders, 2) EU on evening out the standard of living for all Europeans, 3) European funds for citizens and self-governments, 4) the EU of clean air and cheap energy, 5) the EU of healthier and longer living, 6) the EU of better foods and equal chances for agriculture, 7) the EU of values, 8) the Union of shared security, 9) European Union for the young, 10) coherent transport and communications policies in the Union.

While the Law and Justice conventions had a repeatable format and their structure was based on speeches by Jarosław Kaczyński, Mateusz Morawiecki and local leaders, the European Coalition conventions were more challenging from the organisation perspective since each and every one of them "had" to include speeches by all leaders of parties constituting the coalition (Grzegorz Schetyna, Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz, Włodzimierz Czarzasty, Katarzyna Lubnauer i Marek Kossakowski, Małgorzata Tracz) or their delegates. During PiS conventions, the messages of the chairman and the prime minister were aligned and complimenting each other while the KE conventions the themes of the speeches referenced completely different areas. Speakers would embark upon different topics and their message would show conflicting ideas even within the Coalition itself. The only analogy of all those speeches were in fact the criticism of the current government. However, the cacophony created by the leaders of the five parties incited doubt within the audience regarding the coherence of the programme and the planned forms of its implementation

Naturally, the article 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon indicating a community of values and indirectly the EU heritage, appeared in almost all speeches. Depending on the affiliation with a given party, the values such as dignity, democracy, law and order, pluralism as well as respecting human rights, including minorities of national, religious and sexual nature. This also implies no discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity, equality for women, rights for people with disabilities or even rights for teachers to a decent salary. Even though Katarzyna Lubnauer spoke of "new European values", her speeches and proposals did not go beyond the outline of the 'Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union' which was signed as early as December 7th, 2000 in Nice.

Moreover, Democratic Left Alliance was the only one which underlined the neces-

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[19] In needs to be clarified that European Coalition was formed by the following political parties: Civic Platform, Polish People's Party, Democratic Left Alliance, Modern and the Greens.

sity of signing the Charter while discarding the so-called 'British protocol' which would limit the possible usage of the Charter in Great Britain and Poland which was not referenced by the other party leaders.

Europe – as per KE conventions – is unified based on shared values, an "unencumbered enterprise" and relying on the fundaments of law. Indeed, the criticism of the then government in terms of not abiding the law and order, namely violating Poland's constitution remained a leitmotiv during all KE conventions. Naturally, during regional conventions, the local MEPs made references to their achievements so far and the role of their already made European alliances in forming the new EU budget, however their programme was largely based on the opposition towards PiS rather than forcing new ideas and solutions. One of their most important new areas of focus in the campaign, which was troublesome for PiS and underlined by all KE members (mostly the Greens' party), was the "EU of clean air and cheap energy". Despite it being a relatively new topic in the Polish political discourse, it is most definitely present in the European discourse for a much longer time. Hence, it appears that the theme of climate changes and structures of energy sources underlines the supposed future of Poland and not how the EU or Europe for that matter which has been coordinating such activities for years. In this representation, the European Union seems to be as the only guarantor of protection for human rights and the sole source of prosperity of the Polish nation. Essentially, the founding countries and EU institutions are not subject to criticism and their conduct should become a role model to the Polish political class.

4. 3. Europe according to "Spring" led by Robert Biedroń

Robert Biedroń's party slogan in the European Parliament elections was "Spring – the Europe for you". In a practical sense, it means that the Europe for voters is supposed to be a party founded in June 2018. Therefore, for PiS voters the point of reference is Poland, for the supporters of KE it is the European Union and for Spring - the party itself along with its programme. This bold slogan[20] has won his party 6% of the votes and 3 mandates.

Spring's programme assumed seven main objectives: 1) European Project to fight against cancer, 2) Europe free from coal and smog, 3) European test of law friendliness, 4) European charter of women's rights, 5) European fund of free media, 6) Erasmus 2.0, 7) European passport.

Spring's conventions were typically full of youthful energy, enthusiasm and - as was highlighted by its leader, Robert Biedroń and the other candidates from his party – courage, not only in formulating ideas for Europe in which these objectives would be achieved but also in domestic affairs. The main theme of the convention was opposition towards the Catholic Church, the necessity to separate "the throne and the altar", the demand for a country with a neutral viewpoint. This is indispensable because "we cannot guarantee European laws and liberties to Polish men and women if do not pull the Church from the politics" – such are the standards of the 21st century (Robert Biedroń, Warsaw March 23rd, 2019). An equally important topic raised during the conventions was the criticism of the then government and the Civic Platform (PO) which, according to many par-

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[20] In order to better understand this message, what might be a good hint is the following statement made by Robert Biedroń to appeal to his voters: "Poland, Spring and Europe are women" (reference to these three words being feminine nouns – translator's note), (Łódź, May 19th, 2019).

ticipants, are in essence not very different from each other. This is why they offer a choice other than between PO or PiS, a choice 'for' rather than 'against' one party or another.

