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# ELECTIONS IN POLAND AND SPAIN AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES



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## **2015 – Elections in Poland and Spain and their consequences**

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## INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present to you the book *2015 – Elections in Poland and Spain and their Consequences*. The book was inspired by the events which led to considerable political changes in Poland and in Spain. In Poland, the presidential election of May 2015 and the parliamentary election of October 25, 2015 changed the balance of power on the Polish political scene completely. The central political power was taken over the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS), which resulted in an essential change in perception of the role of the state and public affairs in Poland. In the same year, parliamentary election of December, 20, caused serious political changes in Spain. As a result of the election, two new state-wide-parties obtained seats in the Congress of Deputies: Podemos and Ciudadanos. That event did not only mean a transformation of the system previously dominated by two political parties into a multi-party system, but also – for the first time since 1977 – prevented the formation of a central government. On May 3, 2016, for the first time since the establishment of a democratic political system after the death of general Franco, the Spanish parliament was dissolved and the new election was not arranged upon the request of the prime minister but upon the decree of the king.

The changes outlined above did not only affect the balance of power in state parliaments, but they also influenced the mode of political competition and contributed to the introduction of new problems and concepts to public discussion. Those issues became the inspiration to research carried out by scholars and journalists in Poland, the Czech Republic and Spain. The choice of paper subjects was motivated by the research interests of project participants and the specificity of the analyzed political systems. Both in the case of Poland and Spain the analysis involved the attitudes of political parties to the main directions of foreign policies of the studied countries, as well as media (TV and SNS) accounts of parliamentary electoral campaigns. In addition, the Polish authors (Rafał Glajcar, Agnieszka Turska-Kawa and Waldemar Wojtasik) concentrated on selected aspects of presidential elections carried out as part of Polish political system. The Spanish ones (Ramón A. Feenstra, Maria Medina-Vicent and Sergio Príncipe Hermoso) mostly focused on parliamentary elections, because in Spain the head of state is not elected, and the office is closely connected with the issue of political leadership.

The book is divided into two sections, devoted to Poland and Spain. They are preceded by an article by Małgorzata Myśliwiec titled *Causes of Changes in Political Situation in Poland*

and Spain in 2015. The author introduces the readers into the subject of the book and hypothesizes that the main factor of the political environment that significantly influenced the changes is the economic one.

The section devoted to Polish issues begins with the article by Rafał Glajcar, Agnieszka Turska-Kawa and Waldemar Wojtasik, *Political and Personality Aspects of Creating Political Leadership in 2015 Presidential Election in Poland*. Its main goal is to discuss three aspects of creating political leadership in Polish presidential elections: institutional, party, and personal.

The next two articles are devoted to the concepts of selected political parties connected with the perception of Polish foreign policy. At the beginning of the paper *European Union in Electoral Programmes of Polish Political Parties in 2015* Tomasz Kubin analyzed data and indices illustrating Poland's economic situation in the first year of EU membership and before the 2015 election, as well as the attitudes of Polish society to the EU. This provided a synthetic context for the formulation of programme assumptions of Polish political parties with regard to the EU and Poland's position in it. Further, concepts concerning the EU present in political programmes of parties represented in the 8th term of the Sejm (since 2015) are presented. The analysis involves the following parties: Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS, *Law and Justice*), Platforma Obywatelska Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (PO, *Civic Platform of the Republic of Poland*), Kukiz'15, Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru (*Ryszard Petru's Modern Party*) and Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (PSL, *Polish Peasants' Party*). Sebastian Kubas in his article *Central and Eastern Europe in Electoral Programmes of Polish Political Parties in 2015* concentrated on the problem of parties' attitudes to issues connected with Central and Eastern Europe. He had four initial assumptions: First, the definition of the boundaries of Central and Eastern Europe in electoral programmes of Polish political parties is varied and unclear. Second, the range of political parties' interest in the area and problems of Central and Eastern Europe depends on their position on the political scene. Third, one of the most important issues related to Central and Eastern Europe is the role of Poland in the region. Fourth, considering Russia as the most powerful entity in this part of Europe is evident in party appeals. It must be remembered that the author analyzed programmes of political parties that won the representation in Polish parliament as a result of the 2015 election.

The authors of the next two articles in the Polish section gave attention to the problems of media coverage during the Polish parliamentary election campaign in 2015. The first of them was prepared by Mariusz Kolczyński and Dagmara Głuszek-Szafranec and is entitled *Television in the 2015 Electoral Campaign in Poland*. Its objective is to find out what led to the victory of the right wing and PiS taking over the power in Poland, what was the course of

the 2015 parliamentary campaign, and how it was different from the previous campaigns. The main goal of this text is to analyze the course of parliamentary electoral campaign on TV. Marek Mazur and Katarzyna Stelmach, in turn, in the article *Social Media in an Electoral Campaign: The Case of Polish Parliamentary Campaign in 2015* attempted to outline the role of social media in politicians' and political parties' electoral communication during the campaign.

The section devoted to Spanish problems begins with an article by Ramón A. Feenstra and Maria Medina-Vicent titled *Democracy, electoral behaviour and new political parties: reflecting on the evanescence and volatility of new forms of electoral participation*. Its authors first outlined the theoretical framework for the analyzed problem, and then they concentrated on changes that explain the behavior of Spanish voters in the 2015 parliamentary election and characterized the new parties that appeared on Spanish political scene.

The issue of Spanish parliamentary election is also discussed in the paper by Sergio Principe Hermoso, *Post crisis-2015 Elections in Spain. Four Candidates Run for Office in a Tense Country*. Its author concentrated on the analysis of four party leader candidates: Mariano Rajoy (PP), who was the only one to run for re-election, and three new ones: Pedro Sanchez (PSOE), Pablo Iglesias (Podemos) and Albert Rivera (Ciudadanos). The political, media and journalistic analysis, the beginnings, challenges, and context in which each politician devised their particular governance plan for Spain is analyzed.

The main concepts concerning Spanish foreign policy in the political programmes of parties competing in the parliamentary election of 2015 are presented in the article by María José Pérez del Pozo, *International questions in the electoral programmes of the Spanish political parties*, which is the third text devoted to Spanish affairs.

The last two texts – just like in the Polish section – focus on the media coverage of the 2015 parliamentary campaign. The first of them was written by Yolanda Sobero and is titled *General elections in Spain d 20-2105: television as battleground for votes*. The article points out that “never before has a Spanish election race been so focused on the small screen preferably on entertainment shows.” Its author focused on the analysis of the problem of TV coverage of the electoral campaign. Myriam Redondo and Ignacio Martín Granados in the paper titled *Irony in the World of politics: #20D in the Spanish social networks* presented the characteristics of the campaign in social media.

The book is the effect of collaboration between scholars from University of Silesia in Katowice, Silesian University in Opava, Complutense University of Madrid, and Jaume I

University in Castelló de la Plana, as well as the outstanding representatives of Spanish journalistic circle. Therefore, we hope that the volume will have many readers in the academic and media circles and among all those who are interested in the functioning of the studied political systems or public life in Poland and in Spain.

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*Małgorzata Myśliwiec*

*María José Pérez del Pozo*



## Causes of Changes in Political Situation in Poland and Spain in 2015

### Introduction

The year 2008 was the year of a serious global economic crisis. Its scale and range is hard to compare to any other historical event of the kind [Kubin 2014: 287-310], because the effects of the crisis are still visible. The event did not only result in serious economic turmoil in many countries, but also changes in the operation of their political systems. We cannot but agree that in the conditions of representative democracy the country's economic situation is one of the most important factors of so-called political environment, essentially affecting its stability and durability. In other words, the better economic situation of the country, the higher chance of undisturbed functioning and maintenance of the political system. An economic crisis usually upsets those processes.

For these reasons, the events that occurred in different countries after 2008 attracted the attention of many observers of political phenomena. The events in Poland and in Spain were definitely among the most interesting ones.

In Poland, the presidential election of May 2015 and the parliamentary election of October 25, 2015 changed the balance of power on the Polish political scene completely. Central power was taken over by Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS, *Law and Justice*), which had not been able to win any election since the end of 2007, competing with Platforma Obywatelska (PO, *Civic Platform*) which dominated Polish political scene. That change of power caused a shift in perception of the role of the state and public affairs in Poland. Having the absolute majority of votes in both houses of parliament and the first one-party government since 1989, and controlling the office of President of the Republic of Poland, PiS began to implement its political vision, which was very conservative in terms of values and quite statist in terms of economy.

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In the same year, parliamentary election of December, 20, caused serious political changes in Spain. As a result of the election, two new state-wide-parties obtained seats in the Congress of Deputies: Podemos and Ciudadanos. That event did not only mean a transformation of the system previously dominated by two political parties into a multi-party system, but also – for the first time since 1977 – prevented the formation of a central government. On May 3, 2016, for the first time since the establishment of a democratic political system after the death of general Franco, the Spanish parliament was dissolved and the new election was not arranged upon the request of the prime minister but upon the decree of the king [BOE 107/2016].

The main goal of this study is to identify the most important causes of political changes in Poland and Spain as a result of elections carried out in 2015. Initially, we may also adopt the hypothesis that the main factor of the political environment that significantly contributed to the changes in both political systems in 2015 was the economic one.

### **Causes of political changes in Poland**

The origin of political change that occurred in Poland in 2015 dates back to the system transformation of the 1980s and 1990s. Other factors that contributed to it were the events connected with the outbreak of the economic crisis in 2008, the so-called Smolensk disaster in 2010, and Donald Tusk becoming the President of the European Council in 2014.

#### *Economic shock therapy*

The transition from centrally planned economy to free market, which took place during the system transformation in Poland at the turn of the 1990s, has still been one of the most important elements influencing the functioning of the political system. The late 1980s can be referred to as the period of economic collapse. The state's debt was huge, exceeding 65% of domestic product. Enormous, unprofitable and poorly managed state enterprises generated great costs but no profit. In addition, the quality of the offered goods and services was very low. Successive governments of declining PRL were unable to find a good solution to the problem [Piasecki, Michalak 2016: 239].

The Round Table debate and the subsequent election in June made it possible to move to the democratic stage in accordance with the *reforma-pactada, ruptura-pactada* model [Linz 1996]. Generally, it meant the agreement between some representatives of the elites ruling in the non-democratic period and some members of the opposition who were open to dialogue. As

a result of the arrangements made during the negotiation and the election that confirmed them, on September 12, 1989, the first cabinet of a non-Communist Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, was established. The cabinet reflected the idea of *reforma-pactada, ruptura-pactada* at least by the fact that the representatives of Communist United Workers' Party (PZPR) retained the control of so-called state power ministries, such as the Ministry of National Defense and the Ministry of the Interior. But one member of the cabinet (a Deputy Prime Minister) was an economic visionary, Leszek Balcerowicz. He decided to apply the so-called shock therapy in Poland, based on the economic assumptions of Milton Friedman and the Chicago school [Balcerowicz 1992; Klein 2008].

The Balcerowicz Plan included 27 acts adopted by Polish parliament in December 1989. One of the regulations was the act that amended the act on the financial economy of state owned enterprises [Dz.U. 1989a]. It liquidated the guarantee of existence of all the state owned enterprises, which opened the possibility to carry out the bankruptcy proceedings in their case. The act on taxation of the increase in remunerations of 1990 [Dz.U. 1989b] made it possible to limit the growth of nominal pays in enterprises in relation to the real price growth. The act amending the act on the rules of carrying out small-scale production economic activity by foreign legal and natural persons and the act of economic activity with the participation of foreign entities [Dz.U. 1989c] granted many privileges to companies with foreign capital.

Other activities as part of the Balcerowicz Plan were the formation of the Anti-monopoly Office in February 1990 and Warsaw Stock Exchange in April 1991, introduction of personal income tax in January 1992 and VAT in July 1993 [Piasecki, Michalak 2016: 240].

On the one hand, the strategy applied by Leszek Balcerowicz enabled quick transition from socialist economic reality to free market economy. It is worth highlighting that the changes that took place in Poland did not result in bloodshed like in Latin America, where there had also been attempts to implement the assumptions of the Chicago school. But on the other hand, the shock therapy triggered a number of negative phenomena, especially economic scandals connected with the use of loopholes by individuals who were quick to adapt to the new reality. This was accompanied by growing unemployment, impoverishment, and stratification of the society [Piasecki, Michalak 2016: 240]. The group of people regarded as the "transformation cost" still had the vision of the state protecting them. It can be assumed that the gap in Polish society between those who were satisfied and successful and those who did not manage to adapt to the new reality began to grow almost from the beginning of system and economic transformation.

The next years brought great social and economic changes. They were mainly connected with Poland’s accession to the European Union in May 2004 and joining the Schengen Area in December 2007. New opportunities resulting from opening attractive labor markets caused a marked drop of the unemployment rate in Polish society: in 2008, the rate was around 10%. Economic emigration ensured the supply of extra financial resources for many households, which had been rather poor since the beginning of the system and economic transformation. Yet, it also involved phenomena such as a difficult start in another country, long-time separation from family members, or even family disintegration.

But the real challenge was faced by Donald Tusk’s cabinet in the fall 2008, when the global economic crisis began to affect Poland, too. Paradoxically, however, remaining out of the Euro zone, activities to discipline public finances and increasing the supervision of the bank sector helped to survive relatively painlessly the period which was extremely difficult for other countries, especially those in the south of Europe. Quick weakening of Polish currency made export much more profitable, of which many entrepreneurs took advantage. Weaker zloty also meant higher income from the work of those who were abroad and supported their families in Poland. It was also important that as part of European funds Poland received the substantial amount of PLN 287 billion for the years 2007-2013, which undoubtedly helped Polish economy recover.

As a result of these political and economic measures, Poland did not face recession during the whole economic crisis. Against the background of other European Union countries, Poland was presented as the “green island” of economic stability [Kubin 2014]. This does not mean, however, that it was a period of economic and existential peace for all. The government did not manage to find a solution to unemployment among young people. In 2011, every fourth person under 25 was jobless. Graduates of universities could not find jobs compliant with their education, either. Many people who had taken out long-term mortgages before the 2008 crisis fell into serious financial trouble. The situation was especially difficult for those who had loans in Swiss francs. The importers of European commodities also felt the consequences of Economic perturbations [Piasecki, Michalak 2016: 362-363],

Thus, it can be said that despite the attempts of Donald Tusk’s cabinet, the 2008 economic crisis aggravated the division into those citizens who achieved more or less comfortable and beneficial social and economic positions after 1989 and those who failed to adapt to the new reality.

### *“The Smolensk disaster”*

In the beginning of 2010, Poland was preparing to another presidential election that was to take place in the fall. The liberal electorate, associated with the residents of larger cities, well educated and rather affluent (the group that benefited from the economic transformations after 1989), slowly concentrated around the candidate of Platforma Obywatelska. Since Donald Tusk declared he was not going to run for the primary election, Bronisław Komorowski was appointed as the party candidate. Voters inclined to the left slowly began to gather around Jerzy Szmajdziński from Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej. As for the more conservative electorate, upholding the traditions of the Catholic Church and Polish rural areas, often having the sense of post-transformation exclusion and fear of further consequences of the world economic crisis, they gathered around the current President of the Republic of Poland, Lech Kaczyński [Piasecki, Michalak 2016: 371-372]. It is hard to evaluate now what the electoral competition would have been like if it had not been for the event which shocked the public opinion and caused even greater consolidation of social and political divisions in Poland. It was April 10, 2010. On that day, the President and the representatives of most important state institutions boarded a governmental TU-154M plane to Smolensk in order to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Katyn massacre. The visit never took place, however, because at 8.41 the plane with 96 persons on board crashed near the local airport.

The crash caused a great shock, both in residents and in governmental elites. In the face of such an unbelievable and tragic event, the latter were forced to initiate legal procedures to ensure the continuity of existence and operation of many state institutions. At the same time, they had to arrange the bringing back and burial of the bodies. But this process divided even further the two already hostile political camps. The first charge referred to the very date of visit to Katyn. The Prime Minister Donald Tusk had paid another visit there and met the Prime Minister of Russia, Vladimir Putin, on April 7. President Lech Kaczyński organized a separate delegation for the unfortunate day of April 10. Besides, the haste and extraordinary conditions in which the governmental team had to work meant not everything was done with due diligence. For example, after bringing the victim bodies back to Poland, the bodies were not subject to a repeated reliable autopsy to eliminate any doubts. The lack of such documents even now arouses great emotions and motivates people to demand new exhumations. Second, not all bodies were decently prepared for burial, and there were even cases of families burying the wrong person. The third element that probably evoked the greatest emotions was the low

engagement of Polish government in the Russian investigation of the crash and not enough efforts to get back the wreck of the governmental plane.

The final report of the commission investigating the causes of the Smolensk crash, led by Jerzy Miller, was announced at the end of July 2011. However, its assumptions were not accepted by the right wing, whose unquestionable leader was the twin brother of the deceased President of the Republic of Poland, Jarosław Kaczyński. A number of doubts and the lack of reliable evidence to clearly deny all conspiracy and unbelievable theories contributed to serious deepening of the political gap between the more and more hostile camps of “liberal” and “solidary” Poland. The situation intensified even more after the defeat of Jarosław Kaczyński to Bronisław Komorowski in the presidential election in 2010, which was organized earlier than planned as a result of the Smolensk disaster [Wojtasik 2010].

### *Donald Tusk becoming the President of the European Council*

The defeat of PiS in the 2010 presidential election was another failure in the competition with Platforma Obywatelska, dominating Polish politics since 2007. That event led to the expectation of further “lean years” for PiS. The party did not manage to succeed either in the local authority election in the fall 2010 or in the parliamentary election in 2011. Consistently aiming to reach politically and socially alienated voters [Turska-Kawa 2012] was not as beneficial as expected in the time of successes connected with Poland’s accession to the European Union and relatively good political situation.

That tendency clearly changed after Donald Tusk resigned as the Prime Minister on September 9, 2014. The reason for the resignation was the recommendation of his candidature for the President of the European Council by European People’s Party and Chancellor Angela Merkel. We also need to remember that Donald Tusk resigned as Prime Minister in a very difficult moment for his party, after the revelation of talks of its leading politicians in one of the most fashionable Warsaw restaurants.

His leaving Platforma Obywatelska meant serious problems for the whole party. His successor Ewa Kopacz definitely did not have his charisma, and in the light of the tap affair, the party began to quickly lose voters’ trust. As early as in the local government election in November 2014, it was clear that the position of PiS was growing. Its spectacular success was only a few months ahead.

## Causes of political changes in Spain

### *Economic crisis of 2008*

The change in political situation in Spain was caused by several different factors. All of them, however, had a common source in the environment of the political system. The element that caused such significant perturbations in the process of functioning of its many subsystems was the global economic crisis of 2008. It was evident that neither the central nor the regional elites were able to combat the social and economic challenges which emerged at the time.

The constantly deteriorating (since 2008) economic situation of the country affected the Spanish society more and more. The level of the negative evaluation of the situation by the citizens was demonstrated by successive studies carried out by the Center for Sociological Research (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas – CIS). Even in 2008, only 27.4% respondents evaluated Spain's economic situation as bad, and 12.9%, as very bad. This meant that approximately 60% of Spanish people still did not have any serious reasons for criticism and grumbling. Yet, the situation was changing very quickly and in 2013 the condition of the economy was regarded as bad or very bad by 90.8% respondents (bad – 37.9%, and very bad – 52.9%) [CIS 2008a, 2009, 2010a, 2011a, 2012, 2013a, 2014a, 2015a, 2016].

The poor evaluation of the economic situation was accompanied by more and more serious criticism of political situation. In 2008, it was perceived as bad or very bad by 36.5% respondents (bad – 26.4%, very bad – 10.1%). The peak of very negative evaluation of the state's political situation occurred one year later than in the case of the economic situation. In 2014, it was regarded as bad or very bad by 81.8% respondents (bad – 34.1%, and very bad – 50.4%) [CIS 2008a, 2009, 2010a, 2011a, 2012, 2013a, 2014a, 2015a, 2016].

The public mood connected with the consequences of the economic crisis is also evident in the responses to other questions asked in CIS research. In 2008, the respondents were requested to indicate several phenomena that caused the most serious complications in the country, and they highlighted unemployment (43%), economic problems (39.2%), terrorism (35.1%) and immigrants (23.7%). Relatively few people referred to politicians and political parties (8.9%) or corruption (0.7%). But in the subsequent years the proportion of responses was completely different. For example in 2015, 7 years after the outbreak of economic crisis, Spanish citizens still considered unemployment as the most serious problem, but this time the view was shared by 79.4% people. The second most serious problem was corruption (55.5%),

third, economic problems (24.5%), and fourth, politicians and political parties (21.8%) [CIS 2008a, 2009, 2010a, 2011a, 2012, 2013a, 2014a, 2015a, 2016].

### *Corruption*

Definitely one of the factors that most seriously contributed to changes on Spanish political scene in 2015 was corrupt events. As already mentioned, subsequent studies of public mood carried out by CIS in the years 2008-2016 showed growing dissatisfaction with the revelation of the scale of those phenomena in public life. The results of journalist investigations at local, regional and state levels revealed more and more scandals connected with public officers accepting undue material benefits, often of high value. In addition, constantly deteriorating life and financial situation of many Spanish families led to growing outrage as the information became public. The main problem was that the persons involved in corrupt practices were very often connected with the Spanish political parties. It was not one particular party but actually almost all parties that functioned on local, regional and central levels. Examples of scandals at the local level outraging the public opinion were the case of irregularities at the sale of land in the famous resort in Costa del Sol – Torremolinos referred to as “the case of Ciudad del Golf”, involving among others its long-term mayor Pedro Fernández Montes from the People’s Party (acquitted as a result of court proceedings) [www1] or “the case of Sayalong”, in which the villain was the former mayor of the town, José Luis Navas Camacho associated with PSOE [www2]. One of the most infamous regional scandals was “the Millet case” connected with the functioning of Palace of Catalan Music in Barcelona [www3]. During the court proceedings, Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (CDC) was charged with drawing material benefits from irregularities in the functioning of that institution [www4]. The scandal also broke out after publishing the details of so-called “Pujol case”, with the “participation” of long-term president of the autonomous community of Catalonia, Jordi Pujol i Soley [www5]. The most serious corruption events at the state level were among others “the AVE case” [www6], “the Files case” [www7], or “the Flick case” [www8], involving charges against politicians from PSOE, and the cases of Bankia [www9] and Gürtel [www10], in which politicians from the People’s Party were to blame. But the real shock for Spanish public opinion was “the case of Nóos”, in which the most well-known “protagonist” was the son-in-law of king Juan Carlos I, Iñaki Urdangarín Liebaert [www11].

As a result of these problems, since 2008 Spain has been perceived as a country full of corruption. This is demonstrated e.g., by the outcome of studies carried out every year by



Transparency International. The institution uses a 1-100 scale in which 1 refers to an ideal type of totally corrupt country, and 100 means an ideal type of no corruption. In 2008, the index for Spain was 65, placing it in the group of countries with moderate impact of corruption. But in the following years, the value of the index was clearly falling, and in 2015 it was only 58. The results show a clear tendency to the intensification of corrupt phenomena in the country [TI 2008-2015].

### *Decrease of trust in state institutions and authorities*

The effects of the economic crisis that began in 2008 and revealing of corruption cases caused a significant reduction of trust among Spanish citizens in state institutions and authorities which had been established after 1975, in democratic conditions after the death of general Franco.

The most serious changes were observed in the perception of the Spanish monarchy. That institution, for over 30 years enjoying great social trust, began to face a rapid drop of trust among the citizens. The reasons for this appeared gradually, but their nature influenced the events of June 2014. No doubt the series of events that cast a shadow of the ideal image of the royal family included the separation of Juan Carlos I's oldest daughter, infanta Elena and her husband Jaime de Marichalar in November 2007, which preceded their divorce announced in November 2009 [www12]. The situation was aggravated by news releases, since 2006 suggesting double life of the king himself [www13] and the costly exotic trips he went on when many citizens could hardly make ends meet [www14]. But the final nail in the coffin of the Spanish monarchy was the publicity of the above-mentioned "case of Nóos". The series of events translated into dramatic decrease in trust in the institution of monarchy in Spain. Studies carried out in that period by the Center for Sociological Research showed that the institution which had received almost 7.5 points in 1994 (in the scale in which 10 was the most positive evaluation and 1 the most negative), in 2013 was only given 3.68 [CIS 1994a, 1994b, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1998a, 1998b, 2003, 2006, 2008b, 2010b, 2011b, 2013b, 2014b, 2015b]. In order to save the image and institution of monarchy in Spain in the face of dramatic decrease of trust and the intensifying Republican sympathies, on June 2, 2014, Carlos I submitted to the Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy the declaration of abdication. On June 11, the Congress of Deputies adopted the draft of organic law in the case, and on June 17, it was approved by the Senate. The act of official promulgation took place on June 18, 2014, and the next day the act

was published in the Spanish journal of laws, Boletín Oficial del Estado [BOE 148/2014]. That event was the formal confirmation of the abdication of king Juan Carlos I. In accordance with Article 57 section 1 of the Spanish constitution, the only son of the royal couple, prince Felipe, became his successor [BOE 311/1978]. On June 19, 2014, there was a ceremony connected with his formal taking over the function of the head of state and the new monarch began serving as Felipe VI.

The economic crisis also caused a considerable drop of trust in the most important entity responsible for Spain's and its citizens' economic security: the central government. In November 2008, the cabinet of socialist José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero was given 4.74 in a 10-point scale. At the end of the term, in October 2011, the rate was already only 3.24. Taking over the power by the right wing cabinet of Mariano Rajoy Brey did not improve the situation. To the contrary, the need of implementing socially unpopular reforms saving Spain from the lot of Greece caused further decrease of citizens' trust in the institution of central government. In April 2013, the rate of given the government by the citizens was only 2.42, reaching the lowest level of trust since 1994. The following years and the necessary reforms did not improve the rating much. In 2015 – the year of the election – trust in Spanish government reached the level of 2.77 [CIS 1994a, 1994b, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1998a, 1998b, 2003, 2006, 2008b, 2010b, 2011b, 2013b, 2014b, 2015b].

In the context of assessing the level of trust in particular institutions, it is clear that Spanish people have more trust in regional authorities than in the central government. The results of CIS studies show that Spanish people have more trust in authorities that are closer to them, at the level of autonomous communities, than in central executive. For example, in November 2008, the central government had the rating of 4.74 and regional governments 5.07 in a 10-point scale [CIS 2008b]. Two years later, the activity of central executive was only given 3.52, whereas regional governments were given 4.41 [CIS 2010b]. In the year of election, 2015, the central government was rated 2.77, and regional governments 3.20 [CIS 2015b]. The most probable reason for this is the much lower responsibility of regional level entities (due to the special form of unitary state) for the affairs of the economy of the state as a whole. Another probable assumption is that in the case of some autonomous communities having considerable competence, e.g., in the Basque Country, regional governments better coped with the consequences of the crisis in terms of creating their fiscal policy. The possibility of really responding to economic problems, although limited, allowed to alleviate their negative effects. Just like in the case of significant decrease of trust in central and regional government institutions, the same occurred in the case of legislative authorities. The outbreak of the

economic crisis clearly translated into lower trust in the Cortes Generales and parliaments of autonomous communities. In this context, it is noteworthy that, unlike in the case of executive authorities, the level of trust in regional institutions is not always higher than in central level institutions. The results of studies carried out by the Center for Sociological Research in the years 1996-2003, i.e. during the parliamentary domination of the People's Party and the rule of José María Aznar López, show that the level of trust in the Cortes Generales at the time was higher than in the parliaments of autonomous communities. For example in December 1996, the central parliament had the rate of 5.34 (in a 10-point scale), and regional parliaments 5.05 [CIS 1996b], and in February 1998 the results were 5.50 for the central parliament and 5.24 for the regional parliaments [CIS 1998a]. Given Spain's excellent economic situation at the time, it is no surprise. But in 2006, the situation changed dramatically. In the whole period of PSOE dominance and the rule of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the central parliament was evaluated much lower than regional parliaments [CIS 2006, 2008b, 2010b, 2011b, 2013b, 2014b, 2015b]. Undoubtedly, this phenomenon was related to gradually growing awareness of the effects of the economic crisis among ordinary citizens. Actually, the tendency to assess regional parliaments better than the central one did not change until 2015 [CIS 2006, 2008b, 2010b, 2011b, 2013b, 2014b, 2015b].

Discussing the problem of lowering trust in state institutions in Spain, we need to refer to an interesting study carried out in 2015 by CIS. Its findings show the level of trust in different state institutions, such as the army, the Church, or political parties. Just like in studies presented above, the respondents expressed their level of trust in a 1-10 scale, with 1 meaning total distrust, and 10 the highest level of trust. The results show that although the society experienced non-democratic rule in the 20th century (military general Francisco Franco) and is now becoming increasingly secular, it still puts much more trust in the army and the Church than in the currently functioning political parties. In a 10-point scale, the army had the rate of 5.51, the Church 3.61, and political parties 2.23 [CIS 2015 c].

The results prove the lack of faith among most Spanish people that political parties can actually work as expected by the society. These conclusions also confirm the observations formulated by Manuel Castells in 2012. The author observed that in the beginning of 2011, when the unemployment rate in Spain was 22% (and among young people, 47%), the socialist cabinet of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero could no longer ignore the deteriorating economic situation since 2008 and decided to take the necessary steps to prevent an economic disaster. Under the impact of Germany and the International Monetary Fund, yet against electoral promises, the government made radical budgetary cutbacks in health care, education and social

welfare. In such a critical situation, the priority for the contemporary central government was to recapitalize financial institutions and reduce the sky-rocketing public debt, which could keep Spain in the Euro zone but could not meet the expectations of citizens, already used to functioning in the conditions of well economically developing country. Manuel Castells very accurately described the public mood of the time: *There is chaos in trade unions, and most citizens hate politicians and political parties*. [Castells 2013: 115]. It is a very accurate comment to the outcome of the discussed CIS study.

## **Conclusion**

The analysis of above-mentioned causes of political changes that occurred in Poland and Spain after elections carried out in 2015 provides positive verification for the hypothesis adopted in the introduction that the main factor of the political environment which significantly contributed to the changes in both political systems was economic.

In Poland, the division into the group of individuals satisfied with the opportunities they used and citizens alienated as the “transformation cost”, which developed in the course of system and economic transformation after 1989, still has an influence on political choices. The series of events briefly described in this study in 2015 led to a change of power in the political center, both in the office of the President of the Republic of Poland and the parliamentary election.

It is worth emphasizing that the political perturbations of 2015 did not significantly change the functioning of Polish political scene. Despite the disappearance of a leftist party and the replacement of Ruch Palikota with a formation called .Nowoczesna, as well as activating part of the society around Komitet Obrony Demokracji, the basic political competition is still between the two: Platforma Obywatelska and Prawo i Sprawiedliwość.

The problem was very similar in Spain. The economic crisis of 2008 affected Spain much more seriously than it did Poland. And it was this factor that mostly caused the dramatic drop in citizens’ trust in state institutions and authorities and the formation of new political parties in the Congress of Deputies.

But just like in the Polish case, we can see that the political perturbations of 2015 (and later also 2016) on the one hand led to certain changes in the way of operation of the Spanish political system (e.g., through strong positions of Podemos and Ciudadanos parties), and on the other hand, after the period of turbulence, the system is clearly beginning to stabilize. This can

be proved e.g. with the formation of a cabinet by the People's Party, so far ruling in the political center.

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## **POLAND**



## Political and Personality Aspects of Creating Political Leadership in 2015 Presidential Election in Poland

### Introduction

Presidential elections are political events with the greatest interest and voter turnout in Poland. Krystyna Skarżyńska rightly observes that citizens attach greater importance to the function of the head of state than to the function of deputy; presidential elections are also usually easier from the psychological point of view, because you choose one from around ten distinctive, usually well known figures [Skarżyńska 2005: 211]. This political event mostly attracts voters' attention to political figures, their reactions, behaviors, emotions, and appearance. The ultimate profile of the candidate, however, is not the function of one dominant aspect but of overlapping planes of political and psychological functioning of the candidate. This article points out three aspects of creating political leadership in presidential elections in Poland. The first of them, *institutional*, refers to formal and informal rules that determine certain behaviors of candidates, parties and citizens in the electoral process. The *party* aspect is connected with the political background of each candidate and the party creation of political leaders. The *personality* aspect, in turn, is associated with their psychological functioning: their response to the needs and expectations of voters or the activated perception mechanisms. The analysis concentrates on the two key candidates in the 2015 presidential election in Poland: Bronisław Komorowski and Andrzej Duda. The contest was really interesting, with the initial advantage of the incumbent president and his gradual loss of supporters week after week.

Elections of the President of the Republic of Poland involve both direct and indirect creation of political leaders. The person holding the most supreme office in the country, serving as the representative of the nation by virtue of voters' decision, is elected directly. Although the results of presidential elections in Poland show that there are some independent candidates (not

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directly related to any political party), the real ultimate contest only involve those who represent relevant political forces. The examples of Stanisław Tymiński in 1990 or Andrzej Olechowski in 2000 are no exceptions – even the participation in the second round of election did not give them any chance to play a significant role in politics. For both above-mentioned politicians running for presidential elections meant the peak of their popularity and importance. A similar mechanism occurred in the case of winners, as well. After their terms of office, both Lech Wałęsa and Aleksander Kwaśniewski no longer played important roles in politics, in spite of declared ambitions. In the subsequent elections, Wałęsa only suffered political defeats, and the leader of the left wing, despite repeated attempts to lead his former political party, was becoming more and more marginalized. This leads to one more conclusion: we can see how party leaders' perception of the role of president has been changing since 2005. Both Lech Wałęsa and Aleksander Kwaśniewski were elected when they were exercising actual leadership in their political parties, and their candidatures could be treated as natural culminations of their previous political careers. The mechanism of presidential elections in those cases enhanced the importance of the office by associating it with persons who were real political leaders. After 2005, the office of president was held by politicians who were major figures in Polish political life but still in the shadow of their party leaders. Yet, there were some differences between the particular cases. The candidature of Lech Kaczyński in 2005 was a tactical move of his brother (who apparently was right in thinking that he would stand a smaller chance of winning the presidential election, and besides was more interested in the function of Prime Minister), and Bronisław Komorowski ran in the 2010 election as a substitute for Donald Tusk, so to speak. The circumstances were still different in 2015, when the competitor of the incumbent president was a rather obscure politician from Law and Justice [*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS*] – Andrzej Duda.

### **The institutional aspect**

In contemporary democracies we can see a characteristic tendency for more and more public authorities to be elected in universal elections. To a large extent, this is determined by the fact that universal elections have been applied in appointing heads of state of more and more countries over the last several decades. That trend is strongly connected with the democratization processes of Huntington's third wave [Huntington 1995]. Poland is no exception: the model of universal and direct elections was adopted slightly more than a year after the beginning of democratic changes symbolized by the Round Table negotiations.

The choice between universal and non-universal ways of electing the head of state should correspond with the position of the institution of president in the state's system of power. This, in turn, is one of the most important determinants of the model of political regime in the country, defined as formal and real relations typical of the relations between the legislature and the executive [Glajcar 2015: 38-41]. The model of relations between the legislature and the executive implemented in the country affects the relevance of different kinds of elections. With reference to Arend Lijphart's findings, it should be assumed that parliamentary elections are crucial in parliamentary regimes, while presidential elections are crucial in presidential and semi-presidential regimes [Lijphart 2008: 209]. This conclusion is interesting provided that it is possible to clearly classify an empirical case as one of these models. The case of Poland, however, is difficult for two reasons. Firstly, significant limitations are caused by theoretical differences in the inventories of constitutive properties of traditional models of democratic political regimes [Duverger 1980; Mainwaring 1990; Shugart, Carey 1992; Verney 1992; Stepan, Skach 1993; Linz 1994; Riggs 1997; Sartori 1997; Lijphart 1999; Müller, Bergman, Strøm 2003; Elgie 2004; Cheibub 2009]. Secondly, in Polish political regime we can find properties typical of parliamentarism, semi-presidentialism, or even presidentialism, which results in discrepancies in classifying it into one of the models [Protsyk 2006: 220; Beliaev 2006: 385-387; McMenamin 2012: 122; Słomka 2012: 45; Sedelius, Mashtaler 2013: 110; Opaliński 2014: 354-355], or even the pursuit of different descriptive forms to identify its specific character [Sanford 2002: 92, 128; Grzybowski 2012: 134].

These difficulties and the resultant disagreements which generate different explanatory concepts go beyond a typical academic dispute. They play a role in determining the relevance of presidential elections in Poland, which – both from the systemic point of view and with regard to political practice – cannot be clearly considered as less important than parliamentary elections.

Parliamentary (*Sejm*) elections lead to the creation of a certain balance of political power, which is directly or indirectly reflected in the political background of the cabinet and also reflects the relations between the authorities and the opposition. Taking into consideration the system position of the Council of Ministers as the leading executive authority, there is no doubt that the results of parliamentary elections are of key importance in determining which party or parties will take the lead in the state's politics.

A substantial role is played by the president. Although in the case of Polish head of state the presidency is by no means authoritarian, constitutional conditions have been created to implement the model of authoritarian presidency. This means that the President, recognizing

the leading role of the government in the executive branch of power, can engage in carrying out the current politics of the state. The range of his activity, however, is limited – he cannot infringe the powers of the Council of Ministers. In this context, the president serves the role of arbiter, whose activity should first of all be oriented as conflict-solving, guaranteeing political order and broadly-understood security of the state [Opaliński 2012: 75-76]. As a result, the universal mode of election gives the office of president the relevant prestige, and – as Jarosław Szymanek suggests, extends the area of arbitration activity, promotes their extensive interpretation, and has much more imperative effects [Szymanek 2009: 395]. Thus, the concept of dual democratic legitimization adopted in Poland (the parliament and the head of state) is legitimized by the model of active presidency.

Presidential elections are a significant point of reference for the actors of Polish political scene, affecting their attitudes and behaviors. Because of their universal character, they are also important for citizens, who directly decide about the figures holding the office of “the state’s supreme position”.

The system of electing head of state applicable since 1990 in Poland assumes that an absolute majority is needed to win, and if no candidate has such support, the second round of the election is organized, with the participation of the two candidates who had the greatest support in the first round. The one who receives the highest number of votes is the winner. This model of electoral system is widely used in the countries that have universal and direct presidential elections. Actually, there has been a tendency within the last several decades to commonly use this formula of election of the head of state [Shugart 2004: 637-638]. One of its significant advantages, apart from the personalization of the electoral act characteristic of all the forms of universal presidential elections that promotes stronger emotional relations between the voters and the candidates, is that it is relatively easy for the citizens to adopt. It does not require much electoral competence, unlike elections based on proportional formulas [Wojtasik 2012: 222].

The system of presidential elections in Poland is an important motivating factor for political actors (Table 1). With the exception of the first universal presidential election in 1990, in which there were six candidates, the other five elections involved ten or more candidates for the office of the head of state. It turns out, then, that in terms of the number of participants of electoral competition, the 2015 election was not much different from the previous elections. But the effective number of electoral candidates, calculated on the basis of voting results, is interesting. It was 3.57 and was slightly higher than the mean for all the six presidential elections in the years 1990-2015, which is 3.49. So unlike e.g. in the United States, presidential

elections in Poland do not promote automatic bipolarization of the political scene. This case can rather be identified as an illustration of one of Maurice Duverger' sociological laws which says that absolute majority elections lead to a multi-party system [Novák 2015]. In this context, it is also worth pointing out Gary W. Cox's observation [1997:131]. He underscored that a system with two rounds is conducive to creating a situation like the one that occurs in two-member constituencies ( $M=2$ ). So it is highly probable that two winners emerge in the first round of voting, which means that apart from the two main candidates, a third person may also play an important role ( $M+1$ ). This was the most visible in the elections of 1990 (Stanisław Tymiński) and 2000 (Andrzej Olechowski). In 2015, the role of the third candidate was played by the leader of a new socio-political initiative, Paweł Kukiz.

**Table 1. Candidates in presidential elections in Poland in the years 1990-2015**

<b>Election</b>	<b>Number of candidates</b>	<b>Effective number of candidates</b>
<b>1990</b>	6	3.85
<b>1995</b>	13	3.99
<b>2000</b>	12	2.86
<b>2005</b>	12	3.63
<b>2010</b>	10	3.07
<b>2015</b>	11	3.57
<b>Mean</b>	10.67	3.49

Original study.

On the basis of previous presidential elections in Poland we can make the conclusion that the electoral system based on two rounds of voting is an incentive for participation of people who have no chance of winning but want to demonstrate their presence on the political scene. Support received in the first round may be an important factor in future negotiation with one of the candidates who runs in the second round [Shugart 2004: 636]. This, in turn, may not only influence the final stage of the election but also translate into patterns of political competition on the other levels (parliamentary or cabinet one).

This mechanism was also visible in the presidential election in 2015. The fact that eleven candidates took part in the election showed its significance for different political environments. There is no doubt that not all candidates expected victory or at least a high number of votes in the election. Most candidates took part in the electoral competition with objectives other than the actual intention to win, objectives important for their political parties, for example creating a new political initiative (Paweł Kukiz), retaining one's position on the political scene (Janusz Palikot), highlighting the relevance of one's political party by a party member running in the

election (Adam Jarubas), or creating the self-image of a political leader (Janusz Korwin-Mikke). The abundance of candidates' goals connected with the participation in elections, determined e.g. by their position on the political scene, the situational context, or the strategies of their political backgrounds, also shows how complex the study of presidential elections can be.

Although many candidates took part in the 2015 election and the effective number of candidates suggests that the competition was not bipolar before the announcement of the first round results, the actual fight for victory involved two candidates only: the incumbent President Bronisław Komorowski supported by Civic Platform [*Platforma Obywatelska*] and the candidate of Law and Justice [*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*], Andrzej Duda. The other candidates could either play the role of “the third one” in the competition or the background for the race for the office of president.

Approaching the 2015 presidential election from the perspective of competition between Bronisław Komorowski and Andrzej Duda corresponded to the dispute between their political environments (Civic Platform and Law and Justice) going on for about a decade in Poland. The office of president became an important stage of fight for leadership, and in two dimensions. The first thing was institutional leadership of the president, resulting from the fact that in democracy legitimization is obtained in the electoral process, whose effect is “granting” the leader a certain office. The second goal was to take over political leadership, so as to be able to participate in the creation and implementation of the state's policy. In this sense, for Bronisław Komorowski the presidential election in 2015 was an attempt to maintain the *status quo* in the balance of power in Poland, and for Andrzej Duda an opportunity to change. Because the presidential election took place a few months before the parliamentary one, it was also one of the two main stages of fight for political leadership between the main political parties.

The fact that the 2015 presidential election was part of the competition for political leadership at the macrostructural level generated specific effects. First of all, unlike in all the other universal elections in Poland, during the electoral campaign the candidates focused on national, not local issues<sup>3</sup>. On the one hand, this corresponds to the position of president in the public authority system and is a positive thing. On the other hand, problems were relatively often raised in the campaign which the President of the Republic of Poland could not solve or could only indirectly contribute to solving. On the basis of topics mentioned in the electoral campaign we could conclude that the real power of Polish presidency was definitely

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew Soberg Shugart [2004: 635] defines this element as the “nationalization” of presidential elections.

overestimated [Frye 1997; Siaroff 2003; Glajcar 2009]. This resulted in the image of an omnipotent institution connected with ongoing rule in the country.

In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 1997, the president is not the central body of executive authority, although in reality the model that determines his position is dependent on political practice. Depending on the circumstances, Polish presidency can be located in two places of the continuum whose extremes are the model of neutral authority and the model of regulatory authority [Chorażewska 2008: 9-39, 283-288]. The universal character of elections drives the institution of president to one side. As a result, the stress is not on the qualities of the candidates that are connected with the role of arbiter but rather on those that are connected with the effective participation of the future president in the processes of exercising power. Out of the two main candidates to the “supreme office” in the state, this perception of presidency was represented by Andrzej Duda. Bronisław Komorowski, who fought for re-election, represented the image of presidency that corresponded to his style of holding the office in the years 2010-2015. Thus, a kind of relation resulting from institutional limitations emerges. The president fighting for re-election presents the vision of the office more corresponding to the constitutional model, leaving the sphere of ruling the state to the central executive body (the government). The candidate who wants to become president, in turn, emphasizes the inactivity of the incumbent president in many aspects, even if some elements of political programme are beyond the competence of the president.

Remembering that, the results of the presidential election in Poland in 2015 are surprising. Bronisław Komorowski preferred the presidency style that was rather close to the *pouvoir neutre* model. He was positively perceived by most citizens, as shown by surveys carried out e.g. by the Public Opinion Research Center [*Centrum Badań Opinii Publicznej, CBOS*] [7/2015: 3]. Consequently, it seems reasonable to conclude that if the incumbent president meets people's expectations concerning the style of presidency, the current mode of electing the head of state is favorable for him. Thus, elections should confirm whatever opinion polls show (the presidential election of 2000 is a good example). Yet, the presidential election in 2015 not only did not have a confirmatory character, but even revealed the poor structure of voter preferences in Poland. This was reflected in the voters' susceptibility to the contents of the electoral campaign [Jennig, Wleziń 2015: 219]. Bronisław Komorowski was unable to retain the belief of most citizens that his presidency was the best. To a great extent, the “credit” for it goes to Andrzej Duda, who used the criticism of Bronisław Komorowski's presidency to create the vision of a president who is active in carrying out certain political projects, and manager to persuade most voters to believe it.

The task was difficult but, as we can see, not impossible. Institutional logic suggests, however, that in 2020, Andrzej Duda will rather promote the vision of presidency closer to *pouvoir neutre*, especially that his office overlaps with the functioning of *de facto* one-party government of the political group he originates from. Political coincidence of the president, the government, and the majority in the parliament is not conducive to building a strong position of the head of state. So the leadership of president Andrzej Duda will first of all have the institutional dimension.

### **The party aspect**

In political competition, political parties take into consideration the following factors: (1) the costs of entry into the political market and functioning on it; (2) the benefits of political conquests; (3) the probability of voter support [Cox 1997: 152]. In the first case, the division is based on the organization and programme character. Parties that focus on the programme (*programme-based parties*) have to incur the high costs of reaching the voters, showing them their message and persuading them to accept it, and of building internal consensus between party members. *Clientelistic parties* incur high costs of internal organization (which must allow constant circulation of resources) but the costs of building a political consensus between their supporters are rather low (their loyalty is based on the system of incentives). Parties based on the social authority of the leader (*charismatic parties*) have relatively low costs of entering the market and operating on it [Kitschelt 1995: 449-450]. The possibility of electoral success depends on stabilization of the party system and establishing relationships between political parties and the voters, which result in the growing level of party loyalty. In consolidated democracies, where the relationships between parties and the electorate are more stable, perspectives of success are usually lower than e.g. in post-communist countries, especially in the initial period of system transformation [Kitschelt H., Mansfeldova Z., Markowski R., Toka G. 1999: 296]. Hence the unique role of political leaders, who increase the electoral perspectives of parties without generating very high costs of participation in political competition. Twenty-five years of Polish experience shows the process of departure from charismatic political leadership towards clientelistic relationships within parties. The most important consequence of those changes is the evolution of candidate specificity in Polish presidential elections. In the first phase of system transformation the leaders (Lech Wałęsa, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, Lech Kaczyński) were charismatic, but now they are replaced by candidates that focus on certain tasks (Bronisław Komorowski, Andrzej Duda).



Party creation of political leaders involves two steps. The first of them results from the existence of political parties as entities that operate through the institutionalization of the sphere of politics, and the other refers to the social role of voters. On the basis of democratization processes, parties have become the factor that organizes chaotic goals and political demands of individuals. The other demand is practical, and the creation of leaders refers to the two main aspects: the content one and the political one. The content aspect assumes that the candidate should have the adequate qualities, which on the one hand can facilitate generating support and future election, and on the other hand, predestine them to correctly fulfil their role resulting from the potential election. The formula of political creation of leaders assumes their identification with the main values that provide axiological and programme background. The practical aspect of creating leaders is the process of appointing candidates to run for election [Glajcar 2012: 12-14]. It may come in four basic forms: non-regulated appointment, appointment by local authorities, appointment by central authorities, and primary election (appointment by party members or voters) [Sokół 2003: 73-75; Migalski, Wojtasik, Mazur 2006: 96-97]. The determinants of parties' roles show [Antoszewski 2006: 21] that they may not only direct voters' decisions to the proposed candidates, but in certain situations substantially limit the possibility of this choice [Wojtasik 2010: 390-391]. The latter case occurs in Polish presidential elections, in which the character of appointment of the candidates and the formal conditions (100 thousand signatures supporting the candidature needed to register an election committee) mean that actually only relevant political parties are able to generate candidates who have a real chance of victory. The other candidates play a secondary role in the electoral competition. The mechanism means that although the formal rules of democratic election are observed, the instrumentalized intention of political parties limits the number of possibilities the voter really has. This limitation is visible in the fact that so far, candidates of either of the two biggest parties have always won the presidential elections. This also occurred in 2015, when the only person who could really compete with Bronisław Komorowski (PO) was the candidate from PiS, Andrzej Duda.

Whereas in public awareness the importance of the office of President of the Republic of Poland has not diminished over the years, for actual party leaders it is becoming less and less attractive. The basic reason for the low attraction of holding the office perceived by party leaders is the duality of executive authority in Poland: the Prime Minister and the government have much greater influence on the current policy. This factor means that for the major political players (in this context, those who have the potential to win a presidential election), it is better from the strategic point of view to concentrate on holding, or running for, the office of Prime

Minister, retaining the impact on delegating candidates in presidential elections. All this combined with the evolution of the systemic role of the President of the Republic of Poland leads to the division of candidates participating in the 2015 election into three general groups. The first group is the representatives of the biggest political forces which meet the Sartori's political relevance criteria. Their basic goal is to achieve the political goals of the party they represent. The logic of political competition means that these are usually secondary politicians, because party leaders are more inclined to exercise powers resulting from parliamentary delegation. The second group is the leaders of smaller parties, for whom presidential elections are a platform to promote their own parties. The increase in processes of personalization of politics means that thanks to greater recognizability, the leader can expect greater support for their party. The third group is political freelancers, whose motivation is very individualized and may refer to many, often completely non-political goals.

The two major candidates in the presidential election in 2015 were associated with two strongest political parties, but were not their actual leaders. Bronisław Komorowski, despite serving important political roles before (among others, the Minister of National Defense and the Marshal of the Sejm), had never been a real party leader. Andrzej Duda's political experience was even less, hence the surprise as he was announced as the candidate of PiS. Indeed, initially some commentators mistook him for the chairman of Solidarność Citizens' Committee, Piotr Duda. Actually, in such conditions the first round of presidential election is mere formality. Limiting the real competition to the candidates of two biggest parties causes the phenomenon of lower election participation in the first round. In these circumstances, parties out of the PiS-PO axis had to agree to this situation, but for image reasons (to present themselves as serious political forces) they could not afford not to put up their candidates. Examples of such candidates were the representatives of Democratic Left Alliance [*Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej, SLD*] Magdalena Ogórek, and Polish Peasants' Party [*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, PSL*], Adam Jarubas. The roles of Janusz Palikot, Janusz Korwin-Mikke and Paweł Kukiz were different. Their candidatures were to be the prelude to the upcoming campaign and the opportunity for greater support for their parties. The other candidates (Grzegorz Braun, Janusz Kowalski, Jacek Wilk and Paweł Tanajno) were following their individual political strategies, focusing on the promotion of their own candidatures or supported ideas.

Limiting the actual competition in the 2015 election to PO and PiS candidates was the result of processes occurring in Polish politics since 1990, and the success of A. Duda can be perceived as the consequence of competition between those parties. Whereas at the level of

resources and costs of entry into the political market and functioning on it the candidates of both parties were similar, the sources of A. Duda's success and B. Komorowski's defeat may be the political positions of their mother political groups. PO was finishing its 8 years' rule, full of internal conflicts, and was poorly motivated to focus on the election of the president because of very good reputation of the current head of state. After D. Tusk left the party, his successor E. Kopacz did not reveal any qualities necessary to motivate party members to the election. To the contrary, she concentrated on strengthening her own position in PO. The party apparatus was focused on preparing to the parliamentary election in a few months, perceived as more important. In addition, the candidate was not helpful, as he seemed to be sure of the victory, thus demotivating his supporters and discouraging the rest of voters.

The situation of PiS was different. Due to very good reputation of the incumbent president, the party did not hope very much their candidate stood a chance of winning. A. Duda was rather regarded as an element of the parliamentary campaign, expected to modernize the social image of PiS and help the party open up to new segments of the electorate. However, the candidate of the biggest opposition party had all the advantages over B. Komorowski: he was younger, better educated, knew foreign languages, and did not have the burden of previous political career. He was regarded as the personification of the new image of PiS. Actually, the was successful – Duda and the whole PiS attracted new segments of the electorate in the 2015 election [Wojtasik 2016]. Duda's victory, even if treated as a consequence of negligence of the incumbent president, shows that although elections are won by individuals, the victory depends on political parties.

The duality of executive authority in Polish political system and the specificity of presidential elections made the actual political competition limited to the representatives of the two strongest political parties. Their candidates were far from equal politically the other participants of the electoral race. However, presidential elections are an important problem for political parties, which can lose much more than gain as a result. The 2015 election was no different. It determined the division into victorious Andrzej Duda and his party, and the rest – losing candidates and the parties that put them up. Perhaps the only case of relative success was Paweł Kukiz, understood not only as the outcome of the election but also as the basis for unquestionable success of his election committee in the parliamentary election. All this means that in the systemic criteria Polish presidential elections rather tend to disintegrate than consolidate the political and party system.

## The personality aspect

Politicians' qualities are the basic factors of their political images. The reasoning of a potential voter concerning the qualities of a political leader are rooted in the need to understand the reasons of human behavior, forecast that behavior, and control events. The more coherent our environment seems to be, the more it ensures us the sense of security and stability. The observer grasps the reality and can predict and control it only by referring the transient and changeable behavior and events to relatively unchanging underlying conditions [Heider 1958: 79. Cited in: McGraw 2008: 364]. The need to maintain a stable and coherent system of experience representation is also one of the four needs of a human in the experiential system, regarded as fundamental by Seymour Epstein [Epstein 2003A: 51, Epstein 2003B: 162-163]. Researchers classify the mechanisms that govern our perception into different models which explain e.g. the process of understanding of human behavior. The important ones are the classic attribution theory by Fritz Heider [1958], the correspondent inference theory by Edward E. Jones and Keith E. Davies [1965: 220-266], or Egon Brunswik's lens model [1956]. Due to different ways of understanding people's behaviors, those models coherently underscore a number of important issues. First, information available for the individual (concerning other behaviors, dispositions and perceived competencies of the subject) plays an important role in all of them. If the observer has the access to many decisions of the politician, it is easier to draw conclusions of their dispositions based on their activities and utterances; furthermore, if that information is coherent, the evaluation is quicker, more permanent, and more resistant to change. The amount of available information is related to the second aspect: time. In a longer period, the observer is able to observe and absorb more. Third, openness to the information is largely connected with taking interest in it. More information will be of no use if the voter is not interested in the political scene. Thus, in order to assess the politician in a more accurate and stable way, it is important to build the assessment over longer time, which, however, requires constantly following politicians' actions, also between elections, not only during the campaign. When the campaign is in full swing, the voters absorb the most information on the candidates, and at the same time are exposed to the influence of campaign activities. Many mechanisms are also initiated then, which do not need much time to be effective. They are connected with self-presentation issues, communication, and influencing emotions. It is worth highlighting, however, that usually the politician is not a *tabula rasa* for most voters at the beginning of the campaign, but the stimuli are confronted with the beliefs, experiences and evaluations the person has already developed. Definitely, the mechanisms of short-term

influence in the election period are important with regard to citizens who do not have a clear opinion or are not interested in political activities between elections, or with regard to politicians who were not so well-known before the campaign.

At the beginning of the campaign, both Bronisław Komorowski and Andrzej Duda had great budgets and were supported by the biggest political parties. But the political play involved two completely different personalities that clashed, not only at the level of programme but – perhaps mostly – at the level of image. Interestingly, Bronisław Komorowski already had the experience of five-year term of office, positively assessed just before the 2015 election by as many as  $\frac{3}{4}$  respondents (in a poll by CBOS) [51/2015]. The style of his presidency was publicly approved from the very beginning: even in the initial months of holding the office, Komorowski won the approval of the majority of Poles, and in October and November 2014, he could boast the record high (80%) public trust. This positive reception of Komorowski's activity should generate many psychological mechanisms to protect him. An interesting one is the unique direction of voter's conclusion concerning the reasons for the politician's behavior. Drawing conclusions concerning qualities on the basis of their observable expressions is not a universal method. It largely depends on the observer, their beliefs, motivations, the intention to make cognitive effort, experiences, and support for the person. If the voters cherish a positive image of a politician, it is easier for them to justify his shortcomings than for those who consider the politician as someone negative. In the case of the latter, this will more often reinforce their pejorative opinion. Hence, Andrzej Duda, who was not well-known for many voters at the moment of being announced as the candidate of Law and Justice, had a difficult task to do, but his strong points were used perfectly well.

Andrzej Duda from the beginning presented himself as a politician supported by the family: his daughter and wife. Although Bronisław Komorowski had five children, they only became active during the electoral campaign, kind of called to do this by the public opinion, and created a spot to support their father. The presence of family in an electoral campaign is one of the most common ways of making the politician's image nicer. What is more, it makes the politician look reliable and close to the voters, especially in the country where family is one of the priorities. Family is a specific expression of human identification; it shows that the candidate's priorities and needs are similar to the voters', and that he pursues them in a desirable way. Bronisław Komorowski did not highlight properly the important advantage of having a big family. Even in the 2010 electoral campaign, he included his family in one campaign spot: the short story of the crucial moments in the candidate's life finished with the shot of the family having dinner together. Children and grandchildren were definitely missing from the 2015

campaign. During official meetings he was accompanied by his wife. Furthermore, the important role of family could lead to the voters' belief that such clear-cut boundaries of privacy may be connected, not only with the wish to protect family members but first of all with some problems that Komorowski wanted to hide from the public opinion.

An important aspect of the 2015 campaign was arousing the need of change in voters and candidates' attempts to satisfy that need. This was expressed e.g. in the popularity of new political figures, among others the “anti-system” candidate, musician Paweł Kukiz, who achieved the impressive 20.8% in the first round of the presidential election, and voters withdrawing from supporting subjects functioning in Polish political space for many years (e.g., the candidate of the left wing received 2.4% support in the presidential election). At the beginning of the electoral campaign, Bronisław Komorowski had his stable position in the political sphere. Relaxed with pre-election polls which showed his considerable advantage, he did not fight firmly for voters' support. Andrzej Duda emerged as a completely different person: younger, energetic, distinctive, with thoroughly developed image. Noticeable is for example his way of speaking. We like to listen to people who speak slowly and in a low voice, because they arouse our trust [Aronson, Wilson, Akert 1997]. Komorowski had both low and calm voice, but it was completely devoid of emotions and resembled recitation. This definitely contributed to the undermining of his authority. Compared to energetic Duda, he seemed slow, much older, and unlikely to act courageously. The image of Duda appeared even more distinctive in comparison to Komorowski's sluggishness and lack of dynamism pointed out by his supporters (61%) [CBOS 66/2013]. As already mentioned, for many voters Duda was unknown at the moment of being announced as a candidate for the President of the Republic of Poland, so his image was built from scratches. Every third person that voted for him declared that they voted for the person who guaranteed change, fresh approach, and something new [CBOS 88/2015]. The public image of Komorowski was positive but not impressive in terms of public approval. No doubt he evoked positive feelings: voters could see his intelligence and appearance [CBOS 66/2013], but the qualities connected with the president as a political leader, including political effectiveness, communication and persuasion skills, as well as consistency or determination in pursuing the assumed goals, were not so obvious. This outcome is in agreement with a study by Agnieszka Turska-Kawa [2011: 144-146] carried out during the electoral campaign in 2010. The factors of perception and assessment identified in the image of Bronisław Komorowski were compliance (in Komorowski's electorate and among passive citizens) and political dependency (in the electorate of other candidates). Possibly this is the result of the unique situation in which Komorowski was appointed as the candidate of Civic Platform in 2010. After

the public declaration of the party leader that he would not run for president, Komorowski was chosen by way of primary election. The public discourse highlighted the relation of dependence, which dominated his leadership qualities.

Given the public image of Bronisław Komorowski and the assessment of his presidency, we may say that he satisfied one of fundamental needs of the voters, i.e. the need of security. It corresponds to self-preservation instinct, and if it is not satisfied, it causes anxiety and fear [Siek 1986]. Augustyn Bańka observes that the problem of security is connected with risk, and the sense of security is treated as a subjective assessment of risk acceptability. The risk may have different forms, because people live in the conditions of constant uncertainty and all the time are forced to estimate the level of threats, gaps in knowledge and uncertainty in order to have the sense of control. The sense of security gives us self-control and control over the situation we face. It depends on many factors – temporal, situational, or momentary emotional states [Bańka 2002: 227-230]. People who voted for Komorowski in the 2015 presidential election usually declared reasons such as predictability, experience, guarantee of peace and balance, or the fear of chaos [88/2015]. For the larger part of his term as the head of state, the office of president was actually the only authority that Poles continued to trust. The president himself was perceived as experienced, friendly, attached to national values, and respectable [CBOS 66/2013]. Voters often pointed out that he lacked in charisma and energy in action, but he embodied the public image of balance, experience and peace. This might seem very valuable from the psychological point of view, in terms of the importance of the need of security in the hierarchy of individual needs.

But in practice that need was driven out by the desire of novelty and change, to which Andrzej Duda responded well enough to defeat the incumbent president in the second round. The stability of Polish political scene proved to be, not advantageous but boring, and the voters wanted to leave it behind<sup>4</sup>. This need was evident not only in the result achieved by Duda, but also in the outcome of Paweł Kukiz, or in the support for new entities occurring on the party scene in the parliamentary election.

Interestingly, in a public opinion poll carried out after the election won by Duda, citizens were asked what they expected from the new president [CBOS 108/2015]. Despite general rather high hopes concerning positive changes in the style of holding the office of the head of state, concrete expectations of the new president do not seem very high. In most areas, Poles

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<sup>4</sup> The Civic Platform ruled from 2007. In 2010, the candidate from that party became the president and completely monopolized the political scene.

expected the continuation of the course adopted by Bronisław Komorowski. It is only in terms of solving the most important social problems in the country that some respondents expect changes for good rather than maintaining the *status quo*, but as for Polish-Russian relationships, many of them fear the relationships will get worse. Thus, it is interesting that from the psychological point of view the election showed that voters needed a change, but it seems to have been “a change for change's sake”, not connected with any particular socially desirable activities.

## Conclusions

Some problems that emerge in the electoral campaign affect the decisions of voters because of their social importance. In addition, they enable voters to identify with the preferred models of political leadership. The structure of preference reflected in the elections may refer to two complementary models [Wojtasik 2013: 25-38]. In the first, concrete model, as citizens make electoral decisions, they express their attitude to certain issues being the subject of pre-election discourse. Each election takes place in a different context, which causes different distribution of stress on public interest. The other model of electoral preference refers to some generalization as part of which the role of particular demands in the electoral discourse is replaced with personalized expectations concerning the form of political leadership after the election.

The 2015 presidential election fit both these models. On the one hand, it referred to the need of deep transformation of politics, and on the other hand, it focused on the assessment of the style of B. Komorowski's office. Those two aspects synergically transformed people's expectations by highlighting the need of change, not the presidency as political arbitration. The image of B. Komorowski was based on associations with the need of security. As pointed out before, this is one of the fundamental human needs, so it could be predicted that the style of presidency promoted in the 2015 electoral campaign, presenting the image of a politician reaching beyond divisions, calm and experienced, would be victorious. However, the adopted image did not at all take into consideration the social need of change, aroused by the candidate of Law and Justice. The image of A. Duda created in the course of the campaign was the image of a politician who was not only going to promote the transformation of Polish political scene but also be an important factor in the formation of new political order.



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## **European Union in Electoral Programmes of Polish Political Parties in 2015**

### **Introduction**

Poland's accession to the European Union (EU) in 2004, which crowned the system transformation initiated in 1989, was one of the most important events in Poland's history, extremely significant for all the aspects of political, economic and social life [Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2014]. Due to its specific character, the EU exerts very strong direct impact on Poland as the state, Polish economy, society etc. In this sense, the EU is the most important international organization that Poland belongs to. This means that Polish political parties do not only need to specify whether they are for or against Polish membership in the EU (as was the case before 2004), but they also have to more precisely define their views on the form and character of the EU and the role of Poland in the EU, at least in theory.

The aim of the paper is to present the opinions of selected Polish political parties concerning the desirable character and form of the European Union and the role and position of Poland in that organization, included in programme documents prepared for the 2015 parliamentary election. The first part presents the synthesis of selected data and ratios illustrating the economic situation of Poland in the first year of EU membership and before the 2015 election, as well as views on the EU prevalent in Polish society. This will provide a synthetic context for the formulation of programme assumptions of Polish political parties with regard to the EU and Poland's position in it. The criterion for selecting political parties whose programmes concerning the EU are discussed in the paper is that their representatives are present in the 8th term of the Sejm (since 2015). Therefore, the following political parties were taken into consideration: Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS, *Law and Justice*), Platforma Obywatelska Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (PO, *Civic Platform*), Kukiz'15, Nowoczesna Ryszarda

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Petru (*Ryszard Petru's Modern Party*), and Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (PSL, *Polish Peasants' Party*). The main conclusions are presented in the Conclusion section.

## Twelve years of Polish membership in the European Union: selected economic and social aspects

The year 2015, when the parliamentary election took place in Poland, was the 12th year of Polish membership in the EU. Socio-economic consequences of Poland's functioning in the EU are huge. Polish citizens and companies can use the free flow of persons, goods, services, and capital. As estimated by the Central Statistical Office [*Główny Urząd Statystyczny, GUS*], after 2004 more than 1.2 million Poles took advantage of the free flow of persons and the possibility to take up jobs, and went for a temporary stay to other EU countries. As a result, GUS estimated that approximately 2 million Poles were staying in other EU countries as of the end of 2015 [Główny Urząd Statystyczny 2016, p. 3]. Funds from the EU budget made it possible to carry out a great number of investments in infrastructure, transport, agriculture and rural development, environmental protection, innovation, research and development, human capital development etc., which changed Polish economy a lot. From the macro perspective, socio-economic effects of Polish membership in the EU were definitely mostly positive.

**Table 1. Selected statistical data illustrating the socio-economic situation of Poland in 2004 and 2015**

Index	2004	2015
<b>GDP</b> (million euros, current prices)	206,119	429,794
<b>GDP per capita</b> (euros, current prices)	5400	11200
<b>GDP per capita in PPS</b> (Purchasing Power Standards, EU=100)	50	69
<b>Export of goods and services</b> (million euros, current prices)	70,625	212,967
<b>Import of goods and services</b> (million euros, current prices)	76,158	199,659
<b>Human Development Index:</b> - HDI world rank - HDI value	37 0.862	36 <sup>a</sup> 0.843 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Unemployment rate</b> (% of active population)	19.1	7.5
<b>People at risk of poverty or social exclusion</b> (% of total population)	45.3 <sup>b</sup>	23.4
<b>Average wages</b> (US dollars, per year)	20,222	23,998
<b>Minimum wages</b> (euros/month)	175.25	409.53
<b>Household debt</b> (% of net disposable income)	21.6	64.2
<sup>a</sup> in 2014 <sup>b</sup> in 2005		

Source: author's own study based on data from: Eurostat, United Nations Development Programme, OECD (as of: 22.12.2016).

Between 2004 and 2015, Polish GDP grew more than twice, and the difference between Poland and the EU mean in terms of affluence decreased. In 2004, Poland had approx. EUR 5.5 billion deficit in goods and services trade, and in 2015, it had more than EUR 13 billion excess. There was a huge reduction in unemployment (among others, thanks to the above-mentioned economic emigration of Poles to other EU countries), and both the average and the minimum pays rose. The number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion dropped significantly. Detailed data showing selected socio-economic indices in Poland in the years 2004 and 2015 is included in Table 1. Poland was one of the few EU countries that coped relatively well with the economic crisis after 2008 [Kubin 2014b].