The following values are ingrained in the European laws and liberties: equal rights of everyone, men and women, the secularism of the state, access to healthcare, registered partnerships, social justice, environment protection, artistic freedoms, tolerance and equality. Apart from ensuring that all LGBT circles have equal rights in all domains, one of the most significant demands concerned the environment "we want European standards when it comes to nature, the environment protection, today" (RB, May 19th, 2019).

During Spring conventions, Europe is a positive reference (the same as respecting human rights or climate policies) or at least an equal partner, with whom this party's politicians will want to negotiate and convince to make bold choices and deepen the integration. Spring appears to be an avant-garde of European politics with fresh and original ideas. This energy and uncompromising nature will lead to the transformation of Europe into a progressive and modern direction in every facet of its functioning.

5. Conclusions

Conventions of Polish political parties during the campaign for the European Parliament elections provide multitudes of research material regarding strategies, rhetoric and sophistry of their leaders, candidates' behaviours or ways of engaging the audience. They provide the necessary knowledge in order to position the party on two important axes: liberalism vs. conservatism and left vs. right. The focus of this article is not on the political feuds, strategies, metaphors or persuasion techniques. A political sciences' analysis of ideology. Instead, the focus was shifted to the image of Europe emerging from speeches made by politicians during party conventions dedicated to elections.

The aforementioned image is fairly limited but diverse since European elections, in an institutional sense, are on some level still domestic elections: they engage local candidates, local voters and the related proceedings are placed in the context of the same local customs, values and political culture. This is precisely why Europe becomes more a background (more or less prominent) to electoral programmes designed for Polish audiences. It if quite difficult to form a holistic vision of the European Union – they are most likely fragmentary visions placing local issues in a European context. In a sense, we are dealing here with the Bernstein's "recontextualization" – Polish issues and challenges were somewhat "pulled" from the local context and placed in the European context[21].

Only the Law and Justice party outlines a relatively coherent image of Europe and a model of relationship between Poland and the European Union. On the one hand, it is a sphere of shared values, on the other however, due to a postmodern liberalisation of the West, Poland seems to be the only safe place. The European Union ought to be a "Europe of homelands rather than a Europe without homelands" as per one of the speeches by Mateusz Morawiecki during one of the conventions. This is precisely why Poland could be a role model for Europe which would want to restore the fundamental Christian values, on which the devoted Catholics such as Konrad Adenauer, Jacques Delors, Alcide de Gasperi and Robert Schuman built it. The relationship between Poland and the EU should be based on equality, in a way that the institutions of the Union should treat all countries

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[21] B. Bernstein, *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity. Theory, research, critique*, Boston: Rowman and Littlefield 2000.

the same way. Sovereignty may be in conflict with the membership status, if the latter involves interference from the 'external' institution in the Polish affairs. Poland's membership in the EU is on the one hand a part of the Polish patriotism, and on the other it is useful as long as it is beneficial to look after the country's interests, such as attempting to reach the European standard of living.

This vision is the closest thing to a model of a European Union as an international organisation "associating" national member states. One of the most basic principles in this model of cooperation is that if it stops being beneficial to Poland, it could be potentially terminated.

Conventions of the European Coalition focus on Europe being a 'common merit' – Poland is a part of the 'community of values and principles' while it also involves the mechanism of 'creating prosperity hand in hand' as well. The 'nation of law' principle, formed on the basis of the culture of dialogue and a mutual respect, is the best possible guarantee of strengthening the position of Poland in Europe. A humane – from the values perspective – Europe is also an area of business gambits. However only an agreement, abiding the EU rules and a deepened integration could possibly lead to an economic growth and will constitute a safe space where human and citizen's rights will not be violated.

In the KE electoral programme, Europe appears to follow the "uniqueness in diversity", communities of societies developed from the "European heritage" fundaments which are founded on shared, universal values and based on philosophical and legal achievements as well as the culture. "The community of values", identification with European institutions including the universally accepted political and legal norms (European treaties) and the European political and territorial structure together form one sphere in which we can continuously deepen the European integration.

During the conventions of the Spring party, Europe is an improvement project. It is not based however on rejecting the EU's principles and values. Providing the European Coalition mentions the possibility of further integration, the Spring party essentially demands it. It promotes a vision of a 'progressive post-culture' which will emerge from an environment appropriate for Europeans and the changing context. Transformations that each European society is undergoing and the culture lead to establishing new, progressive values which could possibly be new founding principles of Europe.

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