Recently, the EU and its member states have had a number of challenges and need to face some very serious crises. These are e.g., the crisis connected with the uncontrollable influx of refugees/immigrants, the effects of economic crisis, higher threat of terrorism and lower level of broadly understood security, the problem of insufficient legitimization of political institutions of the EU [Kubin 2014a], the increase of social support for radical and extreme political parties, or an increase in Euroskepticism [Kubin 2015a]. As a result, trust in the EU has dramatically decreased in the member states, and in 2015 the dominant attitude among EU residents was the lack of trust in the organization. In Poland, in 2015 the persons who declared the lack of trust in the EU also prevailed, but their proportion was much lower than in the EU as a whole, and their advantage over those who trusted in the Union was only 2 percentage points (Table 2).

**Table 2. Declared trust in the EU among Poles and the residents of all EU countries in 2004 and 2015**

State/EU	Tend to trust		Tend not to trust		Don't know	
	2004	2015	2004	2015	2004	2015
<b>Poland</b>	50	37	27	39	23	24
<b>EU</b>	50	32	36	55	14	13

Source: Standard Eurobarometer 62 (October 2004), Q10.13  
Standard Eurobarometer 84 (November 2015), QA8.10

The image of the EU among Poles was also better than the EU mean in 2015 (Table 3). In 2015, more Poles had a very positive and fairly positive attitude to the EU and fewer had neutral, fairly negative or very negative attitude than in the EU as a whole. In addition, in 2015 the EU was perceived more positively by Poles than in the first year of membership (2004): more people viewed it rather positively, and fewer neutrally, fairly negatively or very negatively. This seems to be the effect, among others, of the generally positive economic consequences of Polish membership in the EU.

**Table 3. The image of the EU in Poland and in all EU countries in 2004 and 2015**

State/EU	Very positive		Fairly positive		Neutral		Fairly negative		Very negative		Don't know	
	2004	2015	2004	2015	2004	2015	2004	2015	2004	2015	2004	2015
Poland	8	8	38	47	40	35	9	6	2	1	3	3
EU	10	4	40	33	33	38	12	18	3	5	2	2

Source: Standard Eurobarometer 62 (October 2004), Q13

Standard Eurobarometer 84 (November 2015), QA9

Polish people's support for membership in the EU is a kind of synthesis of changes in the socio-economic situation in Poland after joining the EU and the outcome of opinion polls concerning trust in the EU and its image. In the accession referendum on June 7/8, 2003, out of the participating 58.85% of citizens with the right to vote, 77.45% voted for joining the EU, and 22.55% were against [Dziennik Ustaw 2003]. At the moment of Poland's accession (in 2004), the support was slightly lower, but then it grew again and since that time has been very high, often exceeding 80%. It also exceeded 80% in the election year 2015 (Table 4).

**Table 4. Poles' attitude to EU membership in the 2004-2015 period (in %)**

Attitude to Polish membership in the EU	Time											
	2004 IV	2005 V	2006 IV	2007 IV	2008 IV	2009 IV	2010 IV	2011 IV	2012 VII	2013 IV	2014 IV	2015 IV
<b>Supporters</b>	64	76	80	86	88	85	86	83	77	73	86	84
<b>Opponents</b>	29	14	11	7	7	9	9	11	14	19	9	10
<b>Unsure</b>	7	10	9	8	5	6	5	6	9	8	4	6

Source: Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej (2005), p. 1, table 1; Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej (2011), p. 2, table 1; Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej (2015), p. 1, table 1.

In the context of this study, it is very interesting and important what attitude to Poland's membership in the EU is declared by voters of particular political parties.

That data, prepared by the Public Opinion Research Center [*Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej, CBOS*] on the basis of declarations concerning voting in the election on 25.10.2015, is presented in Table 5. It shows that the majority of voters of the four parties that had the highest numbers of seats in the parliament were people who approved of Poland's membership in the EU. Nearly all the voters of PO and Nowoczesna declared to be supporters of Poland's membership in the EU, and in the case of electorates of PiS and Kukiz'15, the rate was 78%. This means that most of the voters of those two parties are also supporters of Poland's membership in the EU.

**Table 5. Attitude to Polish membership in the EU among the electorates of Polish political parties in 2015**

Electorates (based on declarations of voting in the parliamentary election on 25.10.2015)	Attitude to Polish membership in the EU (in %)		
	Supporters	Opponents	Unsure
<b>Prawo i Sprawiedliwość</b>	78	15	7
<b>Platforma Obywatelska RP</b>	96	2	2
<b>Kukuz'15</b>	78	13	9
<b>Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru</b>	98	2	0

Source: Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej (2015), p. 2, table 2.

### **2015 election programme assumptions of the key Polish political parties concerning the European Union and the role of Poland in the EU**

The issues of Polish accession to the EU and (after 2004) the future of the EU, its character, functioning, or the position and role that should be played in the EU by Poland, have been the subject of public debate almost from the beginning of the system transformation, and political parties are also engaged in it [Doliwa-Klepacki 2003, pp. 102-105; Domagała 2008, pp. 109-118]. The outlined socio-economic effects of Poland's membership in the EU and the views of Polish society on the Union and the issue of Poland's membership in the EU are the most important conditions in which Polish political parties defined their views and formulated political programmes concerning the future of the EU and the position and role of Poland before the parliamentary election in 2015.

***Prawo i Sprawiedliwość***. The political programme of PiS which the party had when running for the parliamentary election in 2015 was included in a long (168 pages) document titled “Program Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2014” (*Programme of Law and Justice 2014*). Assumptions of the party concerning foreign policy of the Republic of Poland, including the future of the EU and the role of Poland in the EU, were presented in the section “Polska w Europie i świecie” (*Poland in Europe and in the world*).

According to PiS, the foreign policy of Poland should be oriented at achieving three main goals: security of Poland and Poles, the status and position of Poland in international relations, and the presence of Polish politics, Poles and Polonia in key global processes. The starting point for the programme in terms of Poland's foreign policy was the diagnosis that Poland has lost the instruments for autonomous pursuit of national interests in foreign policy, which is especially important in the situation of growing geopolitical competition in the world, including Poland's neighborhood. PiS blamed this on the PO-PSL coalition ruling in Poland in the years 2007-2015.

In their opinion, Poland's foreign policy had been *limited to following the main stream of supranational decisions and only operating as part of and through integration organizations*, and it had been *secondary and peripheral policy, the policy of self-degradation and harmonizing our views with the views of those that are regarded as more powerful*. PiS declared that it resolutely rejected views *assuming Poland's inability to act autonomously on the international arena, and as the result seeking support in capital cities of other countries*, and *limiting Polish foreign policy to the role of an element in European Union's external activity policy, which actually means subjecting it to the interests of the strongest EU countries*.

According to PiS, the belief that deepening the EU integration must be accompanied by limiting the function of a national state is totally wrong: *Europe will be stronger thanks to stronger, subjective and dynamic Poland*. Therefore, the basic goal of foreign policy of Poland under the rule of PiS was to restore, and then strengthen and secure, the subjectivity of Poland in international policy and the area of external security.

PiS holds that the European Union should remain an international organization associating sovereign countries, not be perceived as a way of building a federal state. National competencies of EU member states should have the primacy over the competencies of the Union, and the *competence of establishing competencies* of the EU should remain with the member states. Each transfer of competencies to the EU should be counterbalanced by stronger supervision of those competencies on the part of parliaments and national governments. These assumptions would be the basis for adopting the act on execution of the sovereignty of the state, which would describe in detail the relations between Poland and the EU concerning five issues: confirming the superiority of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland over the law of the EU or the Court of Justice of the EU, specifying the principles and conditions of transferring competencies to EU bodies, guaranteeing subjectivity of Polish state authorities in terms of public finances and taxes, determining the principle of limiting the scope of competencies to be transferred, and the principle of balance between the transferred competencies and control of Polish state institutions of their performance.

The *greatest dilemma* faced by Polish policy of relations with the EU was *the EU's clear tendency to crack*, and the main line of division is Euro zone membership. The EU itself *suffers from overregulation, internal imbalance, political inequality, democracy deficit, degeneration of values and civilization identity, the loss of trust on the part of citizens, and disintegration into several integration areas*. In the view of PiS, the response to EU problems should not be deepening the integration but more freedom and solidarity. That is why according to PiS the European Union should be based on many regional centers (not on division into Euro



zone countries and the other countries), equality of states, deregulation, solidarity, democracy, and openness.

In the party's programme, forming the framework of security policy was regarded as significant, but it may not compete with NATO alliance or lead to formal differences in the hierarchy of security, military status, or the capacity of defence industries between European countries. The European Union should also be open to the possibility of accepting anyone that wants to join it, and PiS's objective should be to help all countries from the Eastern Europe region pursue EU membership.

Poland under the rule of PiS would provide the Union with new dynamics on the basis of the principle of solidarity and collaboration of national states. Regarding the relations between Poland and the EU, PiS declared e.g.:

- not to join the Euro zone and to retain zloty as the currency in Poland;
- to renegotiate legal regulations making the so-called energy and climate package to protect the interests of Polish industry;
- to change the rules of land trade to protect Polish ownership;
- to oppose to control of Poland's national budget by the EU;
- not to let Poland join any voluntary solutions deepening the degree of European integration which do not meet the criterion of being clearly beneficial for Polish interests;
- to effectively defend Polish national identity, tradition, culture, and Polish lifestyle and customs from the tendencies to perform supranational risky cultural experiments [Prawo i Sprawiedliwość 2014].

***Platforma Obywatelska Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej.*** In 2015, PO ran for the election with an 84 pages long political programme titled “Polska przyszłości” (*Poland of the future*). Content concerning the EU and Poland in the Union was included in the chapter “Polityka zagraniczna i europejska” (*Foreign and European policy*).

In its programme, PO declared to defend the foundations of European integration, i.e., the four freedoms of common market, to improve it, and to eliminate the barriers that still exist on that market. PO expressed the will to collaborate in the formation of a *uniform digital market* in the EU, to support the European Commission in developing industry in the Union, to pursue balance between EU policies (e.g., industrial and climate policies), and to continue the formation of common energy policy of the EU. According to PO, strong Euro zone is in the interest of Poland, and therefore, PO declared to actively participate in strengthening the currency union. It also promised to ensure that the membership in the Euro zone is still available

for countries such as Poland, and that it will *block any attempts to create alternative European institutions reserved only for countries of the Euro zone*. In its programme, PO perceived the fundamental importance of France and Germany for the process of European integration and asserted it could not see any possibility of changing the fundamental treaties of the EU to *question the foundations of European integration*.

The party clearly identified itself as a pro-European one, for which the EU was the most important organization in which Poland was pursuing its interests. According to PO, Poland should remain in the decision-making center of the EU, so as to participate in influencing the development of the Union and effectively promote Polish interests, which should be *skillfully included in the general European interest*. PO prefers to continue the predictable and credible policy of Poland in the EU and to apply the tactic of changing coalitions and looking for allies in the whole EU similar in terms of interests. More specific interests of Poland mentioned in the programme as those that PO would pursue in the EU were:

- to defend Polish entrepreneurs and employees from *protectionist tendencies* visible in some EU countries;
- to implement the successive stages of energy union in accord with the interests of Poland;
- to effectively protect the interest of Poland in EU climate policy so as to ensure that the ambitious goals of environment protection are not achieved at the expense of countries that are making up for developmental differences, that the goals are realistic, and that they do not reduce the competitiveness of Polish economy.

In its programme, PO directly referred to the problem of uncontrollable influx of refugees / immigrants to the EU. The solution to that problem should involve, first of all, eliminating its sources, not only fighting its symptoms. According to PO, this problem should be solved using the principle of responsible solidarity, voluntary involvement of individual EU countries, and governmental control of the process of accepting refugees. However, PO expressed the view that in accordance with the solidarity principle, Poland should engage in solving problems which do not directly affect it and treat it as a policy for the future, in case Poland needed the solidarity of other countries in the future [Platforma Obywatelska Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2015].

**Kukiz'15.** After the presidential election in spring 2015 in which the rock musician Paweł Kukiz received relatively high support (20.8%, more than 3 million votes), a few months later,

Kukiz'15 election committee took part in the parliamentary election, winning 42 seats in the Sejm. The party, declaring to be an anti-system one, presented its political programme in the document called "Strategia zmiany. Kukiz'15. Potrafisz Polsko" (*The strategy of change. Kukiz'15. You can do it, Poland!*). In the introduction to the document there was information that the strategy should not be called a programme, because for the past 25 years all the system parties had presented their programmes and *nothing good came out of it*.

The document "Strategia zmiany. Kukiz'15. Potrafisz Polsko" is relatively short: it only has 32 pages and does not include a comprehensive programme of reforms of most areas of functioning of the state, only changes in selected areas. It does not include a separate section on the EU and Polish policy in the EU, and only two pages concerning Poland's foreign policy. The basic goal of the policy should be "nothing about us without us". In the strategy, members of Kukiz'15 argued e.g. that Polish governments had been losing the crucial debates in the European Union for many years, and the largest system parties openly reduced Polish European policy to begging for European funds. Kukiz'15 rejected the desire to renounce sovereignty and transfer the competence of Polish government to Europe. The relatively concrete views concerning Poland's policy in the EU were that Poland should actively form coalitions with the aim of deregulation of European law, and attempt to limit the power of EU institutions and empowering member states.

Relatively much was said about the currency union in the EU. According to the party, common currency Euro was and still is a purely political project without any economic justification. Its introduction proved to be a failed experiment, which contributed to the economic crisis in South European countries, and today Euro is a threat to the foundations of European integration. Therefore, Poland should not only keep its national currency, but it should also shun political correctness and begin a debate on controlled disassembly of the Euro zone.

Moreover, Kukiz'15 expressed critical opinions on the EU's climate and energy policy, referring to it as purely ideological project which has no scientific, economic or political justification. If Kukiz'15 achieved some influence on the rule in Poland, it would immediately unilaterally withdraw from that package [Kukiz'15 2015].

**Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru**, (abbreviated to: Nowoczesna), is a new party just like Kukiz'15, established in 2015 and running for parliamentary election in the same year. Its political programme valid at the time was included in the document "Nowa Polska teraz. Nowoczesna. Kierunki programu. Lipiec 2015" (*New Poland now. Modern. Directions of the programme. July 2015*).

Nowoczesna's declarations concerning foreign policy and Poland's relations with the EU are very modest, actually consisting of few very general phrases: it is necessary to help develop and strengthen the European Union, not to be against it, without any complexes or fears of dependence. According to Nowoczesna, greater integration within the EU strengthens the position of Poland. Poland's policy in the EU must be active, bold, and it should combine values and interests. The four freedoms of the common market – the free flow of persons, goods, services and capital – are absolutely vital. Alliances with Germany and France have a strategic importance for Poland in Europe [Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru 2015].

In 2016, the programme of Nowoczesna was extended a little and it was presented in a document “Program Nowoczesna Polska dla każdego” (*The programme of modern Poland for all*). Nowoczesna declares in it a more active role of Poland in the region, Europe and the world, active impact on the future of Europe, and engagement in solving European problems as well as strategic relations with Western Europe countries or the attempts to achieve the key position in the region.

With regard to the functioning of the EU, Nowoczesna promises to promote the free flow of persons, goods, services, and capital. The common currency, Euro, is perceived by the party as an element of economic and political security. Nowoczesna declares that once it wins the election, it will prepare Poland to joining the Euro zone, preceding it with a public debate [Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru 2016].

***Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe.*** PSL – in the years 2007-2015 ruling together with PO – included its programme assumptions before the 2015 parliamentary election in the document “Deklaracja wyborcza PSL. Wybory parlamentarne 2015. Blisko ludzkich spraw” (*Electoral declaration of PSL. 2015 parliamentary election. Close to people and their problems*). The whole document was only 32 pages long, and only one page was devoted to foreign affairs, with five very general declarations. For example, the document argued that Poland should build good relations with all its neighbors. The programme did not include any information concerning the desirable form of the EU or the role and position of Poland in the EU. In other sections of the 2015 electoral programme there was a promise to ensure that all the financial resources planned in EU budget go to Polish rural areas, and the declaration of the need to develop environment-friendly agriculture preventing climate change as part of the common agricultural policy of the EU [Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe 2015].

## Conclusions

The length and quality of programme assumptions of Polish political parties that obtained parliament representation as a result of the 2015 election vary a lot. This refers both to the whole programmes and to their sections concerning the EU and the role of Poland in the Union.

Definitely the programme of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość was the most detailed, both in general and in the section devoted to the EU and Poland as part of it. Regardless of the political justification of the declared intentions of PiS, it is clear that the party made a lot of effort to prepare this part of the programme and that its content is the effect of insight and reflection. It includes elements of diagnosis of the current condition of the EU and its future character desired by PiS. Besides, a number of goals were listed which according to PiS should be pursued by Poland in the EU.

In the programme of PO, the contents concerning the desired form and reforms of the EU were presented much less thoroughly, and in the programmes of the other discussed parties, they were almost non-existent. Whenever those parties discuss issues connected with the EU, they do so almost exclusively in the context of Poland. The length of the section of PO programme concerning the EU is lower than that of PiS, as is its quality, but still it is better than in the case of Kukiz'15, Nowoczesna and PSL. It is worth mentioning that both PiS and PO can see the problem of so-called integration in the EU, whose main criterion is membership in the Euro zone. It can be concluded from the contents of the programmes that both parties are aware of the potential challenges and threats Poland may face if the process of diversification of EU integration goes on [Kubin 2015b, Kubin 2016].

The contents of programmes of Kukiz'15 and Nowoczesna do not refer much to issues connected with the EU. Actually, these are just few very general buzzwords without any context, which seem to have been prepared *ad hoc*. The 2015 election programme of PSL does not mention any issues connected with the EU.

It seems that the very low level of programmes of parties other than PiS and PO which obtained seats in the parliament in 2015 is both the cause and the effect of the relatively low level of public debate in Poland concerning the desired form and future of the EU. The subject of the EU is very often discussed in that debate, but it mostly refers to current, temporary issues directly connected with Poland. Such fundamental issues connected with Poland's membership in the EU as Poland's sovereignty [Fiszer 2014], relations between democracy and sovereignty in the EU [Czaputowicz 2014], the role of Poland in the EU [Czachór 2014], the impact of EU

membership on the modernization of Poland [Musiał 2015] or cultural changes in Poland after joining the EU [Niedźwiedzki 2014] were almost absent from the programmes of Polish political parties before the 2015 parliamentary election.

Taking into consideration the socio-economic consequences of Poland's membership in the EU and the definitely higher number of supporters of Polish membership in the EU – both in the society as a whole and in the electorates of the four parties which received the most seats after the 2015 election – clear EU skepticism would not work as a programme assumption attracting many voters. Therefore, no Polish political party with representatives in the 8th term of the Sejm (beginning in 2015) can be considered as definitely Euroskeptical and demanding to leave the EU. On the basis of contents included in the programmes, parties with the most positive attitude to the EU are Nowoczesna and PO. Parties that are clearly less positively inclined to the EU are PiS and Kukiz'15. In the case of PiS, programme assumptions are much more detailed and organized, both in general and in terms of the EU and Poland in the EU. In its programme of 2015, PSL completely ignored the issues connected with international policy and the EU, but taking into consideration the events of the previous years (especially the periods when PSL was part of the ruling coalitions) and the views expressed by its politicians, it seems that PSL can be classified as a party with moderately positive attitude to the EU and Poland's EU membership.

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## **Central and Eastern Europe in Electoral Programmes of Polish Political Parties in 2015**

### **Introduction**

The problem of explaining the phenomenon of Central and Eastern Europe is complicated at least for three reasons. First, from the geo-political point of view, there is no commonly recognized list of countries belonging to the region. Second, the multiplicity of historical experiences, cultural phenomena, social attitudes and economic development patterns prevent the unambiguous understanding of the region. Third, we need to answer the question of what is the goal of defining the region, especially in the context of future events. Despite those drawbacks, the concept of Central and Eastern Europe is definitely an existing one, used both in research and in public life. In our region, though not only here, it is an important point of reference for political parties that compete for power in the country. The understanding and position of issues connected with Central and Eastern Europe in the views of the community reflect in political parties' political programmes as if in a lens. Explaining the term 'Central and Eastern Europe' allows to analyze the phenomenon and to understand its value as evaluated by each political party represented in Polish parliament as a result of the 2015 election.

It seems that the issue of Central and Eastern Europe did not play an important role in the electoral programmes of parties running in the 2015 parliamentary election in Poland. Only most recent events could be reflected in the theses the parties advocated. This assumption is based on the observation of Polish political scene directly before the election, which only focused on few problems in that period, such as the war in Ukraine, the expansive policy of Russia, the issue of Polish minorities in Belarus and Lithuania, and the activities within the Visegrad Group. In order to verify this thesis, I will try to analyze several issues presented as research hypotheses. First, the definition of the boundaries of Central and Eastern Europe in electoral programmes of Polish political parties is varied and unclear. Second, the range of political parties' interest in the area and problems of Central and Eastern Europe depends on their position on the political scene. Third, one of the most important issues related to Central

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and Eastern Europe is the role of Poland in the region. Fourth, considering Russia as the most powerful entity in this part of Europe is evident in party appeals. This article presents the analysis of programmes of political parties that won the representation in Polish parliament as a result of the 2015 election.

Not engaging in deep analysis of definitions of Central and Eastern Europe, we still need to remember that the concept has been evolving. The present understanding of the term is the result of past events, the approach to this part of Europe, and the area we decide to consider as Central and Eastern Europe. As for the historical and cultural factor, the region is usually defined in opposition to the West. Its distinct properties are a kind of backwardness of social and economic structures as a result of historical development, which has influenced the political traditions and international relations. Central Europe includes the countries that belonged to the Habsburg monarchy and currently lie between the East and West of Europe. There is also Eastern Europe, led by Russia, and South-Eastern Europe with the Balkan States [Tomaszewski 1976: 28-31]. For Alvydas Jokubaitis the common features of our region are, apart from the above-mentioned ones, similar understanding of the values of personal and social life and a similar view of esthetic categories [Jokubaitis 2011: 34].

The Polish view of Central and Eastern Europe usually differentiates between Central Europe and Eastern Europe or refers to Central and Eastern Europe as distinct from Eastern Europe. This way, we draw on the heritage of Oskar Halecki, who divided Europe into Western, Eastern, Central and Eastern, and Central and Western parts [Halecki 1952]. In Polish perspective, the historical and cultural heritage of Poland is clearly distinct from the heritage connected with Russia. From Polish perspective, the culture of Central Europe includes the Baltic States, whereas in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and even more so, Hungary, the Balkan States are considered to be a part of it.

It is very difficult to determine what area is covered by Central and Eastern Europe. In this matter, geography is only an auxiliary element, just like history and the political factor. It is only the combination of these three factors that makes it possible to begin – but never to complete – the process of identifying potential members of the Central and Eastern European community. There are many classifications of countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the most general of which assumes that the region includes Central Europe countries (the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia), Central-Northern Europe countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia), Central-Southern Europe (Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and former Yugoslavian republics), and Eastern Europe (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova).

Sometimes the list also includes three Caucasian countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) [Czarnocki 1994: 24-27; Ash 1990: 174-175; Wandycz 1995:11-27 ].

### **Geographical determination of the area of Central and Eastern Europe in electoral programmes of Polish political parties**

In the programme of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS, *Law and Justice*), the term Central and Eastern Europe is often used; the party divides it into the Baltic/Nordic, central, eastern, and western parts. For Poland, countries from the Baltic Sea region, the Balkans and the region of Carpathian Mountains are important, and close collaboration with them is demanded. The party's belief in the existence of community within Central and Eastern Europe significantly exceeds the area defined this way. The Caucasian states are offered NATO membership. The programme of Eastern Partnership is considered as insufficient, so the programme of PiS demands that bilateral and multilateral agreements be made with Caucasian states. As for particular country names, only Russia and Ukraine are mentioned. The programme also mentions the Visegrad Group [Program Prawa i Sprawiedliwości. 2014, pp. 153, 156-157].

The political programme of Platforma Obywatelska (PO, *Civic Platform*) *Polska przyszłości* (*The Future Poland*) refers to several countries of Central and Eastern Europe by name to emphasize their significance. First, it mentions Russia, and then Ukraine. In this context, the eastern border of the Republic of Poland, which is also the eastern border of the EU (broadly understood as Western Europe) is mentioned further in the programme. This way, Belarus was first referred to in the programme. The name of the country occurs at the end of the discussion concerning the region of Central and Eastern Europe. There are also several theses connected with the Eastern Partnership, but the countries that belong to it are not mentioned by name, being more or less interesting for PO. Therefore, it may be concluded that apart from Ukraine and Belarus, also Moldova and Caucasian republics (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) are included in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. For the party, all these countries are part of Eastern Europe.

Regarding Central Europe, the obscure term 'immediate vicinity', which is the point of reference for domestic affairs, is further specified in the following paragraphs by adding names of countries such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia, or Hungary. Besides, the Baltic States, Romania and Bulgaria are mentioned in the same context. Lithuania is listed, too. It can be assumed that PO's attitude to the region clearly divides its eastern part from the central one,

placing Poland in Central Europe [*Polska przyszłości. Program Platformy Obywatelskiej RP*. 2015, pp. 66-70].

*Strategia zmiany. Kukiz'15. Potrafisz Polsko (The Strategy of Change. Kukiz'15. You Can Do it, Poland!)* includes the name of Central Europe region, in which Poland should play the role of the leader. Terms such as Central and Eastern Europe or Eastern Europe are never used, although two countries from this part of Europe, Russia and Ukraine, are mentioned. Kukiz'15 uses the unclear term of the East, where Polonia lives. It is not clear whether the party means the east of Europe or all the areas located east of Poland, up to Asian regions [*Strategia zmiany. Kukiz'15. Potrafisz Polsko*. 2015: 26-27].

In the programme *Nowa Polska. Teraz. Nowoczesność. Wolność. Rozwój. Zaangażowanie. Odpowiedzialność (The New Poland. Now. Modernity. Freedom. Development. Engagement. Responsibility)*, the party of Ryszard Petru mentions countries belonging to the Visegrad Group, Baltic States, Balkan States and Ukraine as lying in Central and Eastern Europe. Interestingly, Nowoczesna never uses the name of Russia in its programme [*Nowa Polska. Teraz. Nowoczesność. Wolność. Rozwój. Zaangażowanie. Odpowiedzialność*, 2015; p. 35].

The programme of PSL used the cluster of concepts of Central and Eastern Europe, which means that for the party the area is homogeneous. Russia and Ukraine are considered to be important countries in the region, with which it is beneficial to have good and partner relationships [Deklaracja wyborcza PSL: Wybory parlamentarne 2015. *Blisko ludzkich spraw*, p. 31].

### **The content and scope of Polish foreign policy matters in electoral programmes**

Political issues parties included in their electoral programmes in the context of Central and Eastern European region were: migration, energy security, attitude to the Eastern Partnership, the position of Polish minority in Central and Eastern Europe, the Smolensk disaster, relations with Russia and Eastern Europe (analyzed in further sections of this paper) and the position of Poland in the region.

With reference to migration, PO and PiS proposed European solidarity and full governmental control of the phenomenon and process within the EU and the NATO. Both parties demanded allocating more European resources to the protection of the eastern border of the Republic of Poland due to the possible direction of migration from the eastern part of Europe

and from Asia [Program Prawa i Sprawiedliwości. 2014: 153; *Polska przyszłości*. Program Platformy Obywatelskiej RP. 2015: 66-67].

Regarding energy security policy, PO was of the opinion that alternatives to supplies of energy resources from Russia should be established, so it supported the idea of Energy Union. According to PO, Poland should collaborate in this matter with Central and Western European countries. Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru displayed the view that energy security should be achieved through an international transatlantic agreement. PiS, in turn, argued that Poland needed to try and establish secure energy conditions individually instead of relying on favorable decisions of supranational institutions [Program Prawa i Sprawiedliwości. 2014:149; *Polska przyszłości*. Program Platformy Obywatelskiej RP. 2015: 67; *Nowa Polska. Teraz. Nowoczesność. Wolność. Rozwój. Zaangażowanie. Odpowiedzialność*, 2015: 36].

PO and PiS presented their attitudes towards the Eastern Partnership. The former anticipated the development of and support for the programme, whereas PiS criticized it and demanded individual foreign policy towards Eastern European countries. PiS argued that the Eastern Partnership would be a failure [Program Prawa i Sprawiedliwości. 2014: 42; *Polska przyszłości*. Program Platformy Obywatelskiej RP. 2015: 68].

Referring to Polish minority, PO stressed it was necessary to provide further support and assistance for it. They expressed the will to continue the protection of Poles living in Donbass and to care for the interests of Polonia in Belarus and Lithuania. They promised to develop a programme of repatriation and Polish National Card, which made it possible to work or study in Poland. PiS also guaranteed to provide care for Poles living abroad. They wanted to work on the development of education and culture, and to protect places of remembrance connected with Poland. Just like PO, they suggested the development of the Polish National Card. Kukiz'15 pointed to the need to protect Polish people living in the East and to enable their repatriation [Program Prawa i Sprawiedliwości. 2014: 159-160; *Polska przyszłości*. Program Platformy Obywatelskiej RP. 2015: 71; *Strategia zmiany. Kukiz'15. Potrafisz Polsko*, 2015: 27].

For PiS, the Smolensk issue was still one of the most important from the axiological point of view. The electoral programme mentioned it eleven times. PiS believed that the Smolensk plane crash had never been explained properly, and handing the investigation over to Russia made it impossible to learn the causes of the accident. Therefore, they demanded to engage international organizations in the investigation and explanation of the matter. The Smolensk disaster was and still is discussed by PiS in the context of suspecting Russia of

intentional acts against the security of Poland [Program Prawa i Sprawiedliwości. 2014: 33, 34, 37, 40, 42, 55, 60, 138, 155].

### **Position of Poland in the region of Central and Eastern Europe**

Prawo i Sprawiedliwość expressed the view that limiting Polish foreign policy in relations with Eastern Europe to directions proposed by the EU had led to losing the instruments of autonomous pursuit of national interests, reduced empowerment in terms of security, and lower influence on decisions concerning the whole Europe and the closest region. Therefore, Poland's autonomous initiative should be manifested in supporting the process of Euro-Atlantic integration with Caucasian countries, which would allow Poland to achieve the leader status not only in Central, but also in Eastern Europe. Foreign policy in Central and Eastern Europe was regarded as the most important plane of activity aimed to achieve greater international sovereignty. The electoral programme of PiS underscored strong relationship between Poland and the region of Central and Eastern Europe, with the crucial position of the Visegrad Group. Strengthening the position of Poland should be connected with the development of relations with Central European countries. In order to achieve this goal, the European Union should become an organization of several regional centers, not one decision-making center. In this context, Poland's position would improve, since it already plays the leading role in its region [Program Prawa i Sprawiedliwości. 2014: 149, 153, 156, 158].

The electoral programme of PO included a demand for Poland to take advantage of various relations with countries in the region to build and strengthen its position in Europe depending on the current interest, which was called the strategy of changing coalitions. At the same time, relationships with Central and Eastern Europe were clearly located within the European Union. According to PO, relations between Poland and countries beyond the EU located in Eastern Europe should be dependent on the paradigms of the European Union. The objective of PO was the European community and strengthening the position of Poland within it. It was also emphasized that the closest vicinity of the Republic of Poland was the main point of reference. In that context, the party referred to the key role of Poland in Central and Eastern Europe and to the need to build coalitions with the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary to negotiate with the EU together. It was thought that Poland should be the leader representing the interests of the Visegrad Group, the Baltic States, Romania and Bulgaria in the EU in issues such as European funds, energy security policy, and migration. Furthermore, Poland should be

the leader initiating collaboration with the countries of the Eastern Partnership [*Polska przyszłości*. Program Platformy Obywatelskiej RP. 2015: 66-68].

The electoral programme of Kukiz'15 described two models of Polish foreign policy after 1989. One of them involved lowering the position of the Republic of Poland on the general European arena, and the other, to the contrary, treated Poland as one of the most important states and the clear leader in Central and Eastern Europe. Kukiz'15 stressed that both models were bad for Polish reason of state. So as to make Poland the real leader in the region of Central Europe, more autonomous and independent policy towards the EU would be needed, and the protection of Poland's interests should be of key importance [*Strategia zmiany. Kukiz'15. Potrafię Polsko*, 2015: 26]. Nowoczesna declared in its programme that Poland wanted to be more active, both in the region and in Europe. The party leader, Ryszard Petru, proposed to enhance Polish interest in the Baltic Sea region and the West Balkans [*Nowa Polska. Teraz. Nowoczesność. Wolność. Rozwój. Zaangażowanie. Odpowiedzialność*, 2015: 35]. PSL did not say much about the position of Poland in the region, pointing to the need to develop friendly and partner relationships with Central and Eastern European countries and stressing that by 2015 there had actually been no collaboration between the countries of the region [Deklaracja wyborcza PSL Wybory parlamentarne 2015. *Blisko ludzkich spraw*: 31].

### **Attitude to Russia and the Eastern part of Europe**

Known for its anti-Russian attitude, PiS devoted relatively little attention to Russia in its electoral programme. The demands connected with future Polish-Russian relations included the return to reliable and realistic partner relationships, equal mutual respect, and the respect for truth, openness, and legality. It was clearly asserted that the occupation of Crimea had been illegal. Poland should promote the values of freedom, justice, solidarity and truth in relations with countries where the fundamental democratic principles have not been upheld, especially the countries of Eastern Europe that have strayed from the road of democratization. Granted, in relations with those countries it was necessary to take into account the region's difficult history. The demand for the EU to open up to Caucasian countries should be treated as an important element of PiS's Eastern policy [Program Prawa i Sprawiedliwości. 2014: 155-157].

The programme of PO emphasized the desire to promote the processes of strengthening the rule of law in Ukraine, as well as economic modernization and improvement of social welfare of Ukrainian citizens. Besides, regarding Ukraine, further sharing of transformation experiences, assistance in establishing modern administration as well as financial and

humanitarian support were promised. New Polish-Ukrainian relations should be developed with consideration of the historical heritage of both nations. Because the eastern border of Poland was still at risk of the flow of illegal immigrants, the party demanded obtaining more resources from the EU to strengthen it. It was thought that Russia intentionally implemented the policy of political, military and economic destabilization of the region of Central and Eastern Europe, which could be illustrated by energy policy. Therefore, PO pointed to the need to extend alternative sources of energy resources. It was also stated that Russia's treatment of Ukraine was contrary to international law.

The blame for the poor Polish-Russian relations was on Russia, which broke the principles developed during the cold war, failed to observe the inviolability of state borders, and did not want to participate in partner collaboration. So as to exert pressure on Russia, PO proposed to strengthen and tighten foreign policy within the EU. It was also argued that without Russia it was impossible to build international order based on peace and stabilization. With regard to Belarus, PO thought that collaboration and dialogue should take place in the Eastern Partnership, upon ensuring conditions such as political and economic reforms in the country. Collaboration in the form of local border traffic between Poland and Belarus should be the platform of development of friendly social relations and should contribute to strengthening mutual trust and overcoming prejudice [*Polska przyszłości. Program Platformy Obywatelskiej* RP. 2015: 65-69].

Just like PiS, Kukiz'15 called for greater autonomy of Poland in Eastern policy, especially in terms of relations with Russia and caring about their own interests first. A danger from Russia, materialized in the form of aggression against Ukraine, should contribute to strengthening the country's policy of defense [*Strategia zmiany. Kukiz'15. Potrafisz Polsko*, 2015: 26]. The danger from the east was also pointed out by Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru, which emphasized the instability resulting from the war in Ukraine [*Nowa Polska. Teraz. Nowoczesność. Wolność. Rozwój. Zaangażowanie. Odpowiedzialność*, 2015: 34]. PSL, in turn, stressed the importance of good relations with Russia and Ukraine and expressed interest in building peace and democracy in Ukraine [Deklaracja wyborcza PSL. Wybory parlamentarne 2015. *Blisko ludzkich spraw*: 31].



## Conclusions

The electoral programmes of Polish political parties express a great variety of delimitation of the area of Central and Eastern Europe. The most accurate definition (and hence, the proof of knowing and caring about the region) occurs in the programmes of Platforma Obywatelska and Prawo i Sprawiedliwość. Both parties locate Poland in Central Europe, refer to the Visegrad Group, and mention the names of some of the countries of the area. Unlike the other parties, they are able to notice geo-political nuances and differentiate between Central Europe and the Baltic States, the Balkans, or former European Soviet Republics. PO and PiS extend the definition of Central and Eastern Europe to Caucasian republics as well. They also agree in stressing the crucial role of Russia. Two other parties agree with this thesis: Kukiz'15 and PSL. However, in its programme, Kukiz'15 almost exclusively focuses on Central Europe without defining it, so we do not know exactly which countries are meant apart from Poland. It also includes vague references to the East. The same can be said about the programme of Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru, which refers to obscure 'East' or 'Europe of Poland's closest vicinity'. For PSL, the most important country apart from Russia is Ukraine.

Political issues connected with the region of Central and Eastern Europe included in political parties' programmes were migration, energy security, the programme of Eastern Partnership, Polish minority, the Smolensk disaster, attitude to Russia and Eastern Europe, and Poland's position in the region. The issues were not equally significant for each party. It seems that for three out of the five analyzed parties (PO, PiS, Kukiz'15) the protection of Polish minority in the East was quite an important matter. Each party declared the development of foreign policy to strengthen the position of Polonia, and PO and PiS demanded further work on the institutionalization of Polish National Card. Energy security policy was tackled by three parties: PO, PiS and Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru. Whereas PO demanded to implement that policy as part of the EU, PiS proposed an individualized attitude. Only PO and PiS referred to migration and the programme of Eastern Partnership. As for the former topic, they pointed to the need to protect the country's eastern border and to obtain European resources for that. Regarding the Eastern Partnership, the parties' views differed: PO supported the programme, while PiS considered it to be a failure of Polish government. The Smolensk disaster was only mentioned by PiS, which treated it as a Polish-Russian problem that needed to be settled by international organizations. It is worth emphasizing that apart from the reference to relations with Russia and Ukraine, PSL did not discuss any problem connected with Central and Eastern Europe. Electoral programmes of PiS and PO considered Poland as the leader in Central Europe,

but PO referred to the framework set by the activity of the EU, and PiS perceived it in a more independent context, especially as regards the East of Europe. Thanks to the regionalization of the EU, PiS could see the opportunity to strengthen the role of Poland in the region. As for the other parties, Kukiz'15 emphasized the need to make Poland's attitude to the East independent from the EU (like PiS), whereas Nowoczesna demanded foreign policy as part of the EU (like PO). PSL did not refer to Poland's position in the region, stressing the need to develop partner relations with Central and Eastern European countries.

PO and PiS expressed a negative attitude to Russia's conduct in contacts with other European countries, including Central and Eastern Europe. They blamed Russia alone for the poor Polish-Russian relations. Both parties considered it necessary to take into account the common historical legacy when building future relations. Regarding the East, PiS paid most attention to the problem of including Caucasian countries in Euro-Atlantic structures and closer collaboration between Poland and that region, and PO mentioned the Belarusian issue. PO's attitude to the Eastern Partnership was positive, while PiS criticized that form of collaboration. The subject of Russia and the East was much less discussed by the three other parties: Kukiz'15, Nowoczesna, and PSL.

To sum up, we find that the definition of the boundaries of Central and Eastern Europe in election programmes of Polish political parties is varied and unclear. Whereas in the programmes of two most important parties, PiS and PO, it is treated quite broadly, in the programmes of the other ones it is fragmentary and obscure. The popularity of political issues referring to the region of Central and Eastern Europe, taking into consideration the number of parties that discussed the topics, was as follows: 1) protection of Polish national minority: 3 parties, 2) energy security policy: 3 parties, 3) migration: 2 parties, 4) Eastern Partnership: 2 parties, 5) Smolensk disaster: 1 party. Poland is perceived as the leader of the Central Europe region by PO, PiS, Kukiz'15 and Nowoczesna. PSL did not mention the topic. PO and Nowoczesna were of the opinion that the position of Poland should be strengthened by closer collaboration within the EU, while PiS and Kukiz'15 demanded greater independence, particularly in terms of relations with Eastern Europe. In the electoral programmes of the five analyzed parties, the core of the issues of Eastern Europe is clearly the relations with Russia. It is perceived negatively, as a destabilizer of the order in the region and the originator of poor Polish-Russian relations. PO and PiS devote more attention to Eastern policy, while Kukiz'15, Nowoczesna and PSL only use brief expressions.

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## Television in the 2015 Electoral Campaign in Poland

### Introduction

The year 2015 was a special year for Polish political scene. Two electoral campaigns occurred then, one after the other: before the presidential election and before the parliamentary one. Poll results that were published as early as at the beginning of 2015 did not announce such a huge change. Conservative Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS, *Law and Justice*) with its coalition parties Solidarna Polska (SP, *United Poland*), Polska Razem (PR, *Poland Together*) and Prawica Rzeczypospolitej (PR, *the Right Wing of the Republic*) had the support of 27%, whereas 46% of the respondents declared the wish to vote for Platforma Obywatelska (PO, *the Civic Platform*) and Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (PSL, *Polish Peasants' Party*) [CBOS 2015: 3; www1]. In just few months, Poles dramatically changed their voting preferences. The result of the presidential election and then parliamentary election was surprising for many forecasters. What were the causes of the victory of the right wing and PiS taking over the rule in Poland? What was the course of the long electoral campaign and how was it different from the previous ones? These questions were tackled by the authors of a detailed monograph titled *Oblicza kampanii wyborczych 2015 [Faces of Electoral Campaigns of 2015]*, who summed up a number of problems emerging before both elections [Kułakowska, Borowiec, Ścigaj 2016].

The aim of this chapter is to analyze the course of parliamentary electoral campaign on TV. Despite the growing popularity of social media, audiovisual media still play the crucial role in creating candidates' images, promoting party slogans, and presenting the most important programme assumptions. Therefore, the authors have attempted to answer the questions: What was the course of the TV campaign in 2015? Did it differ much from the previous campaigns? To what extent could the broadcast time of each party on different TV channels have affected the election result? The analyses will be based on the National Broadcasting Council [*Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji*] reports from monitoring national TV channels that broadcast

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campaign spots and presented candidates for the parliament in news services and current affairs programmes. The outcome of the research will show the level of exposure of political parties on TV depending on the broadcaster. The bias present on the media market in Poland, including audiovisual media, seems to be important in this case as well.

### **Relationships between the media and politics in Central and Eastern Europe**

Due to the specificity of contemporary media systems in Central and Eastern Europe, efforts are still being made to draw up a common model of relationships between politics and the media in countries which have undergone democratic transformation. So far, the authoritarian model by F. Siebert, T. Peterson and W. Schramm [Siebert, Peterson, Schramm 1956] and a newer model of polarized pluralism by D.C. Hallin and P. Mancini (more characteristic of Southern European countries, e.g., Spain [Hallin, Mancini 2007]) still best represent the situation of the media market in the region. Brügemann, Engesser, Büchel, Humprecht and Castro argue with the latter typology, pointing out that despite high political parallelism, little professionalization of journalism and heterogeneous press market, in the countries of polarized pluralism model the state is not as interventionist as Hallin and Mancini point out in their model [Brügemann, M. et al. 2014: 1057].

The first of the models involves such phenomena as the government using the media to form its own politics, exercising control regardless of the type of ownership, censorship, and limiting some social and political groups' access to the media. The second model seems to be more relevant for the relationships in Poland because of close relationships between political and media elites and the continuous political parallelism in the media, though slightly reduced by the processes of media commercialization occurring in all Central and Eastern European countries. The Mediterranean model may be applied to that part of the continent because of late democratization of post-Communist countries and strong polarization of political life, a significant direct and indirect role political parties in many areas as well as poorer rational and legal power and persisting clientelism, especially in the post-election period [Hallin, Mancini 2007: 68]. As B. Dobek-Ostrowska observes, relationships between political actors and mass media in Central and Eastern Europe are often determined by the deficit of democratic values, poorly developed civil society and underdeveloped public sphere. As a consequence, mass media are dependent on political elites. This phenomenon is characteristic of many countries in Central and Eastern Europe because political parties may not assume strong identification of

their electorate, so they try to use any public institutions, including mass media, for self-promotion [Dobek-Ostrowska 2006: 29].

Comparing the examples of relations between the media and politics, B. Dobek-Ostrowska proposed a hybrid liberal model for Poland (plus Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Slovenia), justifying the typology with the stability of the media system and good economic and political situation of Polish society. The main elements of the model were: the highest standards of public life democratization and the lowest level of media politicization, primarily connected with the ongoing process of media commercialization. Tabloidization and entertainmentization of the media in place of reliable political information were regarded as the effect of that process [Dobek-Ostrowska 2015: 35-37]. This proposal referred to the situation in Poland back in the years 2010-2015<sup>8</sup>, when – after the period of strong politicization of the mainstream (2005-2010) – the tendencies of the liberal (Hallin, Mancini) or the western model (Brügemann et al.) again occurred in the media system, which meant that the media were less interested in politics, not very diverse in ideological terms, and focused on profit and entertainment.

In the analyzed period of electoral campaign, we can already notice some changes on the mass media market in Poland toward politicization of some of the media (especially the Catholic TV station “Trwam”). This was visible in higher broadcast time of some parties or candidates on particular channels, as well as topics connected with the course of electoral campaign and support of certain political parties in some TV stations.

## **Polish TV market**

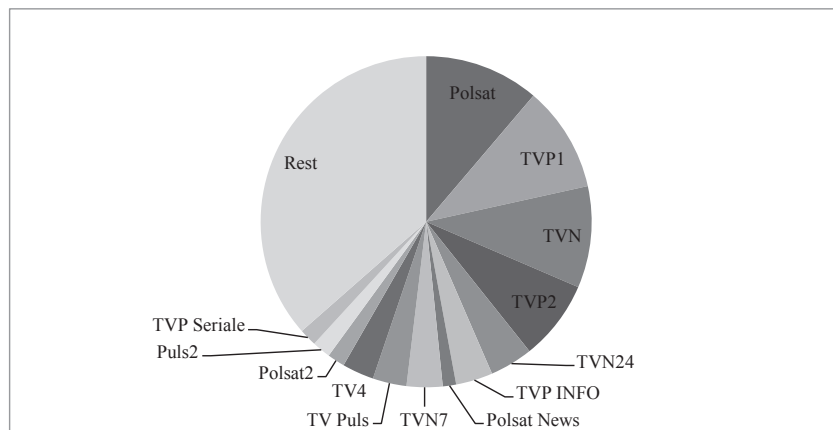
The contemporary audiovisual market market in Poland is a classic duopoly. This means that both public and private broadcasters operate on the market. In addition, there are social broadcasters, mainly religious radio stations. In the second decade of the 21st century, two commercial broadcasters and one public broadcaster dominate the market, being the four most popular stations in Poland: Polsat (11.21% market share), TVP1 (10.31%), TVN (9.92%) and TVP2 (7.82%) [Reisner 2016: 3]. The highest market share in Poland (a total of 28.86%) [Reisner 2016: 7] still belongs to the public channels, though since 2005 the public broadcaster

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<sup>8</sup> Since the end of 2015, the system of media in Poland has been politicized, because both their owners and the journalists get involved in the public discourse, openly expressing their preferences, supporting or fiercely criticizing particular political actors. Cf.: Dobek-Ostrowska 2015: 37-39.

has been clearly losing its significance<sup>9</sup>. The domination of public TVP may be the result of monopolization of the TV market from its origin up to the 1990s, when the media market was liberalized following the system transformation.

Fig. 1. Division of the TV market in the 3rd quarter 2016\*



\*Source: original study based on data from J. Reisner, *Rynek telewizyjny...*, p. 4.

In this part of Europe, public media served a special role during the democratic transformation, often serving as the motor of pluralistic political changes, popularization of civic values, and ownership transformations from state and party to public ownership [Jędrzejewski 2010: 43-44]. Although the new Polish law concerning radio and television was adopted in 1992, public broadcasters are still fighting to be state-independent and competitive with commercial broadcasters. The case of Poland also shows that public broadcasters are often treated by political elites as a kind of electoral trophy, used to improve the positions of the ruling party leaders [Jędrzejewski 2010: 46]. The process of commercialization of the media market in these political conditions is sometimes perceived by the journalistic circle as a mechanism of gaining independence from the authorities, and broadening the broadcasters' offer allows the fluctuation of media elites, irrespective of their political associations or preferences.

The institution to control the market of audiovisual media in Poland is the National Broadcasting Council [*Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji, KRRiT*], which began its operation

<sup>9</sup> In 2005, the combined share of TVP channels was 52.48%, whereas in the last quarter of 2016, it was only 28.86% [Reisner 2016: 7].

in 1993 under the Broadcasting Act of 1992. The National Broadcasting Council is a constitutional body which guards the liberty of speech, pluralism and public interest protection in audiovisual media. The French model of the council was adopted: the council members are elected by the president and both houses of the parliament. The three-stage system of appointment in public media (first, KRRiT, then Supervisory Boards, and then, the management boards of public channels) was designed to ensure their depoliticization. In practice, however, it was hard to expect that the president or parliament would voluntarily give up their influence on the political composition of the Council and at the next stages the professional criteria would be more important than party affiliation. In 2005, by way of the Act of 29 December on transformations and changes in the division of tasks and competencies of state authorities competent for communications, radio and television, the number of Council members was reduced, the principle of rotation was abolished, and the term of office was extended up to 6 years, which guaranteed that the Council composition would retain the same political configuration throughout the term [Jakubowicz: 2007: 222-229].

The competencies of the Council itself could be divided into organizational/technical ones, competencies concerning the regulation of activity of audiovisual media market, and control competencies concerning the assurance of civic rights and liberties, including access to information. National Broadcasting Council systematically analyzes the content and audience of radio and TV programmes, thus carrying out the tasks specified in Article 6 section 1 of the Act of 1992.

The period of electoral campaigns is a special time in public communication, so the Council is also more active then than normally. On October 1, 2015, the Council appealed to the largest nationwide broadcasters to arrange a common debate of election committees before the parliamentary election. That initiative was motivated by the public interest protected by the Council. It was emphasized that: *the media are obliged to provide reliable and objective information, helping citizens to learn and understand electoral programmes and see the effects and reliability of electoral promises* [www2].

Communication in audiovisual media during the electoral campaign is regulated by the Election Code, in particular Article 120.1, obliging the public broadcaster to organize a debate of the election committees that have registered their candidate lists in all the electoral districts [Act of 5 January 2011 – Election Code]. The law guarantees election committees both free and paid (commercial) election TV programmes broadcast by the public radio and TV broadcaster (Article 117 and Article 119 of the Election Code). The conditions of broadcasting election TV



programmes should be the same for all the election committees, regardless of the character of the broadcaster (Article 119 sections 2 and 3). That is why the Council monitors all the main news channels, most popular current affairs programmes and political debates broadcast by the media in order to protect the pluralism of opinion and citizens' access to information. The results of the research will be presented further in the chapter.

### **Television as a channel of electoral communication in the parliamentary campaign in 2015**

Evaluating communication strategies applied in the 2015 campaign in terms of intensity of using different media channels (including TV) measured with the amount of funds allocated for paid (commercial) popularization of political message/offer plus broadly understood activity in non-commercial time, we need to take into account two key groups of factors determining the real possibility of activity of different subjects of political competition:

1) contextual factors: the parliamentary election was the last election in the 2014 – 2015 election series (European Parliament election '2014, presidential election '2015, parliamentary election '2015); this schedule made it necessary (especially for entities that competed for electoral victory<sup>10</sup>) to prepare a coherent communication strategy for the successive elections, with consideration of political importance of each election for that entity (translating into the allocation of appropriate organizational resources),

2) market factors: given the basic parameters of Polish political market, it can be assumed that right before the parliamentary campaign (particularly in the light of the outcome of the presidential election<sup>11</sup>), market positions of competing entities were as follows: (a) the currently ruling party – the clear goal of Platforma Obywatelska was to win the election and retain the previous electoral support, (b) the market opposition leader – the minimum goal of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość was to retain the market position, and the maximum goal, to win the election, (c) parties of secondary importance – they aimed to improve (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej) or retain (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe) their market positions, (d) parties that attempted to make it to the market (Nowoczesna R. Petru, Kukiz '15, KORWIN, Razem).

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<sup>10</sup> Platforma Obywatelska, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość.

<sup>11</sup> With the unexpected victory of the candidate of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, Andrzej Duda.

From this perspective, the media dominance of the leading political entities (Platforma Obywatelska, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) and relative marginalization of secondary competitors is understandable.

This paper includes the analysis of three main areas of campaign activity on TV:

- commercial activity (expenditure for the broadcasting of paid election TV programmes),
- the effect of exposure of electoral message in news services,
- the ability to make the political message visible in current affairs programmes.

The analyzed data comes from research carried out at the request of the National Broadcasting Council<sup>12</sup>.

The exhausting (primarily in financial terms) two-year election series significantly affected the intensity of advertising activity of each election committee: the expenditure for broadcasting paid election programmes on traditional electronic media (TV + radio) was lower by 14.36% than in the previous parliamentary campaign in 2011 (which had taken place in a much more stable political and social context). In addition, the lower demand for “traditional” advertising was also the result of marked intensification of broadly understood propagation influences in the new media – both using parties’ own (fully controlled) channels of online communication, and channels administered by external entities, which allow the presentation of political offer.

Prawo i Sprawiedliwość undoubtedly regained its leading position on the TV political advertising market after the surprising triumph in the presidential election, as it abandoned the ineffective modification of the communication strategy from the 2011 campaign [Kolczyński 2012], again setting the standards of effective use of political advertising. The difference between advertising market leaders (PiS, PO) and the other participants of the electoral competition also increased: the total advertising expenditure of the two leading parties was 85.82% of the total costs of TV advertising. Still, there were considerable changes in TV commercial activity of those parties in the 2015 electoral campaign as compared to the previous parliamentary election.

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<sup>12</sup> Concerning TV commercials: a report of the Monitoring Department of the National Broadcasting Council *Informacja o wydatkach i wykorzystaniu czasu antenowego w radiu i telewizji na emisje płatnych audycji wyborczych zleconych przez komitety wyborcze w trakcie kampanii wyborczej do Sejmu i Senatu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w 2015 r.*, Warszawa 2015; concerning news services: a report of the National Broadcasting Council *Monitoring wyborczy telewizyjnych serwisów informacyjnych. Wybory do Parlamentu RP 2015*, Warszawa 2015; concerning current affairs programmes: a report of the National Broadcasting Council *Monitoring wyborczy telewizyjnych audycji publicystycznych. Wybory parlamentarne 2015*, Warszawa 2015.

The proportion of financial resources of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość spent on media activity dropped from 53.9% in the parliamentary campaign of 2011 to 46.4% in 2015 (a clear downward trend is evident, important for the analysis of communication strategies – with the starting point of 68.2% of financial resources allocated for media activity in 2007). Prawo i Sprawiedliwość dramatically increased (almost twofold) its expenditure<sup>13</sup> for broadcasting TV advertisements – from PLN 3,856,360 (in 2011) up to PLN 7,424,448<sup>14</sup>; the proportion of TV advertising expenditure grew from 23.7% of the total resources spent on media promotion in 2011 up to 53.9% in 2015 (exceeding the level of 2007 – 49%).

Platforma Obywatelska, in turn, implemented the communication strategy similar to the very effective campaign of 2011. The proportion of PO's financial resources spent on media activity was at a comparable level: 53.6% (2015) vs 54.2% (2011). Unlike its main competitor, it decreased the expenditure for paid media activity (PLN 7,826,700 in 2015 vs PLN 8,175,532 in 2011), which directly led to relatively little reduction in the proportion of TV advertising expenditure (from 51.5% in 2011 to 49.5% in 2015)<sup>15</sup> in the media promotion budget.

Both Prawo i Sprawiedliwość and Platforma Obywatelska allocated similar resources for paid activity on commercial TV stations (4,243,183 – PiS, 4,200,167 – PO), but there was a clear difference in the concept of placing advertisements on public TV (PO's expenditure was only 58% of PiS's expenditure)<sup>16</sup>.

As for advertising projects on public TV, the two leading parties chose broadcast time in nationwide channels (TVP 1, TVP 2, TVP Info), devoting to it more than 90% of the expenditure<sup>17</sup>. It is worth noting that out of the other parties taking part in elections, only Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe decided to broadcast advertisements on nationwide channels (69.5% of the resources allocated for public TV advertising)<sup>18</sup>.

Advertising strategies of PO and PiS in commercial TV stations were not identical: Prawo i Sprawiedliwość adopted the concept of a multi-channel strategy, skilfully combining advertising activity on the main channels of commercial broadcasters (Polsat, TVN) and news channels (TVN 24, Polsat News); whereas Platforma Obywatelska concentrated its advertising

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<sup>13</sup> Data concerning expenditure – from the National Electoral Committee (pkw.gov.pl).

<sup>14</sup> Despite a marked increase in expenditure, it was still lower than the level from the 2007 parliamentary campaign – PLN 9,461,819.

<sup>15</sup> The proportion was far lower than the “advertising peak” of 2007 – 70.6%.

<sup>16</sup> Generally, taking into account all the election committees, more resources spent on broadcasting TV advertisements were devoted to activity on commercial TV channels (64.56% > 35.44%).

<sup>17</sup> Distribution of advertising resources in national TV channels: (a) PiS: TVP 1 – 64.6% , TVP 2 – 29.9% , TVP Info – 5.3%, (b) PO: TVP 1 – 59.4%, TVP 2 – 25.1%, TVP Info – 15.4%.

<sup>18</sup> The other election committees only broadcast advertisements in regional programmes of Telewizja Polska.

activity on the main channels, placing some extra adverts on available news channels (See Table 1).

The very high advertising activity of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość can be explained, not only with the intention to meet the broadest group of viewers / potential voters possible, but also with the desire to neutralize the messages of commercial broadcasters, most of which were critical of the party (negative bias).

Since the moment it was established and first took part in a parliamentary election (2001), Platforma Obywatelska had consistently concentrated its advertising activity on commercial TV stations; hence, the advertising orientation it adopted did not differ much from patterns of activity proved to be effective in previous campaigns.

**Table 1. Allocation of advertising expenditure of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość and Platforma Obywatelska in commercial TV stations in the 2015 parliamentary election campaign (in %)\***

	<b>Prawo i Sprawiedliwość</b>	<b>Platforma Obywatelska</b>
<b>Polsat</b>	<b>31.6</b>	<b>36.9</b>
<b>Polsat News (+ Polsat News 2)</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>3.4</b>
<b>TVN</b>	<b>41.3</b>	<b>39.5</b>
<b>TVN 7</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TVN 24</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>15.6</b>
<b>TV Republika</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Superstacja</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.8</b>

Source: own study based on: *Informacja o wydatkach i wykorzystaniu czasu antenowego w radiu i telewizji na emisje płatnych audycji wyborczych zleconych przez komitety wyborcze w trakcie kampanii wyborczej do Sejmu i Senatu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w 2015 r.*, Departament Monitoringu Biura KRRiT, Warszawa 2015.

Advertising activity of the other participants of the electoral competition may be considered as incomparable to the activity of the market leaders. This was surprising, especially as regards system relevant parties with a stable market position (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej<sup>19</sup>, Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe).

It must be admitted that the TV advertising campaign of Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe co-ruling with Platforma Obywatelska was more intensive than in the previous parliamentary election: the proportion of financial resources allocated by PSL for media activities grew from 39.5% in 2011 to 42.6% in 2015. Following that, PSL intensified its advertising activities on television: the proportion of TV advertising expenditure increased from 16.4% (in 2011) to

<sup>19</sup> Running in the election as Zjednoczona Lewica (*the United Left*) coalition (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej + Twój Ruch + Polska Partia Socjalistyczna + Unia Pracy + Zieloni).

22.4% in 2015<sup>20</sup>; most of the resources (65.3%) were used to buy commercial time on public TV<sup>21</sup>. Advertising activity in commercial TV stations was almost exclusively limited to Polsat (76.7% of the expenditure).

The most dramatic changes occurred in the main party of the left wing, Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej, having difficulty finding its place on Polish political market. Although SLD ran as a coalition (Zjednoczona Lewica), it did not manage either to collect enough funds for the campaign (a threefold decrease in comparison to the previous campaign) to ensure effective electoral competition, or to allocate the needed resources for advertising activity on television (only 6.8% of the resources devoted for media activity).

Regarding the parties that were trying to make it to the political market, the campaign of Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru was interesting, surprisingly well funded<sup>22</sup>, media-oriented, with programmes broadcast both in commercial and unpaid time. R. Petru's party devoted nearly half the financial resources (45.9%) to media activities. 11.3% of that amount was spent on broadcasting TV spots – mainly in commercial TV stations (98% of the expenditure, including: Polsat – 22.5%, TVN – 60.3%, TVN 24 – 16.5%).

The other parties that took part in the actual competition (Kukiz'15, KORWIN) did not have enough resources for intensive (or even noticeable) advertising activity on TV.

Definitely, the quality of the adopted advertising strategy depends on advertisement broadcast time: data collected by the National Broadcasting Council clearly confirms the “advertising dominance” of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, both in public and commercial TV stations (See Table 2).

Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, which had difficult (politically unproductive) relationships with the media as a result of PiS management's wrong media policy since the years 2005-2007, and the functioning of a cabinet dominated by the party), managed to draw up an extremely effective communication media strategy (including TV), skilfully neutralizing negative/unfavorable messages popularized by the main broadcasters (in traditional media) and making up for the exposure (understandable in that context) in the so-called unpaid time.

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<sup>20</sup> We should remember, however, that in the 2007 parliamentary campaign the proportion of TV advertising expenditure had been 62% of all the resources allocated for media promotion.

<sup>21</sup> Advertising activity was concentrated on national public television channels (69.5% of the resources spent on broadcasting advertisements on public TV).

<sup>22</sup> The expenditure for the electoral campaign (PLN 11,551,946) gave the new party the fourth position (after PiS, PO, and PSL).

**Table 2. Broadcast time of paid electoral TV programmes (in %)\***

<b>Election committee</b>	<b>All TV stations</b>	<b>Public TV stations</b>	<b>Commercial TV stations</b>
<b>Prawo i Sprawiedliwość</b>	<b>31.10</b>	<b>37.81</b>	<b>30.69</b>
<b>Platforma Obywatelska</b>	<b>23.21</b>	<b>27.12</b>	<b>22.97</b>
<b>Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe</b>	<b>16.02</b>	<b>21.70</b>	<b>15.68</b>
<b>Zjednoczona Lewica</b>	<b>10.87</b>	<b>7.15</b>	<b>11.10</b>
<b>Nowoczesna R. Petru</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>1.42</b>	<b>2.93</b>
<b>Kukiz '15</b>	<b>10.37</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>10.74</b>
<b>KORWIN</b>	<b>1.59</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>1.67</b>

Source: study based on: *Informacja o wydatkach i wykorzystaniu czasu antenowego w radiu i telewizji na emisje płatnych audycji wyborczych złożonych przez komitety wyborcze w trakcie kampanii wyborczej do Sejmu i Senatu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w 2015 r.*, Departament Monitoringu Biura KRRiT, Warszawa 2015.

Undoubtedly, correctly designed media communication strategies should ensure political organizations optimum and legal possibilities of the potential offered by contemporary mass media (including TV). That condition is only met when campaign organizers manage to coordinate<sup>23</sup> different forms of media activity: from advertising activities, through activities in unpaid time, up to communication activities stimulated by legal regulations (e.g., TV electoral debates).

In the case of activities in non-commercial time on TV, we should assume that elementary guarantee of success of such activities is the result of skillful correlation of communication activity in unpaid time with other campaign activities (especially paid ones – if they are legal) in order to mutually intensify the message power (maximum intensification of the power of influence). Active popularization of political offer through high exposure in TV news and current affairs programmes should mainly have the purpose of persuasion and promotion: to popularize knowledge on the basic organizational values (campaign offer), symbolic figures that embody those values (party leaders and candidates), and convince the viewers of a higher quality of their programme and personal offer [Kolczyński 2007]. The basic

<sup>23</sup> The fundamental principle is to preserve the coherent character of political message (minimum communication coherence).

communication dilemma is the question of whether and how much the participants of the competition are able to influence (in a controlled way) the subject agenda of news services and current affairs programmes broadcast by particular TV broadcasters (public and commercial).

For obvious reasons, the subject of election/campaign had a lot of publicity in the main news services of TV broadcasters; available research results show growing interest in the campaign: in the last week of the campaign, the proportion of information devoted to events connected with the election grew from 31% (17.10.2015) up to 68% on the last day of the campaign (23.10.2015)<sup>24</sup>. The highest mean broadcast time of election subjects was observed in the news service of a commercial TV station TVN ("Fakty" – 62.23%) and the main news service of public TV – "Wiadomości" in TVP 1 (50.37%).

Data from the National Broadcasting Council show the advantage of two parties competing for victory in the election (PO, PiS), with a clear inclination towards Platforma Obywatelska. With the addition of clear positive bias towards that party, it can be concluded that Platforma Obywatelska had quite a considerable influence on the process of forming the subject agenda of TV news services, limiting potential effects of advertising advantage of its main political rival.

Another interesting thing was the overrepresentation (the ratio of frequency of TV presentation to current poll results) of two party leaders: R. Petru (Nowoczesna R. Petru) and B. Nowacka (Zjednoczona Lewica)<sup>25</sup>.

Similar trends were visible in current affairs programmes devoted to political and socio-political issues. The basic difference was in the proportion of the subject of election: relatively high on news channels (TVP Info, TVN 24, Polsat News – mean: 61.2%), and moderate in general channels (mean: 35%)<sup>26</sup>.

An important event in the parliamentary campaign was the programme "Rozmowa o Polsce" (*Talking about Poland*) on 19.10.2015 with the participation of the leaders of two biggest parties: Ewa Kopacz from Platforma Obywatelska and Beata Szydło from Prawo i Sprawiedliwość. The programme followed the requirements for TV pre-election debates, but the fact that representatives of the other parties were left out<sup>27</sup> allowed TV broadcasters to classify it as a special current affairs programme. The adopted formula (with journalists asking

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<sup>24</sup> See the findings of a study by the team of T. Gackowski and M. Łączyński [in:] KRRiT 2015.

<sup>25</sup> This category was also dominated by the leader of Platforma Obywatelska, Prime Minister E. Kopacz.

<sup>26</sup> Based on data from the report KRRiT 2015 the highest broadcast time of the campaign subject was on TVN 24 (65.5%) and TVP Info (62.5%).

<sup>27</sup> Which was contrary to National Broadcasting Council's decisions concerning the mode of debates carried out by (or with participation of) a public TV station.

questions), however, did not promote open exchange of opinions, leading to a very standardized exchange of declarations of well prepared (yet not very well defined) protagonists, which did not significantly change the course of electoral competition in the concluding days of the campaign.

The “Proper debate” with participation of leaders of all the eight election committees (20.10.2015), despite a very formal format which prevented any interaction between its participants (and hence the desired emotions in the viewers), gave unexpected effects, important in political and market terms. Breaking out of the forced formula by Paweł Kukiz (Kukiz’15) and the heated dispute with the journalist hosting that section of the debate helped retain the image of a “political rebel”, and first of all, at the end of the campaign stimulated support for the party manifesting its anti-establishment image.

Equally interesting was the post-debate effect of increased support for the leftist party Razem (*Together*), which had had minimum support in electoral preference polls. That outcome, as well as the side effect of Zjednoczona Lewica coalition failing to reach the electoral threshold, resulted from the right (but better than expected) utterances of the party representative, Adrian Zandberg.

The 2015 parliamentary election, closing the 2014 – 2015 election series in Poland, took place in a complicated market context. The results of previous elections (especially the unexpected victory of the candidate of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość Andrzej Duda in the presidential election) and the clear disappointment of the society tired of the eight years’ rule of the PO – PSL coalition radically undermined the stable, bipolar order of the Polish political market. The formation of new political entities (Kukiz’15, KORWIN, Nowoczesna R. Petru, Razem) also contributed to that. The course of the 2015 campaign clearly showed that not all political actors were able to adapt to the changing market situation<sup>28</sup> and properly modify the electoral strategy (also in terms of communication). In this context, it seems that pre-election activities using TV communication channels became less effective. This conclusion refers both to advertising activities, which in spite of high intensity and relevant financial expenditure did not result in any memorable events (moments that would define the campaign), and to non-advertising ones, following the patterns of routine action and/or using the biased attitude of broadcasters, very poorly stimulating the viewers’ interest in the course of the competition<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> This was especially the case of campaigns of Platforma Obywatelska and Zjednoczona Lewica.

<sup>29</sup> There were no spectacular events carried out for the purpose of media coverage, e.g., comparable to electoral conventions of A. Duda in the previous presidential election.



Analyzing the expenditure of entities taking part in the election, we can conclude that activities involving TV are still dominant; yet, the practice of the 2015 campaign might suggest that the most interesting events in electoral competition are beginning to take place online.

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## **Social Media in an Electoral Campaign: The Case of Polish Parliamentary Campaign in 2015 (Marek Mazur, Katarzyna Stelmach)**

The aim of the article is to present the role of social media – their specificity, challenges and opportunities connected with using them in electoral communication by politicians and political parties. We concentrate on describing the use of social media by political entities competing in the 2015 parliamentary election in Poland in terms of adapting to the logic of networking media and using the media's properties important for the purpose of electoral efficiency.

### **Social media in an electoral campaign**

In studies of political parties' and politicians' use of social media [Jacuński 2016: 77-78], especially in the context of electoral campaigns, the focus is usually on the problem of adapting to the properties of those media connected with new models of media consumption and behaviors of the audience, as well as change of norms and practices of political journalism.

A growing number of potential voters are taking advantage, not only of the access to huge data resources accumulated on the Internet, but also of the opportunity to create political content and share it in the communication network. The unique character of those networks is associated with interactivity, i.e., bilateral communication characterized by quasi directness, continuous updating and quick information exchange, as well as highly individualized content. A person's attention – often in their personal time and private place – may be divided into very different contents: from food recipes up to the issues of European identity. For this reason, and because of the “social” character of the media (platforms of horizontal communication – between citizens, and vertical communication – e.g. between politicians and citizens) and the fact that it is impossible to separate the function of social media significant for political

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audience<sup>31</sup>, the style of communication, unlike in other media, is less formal, more intimate and conversational, requiring more personal self-presentation [Langer 2011: 168].

The impact of new media on relating political events is visible in the significant growth of the number and types of information sources and broadcasters of political information, and in the transformation of media production. On the one hand, the “old media” obtain extremely important access to information and data that appears online, and on the other hand, they must face the hypercompetitiveness connected with the activity of new broadcasters, such as bloggers or grass-roots organizations or groups engaged in communication projects such as hashtag protest campaigns or publicizing selected public problems. To maintain their system position, the most popular news media outlets have to face the challenge of using new technologies and their communication specificity in the media production process.

According to Andrew Chadwick, in the contemporary cycle of political information, digital broadcasters may significantly gain in the competition for the power to influence the form of political accounts at the expense of previously elite circle controlling the process (i.e., mutually dependent and competing groups of politicians and media) [Chadwick 2011: 3-29]. First of all, it is the result of disturbing the basic media order in which political sources of information – in accord with the definition by Michael Schudson – had the power to decide what was regarded as news by means of informing of past or future events [Schudson 2002: 255]. Second, it is because some interventions are possible at each stage of the cycle, made online by politically varied and volatile users of social networking sites and visible for the public. Their goal is often to question or undermine the presented information or opinions. Some of those interventions, not only due to special time compression, are an affront to the standards of socially responsible political journalism<sup>32</sup> and rationality of public debate.

Ulrike Klinger and Jakob Svensson [Klinger, Svensson 2015: 1241-1257] point out that political communication participants need to adapt to the logic of networking sites, i.e. the rules or format of communication in social media [Klinger, Svensson 2015: 1241], though in a political landscape including different types of media the importance of new values and norms of media presentation is far from the logic of mass media. The specificity of new media is evident in media production, content distribution and the use of the media, as well as the

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<sup>31</sup> The main three are: searching for information on the candidates and programmes, watching the political scene, and just entertainment. See: Towner, Dulio 2012: 110.

<sup>32</sup> The problem is not only technical errors such as the lack of verification of information sources in the race for publishing some news first, but also announcing information that is untrue in order to attract the attention of viewers (and advertisers). This problem was first visible on such a large scale during the 2016 presidential campaign in the USA.

characteristics of the viewers. First, there is cheap selection and production of information by non-professionals according to individual preferences and in order to maximize attention.<sup>33</sup> The difference in news content and framework between social media (e.g., blogs) and mass media, empirically verified by some studies, is worth emphasizing. Second, virality is an important principle of information flow between new media users. Unlike in the case of traditionally perceived audience, what counts is the network of contacts, often made up of people who think or feel in a similar way.<sup>34</sup> How popular certain pieces of information are determines the range of their distribution. Although there are no classic gatekeepers, bloggers play a significant role of intermediaries in viral dissemination of information, acting as catalysts of the communication process. Because of the influence bloggers have on political reality, it is not important how popular the blog is but with what people it is popular. Finally, in the context of the logic of using social media, it must be pointed out that unlike mass media viewers, who have a limited access to information in a centralized model of cultural production, the users of social media face an excess of data and have to choose the proper criteria for assessing the value of information. The presence on social networking sites is clearly their reaction to those problems, because functioning in a network of friends and people with similar thinking patterns they indirectly “project” the information they will receive [Klinger, Svensson 2015: 1250] .

With regard to the strategic dimension of electoral communication under the influence of new media, an important question is whether the previous paradigm of political communication is still valid, in which the flow of political information between political entities and potential voters is basically one-directional (from political parties to citizens), centralized, and controlled by politicians. In the light of the normalization thesis, and because of the common attitude of consumers of political information, far from the civic inclination to participation and deliberation, political parties’ behaviors in new media can be deemed conservative. Obviously, there are some changes, but they are usually superficial and only involve “cyber rhetoric” – political promises, greater transparency, and interactive communication with voters. Since the structure of communication process does not change, its democratization is actually only superficial [Larsson 2013: 72-85; Lilleker, Jackson 2011; Vergeer, Hermans, Sams 2011: 477–501].

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<sup>33</sup> Unlike expensive selection and production of information by professional journalists motivated by news values.

<sup>34</sup> Many studies have confirmed the so-called *echo chambers* effect, although there are also many empirically based opinions that this effect is an oversimplification of the characteristics of networking style communication. See study review: Boulianne 2016: 566 – 579.

The supporters of the theory of innovation<sup>35</sup> argue that the recent development of new media, especially social networking sites, leads to parties and candidates adopting a new approach to communication. In accord with the principles of dialogue and participation in value creation<sup>36</sup>, regardless of the risk of losing control of communication, politicians approve and promote real inclusion of potential voters in the campaign, not only to receive grass-roots support it but also to initiate a dialogue and let them participate in forming the political offer.<sup>37</sup> On the basis of the electoral campaign in Great Britain in 2010, Rachela Gibson observes considerable engagement of parties – modelled on the activity of B. Obama in 2008 on MyBO site – in the promotion of a new form of CIC (*citizen-initiated campaigning*), in which party supporters, not only its members, use online instruments prepared by politicians for their own campaign activities.<sup>38</sup> The British researcher seeks in those practices the proof of the potential of new media in the process of structural (traditional membership replaced with virtual affiliation) and functional (deepening and restoration of relations with ordinary party members and local communities) reforms of political parties.

The results of the study clearly suggest changes in political entities' behaviors, but in the light of those results it is impossible to unambiguously prove false one of the above-mentioned theoretical perspectives. This fact does not only result from different research approaches or an important role of contextual variables. It results from insufficient emphasis on the multidirectionality of the impact and mutual relations between the pre-Internet model of electoral communication and the new media concept. Therefore, Andrew Chadwick's theory of hybrid media system in political communication is inspiring for many scholars. According to the British media expert, professionalization of electoral campaigns comes down to combining complementary concepts and practices of mass communication and new media communication. In other words, electoral strategies integrate in different constellations and to different degrees the values and norms valid in the age of broadcasting and the new ones, such as networking, flexibility, spontaneity and participation in campaigns of organizations established ad hoc.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> In the context of potential voters' behaviors, the thesis of normalization (social media only consolidate the existing differences and political inequalities) competes with the concept of mobilization, saying that the political participation of those who have never been politically active is increasing as a result of social media activity.

<sup>36</sup> Concerning the participation in creating values in social media, see: Bachnik, Szumniak-Samolej 2015.

<sup>37</sup> The breakthrough influence on the paradigm of electoral communication on the Internet is usually attributed to the 2008 campaign of B. Obama, when the Democrat's supporters first received instruments to initiate grass-roots communication on such a great scale. See: Lilleker, Jackson 2011; Nowak 2011: 214 ff.

<sup>38</sup> The campaign is based on four pillars: building a virtual community, network users motivating others, organizational activities aimed to multiply campaign resources (financial resources and voluntary work), creating campaign content (users' own messages and the distribution of campaign messages). See: Gibson 2015: 183-197.

<sup>39</sup> In Poland, the hybrid model of political communication is described by Michał Jacuński [Jacuński 2016: 110 ff].

In the light of studies of the use of social media, the hybrid character of electoral communication means the coexistence and mutual influence of marketing management, improved thanks to new technologies (marketing research, micro targeting, management of media relations) and more and more frequent attempts to engage voters in the formula of interactive communication, with the stress on personalized communication style. We also know that new communication channels promote higher activity of candidates with lower strategic resources (so-called *underdog effect*); a change of the tone of communication is also probable if politicians' messages dominant in social media are much more positive than those in traditional media [Bode, Lassen, Kim, Shah, Fowler, Ridout, Franz 2016: 580 – 594; Larsson, Kalsnes 2014: 653-667]. So far, the strongest influence on operational activities in SNS is exerted by the top-down communication model<sup>40</sup>, but the results of the most recent studies, as compared to studies carried out a few years before, suggest a little greater activity on the part of politicians in terms of bilateral communication, assuming the growing grass-roots share of potential voters in the campaign.<sup>41</sup>

From the point of view of political entities, an important argument for the need to understand and adapt to the specificity of social media is their electoral effectiveness.

According to Cristian Vaccari, social media surpass traditional ones in terms of political persuasion potential, their impact is broader than the influence on political attitudes (predispositions) assumed in the theory of minimum consequences.<sup>42</sup> This assumption first of all results from the characteristics of intensity of sharing the message on social networking sites. Due to the way media are used by the audience and the specificity of distribution of messages in friend networks as part of everyday, not necessarily political, communication activity, there is a higher probability that more people to persuade – voters with no party inclination and

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<sup>40</sup> Twitter mostly serves the auxiliary role in that campaign. It can be used first of all to react quickly to current events, inform about the course of the party's or candidate's campaign, and manage media relations in a more interactive way. See: Jungherr 2016: 72-91.

<sup>41</sup> Anders Olof Larsson and Øyvind Ihlen agree with this conclusion after the analysis of interactive behaviors of Norwegian party leaders. See: Larsson, Ihlen 2015: 666-681. See also: Nuernbergk, Conrad 2016: 1-14. Most previous studies prove a lower level of politicians' engagement in interactive communication, see e.g., the analyses of European Parliament election campaign in 2009 in the Netherlands [Vergeer, Hermans, Sams 2011: 477-501], British parliamentary campaign in 2010 (Graham, Broersma, Hazelhoff, Van 't Haar 2013: 692-716), or the 2011 parliamentary election in Spain (Medina, Muñoz 2014: 83-106).

<sup>42</sup> Vaccari 2012: 109-127. Vaccari's theoretical deliberations are based on the model of media impact by John Zaller (RAS: *receive-accept-sample*). According to the model, a change of attitude under the influence of a message occurs when the message is received and accepted by the individual. The intensity of the message understood as the properties of the message and the characteristics of the audience determines which group of viewers will be exposed to persuasion. The key intervening variable in this process is political awareness (considering politics as important and being able to understand it). Moderately aware voters are the group in which the change of attitude is the most frequent. On the one hand, they are aware enough to receive the message, and on the other hand, their psychological mechanism of resistance to content different to their views is not strong enough to prevent them from accepting it.

moderate political awareness – receive political messages. Their attitudes may be changed by the message content if it better suits their preferences and interest thanks to bilateral communication and if its visual form is more efficient than text messages in terms of evoking the approval for the message because of greater emotional load. It is also important that messages are often distributed by information sources that are credible for the viewers; sometimes this even means friends. The probability of persuasive impact is also greater due to the exposure of less politically aware voters to political content prepared by party supporters with a high level of political awareness. Those people will definitely be more active and better prepared to exchanging political information. Together with the dynamics of information diffusion, these properties make good conditions for the reception and acceptance of messages by those who are less politically aware.

There is a lot to prove that the electoral effectiveness of social media (except the intervening variables connected with the viewers and the electoral context) depends on skillful application of the characteristics of those media, following the logic of their functioning.<sup>43</sup> Several recent studies have confirmed the thesis that interactivity and personalized communication translate into higher involvement of potential voters, which may in turn have a positive impact on the assessment of the politician and the intention to vote for them [Kruike-meier, Van Noort, Vliegenthart, De Vreese 2016: 673-694; Kruike-meier, Van Noort, Vliegenthart, De Vreese 2013: 53-66; Lee, Oh 2012: 932-949; Lee, Shin 2012: 515-535]. In the most recent study, Kriukaimier et al, referring to the social presence theory<sup>44</sup> and the psychological mechanism of persuasive influence of an expert<sup>45</sup> concluded that exposure to interactive and personalized communication via Twitter affects the message recipients' political involvement. It should be added that in the light of their study, both types of communication have a mutual positive influence. Besides, after identifying two dimensions of personalized communication: individualization (communication focused on the politician as an individual at the expense of the political party they represent) and privatization (communication focused on information on the politician's private life and their personal thoughts), the authors concluded that the latter one bears the risk of diverting the viewers' attention from political (programme)

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<sup>43</sup> It is worth mentioning that a similar belief was expressed in one study by political consultants in campaign teams responsible for online communication. They share the opinion that despite the risk of criticism and distortion of message content, the centralization of diffusion of campaign messages and focusing on network characteristics of communications is inevitable. See: Vaccari 2012:114 ff.

<sup>44</sup> In this approach, interactive and personal communication enhances the sense of interpersonal contact (i.e., public presence), which in turn improves the chance of positive evaluation of the person we meet.

<sup>45</sup> Expertise (attributing professionalism and competence to the individual) can be treated as one of the dimensions of credibility of the source of information.

contents, thus leading to lower involvement in the message on the part of the viewers. From the politician's perspective, it only seems justifiable to reveal information on their private life if the politician is able to prove their expertise focusing on programme demands important for the viewers.

Apart from the style of online communication, an important issue in the context of voters' involvement is its content. The study of the Facebook activity of B. Obama during the presidential campaign in 2012 shows that content concerning the politician's character and programme is the most important for voters. At least such posts caused the highest engagement, measured with users' activity in the form of likes, comments, and sharing [Gerodimos, Justinussen 2015: 113-132].

### **The role of social media as a channel of electoral communication in Polish parliamentary campaign in 2015**

Data concerning the use of social networking sites by potential voters and entities competing for votes in the context of 2015 parliamentary election clearly shows the increase in popularity and significance of this communication channel in comparison to the previous election of 2011.

During the 2015 campaign, 70% of Poles (24.9 million people) used the Internet, and most of them were SNS users. According to data concerning the last quarter of 2015, the most popular social networking sites were: Facebook (14 million users), Instagram (2.3 million users), and Twitter (1 million users)<sup>46</sup>. Facebook is the most significant social networking site in terms of impact it has on voters. It is the platform of highest flow of political information and opinions.<sup>47</sup> The site also provides the broadest range of communication tools and guarantees the best socio-demographic representation of users [www3]. Last but not least, it enables the most precise identification and reaches varied target groups; actually, this may be the most important feature for political parties.

As we compare data from 2011 and 2015 electoral campaigns, we can definitely see an increase in the importance of the Internet as the source of information on competing parties,

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<sup>46</sup> 75% of Facebook users log to FB every day. Data based on: official Facebook report: [www1..](#)

<sup>47</sup> A study of Internet domains by SentiOne shows that within the last month before the election (between September 14 and October 14), the most opinions on political parties were posted on Facebook (nearly 370 thousand), Twitter (approx. 80 thousand) and [salon24.pl](#) (approx. 20 thousand). Cited in: [www2.](#)



committees and candidates: in 2011, one fourth of those who declared the wish to vote used the Internet, while in 2015, the ratio grew to one third.<sup>48</sup> The activity of social media users in the production and distribution of political messages also increased: the proportion of people who expressed their opinions on political topics and engaged in electoral canvassing on the Internet doubled, and three times more joined online groups supporting some political entities. Yet, this was still done by relatively few Internet users (5-6%)<sup>49</sup>.

The most important online sources of political information were articles on political subjects (51% Internet users, 32% of all the respondents), video materials, including electoral spots and interviews with politicians (37% and 24%, respectively), Internet users' blogs and posts concerning politics (30%, 19%), and the least popular are parties' and candidates' websites (29%, 18%) [CBOS 2015c: 3-4]. Data from CBOS shows that voters of Paweł Kukiz and .Nowoczesna most often looked for political contents online; the voters of Kukiz'15 were more active in the deliberative dimension (online political discussions), and those of PiS, in the participative dimension (engagement in political activities online) [CBOS 2015c: 7].

The youngest voters from the so-called Y generation<sup>50</sup> displayed the highest engagement in online political activity, as is proved by the study "Elections from the perspective of young ones" carried out by Mobile Institute for Odyseja PR in collaboration with Brand24. 46% of younger (19-24 years old) and 33% of older (25-34 years old) Millennials obtain information from online news services (41% and 28% respectively find it in traditional media). A considerable proportion of young voters follow politicians' profiles on SNSs, though not regularly; 35/32% of the respondents do so occasionally, 23/26% once a month, 12/15% once a week; 6% of younger and 5% of older Millennials read politicians' profiles every day. Visiting politicians' official blogs is much less popular. Almost 3/4 of younger and over 50% of older respondents are willing to share their views and opinions. In their political decisions, even 22% of Millennials (both older and younger) take into consideration the opinions of their friends and acquaintances [www4].

In 2015, the presence of candidates for MPs and senators on the WWW was also higher than in the previous election.<sup>51</sup> However, most of them did not use the opportunity to reach

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<sup>48</sup> It must be stressed that the Internet is the 7th most popular source of information on political entities that run for elections. The leaders are still mass media: TV news services and current affairs programmes, electoral spots and advertisements (e.g., on TV and the radio), and contacts with other people. See: CBOS 2015c.

<sup>49</sup> CBOS 2015c: 5. More on the profile of Polish Internet users in 2015: Nożewski 2015: 35-49; CBOS 2015c; CBOS 2015b.

<sup>50</sup> Also known as the Millennials, the generation of people growing up in the world dominated by the new media, born in the years 1984-1994. Cited in: Ceglińska, Kopeć-Ziemczyk 2016: 58.

<sup>51</sup> Regarding their online presence in 2011, see: Batorski, Nagraba, Zajac, Zbieranek 2012.

voters through the Internet. As for those that did decide to have an online campaign, the majority (930 candidates, 13.6% of all the election participants) chose Facebook. 444 candidates (6.5%) had their own Internet websites, and only 230 candidates (3.4%) chose Twitter accounts, including 105 from PO (11.5% of PO candidates) and 61 from PiS (6.6% of PiS candidates).<sup>52</sup>

**Table 1. Online presence of Sejm candidates**

Committee	Online presence index <sup>53</sup>	Number of candidates present on Facebook	Number of candidates present on Twitter	Number of candidates with their own websites	Total number of Sejm candidates	Number of “most active” candidates <sup>54</sup>
Platforma Obywatelska RP	0.1845	241	105	161	916	71
Prawo i Sprawiedliwość	0.1146	148	61	107	919	38
Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe	0.0916	153	25	74	917	16
Zjednoczona Lewica	0.0848	129	46	56	908	25
Kukiz'15	0.0492	100	11	13	840	1
Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru	0.0400	67	18	18	859	5
KORWiN	0.0323	67	10	10	899	0
Partia Razem	0.0227	25	9	5	573	0
TOTAL		930	230	444	6831	156

Source: A. Deryło, V. Makarenko: *Kandydaci do Sejmu w mediach społecznościowych. Twitter nie jest bardziej pracowity niż Facebook*. <http://biqdata.wyborcza.pl/kandydaci-do-sejmu-w-mediach-spolecznosciowych-twitter-facebook> [accessed: 06.01.2017].

As Table 1 shows, Platforma Obywatelska RP, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe and Zjednoczona Lewica had the highest online presence indices, much higher than the other parties. The presence of candidates from Partia Razem was negligible, the lowest in the ranking.

## Network electoral communication of parties and candidates

As early as in the 2011 electoral campaign, communication activity of politicians of the largest parties in social media was evident, but that engagement was very different from the model of professional campaign, characterized by adaptation to SNS logic, significantly

<sup>52</sup> www5. Contrary to popular opinion, politicians from Platforma Obywatelska dominated on Twitter (105 candidates, compared to 61 tweeting PiS politicians).

<sup>53</sup> Number of Sejm candidates present on Facebook and Twitter and having their own sites divided by the total number of Sejm candidates.

<sup>54</sup> Number of candidates who had Facebook and Twitter accounts and also their own websites.

increasing the chance of improving electoral effectiveness. Generally, electoral activities on the Internet were characterized by low activity<sup>55</sup>, there was no interactive approach (the dominance of unidirectional communication), parties and politicians only engaged in standard self-promotion projects [Adamik-Szysiaak 2014: 111-136], and presentations proving good strategic preparation and tactical innovativeness were rare [Kolczyński 2012: 33-53; www6]. There is also little proof for a significant change of using social media in the period between the parliamentary elections of 2011 and 2015 [Bodys 2015: 109-133].

The conclusion of higher concentration of competing political entities on social media is obvious when studying and analyzing the 2015 parliamentary campaign. However, progress in understanding and conscious use of the logic of social media for their own purposes varies greatly from committee to committee.

The activity of two biggest parties is especially interesting. The presence of Platforma Obywatelska in social media was very regular, and they used various platforms. The timeline of the party FB fanpage was regularly updated [www7]: between the beginning of August and the end of October 2015, PO created 239 posts, 62% of which were photos, and 27%, video materials [Nożewski 2017]. PO managed to build a very broad non-directional network of users – though not often, the party exchanged opinions with potential voters in response to comments [Nożewski 2017]. At the peak moment, PO's official profile had approx. 72 thousand fans (while the fanpage of Ewa Kopacz had 25 thousand), but the party only managed to gain 8 thousand new fans in the period from 01.08 to 23.10.2015 [www8]. Making the same mistake as in the previous parliamentary campaign, PO only intensified the activities to engage their supporters a few days before the end of the campaign [www8].

The campaign of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość on social networking sites definitely included many innovative elements, which were quite coherent with the other elements of the party's electoral communication strategy. The fanpage of PiS on Facebook gained 106 thousand fans, including 43 thousand gained between the beginning of August 2015 and the day of election [www8]. That fanpage engaged PiS supporters much more than did PO (at the crucial moment, 37% of all the fans took part in interaction), and much earlier (the highest activity of fans was in August and September 2015) [www8]. As demonstrated by a study carried out by Jacek Nożewski, the involvement<sup>56</sup> of individual users was also much higher than on the profile of

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<sup>55</sup> Actually, the greatest interest on the most popular political platform (FB) was in parties which did not make it into the parliament: Ruch Poparcia Palikota and Nowa Prawica by Janusz Korwin-Mikke. See: Batorski, Nagraba, Zajac, Zbieranek 2012: 10-12.

<sup>56</sup> The author operationalized the users' involvement in the content as the sum of likes, comments and shares of a post and likes of the comments to that post. See: Nożewski 2017.

PO. Compared to PO, the profile of PiS had fewer very active users; instead, they concentrated on maintaining a stable level of interest and thus generating higher intensity of total engagement in the studied period (called by the author “a solid member base”).

On the other hand, the majority of the posts were party messages, which reflects the directional and conservative character of PiS’s network. In the period studied by Nożewski, the party did not engage in discussion with any of its supporters on FB, lowering its interactivity level even more. The dominant form of posts also changed on the PiS profile: the highest number of posts included links to materials from sources other than FB (39%), 32% used photos, and 29%, video materials.

It is worth emphasizing that the highest level of interaction between users (potential voters) in Facebook networks of PiS and PO was generated by posts concerning health care system, taxes, unemployment, and – in the case of PiS – new electoral spots [Nożewski 2017].

Apart from the largest parties, FB activities of Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru were also interesting – the party proposed a subject-based variant of SNS presence<sup>57</sup> in the form of many simple and esthetic posts concerning particular subjects (taxes, economy, law drafts etc.), often even educational in character [www7].

It seems that PiS made the fullest use of the communication and participation potential of Twitter. In October 2015, hashtags: #PiS, #dobrazmiana and #damyrade gained greatly in popularity, and the profile of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość was the third most frequently mentioned (with the number of references exceeding 14.4 thousand). The profile of PiS went 6 positions up in the ranking of most engaging Polish profiles, and 9 positions up in the ranking of the number of activities. Apart from PiS, the only parties listed in SoTrender ranking in September and October 2015 were Partia Zieloni and, occasionally, Partia Razem and Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej. The other positions in the top fifteen of all rankings in that category were taken by individual politicians, which proves their important role as communication senders, and thus, high individualization of communication on that micro blog platform.

As Olgierd Annusewicz observes, the example of PiS shows that on Twitter politicians usually tried to engage voters by reports from the ongoing campaign [Annusewicz 2016: 75-95]. Other popular formats were ‘encouraging tweets’ to support the fans of the party and its candidates, and ‘commentator’s tweets’, providing live comments on the course of news services, current affairs programmes, interviews and debates [Annusewicz 2016: 75-95].

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<sup>57</sup> Marciniak, Godlewski 2016: 63-64. The voters of .Nowoczesna less frequently use the Internet as a source of knowledge on politics and politicians; they treat the information obtained from there as signals, learning more about the subjects in traditional media or from family members and friends (the model of media consumption).

A typical element of presentation of all the political entities on SNS was centralized strategic personalization: the party leader being more for the party's image than other senders of electoral offer. The Twitter profile of PO was concentrated on the person and activity of Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz (#PEK), whose utterances were quoted almost all the time [www7]. Compared to others, the Instagram profile of the ruling party made a positive impression, including not only the photos of the party leader but also of less important politicians, and photos from unofficial media events [www7]. The profile of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość was dominated by the leaders: Jarosław Kaczyński and Beata Szydło [www7]. Streamed Ms Szydło's meetings or Mr Kaczyński's talks had hundreds of thousands of views, and a total of 370 thousand opinions were collected.<sup>58</sup> The Instagram profile of Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru was also mostly used for image purposes: to present the leader in the best possible light [www7].

The crucial role of leaders as message senders is proved by election committees of Kukiz'15, KORWiN and Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru: in each case, the branding is based on the leader's name. Respecting the media preferences of its voters [Marciniak, Godlewski 2016: 63]<sup>59</sup>, Kukiz'15 concentrated its activity on Facebook, where it collected about 150 thousand fans.<sup>60</sup> It used the popularity of the leader, who displayed more than average activity (hundreds of posts a month) and through his many profiles gained as many as 700 thousand fans [www7] despite (or because of) evident lack of professionalism or language and content unsuitable for a politician [www7].

162 thousand of fans of KORWiN party and 600 thousand of supporters of Janusz Korwin-Mikke on Facebook are the result of well thought out concept of social media presence, based on catchy phrases, controversial and blunt materials, mostly concentrated on the party leader and his activity, as well as remembering the mistakes of political opponents [www7]. Especially noticeable is the extraordinary online (inter)activity of JKM, including presence on his own portal with a blog, news service, a and live video chat.<sup>61</sup>

The high (though different for different parties) level of strategic personalization is also proved by the study of presence of leaders in electoral spots of the largest election committees broadcast on You Tube [Mazur 2017: 176-180]. Its highest level was observed in electoral offers

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<sup>58</sup> *Wybory parlamentarne 2015....*

<sup>59</sup> For the voters of Kukiz'15, the Internet is the main source of information on politics and politicians; traditional media are complementary to information from the web. The Internet is also used by voters of Kukiz'15 to look for entertainment, contacts with others, or local and global news.

<sup>60</sup> *Wybory parlamentarne 2015....*

<sup>61</sup> *Wybory parlamentarne 2015....*

of Kukiz'15 and Zjednoczona Lewica, as they were dominated by the style of the their leaders at the expense of other content. The leaders of Platforma Obywatelska, PiS and .Nowoczesna played the roles of main party representatives, presenting their programme messages and demands.

It is worth adding that the two largest parties engaged in mutual discrediting of campaign leaders, either in spots published online or on specially designed websites.<sup>62</sup>

## Conclusions

The above review of studies and analyses shows the image of parliamentary campaign in which the majority of communication practices prove that entities competing in elections used SNSs in accordance with the normalization model. There is little to prove that election committees made an effort in the campaign to implement the principles of co-creating the values of electoral offers and dialogue between the political entities and the voters.

The perspective of hybrid electoral communication confirms the thesis that electoral strategies are dominated by values and norms more fitting the age of broadcasting, such as top-down communication, unilateral communication relations, concentration on content that causes little emotional engagement in quasi direct relationships, individualized centralized personalization without elements of politicians' images based on private aspects. The reported studies did not provide any evidence to prove that politicians have created a modern and well functioning network architecture drawing from the campaign model initiated by the citizens outlined by R. Gibson.

It is worth highlighting the limited online presence of candidates competing for MP seats (1,160 accounts and 444 sites vs 6,831 candidates). Ignoring SNSs in communication strategies or limited activity on them was typical especially of smaller election committees. This is important in the context of assessing the professionalism of the campaign if we agree that in the case of those entities social media play an especially significant role in comparison to other communication channels because of their limited strategic resources and the characteristics of their potential electorate (e.g. Partia Razem).

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<sup>62</sup> PiS prepared two sites to criticize the politicians of PO: [Ewaiprzyjacie.pl](http://Ewaiprzyjacie.pl) and [8latplatformy.pl](http://8latplatformy.pl). Those activities may have contributed to the fact that Ewa Kopacz was the leading subject of negative opinions and critical evaluations made by Internet users concerning the analyzed party leaders: E. Kopacz, B. Szydło and J. Kaczyński (37% of posts referring to her were regarded to have hater content). See: Maliszewski, Baran, Wysocki, Wojciechowski 2016: 37-38. More information on "hate" in an electoral campaign: Różyk 2016:121-144.

Summing up the findings and the conclusions, the case of 2015 parliamentary campaign proves a relatively low level of involvement of Polish political entities in the process of adapting to the network media logic and use of social media electoral potential.

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## SPAIN

## **Democracy, Electoral Behavior and New Political Parties: Reflecting on the Evanescence and Volatility of New Forms of Electoral Participation**

### **Introduction**

For a few years now, the Spanish political context has been going through very complex times, but also enthralling volatile times (Feenstra et al., 2016). In recent years, the political scenario of the Spanish State has been characterized by the emergence of citizen mobilizations and various political initiatives that have led to political changes, whose evolution we are still witness. To a great extent, these changes are the result of citizen disaffection whose roots lie in different compounds that relate to the economic crisis, austerity measures, corruption, and the progressive loss of people's trust in the political class (Pradera, 2014b; Lapuente, 2016).

The economic crisis that has developed within the European framework since 2008, particularly the euro crisis suffered by south European countries (Spain, Italy and Greece) linked to austerity policies, has led the population to be constantly alert for these measures (Gálvez, 2013; Antuñano, 2015; Dekker & Feenstra, 2015; Méndez-Vigo, 2015; Bourne & Chatzopoulou, 2015). These austerity policies, along with high corruption figures, have led to classic political questions like “Who obtains what, when and how?” (Keane, 2005: 19) to appear fervently in the Spanish public opinion.

At the same time, the CIS (*Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, the Spanish Center of Sociological Research) has shown that the population's discredit to the political class and certain basic representative structures have increased since 2009. Political actors and political parties have since this time been established as the third or fourth problem that most worries citizens, whereas corruption has been its second main concern since July 2013<sup>64</sup>. These data evidence strong citizen disaffection, defined by a feeling of cynicism and mistrust about the

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<sup>64</sup> These data can be consulted on the Spanish Center of Sociological Research website (Spain): [http://www.cis.es/cis/opencms/ES/11\\_barometros/indicadores.html](http://www.cis.es/cis/opencms/ES/11_barometros/indicadores.html)

representative political process, and also about the progressive distancing of people from its basic institutions (Alonso, 2014). All this boils down to less generalized citizen appreciation and esteem of classic representative politics and its structures (García-Marzá, 2015; Crouch, 2004).

The combination of these different factors –disaffection, austerity policies, political corruption, growing mobilization, etc.– has led to initiatives appearing suddenly in the Spanish context which, in both civil society and the electoral domain, attempt to take participation possibilities beyond sporadic voting. Thus in recent years, we have witnessed the consolidation of a plural and heterogeneous political repertoire that encompasses the following actions: camping occupations, manifestations, stopping evictions, monitoring platforms, ethical consumer associations, citizen platforms proliferating that defend public services, popular legislative initiatives and the multiplication of new political parties (Feenstra, 2015). In short, various political forms that show a high level of experimentation, and have led us to a scenario with novel characteristics, which deserve being dealt with.

Of all these many actions, we consider it worthwhile to deal with those that affect the electoral domain. In other words, if we take a two-way democracy model (Habermas, 1996; García Marzá, 2015), we see how experimentation in the particular case of Spain affects not only civil society, but also the electoral domain. Many academic works have examined the former question in depth (Flesher Fominaya, 2014; Toret, 2013; Subirats, 2012), whose preparation has resorted to a special predominance in the years 2011-2012 (Postill, 2013; 2014). More recently, experimentation takes place in the representative political field where political opinions have multiplied since 2014 (Subirats, 2015a; 2015b; Collado, 2016; Romanos & Sádaba, 2016), and where voters have shown symptoms of major changes (Dalton, 2014; Cordero & Montero, 2015; Castillo-Manzano et al., 2016). The present work centers on this second domain.

Accordingly, we propose to firstly outline some of the changes that have taken place in Spanish citizens' electoral behavior (Recuero, 2015). Secondly, we consider certain basic characteristics of the new political parties, which have stem from street mobilizations, have appeared abruptly on the Spanish political scenario to increase their political influence, and are presented as alternatives to the traditional way in which classic parties do politics. Before we start our analysis, it is worth pointing out that this theoretical and qualitative study draws its conclusions from fieldwork and from some interviews previously conducted on the Spanish case (Tormey, 2015a; Tormey & Feenstra, 2015; Feenstra et al., 2016). We have added new

sources and demoscopic data to examine and reflect –with up-to-date information until the end of 2016- on voters and new political parties in the Spanish political context.

### **Changes in Spanish voters' behavior: from what is predictable to what is volatile**

The electoral behavior of voters in Spain has varied since the economic crisis began in 2008, and also due to their discredit to representative institutions, which increases as new cases of corruption and misappropriation are discovered among the political class (Romanos, 2017). Given citizens' reaction to these issues, the situation has gone from a certain voting predictability –typical of two-party systems- to electoral volatility (Bartolini, 1986), which makes political analysts' predictions and drawing definite conclusions about what takes place within our frontiers very difficult (Lago & Martínez i Coma, 2013). And so it is that a complex voter's behavior model has appeared in the Spanish context that alters the classic dynamics and presents greater volatility when it comes to placing trust in one of the options that the electoral offer makes available.

In order to understand this change from a historical perspective, we must remember that the democratic transition process that took place in the 1970s gave way to a multi-party political system, and then shifted from one dictatorial context to another where a new variety of political parties applied for general elections (Pradera, 2014a). It was the UCD (*Unión de Centro Democrático*, Union of the Democratic Center) party that formed the government after the 1977 elections, a party that broke up in 1982 when a political system with a dominant party opened up, the PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*, Spanish Socialist Worker's Party), which governed Spain from 1982 to 1993. Since 1993 until the general elections in 2011, the system of Spanish parties remained stable thanks to a predominant two-party system, with PSOE and PP (*Partido Popular*, the Peoples Party, founded in 1989), which were the two main parties that dominated the Spanish political scene. The two-party system era is marked by the political domain of the two main national parties, and it continued in the Spanish scenario despite new parties emerging<sup>65</sup>, a stage characterized by the great predictability of Spanish voters' electoral

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<sup>65</sup> It is worth pointing out at this point the way the Spanish electoral system works because its decentralized proportional vote characteristics in constituencies, along with a minimum percentage of representation, make the consolidation of new political parties on a national scale difficult. The D'Hondt Method sustains the electoral system in Spain, this being the logics designed by Belgian mathematician Víctor D'Hondt in 1878 (Sartori, 1980; Rae & Ramírez, 1993; Bilbao, 1994). The 350 Spanish congress seats are distributed by applying this method, according to which each province represents a constituency that has a minimum of two assigned representatives, and the others are distributed according to the population figures of each province. However, the Spanish Electoral Law includes not only the novel aspect of distributing seats in constituencies, but also includes the requirement of a 3% minimum percentage of votes so it can be potentially calculated as seats. This characterization favors the

behavior (Pradera, 2014a). Nowadays, however, this trait appears to be disintegrating as Spanish voters' volatility is growing (Martin, 2013).

The emergence of the 15M Movement in 2011 is partly explained by the population's generalized discontent with the traditional political class and its representative institutions. This fact has led some citizens to wonder about the ties that link them to traditional political parties. After the mobilizations, camping occupations and demonstrations that shaped 15M as a heterogeneous movement (Taibo, 2011; Álvarez et al., 2011; Cabal, 2011), a high level of citizen disagreement with the political *status quo* was evidenced, and citizens progressively became more influential on the electoral process in the years that followed. In 2011, PSOE was the worst affected party after losing many votes in the general elections held in November, as it went from 11,289,335 votes in 2008 to 7,003,511 votes in 2011, which meant an absolute majority victory for PP (with 10,866,566 votes) the same year. During this electoral process, the deception of those who voted the left and center-left was expressed by them transferring their vote to minority parties (Torcal, 2014).

The 2014 European Elections witnessed what is understood as an organized materialization of the population's discontent with their governing representatives. Indeed this electoral process clearly "punished" Spain's two main parties (Lewis-Beck & Nadeau, 2012; Treib, 2014; Orriols & Cordero, 2015). Political analysts Cordero and Montero concluded that: "The punishment of both the ruling party and the main opposition party reached extraordinarily high levels: each of those parties lost 2.5 million votes relative to the previous EP elections" (2015: 358). And so it was that citizen discontent brought about an increase in the votes which, what were until that time, minority parties received. Indeed the biggest surprise was for the Podemos party, which obtained more than 1.2 million votes (7.96% of the total) and five Euro MPs after appearing only a few months before (Toret, 2015). Consequently, the 2014 European elections were a key point to promote the future commotion of electoral political practices in Spain (Boix & López, 2014; Schmitt & Teperoglou, 2015). Given this new situation, votes acquired a critical and volatile view made by citizens which, until that time, had logically looked to conventionally support the two main Spanish political parties (Anderson, 2000).

So as the population continued to discredit political institutions for their economic and political management, its tendency to reduce its vote to those parties that had until then been in power tended to grow (Lewin 1991; Hübscher et al., 2014; Dalton, 2014). There is also a tendency to move one's vote to parties that offer alternatives, which seems to be associated with

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main national parties and regional parties that have a high concentration of votes and makes the consolidation of national parties difficult whose votes are dispersed throughout different constituencies.

mainly the political parties that formed after 15M<sup>66</sup>. Citizens' desire a change in the pace at which the ways of doing politics materialize in an increasing number of new parties which, with a different kind of ideological proposals, shape a more diverse political context (Grittersová et al., 2016: 276; Bartels, 2014; Rodríguez-Aguilera de Prat, 2012).

In other words, votes formerly derived from a more deeply rooted practice that was decided beforehand, while today voters take into account more information and the strategies adopted by political parties during campaigns while they decide their vote. According to the CIS opinion survey, this lies in the evolution of indecision about voting from the March 2008 General Elections to the December 2015 ones. During this period, the percentage of indecision went from 16.9% in 2008 (CIS, 2008: 5) to 15.4% in 2011 (CIS, 2011: 6), and reached 22.2% in 2015 (CIS, 2015: 9)<sup>67</sup>. As we can see in the table below, indecision is reflected in the progressive loss of the votes of the two main parties (PP and PSOE) and, in parallel, this loss confers other parties the access to the political scene of the Spanish State.

<b>Table 1. Evolution of the number of votes for the main political parties in Spain (2008-2016)<sup>68</sup></b>				
	<i>2008 Elections</i>	<i>2011 Elections</i>	<i>2015 Elections</i>	<i>2016 Elections</i>
<i>PSOE</i>	11,289,335 (43.87%)	7,003,511 (28.76%)	5,530,693 (22.01%)	5,424,709 (22.66%)
<i>PP</i>	10,278,010 (39.94%)	10,866,566 (44.63%)	7,215,530 (28.72%)	7,906,185 (33.03%)
<i>Total for both parties</i>	21,567,345 (83.81%)	17,870,077 (73.39%)	12,746,223 (50.73%)	13,330,894 (55.69%)

So we can see from the various electoral processes held in Spain from 2011 to 2016 an experimentation tendency in not only the political options offered (and the new parties formed),

<sup>66</sup> Since 2008, the Spanish electoral scene has varied to a great extent and reflects changes in voters' behavior, as the following figures reveal. PSOE won the 2008 General Elections with 169 seats, while PP obtained 154, so both the main parties obtained most seats. However in 2011, PSOE lost many votes and obtained 110 seats against the 186 that went to PP, which then formed the Spanish government. It was not until the 2015 General Elections that a greater heterogeneity was evidenced on the political scenario as PP obtained 124 seats, PSOE achieved 90, while the new political parties Podemos and Ciudadanos obtained 69 and 40 seats, respectively. The way in which these figures progress allows us to see how new protagonists appear in the Spanish parties system, which continued to play their role in the last general elections held in June 2016 as PP has 137 seats, PSOE has 85, Unidos Podemos has 71 (the coalition formed by parties Podemos, Izquierda Unida and EQUO) and Ciudadanos has 32. So now we can talk about four leading political parties on the Spanish political scenario as opposed to the two main ones that formed the two-party system, which still play a relevant role.

<sup>67</sup> This information is available in several CIS (*Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, the Spanish Center of Sociological Research) opinion surveys conducted before the general elections announced in the aforementioned years (CIS, 2008, 2011, 2015).

<sup>68</sup> Table produced by the authors. Electoral data were taken from: <http://resultados.elpais.com/elecciones/2011/generales/congreso/index.html>

but also in voters' demand, a tendency that enabled the consolidation of four national parties in 2015 (Rodon & Hierro, 2016; Orriols & Cordero, 2016). To the traditional PP/PSOE parties, Podemos and Ciudadanos are added as parties with certain electoral importance since they obtained more than 13% of all votes. The consolidation of this scenario appears to indicate, according to CIS data, a context in which traditional parties are still relevant in towns and villages, among qualified people and voters with a low income, whereas new parties are consolidated in cities, and among voters with medium-high incomes. Another key aspect that comes into play is the generational aspect since traditional parties clearly predominate among older voters, while new parties strongly feature among young voters.

Thus more volatile and open voter models are willing to experiment in their right to vote. The punishment vote and the change in the political options among different electoral processes are increasingly more present and make the electoral outcome less predictable. Obviously, this also implies an opportunity to increase the offer in the electoral "menu" while allowing the chance to analyze the future reaction of the set of parties to this greater multi-party sensitivity which appears to be taking root in Spanish society. The difficulty of forming a government after the 2015 General Elections held on 20 December (20D) and the long negotiation process after the electoral process of 26 June 2016 (26J) seem to indicate that the political class set that is used to shifting between two blocks has still not acted swiftly against the new "volatile" and multi-party voters. Let's now see some basic characteristics that are consolidated in the electoral offer domain, particularly those apparently (and *a priori*) paradoxical options that leap from the street mobilizations in 2011 ("they do not represent us") to the institutional terrain ("we represent ourselves").

### **New political parties appearing**

Since the economic crisis started in Spain in 2008, the number of new political parties has soared. Between 2009 and 2010, the Spanish Home Office accumulated 295 registers of new political parties. This number doubled during the period of mobilizations, between 2011 and 2012, to 492 newly registered parties. This figure increased further during the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015 as the number of newly registered parties rose to 699<sup>69</sup>. Although the majority of these registered parties are not relevant nationwide, it is striking to note the sudden appearance and presence of certain parties that, more or less, seek to promote the transformation of political system coordinates.

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<sup>69</sup> Registered parties can be consulted at: [https://servicio.mir.es/nfrontal/webpartido\\_politico.html](https://servicio.mir.es/nfrontal/webpartido_politico.html)



Among these initiatives, we find some of them are linked –as far as their members and some of their claims are concerned– with 15M<sup>70</sup>; e.g., *Podemos*, *Partido X* or the many municipal options inspired by the *Barcelona en Común* initiative<sup>71</sup>. Other parties like *Partido Pirata* (“Pirate Party”) or *Escaños en Blanco* (“Empty Seats”) present novel proposals. On the one hand, this proliferation of parties has to be welcomed by those who consider that a wide and vibrant variety of political parties is healthy for a representative democratic system. On the other hand, it also creates problems to reflect on.

The main promoters of the proliferation of new parties are: a) the political and economic crisis context lived in Spain which affects the political class as a whole, but the two main Spanish political parties in particular (PSOE and PP); b) the drastic reduction in costs spent on creating political parties thanks to the progress made in digital technologies and finally; c) the perception of the scope that “street politics” (direct action and other forms of citizen pressure) can reach to back transformation in the policies and agenda of traditional political parties. This has meant that even those activists who are more committed with horizontal forms of participation –assemblies, mobilizations and camping occupations- have begun to view the party as a possible tool to achieve political transformation and, besides, this tool does not necessarily jeopardize activist participation ideals (Tormey & Feenstra, 2015). What this results in is that new parties seek being greatly distinguished from traditional parties, which affects both the meaning of representative democracy and the connotations of the participation term itself, which go beyond the civil society boundary.

In today’s context we appear to be facing the consolidation of two main trends. First, growing disaffection of representative structures, explained by discontent with the way these institutions have worked until the present-day, particularly in recent years, but one that does not deny their worth. On the other hand, a growing demands for some citizen strata to participate more. The well-known motto “they do not represent us”, along with a “real democracy” demand, encompass precisely these two conceptions of disaffection of what exists and of claiming the value of participation, and the need to renew and reshape it.

A more recent trend, and perhaps one of the most striking ones, has been the appearance of many new political parties promoted by members who have been active in street mobilizations. Indeed new parties have constantly appeared since 2011, among which the

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<sup>70</sup> The *AutoConsulta* (Self-Inquiry) initiative regularly publishes the political initiatives that stemmed from 15M. Check: <http://autoconsulta.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/MapaNuevo.png>

<sup>71</sup> Thirty-seven municipal initiatives were twinned in April 2015. These included *Ahora Madrid*, *Marea Atlántica*, *Málaga Ahora*, *Participa Sevilla*, *Zaragoza en Común*, *Valencia en Común* and *Castelló en Moviment*.

following stand out: *Partido X* (2013), *Podemos* (2014) and several municipal platforms (*Barcelona en Común*, *Ahora Madrid*, *Zaragoza en Común*, *Castelló en Moviment*, and a long etcetera; 2014-2015). These parties differ from traditional parties in that they not only include new political claims, but also seek to promote new dynamics (transparency and participation) in their own organizational structures. These initiatives allow such parties to be conceived as another, but not the only, participation tool. At the same time, the digital component of these parties is also relevant as ICTs are employed and promoted for their internal organization, their growth as a party and to disseminate their proposals to citizens (Casero-Ripollés & Feenstra, 2012; Tascón & Quintana, 2012; Izquierdo, 2012; López et al., 2015; Zugasti & Pérez, 2015; Casero-Ripollés et al., 2016). Basically, these new parties appear on the electoral scenario after years of street activism by making claims from street protests and attempting to defend them now from within representative structures.

One first vital characteristic is the vision that these new parties have of themselves as a party. New parties understand a party to be another participation tool; i.e., like a driver of mobilization and pressure to the system. In this way, members of these new parties opt for extending the ways citizens can participate, but this does not automatically exclude them from participating in other forms of political expression: demonstrations, acts of digital activism, political occupations, boycotts, etc. The male and female citizens who participate in new parties understand that in order to enhance the efficiency of their acts, it is necessary to set out on the electoral pathway, and to pragmatically and strategically decide on this option. Consequently, this party is constituted simply as another political way.

This party instrumentalization is not the only differentiating characteristic of new political parties as understanding them as initiatives that seek to leave a mark on the political system is also fundamental. The main objective of many of these new political parties consists in meeting goals which, if successfully achieved, will automatically convert them into something redundant and obsolete. For instance, the *Escaños en Blanco* (“Empty Seats”) party intends to change the electoral law so that it recognizes a blank ballot paper as being countable. In other words, an electoral system that allows protest votes to become empty seats in parliament. If this objective is met, the *Escaños en Blanco* party’s participation in elections would no longer make sense. It is also basic to understand that these parties are characterized by their claims being limited as many of them center on specific themes. For example, the *Partido Pirata* (“Pirate Party”) wishes to encourage universal and free Internet access, whereas *Partido X* (the “X” Party) participated in the 2014 European Elections whose discourse favors a citizen agreement of the basics.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that new political parties are characterized for having a (paradoxical) “anti-party” character as they generally reject the hierarchical structures and discourses of traditional political parties. If one shared characteristic of new parties was to be stressed, it would be their rejection of the traditional “politician” figure and the operational dynamics of traditional parties. Therefore, new parties not only seek to consider alternatives to the political system, but also intend to promote changes in traditional parties’ dynamics.

### **Conclusions: reflecting on new trends in the electoral domain**

According to what has been pointed out so far, there is clearly no need to fear the reduction—and even the disappearance—of political parties within representative democratic systems. Indeed given the proliferation of new parties in societies most affected by the crisis, like Spain, this fear could even be inverted by arguing that the political party as such has only just begun (Tormey, 2015a; 2015b). It has also been evidenced that the traditional coordinates of political parties are rapidly changing. We now move on to look at two clear consolidated trends in this scenario, plus a series of questions that remain open for future research and for events to occur.

First, it is stressed that one of the main objectives of new parties in Spain lies in bringing our attention to the deficiencies or shortages of democracy itself. One of the clear 15M slogans was “Real democracy now!”. This slogan denotes the belief that the existing democratic process falls short of the most fundamental aspects. Hence 15M revalued democracy in such a way that it underlines the idea that Western European citizens have not renounced democracy, even though they show disaffection to existing representative processes (Wessels, 2011). Conversely, it would appear that the objective is none other than enriching and thoroughly examining putting democracy into practice in such a way that it does not compare with the periodical election of politicians, but is expressed in citizens’ daily living. Hence the large number of new political parties that wish to extend political practice by employing 2.0 technologies and peer-to-peer (P2P) exchanges. Many of the new parties that have emerged in recent years intend to reform democratic institutions to improve their operation (Jurado, 2015; Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2016). Indeed many new parties wish to draw attention to the deficiencies that affect democracy and aspire to promote citizen debate about what would be the best way to deal with them. So political parties must be understood to form part of the broader efforts made by citizen initiatives to improve deliberation, to provide better participation opportunities,

and to cut the distance between politicians and citizens, and also between the State and civil society.

Second, new parties mark an overall change that implies moving from long-lasting political organization forms to evanescent, short-lived and immediate political interaction styles, as set out in the work of Tormey (2015a). The difference between the direct or self-organized forms of participation and the kind of politics that we associate with traditional political parties is becoming increasingly more difficult to discern (Diani & McAdam, 2003; Day, 2004; Mertes & Bello, 2004; Castells, 2012; Della Porta, 2013; Della Porta & Mattoni, 2015), which reflects the changing nature of the political parties that we looked at earlier.

In previous decades, organizing a political party involved investing much time, large doses of energy and enthusiasm were needed to launch an organization, and also required considerable financing and long working hours for it to be feasible. Nowadays thanks to digital tools, organization processes have become “ridiculously easy” (Shirky, 2009). It appears that we enter a context where new parties form part of a more general tendency that is evanescent and liquid in nature. These parties will come and go between some elections and the next. So our connection with them and what they represent will be less secure and firm than that which existed for the type of membership or sympathy associated with the traditional party, which tended to develop more deeply set roots with their followers.

Moreover, there is a series of open questions about the possible future development of these new parties, an opening that indicates that we are still witnessing their evolution. It is worth bearing in mind that new political parties constitute large plural parties with politics of belonging and open, or practically open, membership. Many of these parties do not expect a given rate being paid and the process to register to be able to participate in debates, primary elections and in the selection of candidates tends to be simple and open, especially through new digital tools. This affects the perception of how a party can be and must be internally organized, and perhaps ends up influencing traditional parties, which might feel obliged to open their structures and introduce democratizing aspects.

On the other hand, these parties are set up with a strong social mobilization component. Generally speaking, the objective consists in transferring the pressure they exercise from civil society to the institutional domain to increase the influential capacity. Opting for this dual strategy leaves an open question, that of whether institutional logics would not limit future options (or capacities) of mobilization beyond the institutional domain. That is to say, to what extent can parties combine such disperse (vertical/horizontal) political logics? Will they become more relevant when accessing institutions or will the pressure they can exercise fade?

Is there a danger that these parties appear –in Habermas’ words- colonized by the administrative power?

Moreover, these liquid and evanescent forms will be determined to a great extent by future electoral failures or successes. In electoral terms, possible success or failure in future elections is still to be seen to a great extent; e.g., we have seen how *Podemos* appeared suddenly on the scene for the 2014 European Elections and has become a consolidated political force after the 2015 and 2016 elections. Many municipal political forces have obtained surprising outcomes, are governing some Spanish cities (*Barcelona en Comú*, *Ahora Madrid*, *Zaragoza en Común* or *Por Cádiz Sí se puede*) and are playing a determining role in local governments (CsM, among others). Other political parties like Partido X have been less successful among activists, who have detected electoral consolidation among that party’s interests. Other parties or initiatives have been created, but do not participate in elections under their names (*Demos +*, *Ahora tú decides*, *Frente Cívico*, *AdA*, etc.). Those that are not successful in electoral terms probably focus their efforts on other more closely associated tasks with the civil society domain. So we will have to wait and see which route these parties that are consolidated in institutions will take.

Along these lines, at the end of 2016 *Podemos* showed the difficulties it has to consolidate its structure nationally and the challenges that come with moving from an evanescent structure to another longer lasting one. This situation is not the same for the municipal initiatives as their smaller geographical size allows them to deal with this challenge differently. We shall also have to wait to see how the relation between *Podemos* and the many “*en Comú*” initiatives all over Spain will develop in the future. Nonetheless, the key question that remains is closely linked to the type of party that will consolidate these parties; i.e., to what extent will they manage to balance the “vertical” and “horizontal” elements in their party structures? To what extent can they be long-lasting parties? Up to what point will they take participation in both their own structures and the institutions where they are relevant?

Finally, another key question remains: will voters follow a volatile voting trend, or are we perhaps witnessing temporary protest-type voting that will end if, and when, “more traditional” voting models return? Beyond the matters dealt with and the questions we pose herein, what appears to be certain for the next elections held in the Spanish State is that voters will face more varied political options, which will range from more traditional political parties to more recently formed protest-type parties, and this will prompt citizens to at least reflect more profoundly to make a firm decision about which political party deserves their vote.

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## **Post Crisis-2015 Elections in Spain. Four Candidates Run for Office in a Tense Country**

On the last leg of Mariano Rajoy's legislature, Spain's political future was at risk because the country was in a tail's spin. The economic situation was not improving and unemployment and deterioration of the welfare state became ever more apparent. On the other hand, on June 19 of 2014 the King Juan Carlos I abdicated the throne in favor of his son Felipe VI and thus adding a new risk factor, in the mist of political polarization, the monarchy gambled its prestige, legitimacy, and roll as arbitrator. In this state of mind, Spaniards went to the polls December 20 of 2015. Due to all these factors, these elections were going to be, in many ways, unprecedented. In the first place, two new political parties had been formed, Cuidadanos (Citizens) and Podemos (United We Can), that had good probabilities of changing, once and for all, a model that for years had relied on the two traditional parties (Partido Popular or People's Party and PSOE) without annulling participation of other nationalistic or regional parties that "per se" had a guaranteed seat in parliament.

Of the candidates running in this election, only Mariano Rajoy was seeking re-election. The other candidates, Pedro Sanchez (PSOE), Pablo Iglesias (Podemos) and Albert Rivera (Ciudadanos) debuted as rivals on this affray conscious that was make or break for their political careers.

Through a political, media and journalistic analysis, the beginnings, challenges, and context in which each politician devised their particular governance plan for Spain will be analyzed.

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## **Mariano Rajoy Brey (PP): the art of managing the times with the challenge of seeking re-election.**

Born in Santiago de Compostela (Galicia)<sup>73</sup> in 1955, Mariano Rajoy is not a politician that the great analysts would call charismatic. Quite on the contrary, the image that he projects does not claim great attention. Often described as a "grey politician", Rajoy did not have the 2015 elections in hand.

As discussed above, the emergence of two new political parties threatened the traditional "status quo" of the two large parties that had governed Spain, PP and PSOE, as well as the many cases of corruption that called into question the performance of his of his own party right at the end of his legislature, set a difficult political scene in which Rajoy would find it hard to shine as the candidate Spain needed to lead the country out of the crisis and towards recovery. Added to this, tensions within the PP created an environment in which many proposed replacing Rajoy out of fear that he might not be successful in winning the election<sup>74</sup>.

Mariano Rajoy started out in Galician politics during the eighties. Professionally, the conservative leader won in 1978 a position as a Register of Deeds, in Spain generally this public office position is well-paid, and his first goal was to obtain professional stability. It is surprising – when you think about it- how young he was when he obtained this post, truly a record. Even this detail of his public career was subjected fierce scrutiny and was a subject of controversy. Critical media reports aired during the middle of the political campaign stating that the "popular" candidate had neither acted in a clean nor transparent way in his first years acting as a Deeds Register, since there were certain inconsistencies found in the political functions he undertook starting in 1982. The truth is that there were certain loop holes in the law that applied at that time in which Rajoy, although he had already quit his position as Deed's Register, according the report, could have received certain income on the side independently of his political performance (Medina, 2015).

Rajoy established his political career working for the Xunta de Galicia (Government of Galicia). Close to the veteran Manuel Fraga Iribarne, a great leader of the Galician right, the current President of the Government progressively occupied key positions. While he

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<sup>73</sup> An area located in the northeast of Spain.

<sup>74</sup> Many looked towards the Vice-president and government's Spokesperson, Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría. Not only did she represent a younger and media-friendly figure, but also added a feminine image to the party that could pay-off very well..

established himself as a rising star, he increased his participation and political involvement, until 1989 when he assumed his post as a National Member of Parliament. After gaining some stability, in 1996 he leaped frogged politically, as well his presence in the media increased, the Rajoy that we know today was appointed as Minister of Public Administrations by the government of José Maria Aznar during its first term in office. Nearing the end of term of this legislature, between 1999 and 2000, he acted as Minister for Education and Culture for almost a year due to a restructuring of government. However, his prominence in the PP was not due to this, but because of the confidence the then President, Aznar, deposited in him to create the electoral campaign to help him win one more term in office after the elections in March of 2000. This assignment, a raw political battle, highlighted the qualities that usually define Rajoy and was showcased in this campaign:

“The People’s Party will have to face up to two different electoral campaigns in the March 2000 general elections. The protagonist of one is Jose Maria Aznar, who has commissioned the Minister for Education and Culture, Mariano Rajoy, a trusted strategist that for decades has been entrusted with this kind of projects. It will be a low profile, smooth, and almost routine institutional promotion, in which Aznar will merge his role as chief of State with that of being the PP candidate. The other campaign, featuring heavy and open confrontation with the PSOE will be starred by Javier Arenas, Secretary General of the PP and Sevilla’s leading candidate.” (Casqueiro, 1999)

“Institucional”, “low profile”, “smooth”. That is how the leading reporter of the time defined the campaign that Rajoy was leading and that, in a way, could even be considered as an image of his own personality.

With the new PP victory, Aznar wasted no time in asserting that Mariano Rajoy was a key figure in his team. His efforts during the campaign were, again, rewarded with a position in the Cabinet. Rajoy was appointed as the Minister of the Presidency during 2000 and 2001. From 2001 until 2002, he took office as Minister of the Interior. After preforming these duties, between 2000 and 2003, Aznar appointed him as the Government’s Vice-President.

His key and transversal role as minister in the government of Aznar, positioned Rajoy as a possible successor to the ex-president as leader of the People’s Party. Based on media reports, he did not seem to be the popular choice. In front of him were public figures such as Jaime Mayor Oreja, ex-minister of Interior, and Rodrigo Rato Figaredo, vice-president and Economic Minister in the Jose Maria Aznar governments. In some spheres of influence, some even pointed to Alberto Ruiz Gallardon<sup>75</sup>. However, as the own ex-President related in his memoirs (Aznar,

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<sup>75</sup> Key figure in the People’s Party in Madrid, first as regional president, and then as mayor of the Spanish capital. Years later, he was Minister of Justice for Mariano Rajoy when he acted as the government’s President.

2012) Rajoy was personally picked as his successor leading the party after Rodrigo Rato refused him twice. According to the preface of his memoirs – in which Aznar reveals that although he had promised to leave power after eight years he actually no longer desired to remain with the executive power --, the ex-president underlined the three main circumstances under which made Rajoy the chosen candidate: represented the continuity of the ruling PP policy's, maintained the internal hierarchy and, on the other hand he was not a political figure that could be interpreted as extension of Aznar himself.

It is worth rethinking this criteria when, during the December 2015 electoral campaign, ex-President Aznar maintained a constrained and tense silence – although not complete—on some of Rajoy's proposals from his watchtower in the FAES Foundation, a think tank traditionally linked with the PP that was beginning to realize that the incumbent president and candidate that was to repeat the term at La Moncloa grew further and further away from assumed ideologies.

Even so, in September 2003, after confirmation on the National Board of the PP, Jose Maria Aznar promoted Mariano Rajoy as head of the party and candidate for the presidency. Although at the time the forecasts were very early and unpredictable, nobody could of foretold the tragedy of the March 11, 2004 Madrid Bombings. Shock as well as the government's strategy that claimed that the attack originated from the terrorist band ETA further tensed the social climate in the days prior to the election. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero from PSOE would overthrow the center-right from power and Mariano Rajoy would frankly remain in a situation of political weakness as leader of a party that was stunned by the loss and in which, as the attacks on Madrid were investigated and a deeper understanding of the nature of the attacks was obtained, slight and suspicions were concentrated.

From that fateful 2004 until 2011, time in which the socialist Rodriguez Zapatero governed, Mariano Rajoy had to concentrate on two missions that seemed evermore difficult to achieve:

- Assert himself as the conservative leader exercising his role as the Opposition.
- Strengthen the People's Party, at times very fragmented by the more orthodox view points and that of the inner circle closest to Rajoy.

In the first of his missions, the task was difficult. After the attacks in Madrid on March 11<sup>th</sup>, the government of Rodríguez Zapatero was changing the foundations of Aznar's Spain by

implementing more social aids and increasing public spending. At the same time, the first portion of the socialist leader government was especially significant because he dared openly challenge the United States and bring back to Spain the troops deployed in Iraq that Aznar had promised to send to the president of the United States by that time, George W. Bush, and the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair. Moreover, Rodríguez Zapatero drove the possibility of negotiating with ETA terrorist group to try and achieve a peace treaty. Another taboo that was being faced in Zapatero's Spain was national cohesion; the socialist former president even mentioned that Spain was a "nation of nations", setting the stage for the renegotiation of a new Statute of Autonomy in Catalonia. This political strategy was in direct contrast with the core values of the PP: the unity of Spain and a heavy hand against ETA. The road taken by Zapatero was qualified by Rajoy as "irresponsible", and he expected to right the socialist former president's wrongs after the election of 2008. It did not happen. His defeat after Zapatero's first government made even more difficult his second mission. Rajoy's efforts were then focused on trying to resist the "friendly fire", the internal opposition, as Díaz remembers (2012:19):

"He built a castle in his own office to repel the attacks of his internal adversaries" Nobody thought he would make it but, after resisting stoically, he reached the congress of Valencia, he won and renewed his team with certain hints of Zapaterism. He was very careful to make people know he had chosen the center, ultimately separating himself for Aznarism".

Díaz points out the survivalist pose that Rajoy assumed to keep himself in power. A key in this sense was the congress of his party, celebrated in the city of Valencia in 2008, which, despite the internal pressure and issues, we managed to win. Already invested as President of the PP until the next election, Mariano Rajoy began the slow movement towards the "center" that he wanted to lead, although in the process he may have to "kill the father", his predecessor, José María Aznar, and distance himself from, in consequence, some of his ideological principles. Rajoy himself, in a book of his memoirs published in 2011, described the type of PP he wanted to lead: a PP "opened, centered and European".

However, beyond his political proposals, what really secured Rajoy's road to the presidency of Spain was the severe economic crisis that doomed the second government of Rodríguez Zapatero, who was unable to revert with his actions a reality that was increasingly becoming darker for most Spanish people. The decline of the PSOE approaching 2011 was evident. The impressive demonstrations by numerous groups of "indignados" (anti-austerity movement) that later combined massively to form the Movimiento del 15-M (15-M

Movement)<sup>76</sup> was a sign of a later dramatic ending for the socialists. In fact, many of the citizens that joined the movement and participated in the protests felt betrayed by the political left that they felt no longer represented them. This, of course, was no guarantee of an automatic victory by Rajoy's PP, it was actually the opposite. Especially because the Movimiento 15-M was trying to fight the status quo of the political bipartisanship. The "Indignados", of course, would never vote for the PP nor for what it stood for. However, the movement, which did not yet have a political structure to present itself for election, did not affect Rajoy's aspirations, as he then won the election in 2011. Once in power, the reforms driven by Rajoy soon followed. Often, Rajoy's government justified austerity measures, in tune with what was happening in other European countries in crisis, as a consequence of what "they had received" from the former president, Rodríguez Zapatero. Paying off debt had become top priority. That goal, and trying to resist the separatist tensions that were strongly present in Catalonia, were the focus of Rajoy's efforts. On a second category was left the crisis his own party was living because of the different corruption cases and scandals that came out in the open. The involvement of members of PP in different allegations of misappropriation of public funds and illegal funding of the party's structure meant a damaging blow for Mariano Rajoy, who started to realize it was not going to be easy for him to stay in power. The PSOE, as we will see later, had already established its new leadership; and both to its left and its right, the PP had more enemies due to the arrival of new parties, such as Podemos and Ciudadanos. However, above all, what Rajoy feared most were the allegations that Luis Bárcenas<sup>77</sup>, former treasurer and senator for the PP, could direct against him. Although, at the beginning, Bárcenas had tried to leave Rajoy aside, in July 2013, the EL MUNDO journal published some messages evidencing a direct relationship between the former treasurer and Rajoy himself (Inda y Urreiztieta, 2013).

This was not the only case affecting the PP, and Rajoy. In a government that became increasingly more complicated, Rajoy did not like to be paraded in front of the media. He tried to avoid reporters, both in appearances and statements, but he was now in the eye of the storm. Every time he had to explain himself to the media, periphrasis and circumlocution were his tools to try to distract and avoid actually giving his opinion with respect to what he was asked

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<sup>76</sup> The Movimiento del 15-M or the Indignados had as its headquarters the emblematic Puerta del Sol in Madrid. After a protest that took place on May 15<sup>th</sup> 2011, thousands of people that felt betrayed by the politicians who have put their needs aside set camp spontaneously on the center of the capital city. Although there were other numerous gatherings and demonstrations of "Indignados" across the country, the one in Madrid became the epicenter of a movement that would change the country's political landscape and bring unexpected consequences.

<sup>77</sup> Luis Bárcenas was one of the main participants in a network that had designed a system for accounting black money and assigning it to pay overpriced salaries for the higher positions of the Partido Popular and finance several activities of the organization. By the decision of the Judge ruling over the case, in the summer of 2013, Bárcenas was sent to jail on the risk of him escaping or destroying evidence.

about. He was trying to mind his words. For example, Rajoy, when referring to Bárcenas, never mentioned his name. He would rather refer to him as “that person” in front of the media. The most famous and hilarious moment was when the President referred to his former associate, Rodrigo Rato<sup>78</sup> as “that person you are referring to”, before the reporters who were trying to learn of his opinion regarding the involvement of the former minister in different cases of misappropriation of funds.

Besides his distance from the media and how uncomfortable he seemed to be in front of them, he came across as a lazy and not-so-active leader. The vignettist José María Pérez González “Peridis” often draws Rajoy, in his comic strip in the EL PAÍS journal, sitting on a giant chair smoking a cigar. However, the most accurate criticism comes from journalist Pedro J. Ramírez<sup>79</sup>, Director of EL ESPAÑOL electronic journal (<http://www.elespanol.com>), who often refers to the PP leader as an “estafermo” (quintain in English), a device used for training in jousting exercises, which was a rotating figure attached to the ground that simulated a man armed with a shield and balls that took the hits and tiltings with the lances of the participants. The game consisted in avoiding the hits delivered by the quintain once it was made spin by the action of the impacts of the participants. The term is also used for describing people that stand still, people that do not take action, a “twit”.<sup>80</sup> When the election period was close, Ramírez published a harsh essay about Rajoy<sup>81</sup>:

“Lacking genius and charisma, of a lesser grace or internal light, awkward and indifferent, incapable of generating empathy or at the very least complicity, after having deceived many, after letting everybody down, Rajoy is already meat for the slaughterhouse”.

During the last third of 2015 and facing election hoping to be reelected, Rajoy offered several interviews in different media with the intention of getting clear of his aversion to media attention. During the campaign, there were those who were sure he was politically finished.

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<sup>78</sup> Rodrigo Rato, in other times praised as the person behind the economic miracle of Spain as former Minister of Economy under the government of José María Aznar, and recognized as Director-Manager of the IMF, was involved in a case of misappropriation of funds during his time as President of Bankia.

<sup>79</sup> Pedro J. Ramírez was founder and Director of EL MUNDO journal from October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1980 to January 2014. He became an enemy of Rajoy after the Bárcenas scandal, given that his journal published as an exclusive the polemic messages exchanged between the PP President and the former treasurer of the party that were previously mentioned in this chapter, Ramírez always credited his dismissal to the pressure exercised by large Spanish companies as well as the government itself. To get more information about this matter, refer to: <https://www.cuartopoder.es/elremediodelosmedia/pedro-j-ramirez-abandona-la-direccion-de-el-mundo-veinticinco-anos-despues-de-fundarlo/5231>

<sup>80</sup> The definition of the term “estafermo” in Spanish can be found in the Diccionario de la Real Academia Española’s website: <http://dle.rae.es/?id=Gk8FNzB>

<sup>81</sup> The full article can be found at <http://blog.elespanol.com/arponero/las-bolas-del-estafermo/>

However, what Rajoy was able to prove was, above all else, his tactical ability and how he was able to manage timing, the classic “wait and see”, although merely by chance.

### **Pedro Sánchez and his challenge: leading the PSOE to lead the country**

It’s something unexpected, unprecedented; in just two years Pedro Sánchez managed to make the jump from local and sectoral political positions away from the front line to become the leader who, in the December 2015 elections, tried to face Mariano Rajoy. In a policy increasingly measurable by its share of screen in all its formats (television, mobile and internet), Sanchez implied new energies and a rejuvenation in two directions. On one hand, he represented hope to a PSOE in reconstruction after the departure of Rodríguez Zapatero and the resignation of his successor, the former minister Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba. On the other hand, full of energy of the newcomer, he was ready to fight Mariano Rajoy.

Pedro Sánchez was born in Madrid in 1972. He attended the mythical Ramiro de Maeztu School, one of the benchmarks in public education in the Spanish capital. Amateur player in basketball, he became part of the team of its education center, Estudiantes. After going to the University, he graduated in Economic and Business Sciences. He completed his studies with several postgraduate programs. In 1993, as told by Garea (2014), he joined the PSOE and soon began practicing active politics in the Socialist Youth, even on a small scale. His professional side developed in parallel to his political role as assistant or collaborator for important names of his party in recent years. He worked as a university professor at the Universidad Camilo José Cela in Madrid<sup>82</sup>.

Between 2004 and 2009, Sánchez was councilman of the City council of Madrid in different periods. Garea (ibid.) states that he did it “in rebound” since he obtained the seat as result of the resignation of his companions. In 2009 he was, for the first time, deputy for Madrid. But just as his local experience, his arrival in the Parliament was due to the resignation of some colleagues such as Pedro Solbes, former Minister of Economy at different stages and former European Commissioner for Economic Affairs. With his party’s electoral defeat in 2011 Sánchez left his post as deputy, but only to in 2013 - again – due to a resignation; this time of Cristina Narbona, former Minister of the Environment in the executive of Rodríguez Zapatero, who went to occupy a position in the Spanish Nuclear Security Council. However, it is surprising to know that during his time as a deputy, Sanchez went quite unnoticed.

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<sup>82</sup> According to Garea, he taught the subjects of History of Economic Thought and Economic Structure.



If his arrival to the Congress was almost by "by chance" as pointed out Garea, also his eruption in the executive of the PSOE was caused by the resignation of others. Sánchez had never been part of the key organs in which the party is structured, that is to say, his promotion as general secretary and candidate for the presidency of the Government was articulated almost "handicraft" and, rather, by the absence of other more preponderant references. In fact, the crisis of the PSOE after the period of Rodríguez Zapatero and an "energyless" Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba caused the necessary search for a new leader.

Although former minister Pérez Rubalcaba, as secretary general of the PSOE, tried to revive the party, a new failure - that of the elections to the European Parliament in 2014 - forced him to rethink his future. Finally he decided to take a step back. Sanchez knew how to take advantage of the moment, from his position as deputy, and his participation in some radio and television gatherings. Little by little Sánchez was preparing, although, as usually happens in these cases, he was not the only one. We should remember he was not a personality of absolute relevance within PSOE. In the party's primary elections held on July 13, 2014<sup>83</sup>, Sánchez finally became the Socialist secretary-general although he would still need confirmation at the PSOE national congress held a few days later. Coated with the support of the party, Sanchez abandoned the last ranks he used to occupy in the Congress of Deputies to become the head of the opposition. Also, as candidate for the presidency of the government, the new socialist leader would prepare to fight with Rajoy the direction of the country.

But, under these circumstances, when did Pedro Sanchez become someone to be trusted to regain power? The journalist Manuel Sánchez (2013) says that the socialist leader began to gain support before his candidacy. As an anecdote, he says that the presentation of the book titled *The new Spanish economic diplomacy*, signed by Pedro Sánchez, was attended by a good number of personalities linked to PSOE. Also, despite the unattractive title of the book, there had been some media expectation: "But, behind the scenes, it was not the book that grabbed attention, but the socialist leader itself," said Manuel Sánchez.

Indeed, Sanchez's personal traits projected an attraction and a telegenic that Rajoy, as the main opponent, did not have. In a time when no one suspected that Sánchez would lead the party one day, the journalist Karmentxu Marín (2011) highlighted the ability to laugh, his "meticulous" profile in addition to the willingness and ability to deliver of the PSOE's leader. Even with the adjective that has always been applied to him and which nowadays is commonly

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<sup>83</sup> Sánchez disputed the leadership of PSOE to other candidates like Eduardo Madina and Jose Antonio Pérez Tapias. Both represented different political families of PSOE.

used, "Pedro el Guapo", Sánchez himself stated: "I say thank you for that, because, as things are, all compliments are welcome. But I believe that in life, and in politics, is not so much about the face, but to face anything. And I face everything even if that breaks my face."

It's a fact that his physical looks accompanied him as a sign of identity since he occupied the general secretariat of his party and helped him generate expectation in every interview or television intervention he was trying to get to set up his electoral campaign. Now we should ask, was there any content behind the facade? In his favor, in while in the Congress of Deputies, Pedro Sánchez had the opportunity to take advantage of the corruption crisis in the PP and worn-out image of the PP. Also, compared to other political alternatives, Sanchez was supported by the long history and tradition of the PSOE.

A few days after the elections, as in the case of the other candidates, the newspaper EL PAIS invited Pedro Sánchez (2015) to explain in an extensive article his idea about Spain, as a political synthesis of his program. In said article, Sanchez explained his intention of building a "fairer, prosperous and free society." He also criticized one policy, the PP's, focused on overcoming the economic crisis with a growth that in fact had failed to reduce inequalities or give added value. He also tried to expose one of the great failures of the legislature of Mariano Rajoy: the territorial tension for the separatist aspirations that had become more visible in Catalonia. "The Socialists," he said, "do not conceive Spain without Catalonia, but we cannot conceive Spain without all its diversity. We must reaffirm that we all fit and that we are all necessary for our collective progress." In his text, Sánchez always speaks in plural, with this appeal: "the socialists." With that perspective he also tried to cope with the tensions of parties like Podemos, who questioned the equilibrium system established by the Spanish Transition after Franco's death. "Socialists don't need to demonstrate everything that exists to excel in the landscape of discredit that some extend over everything we have done as a people since 1977," said the PSOE candidate.

Despite his strong statements, the great challenge of Sanchez was to try to convince that it was more than an image campaign amid the efforts of the PP to try to save his model, and other parties that come to fragment even more the electoral mass.

### **Pablo Iglesias (Podemos): the expression of the indignant movement and the fragmentation of the left.**

With an overwhelming personality and powerful media skills, Pablo Iglesias - and those who accompany him in Podemos, the left formation that he managed to constitute to attend the

general elections in 2015 - has been one of the protagonists that most convulsed the political future of Spain. Iglesias was born in 1978 – he already was an interesting element to claim the interest of those who were increasingly indignant and disappointed with the *status quo* of the Spanish policy installed during the legislature of Mariano Rajoy. The solutions that the government of the PP applied to tackle the political crisis were translated in wide reforms that the citizens did not perceive as positive; job insecurity, the fragility of public services and a blurred future prospects, did the rest. This was the context in which the figure of Pablo Iglesias as a political leader strengthened and popularized.

He was born in Madrid in a family always considered with socialist and anti-fascist ideas, Iglesias first graduated in Law from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, something for which he did not have full vocation, and later on in Political Science (Suárez, 2014). His academic resume was complemented with several master's degrees, but the most important for him were those related to communication. It seems obvious, but Iglesias balances the symbiosis between politics and communication. Of course, in this sense, it seems a true antithesis of Mariano Rajoy.

To his work as a political analyst and his desire to work at the University, we should add his first collaborations in the media, not massive, but all leftist, like the magazines *Rebelión*, *Diagonal* or *Kaos en la Red*. Iglesias also believed, in participatory politics. In fact, a biographical data frequently appealed to by the media in Spain is that he took part of the Anti-globalization movement in 2001. In 2008, the leader of Podemos obtain a doctorate in Political Science in the same University where he had studied and, his doctoral thesis reflected that impetus, although Iglesias preferred to softened it:

"We talk about global social movements (and not of anti-globalization movements) and we identify them as movements of anti-systemic nature to historically relate them to a series of experiences of social and political protest of the last 150 years." (Iglesias, 2008).

After achieving his doctorate, Iglesias became a university professor, always linked to political analysis. In parallel, he worked as an advisor for different organizations and institutions, directing specific courses and writing articles. The different publications signed by Iglesias deal with popular disobedience, the relationship between politics and the cinema or television; In short, on the people's need to recover democracy<sup>84</sup>. But his energies were

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<sup>84</sup> You check a sample of his work on the web <https://pabloiglesias.org/libros/>

distributed between the classrooms and television sets. In 2010 he began directing the television show *La Tuerka*, broadcast by TELE K<sup>85</sup>, a television channel in the Madrid neighborhood of Vallecas<sup>86</sup>. The concept of the program launched by Iglesias was created as a strongly positioned and committed space and with the goal of "democratizing a Madrid television space, for good or probably poorly dominated by conservative sectors" (Torres, 2014).

The great leap of Pablo Iglesias, when he really began to be known throughout Spain came from the hand of the 15-M Movement. His assessments, his rhetoric and his ability to concentrate on his arguments the feeling of the "indignados" made of Iglesias the analyst and tertullian over which many television shows of great chains in Spain fight over. Between the demands and the media presence, Iglesias became the touchstone of the citizen movement that would eventually lead to a formal party, Podemos, in January 2014. His objective was to appear in the elections to the European Parliament in the summer of said year.

His general speech, denouncing inequalities and scarce social justice in Spain, as well as the indifference of the big parties, PP and PSOE, which under the protection of bipartisans did not seek to fulfil the interests of citizens, but were obsessed to keep their power shares. Churches and their coreligionists spoke contemptuously of "caste", to refer to this policy that they believed to be stagnant. With this term they also involved the financial elite of the country.

As the European elections are approaching, those who felt attacked by the pressure that *Podemos* was gradually exerting, many times in the heat of the polls, tried to invalidate his speeches accusing him and its surroundings of demagogues, populists and anti-system. In addition, some scandals tried to damage the progress of the movement. In fact, several political advisory works provided to the Venezuelan government, whose democratic projection was doubted under the Chavez government of Nicolás Maduro, led to speculation that Caracas financed the campaign of Podemos. Also, were controversial the ties of the producer of *La Tuerka* with an Iranian television (Hispan TV), forced Iglesias to explain and to justify himself. The PP also accused him of not being critical of the "abertzale left", that is to say, the pro-independence left of the Basque Country.

In any case, Iglesias navigated around these arguments and strongly replied, again showing his mastery in front of the media. Iglesias was speech, but as we have mentioned, he was also image and esthetics. With his everlasting ponytail, his informal pants and checkered

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<sup>85</sup> The development of the program was assumed by a producer that depended on a cultural association called Con Mano Izquierda whose board of directors, Iglesias himself was a member.

<sup>86</sup> This humble district in Madrid has always been one of the most disadvantaged and impoverished in the capital.

shirts, the leader of Podemos had established his image. This was definitive for the great success of the party in the European elections of June 2014. In addition to ideas, and not to be ignored, as recalled by Suárez (2014), in the ballots of Podemos for those elections, instead of the party's logo in its usual place, the Image of Iglesias appeared. Ultimately, politics turned into an image; or rather, an image turned into politics. As it were, the strategy worked, and Podemos achieved notable success in the European Parliament's elections. In virtue of this victory, Iglesias served as a Member of the European Parliament from June in that 2014 to October 2015. The moment had come to expand his political work and, together with his collaborators, install Podemos within the Spanish parliamentary framework. As Iglesias himself wrote in 2015, "change is underway and cannot be stopped". Further on, near the end of the campaign, Iglesias would go on to write in *EL PAÍS*, in the same *Tribuna* that had been granted to all other candidates, that his commitment to the general elections of the 20<sup>th</sup> of December was based on implementing a new transition that had emerged with the 15-M Movement.

Iglesias forecasted the parliamentary model based on absolute majority systems had come to an end, as electoral fragmentation was more than plausible. He concluded by noting that the in Spain Podemos wished to transformed, one of the key axis would be to bet on a real representative democracy. Furthermore, Iglesias assured his party would work for independent justice, a system that would offer guarantees against corruption. He also proposed a "constitutional armor for social and environmental rights." Finally, in perhaps his most ground-breaking proposal from the breakpoint they used to defend –with its nuisances and distinctions– PP and PSOE involved Spain's internal cohesion. Iglesias spoke openly in that article in *El PAÍS* of the "acknowledging plurinationality and the right to decide."

Ground-breaking, dynamic, great rhetorical and challenging the established order. That is how, in the elections of December 2015, a Pablo Iglesias was presented, taking the theoretical politics taught in college classrooms to actual practice, although sometimes theatrical, stilted and made for TV. An undeniable fact is that with Iglesias and Podemos, the Spain's left-wing would end up further fragmented.

### **Albert Rivera: The Pragmatic Philosophy of the Citizen Party**

The entry into politics of Albert Rivera could not be understood without the social fragmentation experienced by Catalonia when seeking a new fit within Spain. The distinctions between the central Government and the Catalan autonomous government became more and

more evident and abrupt. The search for an independence referendum, prohibited in the Spanish Constitution, sowed the differences between the various Catalan political assets: Catalan Nationalists vs. “Spanish nationalists.” The relations between Catalonia and the central Government got complicated during the term of Mariano Rajoy, but by then, Rivera (Barcelona, 1979) had already jumped into active politics. With a Law degree from ESADE (Aparicio, 2006), an institution affiliated to the Raimón Llul University –a private enter-, he practiced his profession for some years for La Caixa bank.

However, in the autonomous elections of 2006, Rivera became fully committed, inspired, as Aparicio refers, by the well-known Manifesto of the 15, where celebrities such as the theater director Albert Boadella, intellectuals such as Félix de Azúa, and journalist Arcadi Espada, among others, spoke of the need to create a party would provide Catalans with politicians involved in the real issues, and not in secessionist chimeras. That’s how Rivera launched himself into the adventure of leading Ciutadans (Citizens), a party aspiring to drive a true bilingualism that would break away from Catalan’s institutional imposition, as well as other reforms of the electoral system that would bring them closer to the “one citizen, one vote” criteria, and thus dilute the excessive burden of territoriality when defining political representation in parliament. Rivera aspired to a better fit of Catalonia in Spain, but not on secession, but rather on the defending the country’s unity. In those Catalanian elections, Rivera’s party attained timid representation: three members of parliament. Four years later, he would revise political presence in the Catalanian parliament. However, the advanced autonomous elections of 2012, Ciutadans achieved six more seats. The real projection had begun for Rivera who, on the other hand, also handling his presence in the mass and social media, had built a profile as a representative of new politics.

On his personal and political career, Rivera himself offers plenty of clues on his official website ([albertrivera.es](http://albertrivera.es)). For example, he insists that the will to change is one of his core leit motiv. Although none of them knew of his facet as a father, and as he states:

“I believe there is a before and after when you become a father. A new dimension opens, you go into a different state. When you become a father, you become more complex, more sensitive, you are more open to life’s sense. You notice what is important, the priority. It becomes your top priority, and everything else takes second, third and fourth place. And, logically, this also affects your attitude in politics, in everything in life, but also in politics.”

The leader of Citizens argues that his involvement in politics was due to a “certain sense of justice, because I believe in the values: equality, freedom...” But above all, revolving around

the idea of Catalonia, and its role within Spain, encouraged him to continue putting up a battle in an attempt to neutralize the drive of a further installed nationalism, fueled by the incompetence of successive governments in Madrid. Rivera himself regrets this circumstance, as his states in his personal website<sup>87</sup>:

“We Spaniards suffer from a lack of moral leadership, we are now seeing this with Rajoy, and also saw it with Zapatero. An absolute failure has existed now and before, knowing the other part seeks to separate, to think on how to unite, how to add. That is to say, to have an attitude that enables the great majority of Catalonians to be comfortable within their own country.”

With a groomed image – always in a suit and tie, or a casual style-, a significant telegenic quality, and fluid rhetoric, Rivera soon took more space in mass media, where he was often showcased as an example, unprecedented, in recent Catalan politics where the difficult balance of Partido Socialista de Cataluña (PSC) and the evident erosion of PP continuously strengthened Catalan nationalism. Rivera represented, on one hand, a youthfulness that traditional parties were unable to represent or conquer and, simultaneously, broke away from the outrage phenomenon driven by the political figure of Pablo Iglesias. Within this context, an opportunity opened for Rivera to jump into national politics. Rivera finally decided and, in July 2015, became the candidate of Ciudadanos to preside over the Government. In Catalonia, Inés Arrimadas would successfully continue her work, up to the point of become the head of the opposition after the autonomous elections held in September 2015.

Facing the 2015 elections, Rivera was extremely careful in attempting to ideologically define himself as right or left wing. For some, he defended a decaffeinated right-wing concerned about their potential to subtract votes from PP. For others, he was nothing more than a renewed version of the old Popular Party that would end up being gobbled. The left-wing – especially Podemos- and certain mass media critical of Rivera, attributed to him and his party connivances with the country’s leading companies, agglutinated into the selective stock index, the Íbex 35 that, by the end of 2015, could feel disappointed or concerned for Rajoy’s ability to continue in power. This accusation was an attempt at unmasking a “caste” in disguise. The easy rouse consisted of reducing Ciudadanos to a “Right-wing Podemos”. Armentia (2015) would dim this reflection, noting the falsehood of Ciudadanos having been created by that Íbex 35, even though he didn’t deny that the country’s entrepreneurial group enjoyed the projection of Ciudadanos:

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<sup>87</sup> Compare <http://albertrivera.es/sobre-mi/>

“Josep Oliu, the author of the expression “Right-wing Podemos”, is a patron of FEDEA (Fundación De Estudios de Economía Aplicada), a ‘think tank’ stemming from Banco de España, and driven by Banco de Santander, Repsol, BBVA, Iberdrola, Telefónica, and La Caixa, among other Ibex 35 companies. The relationship of Ciudadanos with FEDEA is well-known. Luis Garicano originates there, the architect of the economic training program of Albert Rivera. That is also the origin of Florentino Felgueroso, whose ideas on Education in forming Ibex 35 have been echoed in the Ciudadanos program”.

However, it wouldn’t be easy for Rivera to get rid of that label. Just as for all other candidates for the Government’s presidency, the EL PAÍS journal offered the leader of Ciudadanos the chance to synthesize his idea for the Spain he would govern. And, more precisely, his commitment with the idea of a country is the first issue he defends. To clearly mark his distance, although probably an unnecessary gesture, Rivera does not renounce the values of the 1978 Transition reviled by Pablo Iglesias. Of course, the defense of Spain’s unity would for him be an essential maxim. In his text, expressed as a final argument for the campaign, he assured the need to set up a government that would accommodate professional profiles, as other international leaders have done, such as Canada’s Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, or Barack Obama himself. Education and its safeguarding, through a national pact and deeply reforming the public administration to make it more efficient, constituted his other fundamental commitments. Apparently, Rivera was committed to offering more precisions than ideological proposals.

### **By Way of Epilogue**

After the 20-D elections of 2015, the parliamentary arithmetic frustrated all candidates’ potential to govern. It became necessary to reach a pact that did not materialize because none of the parties was actually willing to take the initiative. Mariano Rajoy chose to abstain from the attempt, even though his party had attained more seats in Parliament. Who did make the attempt, and out of loyalty as he stated as often as he could, was Pedro Sánchez. The leader of PSOE attempted to set up a government pact with Ciudadanos, where he sought to integrate Podemos, with the premise of leaving out Rajoy’s Government.

However, Pablo Iglesias refused to participate in a project with these traits, because he understood there would be more options if he achieved a pact joined by all of Parliament’s left-wing parties. Nevertheless, Sanchez was unable to accept Iglesia’s offer, as this would force him to sign agreements with nationalist and breakaway parties. Proving the antagonism between Podemos and Ciudadanos was more than obvious. In a dramatic investiture session, Pedro



Sanchez, supported by Rivera, failed to attain the support needed in the House to govern. In light of this, repeating the elections became the only choice.

Facing this scenario, positions were then much clearer than in the 20-D elections. In this strategy, Pedro Sanchez would lose the most, because part of his traditional voters had felt betrayed for having sought the support of Ciudadanos, and for abandoning certain progressive budgets. In fact, if this materialized in the elections to be held in June 2016, Pablo Iglesias would be reinforced. However, who this panorama truly reinforced was Mariano Rajoy. His usual “wait and see” could now offer him good parliamentary revenues.

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## **International questions in the electoral programmes of the Spanish political parties**

### **Introduction**

The general election held in Spain on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2015<sup>89</sup> offers several new perspectives on the social and political evolution of democracy in Spain: socially, the impact of the economic crisis has modified traditional voting across a wide sector of the middle class, altering the bi-partisan dynamic which has underpinned the country since the beginnings of democracy in 1975 and particularly from 1982 onwards<sup>90</sup>. Furthermore, this wide sector of society, hit hard by structural unemployment, the construction bubble and the labour reform laws brought in by the first Partido Popular (PP) government, has seen the emergence of a new political party, Podemos, situated on the hard left, characterized by an abrasive and populist rhetoric appealing to the young in particular. At the opposite end of the spectrum another party, Cuidadanos, has come to the fore; growing out of a civil initiative in Catalonia in 2005 with a mission statement for democratic regeneration in Spain, Cuidadanos is marked by a willingness to enter into open-ended, cordial dialogue.

Although the largest long-standing parties, the PP and the PSOE, took barely 50% of the vote in the December 2015 election, compared to the almost 70% they obtained in the election of November 2011, the application of the Spanish Electoral Law, nevertheless, allowed them to take up more than 60% of the seats in the Congress of Deputies. The result meant a certain break in the bi-partisan absolute majorities which had dominated up to that point, but it is not possible to talk about a definitive end to this electoral tendency.

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<sup>89</sup> These elections did not lead to the formation of Government as the investiture of the candidate and leader of the PSOE, Pedro Sánchez, was rejected by the Congress of Deputies by 219 votes against to 131 in favour on March 4<sup>th</sup> 2016. It was necessary to hold new elections on June 26<sup>th</sup> 2016 in order to form a Government, this time led by the Partido Popular candidate Mariano Rajoy who was sworn in as Prime Minister on October 26<sup>th</sup> 2016

<sup>90</sup> Since the election victory of the PSOE in 1982, Spanish political life has oscillated between this left-wing party and the right-wing Partido Popular. The old Communist Party, after various crises, saw itself subsumed within the minority Izquierda Unida (United Left). Some nationalist parties, particularly in Catalonia (Convergència i Unió) and the Basque Country (Partido Nacionalista Vasco) have played a determinant role in the formation of central government through their support of the majority party be it the PP or the PSOE.

Despite the December 2015 vote having been for a general election, in terms of reading and analysis, the subsequent election held in June 2016 allows us to study certain aspects of the previous electoral campaign and its results as if it had been a first round vote or trial run, and to consider issues which were seen for the first time in December 2015 then consolidated in the second election, as well as those other aspects which, though they made an extraordinary impact in 2015 were either superseded or forgotten about in the new internal context that surrounded the 2016 campaign, thus highlighting their ephemeral or flimsy nature.

The circumstances in which our political system found itself (and which it finds itself today) lend a particular and novel character to the 2015 elections which differentiates them from all the other elections which have taken place since the beginning of the Transition.

### **Spain's foreign policy orientation and the electoral context**

The growing importance that Spain has enjoyed on the international stage since its incorporation into the European Community in January 1986 and into NATO following the referendum held that same year is undeniable. These two achievements came about as the result of a wide consensus among the political forces during the time of the Transition. As a result, generally speaking, foreign policy has been perceived by successive governments as the policy of the State, reflecting a dual agreement: consensus among political parties and between these parties and Spanish society - which sees itself reflected to some degree in the way it is projected abroad. It would be useful to make a brief presentation of our international track-record in order to summarise how the outlines of foreign policy have historically been directed towards the following scenarios:

- The relationship with the United States, driven by the signing of the Madrid Pacts in 1953 when decisive military and economic cooperation began. The policies of security and defence of the Transition governments have hinged fundamentally on the development of these bi-lateral relationships to further include economic, financial, scientific-technological, industrial and cultural co-operation. Spain's belonging to NATO has overlapped with both scenarios in the areas of security and defence. In 1998 these bilateral relations were bolstered by the Defence Cooperation Treaty, modified on three occasions to allow United States destroyers to use the naval base at Rota (Cádiz), from 2013 onwards, and to permanently integrate the air base at Morón (Cádiz) within the United States rapid action force in Africa from

2015. Furthermore, Spain has been part of the NATO Anti-Missile Defence System since the Lisbon Summit in 2010.

- Ibero-America: Ibero-America has traditionally been a priority for the Spanish Foreign Office due to our deep historical, cultural and human links. Here there has been an institutional evolution from the paternalistic and almost proprietary perspective which was held throughout the Franco regime, towards a closer and more equal vision which has prioritized several specific areas, ranging from collaboration in peace processes and political transition throughout the 1980s to cooperation on development as an instrument of foreign policy. This has led to Spain's presence as one of the main investors in the region in sectors such as energy, banking, telecommunications, audio-visual communications, among others.
- The Mediterranean, the Maghreb and Middle-East: the historical presence of Spain in these regions, due to proximity, historical ties, intercultural and human exchange - as well as economic interests - has also been a constant in foreign policy relations. There can be no doubt that community policies towards the Mediterranean are one of Spain's contributions to the European project. In this context, Spanish foreign policy is completely integrated into European policy towards the Mediterranean.
- Europe: integration into European institutions was a long-held dream for Spanish citizens who wished, once the dictatorship had disappeared, to attain international normalcy in step with the internal changes that the country was undergoing. The negotiating process was long, complex and full of difficulties and obstacles including those presented by some European countries such as France which was fearful of the impact that the incorporation of Spain could have on its agricultural sector. From an institutional perspective, Spain's membership of Europe has allowed foreign policy to operate within a far wider framework while at the same time providing Europe with the viewpoint of a state on its periphery, geographically speaking, offering a distinct perception to that of the north and centre of Europe on major foreign policy issues in a globalized world: security, migration, multilateralism, international terrorism, the environment, development and equality, energy...

Following on from this brief presentation of the priorities of Spanish foreign policies, we must remember that the international context prior to the election was marked to a great extent by two events that shook Europe and which were imported via its frontiers: the refugee/immigration crisis that began in the summer of 2015 and the series of jihadist attacks that took place in Paris on November 13<sup>th</sup> - and the subsequent lock-down in Brussels due to the threat of further attacks.

However, internal political questions had a high profile during the electoral campaigns in 2015 given that there were both municipal elections and elections in Spain's autonomous regions that year. Of these the Catalan elections were particularly significant due to the challenge that the Catalan President had thrown down to central government on the question of Catalan independence, a challenge which was judged to be unconstitutional by the Spanish Constitutional Court at the end of 2015. This election, held on September 27<sup>th</sup>, led to a split in an historical nationalist party (Convergencia y Unión, CiU) and its integration in an electoral platform which, despite victory, did not win a large enough majority, leaving it in need of the support of Candidatura de Unidad Popular (CUP) an extreme-left group characterized by representation by assembly. 2015 was also shaken by new cases of political corruption and new accusations of corruption in pre-existing cases, the signing of an anti-jihadist pact in which Podemos played the role of observer, significant support for King Philip VI and the beginnings of economic recovery - at least according to macro-economic indicators; this improvement was not yet felt by citizens, however, with unemployment holding at over 20%.

### **International issues in the electoral campaign**

Spain, from an international point of view, may be considered as a medium-level power; it has the fourth largest economy in the eurozone and the fifth largest in the European Union as a whole; according to the International Monetary Fund, in 2016 and 2017 the Spanish economy will maintain twelfth position with a gross domestic product of 1,242 billion dollars, ahead of countries such as Australia and Russia (Expansión, 2016). The Bank of Spain estimates that the gross domestic product could rise 2.3% in 2017 (Banco de España, 2016, 4). Its levels of competitiveness, export capacity, infrastructure, resources and economic potential attest to the global position of the country. In the Índice de Presencia Global<sup>91</sup> (the Elcano Global Presence

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<sup>91</sup> This Index measures the effective position that the different countries occupy in absolute terms according to 16 variables grouped in three vertices: economic, military and soft power.

Report) from the Spanish think tank, the Real Instituto Elcano, Spain is also positioned twelfth, behind Italy and sixth within the European Union.

All these characteristics - together with the conviction among citizens that the individual and collective success of the country is linked to foreign relations, our international presence and connections - should have led to a high degree of importance given over to international themes, particularly to foreign policy, in the electoral campaign of 2015. If we add to this the participation of new political forces comprising young leaders with renewed, if not to say transformative, ambitions for the global political agenda, we might have expected to be surprised by a breath of fresh air in political programmes offering creative, original and seductive proposals to a citizenship disaffected with its leaders and mistrustful of its institutions.

However, little attention was given to general international questions by the different leaders, either during televised debates or on the campaign trail. Neither was any interest shown in introducing an original or profound vision regarding foreign policy in either its regional and sectorial aspects or at an institutional level. To this minimal interest in foreign policy, we must add the lack of new initiatives or solid and detailed messages spelled out in the electoral proposals of the different parties in relation to international concerns. And, naturally, there is a manifest lack of a political vision on those themes which have instrumental, repetitive and, sometimes, discursive characteristics - that is to say those which are removed from the pragmatism and coherence that Spain's foreign policy should seek to articulate.

In this work we are going to analyse the proposals on international questions which were outlined and presented in the electoral programmes of the four political parties who won the largest representation in parliament: the conservative Partido Popular (PP), which occupies a position on the centre-right; the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) on the centre-left; Podemos, which made its first appearance in a general election, ideologically situated to the left of the PSOE; Ciudadanos, also appearing for the first time in these elections, a non-nationalist party that represents a wide, moderate section of society and advocates democratic regeneration.

### **European Union: policies, economy, security and institutions**

Out of all the regional areas, Europe is the one which is a natural focus and priority in all foreign affairs. All parties include proposals dealing with this area. The PP considers the EU to be a priority as far as foreign policy is concerned for the foreseeable future, particularly in regard to advancing the Fiscal Union and the Banking Union as well as the application of mechanisms of solidarity and budgetary support within the eurozone. Similarly, it considers

that Spain should support the reform of the Economic and Monetary Union in EU, the creation of an energy union and the expansion of a Common Policy on Migration and Asylum, together with a policy on frontier management.

In the area of security, the PP defends the strengthening of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) leading to the EU having a higher international profile in multilateral forums with a more sharply defined Common Defence Policy. It has shown itself to be a firm defender of large scale business treaties and in particular the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the USA which, it believes, will create wealth and opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses. The mechanisms of joint cooperation in the fight against terrorism, the strengthening of Europe in the struggle against global challenges such as cyber-terrorism, climate change and the battle against pandemics are other subjects which have been given a high profile and the continued support of the PP within the European Union (Partido Popular, 2015:208-213). It is also necessary to highlight a new institutional feature affecting decision making in the EU: the PP has proposed the creation of new mechanisms in order to improve decision-making on Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), as well as a recourse whereby a qualified majority decide on a greater number of issues (Real Instituto Elcano, 2015: 19).

For its part, the PSOE also states that our projection within the EU is its first priority as it is through this organization that sustainable development and the fight against poverty must be guaranteed. However, for the PSOE, the EU should, more than anything else, manage globalization - not only in its economic and financial aspects but also in the fight against terrorism and illegal trafficking. The PSOE also proposes an extension to the Common Defence Policy and a solution to the conflict in the Ukraine as this would facilitate dialogue between the EU and the Russian Federation. It supports a federal European model with a common policy on asylum and migration and the boosting of the EU's role as an outside actor so that the government of the eurozone can represent Europe in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. They would also like to see greater coordination among European members of the United Nations Security Council with the medium-term aim of having single representation (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, 2015: 242-249). The PSOE considers that the TTIP has enormous geopolitical importance and must not be detrimental to the interests of European citizens who should be guaranteed the highest level of protection regarding data, cultural diversity, audio-visual services etc. For this reason, the party demands complete transparency in all aspects of the negotiation process.

Ciudadanos, for its part, supports the revision of European treaties in order to draw up a “real European Constitution that will defend European democratic values” along with greater political, military, fiscal, monetary and social integration. Like the Socialists, they advocate single representation for the EU on the United Nations Security Council. They also propose the strengthening of the CFSP and the European agencies that are fighting terrorism and organized crime; an increase in the responsibilities of the European Parliament; a single and transparent labour market; a more ambitious Schengen space within a Europe without internal borders and with safe external borders where the control of migratory flows is undertaken through a common asylum and migration policy – something which all four parties analysed here support. They show their support for the signing of the TTIP if this is carried out with transparency and respects European legislation on the questions of internal markets and defence of citizens (Ciudadanos, 2015). As the culmination of the EU’s position in the world, the party concludes that “Europe should be less reactive and more strategic, more assertive on specific questions such as the promotion of democracy and human rights and more pragmatic on those things that directly affect it (security, defence, migration flows, energy, etc.)” (Real Instituto Elcano, 2015:19).

For Podemos, human rights, democracy and sustainable and equitable development are the three foreign policy mainstays they propose. These should also be the supports on which to revise foreign policy and common security. Furthermore, these values should take precedence over geopolitical, economic and security interests; as such, asylum and migration policies should prioritise human rights over border protection issues. The party puts forward numerous economic proposals within the EU framework, such as an end to austerity measures, a modification of the present calendar for the reduction of public debt as well as the drawing up of an action plan to reduce poverty and the social exclusion of children in Europe. In a coherent manner they state their direct opposition to the TTIP as a “threat to our sovereignty, to our democracy, and to the welfare state” (Podemos, 2015: 221). They also advocate the strengthening of the political union via a new constituent reform based on a social model and common values. They state the need to come to an understanding with Russia, seeing confrontation as contrary to European interests; they hope for a profound reorientation of Europe’s policies towards its neighbours.

Despite the four parties showing unanimity on the question of creating a common policy on asylum and migration – a particularly sensitive question at this time in Europe due to the unfolding human drama in the Mediterranean with the surge of refugees fleeing conflicts in



North Africa, Syria and elsewhere - they diverge on the issue of possible intervention in Syria: the PP, the PSOE and Ciudadanos have not declared themselves to be opposed but they demand that any such intervention have the support of the United Nations and of the national Parliament if it were to materialize. Ciudadanos has expressed its willingness for Spain to participate in an international alliance to combat ISIS. The leader of Podemos, however, showed his complete opposition to either an aerial or land incursion and the party's electoral programme outlines proposals for the consultation of citizens on the participation of the Armed Forces in important international military operations (Programa Podemos, 2015: 223).

### **The USA, NATO and defence priorities**

Spain's geographical situation, close to areas of tension, makes it particularly sensitive to security questions. This sensitivity frequently transcends a solely European stage to affect NATO, the United Nations or the 5 + 5 Defence Initiative. As regards the NATO agreement of 2014 on the progressive increase in defence spending to 2% of the GDP, the PP maintains that the share of the financial burden should take into account each country's economic situation, the maintaining of previously agreed commitments and a real contribution of each ally to questions of security. In this sense, they consider that Spain "exports stability and contributes in an efficient way to global security" (Real Instituto Elcano, 2015: 22) and, furthermore, it has slightly increased the defence budget in 2014 and 2015.

The PSOE, which basically addresses security questions to the European Union, considers that agreements with NATO should not displace other social priorities in the country such as education and health. It proposes the long-term programming of investment in defence policy and the encouragement of research, development and innovation. It considers it appropriate to seek out disarmament and non-nuclear proliferation treaties internationally, as well as to reform the UN Security Council as the fundamental organism for maintaining world peace (PSOE, 2015: 247).

Ciudadanos, for its part, believes that the 2014 NATO accord is unrealistic and that it should make more coherent commitments that depend on the capacity of each individual country. It considers that Spain has been committed to international operations according to the agreement it made many years ago and that it should both continue to do so and to deepen its collaboration with the Atlantic Alliance. Nevertheless it pays close attention to the initiatives that the EU should take on, among which they highlight the following: the creation of security measures that respond to the terrorist threat, organized crime and cyber-security etc; the creation

of a European army; the setting-up of common European strategies on the European military industry and a shared security and defence culture based on our values and principles.

Podemos rejects increased defence spending by NATO as it does not consider it to be a priority and it also opposes military operations as the only answer to international threats. It considers that NATO's expansion in Eastern Europe has led to growing instability in the region by creating the perception of a Russian threat. In its programme Podemos defends the idea that security and defence must be centred on the idea of guaranteeing human rights, democracy and sustainable development. It advocates the integration of European defence systems alongside a greater European political autonomy in respect to the United States, as well as NATO compatibility with a pan-European security in which Russia is a participant (Podemos, 2015: 224).

The four parties hold a similar line, to a greater or lesser extent, with regard to the utilisation of the air base at Morón by the USA for its African missions: the PP defends its use as stated in the Third Amendment Protocol (2015) of the Cooperation Treaty, with the argument that any increase in the USA's military deployment at Morón requires consultation at the highest level between both governments. The PP also believes that a new Treaty is needed which responds to the new challenges of the Twenty-first century.

The PSOE, closely in line with the PP on this question, considers that the military alliance with the USA is fundamental as a means of guaranteeing our Southern flank. Ciudadanos meanwhile have criticized the lack of transparency in the negotiation and the absence of reasons that were given for accepting the conditions, appealing for a fuller debate and a political consensus. Podemos also criticised the opacity of the negotiations "which call our sovereignty into question" (Real Instituto Elcano, 2015: 27). It criticises the existence of US bases on Spanish soil and the country's participation in the anti-missile shield as, according to them, this affects national sovereignty and puts the security of the nation at risk (Podemos, 2015: 223).

### **Regional areas: Ibero-America and the Arab World**

Ibero-America is a constant in our foreign affairs, as we have previously indicated; however the programmes of the four parties do not propose or deepen any existing plans of action. The PP congratulates itself on its support for the processes of regional integration and to extending Schengen visas for Colombian and Peruvian citizens; they propose an increase in

cultural exchange in both directions, seeking ways to attract Ibero-American investment in Spain. A similar vagueness is apparent in the PSOE's programme which insists on the development of talks with all Ibero-American governments as well as the encouragement of the Ibero-American Community of Nations. Cuidadanos, for their part, recognises that the relationship is somewhat ill-defined at the present time and that it lacks clear future objectives; it proposes new instruments for cooperation without defining what they might look like. We can observe the same lack of content in Podemos who limit themselves to demanding the protection of the rights of Spanish immigrants in Ibero-America and for Ibero-Americans in Spain, together with a proposal for Spanish participation in the Colombian peace process.

The same absence of proposals is apparent in regard to countries in the South Mediterranean: the PP talks of stability being a mutual objective, of two shared challenges – the fight against terrorism and the control of migrant flows. The PSOE argue for a “true and far reaching political strategy which will tackle terrorism from a security perspective, police and intelligence service cooperation, the defence of rights and freedoms, as well as the “Citizen's Alliance” initiative (Real Instituto Elcano, 2015: 48-49). Cuidadanos proposes to bolster commercial and cooperation policies with political-institutional mechanisms either via civil society or the new governments. Podemos puts forward a foreign policy that is based on respect for and the promotion of human rights, gender equality, religious and ethnic plurality, together with “support for democratic processes and empowerment of citizens” (Real Instituto Elcano, 2015: 49); they also demand recognition and self-determination for Western Sahara and the State of Palestinian (Podemos, 2015:225).

Finding a solution for the problem of Western Sahara is also mentioned in the PP's programme; it insists on a central role for the United Nations and adhesion to the norms that the Security Council has established on this question (Partido Popular, 2015: 218). The party advocates strengthening what it refers to as the ‘excellent’ relationship with Morocco while at the same time increasing links with Algeria. The PSOE also wishes to help resolve the Western Sahara conflict, to improve dialogue between Morocco and Algeria and thus contribute to the stability of the Maghreb region (PSOE, 2015: 243-244). Cuidadanos, for its part, is in favour of strengthening the relationship with Morocco, not only in regard to security but also economically, culturally and socially. Podemos advocates a multi-dimensional relationship with Morocco which is not limited to migrant flows and security but which aids its social and political development (Real Instituto Elcano, 2015:50:52).

## **Spain's international projection: development cooperation, institutional reform, Marca España**

One of the first measures adopted by the PP after winning the 2011 election was the drastic reduction - almost 70% - of resources set aside for Official Development Assistance (ODA), which had an enormous effect on the viability of some Spanish NGO projects. The PSOE and Podemos both put forward the idea of a new Cooperation Law which would establish the goal of giving over 0.7% of GDP to foreign development aid. In the case of the PSOE the intention would be to prioritise this aid for failed states, those in conflict and those suffering extreme poverty (PSOE, 2015: 252), while Podemos promises to create a new Ministry of Equality and Solidarity, charged with applying policies of international cooperation and solidarity (Podemos, 2015: 230-231).

During the electoral campaign President Mariano Rajoy declared that one of his foreign policy aims would be to meet the challenges outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. These include: the fight against poverty and hunger, guaranteeing inclusive education, achieving equality between the sexes, ensuring the availability of water and the fight against climate change (Real Instituto Elcano, 2015: 13). In their electoral programmes neither the PP nor Ciudadanos offer a new law as the solution for achieving the 0.7% though they are in favour of increasing resources for this question. The PP voices its support for other Spanish organisations specialized in co-operation and for the promotion of great efficiency and transparency around the issue of funding - which should be destined principally to North Africa, Ibero-America and the Caribbean. Ciudadanos proposes backing a foreign policy Government Pact which takes on board the aims of the Millennium Development Goals as outlined by the United Nations for 2030 and the 0.7% GDP for ODA which will be linked to a structural reform in Spanish cooperation policy. It also proposes the reform of the Spanish Cooperation Agency for International Development in order to make it more professional and independent. It further wishes to diversify the way development aid is financed through an alliance between private businesses and public administration (Ciudadanos, 2015).

As all of the parties draw up an international global agenda for Spain as well as foreign policy priorities, other regions and sectors appear in the electoral programmes. Among these we can highlight the following:

- Institutional aspects relating to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself, given that in the previous legislature several strategic documents were approved such as the European External Action Service, the Law on Treaties and the new Rules for the

Diplomatic Corps. These documents have been criticised by the PSOE and Podemos, citing absence of dialogue and consensus in the approval process. Ciudadanos decries “the politicization of State instruments” while advocating meritocracy and the de-politicization of the administration. At the same time, all parties claim to be in favour of dialogue and a broad consensus on Spanish foreign policy.

- The Marca España (Brand Spain) initiative designed to improve the image and perception of Spain by its own citizens. The PP believes that it is necessary to coordinate public and private initiatives and to improve communication strategies, while the PSOE thinks that business activity should not be the main focus here and that it would be a mistake to become obsessed with something as superficial as ‘image’. For Ciudadanos, Marca España should be a public not governmental strategy; therefore it should be evaluated in order that it may be turned into an effective component of our foreign affairs strategy (Real Instituto Elcano, 2015: 38). Podemos, for its part, believes that it should be completely revised – down to the name itself – so that it is representative of the diversity of the Spanish state.
- The relationship with Russia and the European Union following Russia’s intervention in Ukraine is an issue on which all of the parties adopt an almost identical position, recognising Russia’s importance on the world stage for the resolution of different international conflicts: the PP understands how important Russia is for achieving common aims and that sensitivity should be shown towards its proposals - as long as this does not require renouncing the principles of the EU - and that a positive agenda should be set, with dialogue on commercial and citizen relations taking place at the highest levels. The PSOE declares the need to respect the Ukraine’s territorial integrity while maintaining a dialogue with Russia. Ciudadanos, for its part, advocates developing areas of collaboration alongside Russia if there is a change in the situation of their sphere of influence. Podemos, more explicitly, proposes allowing Russia back into forums it has been expelled from and ending international sanctions if Moscow respects the cease-fire and ends its provocations in Eastern Europe; according to Podemos, the solution might be found in the creation of a permanent forum in which the EU, Russia and other countries in the region, including Ukraine, participate (Real Instituto Elcano, 2015: 46-47),

## Conclusions

In general, we can say that there are more points of confluence than divergence in the way that foreign policy is understood by the four parties. There are, logically, differences in the areas of focus, and even in development, between the traditional and the new parties; the latter are less general and more explicit in their proposals and, furthermore, they introduce some novelties in regard to decision-making, transparency and the de-politicization of foreign policy. So Podemos speak about maintaining a foreign policy consensus, of priorities and of the cultural and social potential for increasing our projection abroad. The triumphalism of the PP in assessing the achievements of its previous legislature is evident, as are the inevitable criticisms of the other parties and the radical proposals of Podemos - which were softened as the electoral campaign wore on. In this sense, the electoral programmes were predictable, rhetorical and showed little originality.

We should also note the lack of interest shown by the candidates during the campaign in highlighting their international proposals, something which can be explained as much by the predominance of national questions as by the public perception of Spain having a limited capacity to exert its influence abroad (Real Instituto Elcano, 2016: 10). Spanish society sees itself as affected by happenings closer to home and does not perceive itself – wrongly - to be vulnerable to international challenges. Such misunderstandings have been created by the media's decreasing coverage of international issues due to the country's own economic crisis. This abandonment or collective desertion in the face of international problems was made apparent in the television debates between candidates during the electoral campaign in which barely two minutes were given over to our international priorities.

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## **General Elections in Spain D 20-2105: Television as Battleground for Votes (Yolanda Sobero)**

### **Introduction**

“The television show takes over the campaign”. It is one of the front-page headlines of “El País”, the newspaper of largest diffusion of Spain, December 11, 2015, day that marks the equator of the campaign for the general elections of December 20 2015.

Its subtitle emphasizes that “candidates swap party rallies for TV shows in search of mass audiences”. The article points out that “never before has a Spanish election race been so focused on the small screen preferably on entertainment shows. (...) In fact, these elections are practically being viewed as a generational battle between the old and the new. Communications experts now talk about “the new politics,” about “entertainment politics” and even about “pop campaigns” to explain this new effort to reach out to voters.

The mass media and, especially, the television have always played a central role in electoral campaigns. In Spain, the small screen has been an essential instrument since the elections of June 15, 1977, the first free and democratic election since the Second Republic (February 1936). Spanish Television (TVE, state and public corporation), without having any competition then, showed the enthusiastic electoral posters that marked the beginning of the campaign, the electoral caravans, in which politicians and journalist travelled together, the first slogans, the first ads of the political parties, the first speeches of inexperienced politicians, the countless rallies that attracted citizens curious and desirous of using freedom for the first time. In 2015, the putting up of electoral campaign posters, including large rallies, are secondary acts. Democracy, born in Spain with the 1977 elections and the Constitution of 1978, seems to need new impetuous and new political forms to deal with a deep crisis and the corruption. The two predominant parties (PP-PSOE), which have been alternating in power since 1982, are coming up against their first serious challenge, two new parties, Podemos (We can) and Ciudadanos (Citizens), which appear without complexes, as alternatives of government.

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Television has changed a lot since 1977. TVE is no longer the only one and neither determines the guideline. It has to compete with 24 national channels, most of them private, apart from the multiple offers of the autonomic, local, satellite channels, payment platforms and Internet. In TV programming, entertainment programs, talk shows, political talk shows and debates triumph. All this makes television more attractive for a campaign in which all parties, old and new, are at stake.

## **Method**

This analysis of the role of television in the campaign for the general elections of December of 2015 is based on the leaders of the four most voted parties in previous elections (European, regional and municipal) and their participation in the most relevant programs of national TV channels, their media impact and the controversies created.

The sources are the audiences of each program, the campaign surveys, the major Spanish newspapers (El País and El Mundo), digital newspapers, articles and papers written by specialist and researchers of political communication on television.

## **Television as political campaign media**

The general elections of 2015 are very open and interesting. The previous elections of May 24, municipal and autonomous, confirm the trend already marked by the European elections in 2014: the big traditional parties, PP and PSOE, lose ground with regard to the emerging parties, Podemos y Ciudadanos. The bipartisanship recoils with regards to the push of these two new parties, which advocate new ways of doing politics and, especially, end with the corruption. And this seems to be the desire of the Spanish people. According to a pre-election opinion poll of the CIS (Center for Sociological Research), 61.6% of the citizens point to honesty as the most important quality politicians must have (CIS- October-November, 2015)

These elections are of great interest for citizens. During the campaign, elections are a topic of conversations, habitually or sporadically, in the private environment. 61.1% of those surveyed say they discuss it with their family and 57.4% with friends (CIS, January-March 2016). The issues that most concern are the economic crisis and social budget cuts (Kantar, October 2015)

Despite the presence of new media, such as social networks, the television remains the big stage of the electoral campaign, which is in progress even before the call for elections

(October 26, 2015) Television is also the preferred media to follow the political news during the campaign. 58.3% of the surveyed follow it all or almost every day through television, more than double than the press (23%) or radio (19.6%) (CIS, January-March, 2016).

This political role of television is not new but its formats are so this time. The favorite programs to show these personal facets and approach to the citizen-voter are entertainment programs and talk shows. The tours around TV studios of the different programs and channels begin long before the start of the electoral campaign, even before the call for elections. Moreover, it could be said that 2015, with three electoral events (autonomous, except in Euskadi and Galicia, and municipal elections) was a year of uninterrupted campaign.

The politicians accept the invitation to participate in most of the different kinds of programs, whether morning, afternoon or evening, preferably if these programs don't involve any risk or confrontation with other candidates. The stage is free and very profitable in audience with a bigger mediatic impact than any rally. Through the screen, it is possible to reach a very diverse 'public', to influence the undecided, the less motivated. The people who attend the rallies are the unconditional voters.

The tone of the interviews is usually friendly, even casual, which gives the opportunity to the candidates to show the best trait of their personality. The 'how they are' (at least, in front of cameras) is more important than their political proposals. Their respective campaign managers want the viewers-voters to discover that the politicians are close, warm and capable leaders. Emotions prevail.

It is the *political infotainment*, the *politainment*. The term *infotainment* encompasses two concepts of different characteristics and requirements: 'information' and 'entertainment'. It is a hybrid genre, in which the show is more important than the facts. With a superficial, frivolous or dramatic treatment it seeks and gets large audiences. (S. Berrocal Gonzalo, M. Redondo García, V. Martín Jiménez, E. Campos Domínguez: 2014).

The *politainment* is "representation of reality with a spectacular approach that can occur in any media" (Berrocal Gonzalo, 2015) It involves a superficial, spectacular and even frivolous treatment of political issues (soft-news) both in strictly news programs as in miscellaneous, entertainment or info show programs. (Berrocal Gonzalo, 2015) These programs provide excellent audiences; they raise the irrelevant anecdote to the category of news and create controversies, as intense as brief.

In electoral times, the main protagonist of *politainment* is the candidate, particularly the leader of the political party, and television is the media that provides them with the largest

audience. The media, especially television, build their public / political / personal image through messages and TV spaces.

Of the candidates for the general election of December 20, the one who knows television best is the leader of Podemos. Even before starting his political career, Pablo Iglesias, then professor at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, has clear knowledge of political role of the media and, especially, of the television:

“In such mediated societies as ours, the fundamental thing of any political initiative that aspires to a certain success is its ability to communicate from the handling of symbolic codes and dramatic effects. The hypermedia style of leaders and movements as diverse as Berlusconi, Obama, Chávez, Greenpeace, antiglobalization groups or the Tea Party are nothing more than a proof that participating in the ideological struggle of the 21st century requires to generate political products able to operate in the audiovisual media, even in very adverse conditions, as when practically all the media are not related to the political actor involved” (P. Iglesias, I. Errejón, 2010)

In one of his university lectures, he emphasizes:

“90% of political discourse is an audio-visual tool, 95% of leadership is an audio-visual tool, 95% of an electoral or political campaign is an audio-visual tool, and 95% of what a political organization can state is an audio-visual tool”.( Iglesias, P (2012). Quot. Casero Ripollés, A. Freenstra, R.A. and Tormey, S. (2016).

Before being known as a politician, Pablo Iglesias forges a name in the political talk shows. In November 2010, he started his own political debate program, “La Tuerka” (“The Nut”), which is broadcast on Tele K, a small station in Vallecas, a labourers district of Madrid, and later, through the web of the newspaper “Público”. Another program is “Fort Apache”, which is broadcast On Hispan TV, the Spanish-language channel of the Iranian government. Through these talks and interviews, also broadcast on You Tube, he begins to be known in journalistic circles and starts to collaborate with programs of conventional television (Intereconomía, La Sexta, Cuatro) (Casero-Ripollés, A., Feenstra, RA, & Tormey, S. (2016).

His communicative strategy, with a simple, emotive and televised speech, is the ground of success of Podemos in the European elections of 2014: 5 MEPs, the fourth most voted party in Spain (7.89% of the votes). Pablo Iglesias has no doubts about the media. “The use of televisions is too important to stop going,” he told El País the day after the election (El País, 26/5/2014).

## Infotainment: All for the vote

The current affairs and entertainment programs are, together with the debates and the news programs, one of the pillars of the electoral campaign. The format that prevails in them is the magazine, which combines current news, debates, interviews with banal themes (events, curiosities, celebrities). Its preferential timetable is the morning (El programa de Ana Rosa, Las mañanas de Cuatro, Espejo Público, Al rojo vivo) and its prime time (El Hormiguero 3.0, Salvados, La Sexta Noche) (S. Berrocal Gonzalo, M. Redondo García, V. Martín Jiménez, E. Campos Domínguez: 2014).

The day before the start of the electoral campaign, the newspaper *El Mundo* publishes a long report in which the anchors of four of these programs value the role of television in the political arena. Everyone agrees to underline the increase of citizen interest in politics, which is reflected in the audience they get when some political leaders are invited.

Ana Rosa Quintana ("El programa de Ana Rosa", Telecinco, leader ratings in the morning time) indicates that "never before have all candidates have had such an index of knowledge and that they owe it to the television." For his program, the four leaders have already passed in September: Pablo Iglesias unleashed his ponytail, Pedro Sánchez challenges her to make baskets, Mariano Rajoy drinks some beer with her and Albert Rivera rides her on his motorbike around Barcelona.

Javier Ruiz ("Las mañanas de Cuatro") considers that there is "a risk in trivializing politics, in making the political discourse very superficial if only that is done, the show. For this reason the candidates have the duty to attend also the traditional spaces. (...) If you go to the debates, to the gatherings, to the interviews, if you fulfill your democratic obligation, you complete the two profiles. "

Susana Griso ("Espejo Público", Antena 3) validates that the policy "has never had so much weight on television and the panorama is so tough that the candidates are willing to take advantage of any opportunity".

La Sexta is the channel that, in the last years, has bet more for the political issues and dedicates diverse programs of all kinds. Its director and also anchor of the talk show "Al rojo vivo", Antonio García Ferreras, does not deny the political return of the television, but he points out that "there has been a failure of bipartisanship and I believe that corruption or the crisis more than television have driven Ciudadanos and Podemos more than television, although it is true that they have been able to connect better with the disenchantment of citizenship".

The leaders of the Popular Party (PP) (Mariano Rajoy) Socialist Party (Pedro Sánchez), Podemos (Pablo Iglesias) and Ciudadanos (Albert Rivera) do not hesitate to do, things before the cameras that, some years ago, they would not have done: playing guitar, ballooning, playing, cooking ... Mariano Rajoy, the most reluctant to the media, leaves the Council of Ministers in the middle of the morning on December 11 to go to Telecinco to record the program ¡Qué tiempo tan feliz! (Telecinco). However, he refuses to go to "El Hormiguero" (Antena 3). In addition, both Rajoy and Sánchez refuse to go to the current affairs program "The Objective" (The Sixth) (La Vanguardia, 12/3/2015, El País, 11/12/2015).

Among all these programs, the ones with the greatest audience are "En tu casa o en la mía" (La 1-TVE), in which Rajoy and Sánchez participate, and "El Hormiguero 3.0" (Antena 3) with Pablo Iglesias (see Table I)

"En tu casa o en la mía" (La 1-TVE), led by Bertín Osborne, is a long and relaxed conversation about diverse topics, more personal than political, while they cook or play, for example Rajoy won the 8-1 table football and Sanchez played ping pong. In short, a friendly format that allows the guests to show off and make known the best aspects of their personality. A safe bet and a great audience for any politician.

The leaders of the PP and the PSOE will be the only ones that go through its program. Bertín Osborne says he wanted to invite Pablo Iglesias, but that the TVE direction did not consider it opportune (Vozpopuli, 3.12.2015)

The program with Pedro Sánchez is broadcast on November 25 and is the most watched of the day (3,733,000 viewers and 20.4% share). On December 2, it is Mariano Rajoy's turn and it is also the most watched of the day (4,334,000 spectators and 23% share) also among all non-news programs in which the main political leaders participate (see table).

The controversy arises days later when the Twitter account of the PP in Catalonia publishes a video of the program's conductor, Bertín Osborne, in which he says that "I was thinking of voting for Albert Rivera, who is a lifelong friend of mine and seems like brave guy to me but I am going to vote for Rajoy. After five-and-a-half hours, plus two more, I realized he's a brilliant guy. "Bertín Osborne, a popular singer and showman, is the only famous person who publicly supports Rajoy in these elections (El Mundo, 12/16/2015).

## Debate programs

Nixon vs. Kennedy. September 26th, 1960. A legendary debate for politics and for television. The 'face to face' gets 70 million viewers, the largest audience achieved by a political event in the United States. According to Ted Sorensen, adviser to Kennedy:

“Presidential campaign debates are a pillar of the democratic system.” True, they can increase voter interest, education and turnout. But that’s about all we can expect of them. Presidents and candidates don’t (or shouldn’t) make important decisions in two-and-a-half minute responses and four-minute closing statements (Sorensen, 2010).

Since then, the debate is the star program of any election campaign. It raises great media expectation and gets large audiences. It allows candidates to explain their proposals and citizens to see how they defend and replicate the objections of the other candidates. It also involves risks, any unfortunate detail or gesture can leave the candidate in a difficult position. Therefore, it is a program that is controlled to the smallest detail, where campaign managers negotiate the staging, the lights, the framings, the subjects and the order of intervention, who starts and who closes the debate.

The debate is not always decisive, but serves to *scrape votes* between the undecided or unconvinced. According to Sorensen:

” Kennedy did firm up his support among Democrats previously dubious about his age and religion, especially in the South, and increase his standing among independents who knew too little about him.” (Sorensen, 2010).

The televised electoral debates, in particular when they are 'face-to-face' have not been frequent in the Spanish campaigns despite the interest they create in the citizens and the rest of the media. Every time polls have predicted a clear victory, the favorite party has rejected the debate.

The first two debates took place in the 1993 campaign and its protagonists were Felipe González (PSOE) and José María Aznar. Everything was negotiated and signed in front of a public notary: the staging (Aznar, lower than Gonzalez, demands that they be seated), the order of entry of the candidates, the temperature (Felipe González tends to sweat), the position of the cameras, the framings (without foregrounds), the times of intervention, who closes the debate, the type of titles.

The Spanish citizens have to wait 15 years, until the campaign of the generals of 2008, to see again an electoral debate on television. On this occasion, it is organized by the Academy of Sciences and Television Arts (ATV), an association of professionals in the audiovisual

sector, and is televised by 20 channels. The moderator is the journalist Manuel Campo Vidal, who affirms that there have not been more debates before because "Aznar did not want it". Jose Luis Zapatero (PSOE) and Mariano Rajoy (PP) and their parties negotiate again to the minimum details, from the temperature (21 degrees), the type of chairs (not revolving), the position of the cameras, the first intervention is submitted to raffle.

In the campaign of 2011 there is only one debate between the candidates, at this time Mariano Rajoy (PP) and Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba. The ATV organizes it again and Manuel Campo Vidal is the moderator. According to Esteban González Pons, member of the PP team in charge of the debate, the most difficult to negotiate are the topics, order and time. (El Mundo, 12/6/2015 web version)

During the campaign of 2015, there are three classic debates, organized and / or broadcast by Antena 3, La Sexta and La 1 (TVE). The channels of the Mediaset group (Telecinco, Cuatro) do not broadcast any of them, nor do they organize their own. That does not mean they are not interested in the political audience, but their bet is on "soft" formats and interviews. The leaders of the four main parties (PP-PSOE-Podemos-C's) appear, since the pre-campaign, in their most important current entertainment programs (El programa de Ana Rosa, ¡Qué tiempo tan feliz!, Un tiempo Nuevo), as well as in daily news programs (Informativos Telecinco" (see Table II).

### **2015 Face to Face: Mariano Rajoy vs. Pedro Sánchez**

It is the sixth face-to-face debate of the Spanish democracy and the one that raises most expectation.

In its electoral coverage plan, TVE anticipates a face-to-face debate between Rajoy and Sánchez. However, this proposal is rejected by the socialist leader, who claims that the public television is not a guarantee of neutrality (The information, 11/26/2015). For this reason, this debate is once again organized by the Academy of Sciences and Television Arts (ATV), which is accepted as "neutral ground". TVE is in charge of the live broadcast and offers the free signal to the channels interested in it, in this case twelve channel, among them Antena 3, La Sexta and five autonomic channels. Neither Telecinco nor Cuatro (Mediaset) broadcast it.

On this occasion, the table at which the candidates sit is smaller than in other occasions, 170 cm wide (in the 2011 debate between Rubalcaba and Rajoy the table is 3 meters wide and in 1993, González and Aznar occupy separated tables) (El Mundo, 12/14/2015)

It is a tense debate, in which candidates are frequently interrupted, with more mutual disagreements than proposals. The issue of corruption provokes the most angry row, an exchange of insults between Sánchez and Rajoy ("You are not a decent politician," Sánchez tells Rajoy, who replies: "You are mean, petty, miserable and contemptuous"), That the next day occupy the covers of the newspapers.

Behind the cameras, the debate brings together more than 300 journalists and 150 guests, including Alan Schroeder, a specialist in political debates (El País, 12/15/2015). Schroeder, a professor at the School of Journalism at Northeastern University in Boston, estimates Sanchez's aggression made him lost.

"In this case the strategy failed. Aggressiveness degenerated into rudeness. The endless confrontation became annoying, and more harmful to Sanchez than to Rajoy. Presidential campaigns should focus on the future, but Sanchez seemed obsessed with the past. Undoubtedly, corruption cases deserve to be part of the discussion, but not in this scenario, which is a platform to address voters concerns. Opponents should focus their message on how they will govern if they are elected. Repeating the political record of Rajoy, Sanchez lost the opportunity to sell himself as the key to the future of Spain "(Schroeder, 16/12/2015- Huffington Post)

In term of political profitability, Schroeder points out that "debate does not normally change votes, but in spite of it they have a lot of influence in shaping perceptions about candidates. Debates can make a career bigger, or they can destroy it. "

The debate gets the highest audience of the campaign (9,728,000). At that time, according to the polls, there are 41% undecided voters (El País, 12/13/2015), but according to the CIS post-election poll, it does not appear to have been decisive in the final vote. 56.5% of the respondents saw the debate in whole or in part. Sánchez seemed more convincing to 26.9% of them and Rajoy, to 26.1% and none of two, to 37.1%. (CIS, January-March 2016)

### **"7D-The decisive debate"**

It is the first debate of the campaign and the second electoral program with most audience. Antena 3 and La Sexta (both of the group Atresmedia) organized and broadcast this debate on December 7 in prime time. The participants are: Pablo Iglesias (Podemos), Albert Rivera (Citizens), Pedro Sánchez (PSOE) and Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría, vice-president of the government in-office at this time, who attends instead of Mariano Rajoy, since he declines the invitation. This is the second time in a week that Rajoy does not want to participate in a



debate, it was a previous one organized by the newspaper El País and is broadcast on the web. On that occasion, unlike the debate in Antena 3 / La Sexta, his atrium was empty, as the organizer does not accept that he is replaced by Sáenz de Santamaría.

Moderated by two of the most outstanding journalists of the group Atresmedia, Ana Pastor and Vicente Vallés, the scenery is novel: candidates standing, without tables or lecterns, with only one stool as possible support. The most watched minute is the moment when Sáenz de Santamaría comments on the economic deficit that the PP found when it came to power in 2011 (El Mundo, 12/9/2015)

Candidates are not brilliant, but they do not make big mistakes either. The three candidates take advantage of the absence of Rajoy, who sees the debate on television in Doñana (Andalusia). On his behalf Rajoy believes that Pedro Sánchez was mistaken to participate in this debate, since "the leader of the opposition has to debate with the president of the government" (El País, 12/13/2015)

The four-way debate is success in audience, 9,233,000 viewers. It is the most watched show of the day; it becomes a news event, totaling valued and spread by networks and other media. The next day, it's on the front pages of the newspapers. "The debate to four shows the strength of the emerging ones," headlines El Mundo.

According to the CIS post-election survey, 54.7% of the respondents saw the debate in whole or in part. Of the candidates, the most convincing was Pablo Iglesias (31.3%), followed by Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría (18.3%), Albert Rivera (12%) and Pedro Sánchez (8.9%). 16.2% believe that none of them were. (CIS, January-March 2016).

### **“Albert and Pablo, face-to-face”**

It is the first face-to-face debate on television of the leaders of emerging parties and also a more risky and innovative political encounter. But it is not a classic debate, since it is a program recorded and shot outdoors and broadcast by a current affairs program with a large audience of the private channel La Sexta (Atresmedia Group), and led by journalist Jordi Évole. Its protagonists are the leaders of the emerging parties, Albert Rivera (Ciudadanos) and Pablo Iglesias (Podemos). The program is recorded on October 9 in an intentionally chosen setting, a bar in Canyelles, a working-class neighborhood in Barcelona in which Ciudadanos won the regional elections and Podemos in the municipal elections. Location according to Jordi Évole, neither the candidates nor their campaign teams knew until the same day of the recording. There were not any previous pacts of subjects, times, or framings.

Rivera and Iglesias sit, face to face, with a coffee on the table, accompanied by Évole, who get involved little. For almost two hours, they talk about the issues that most affect citizens: unemployment, immigration, minimum wage, banking, corruption, Catalonia ... They coincide in diagnosis and differ in solutions.

The program is broadcast on October 18, one week before the call for general elections, and gets an undeniable audience success. With 5,214,000 spectators and a screen share of 25.2%, it is the most watched program of the day and of October. Its highest peak of audience is obtained at 22.35, with 6.062.000 spectators and a quota of the 28.1% (RTVE, Analysis 18th of October 2015).

It is also the third most viewed of all the programs in which the political leaders of the main parties participate, emitted both before and during the electoral campaign.

Jordi Évole tries to repeat this formula with Mariano Rajoy and Pedro Sánchez, but he does not succeed. Neither does he get that they separately attend his program before the general election.

### **The Debate of La 1 (TVE)**

TVE proposes "The most pluralistic debate", in which the representatives of the parties with own parliamentary group and the emergent formations are invited to participate. Its 90 minutes are divided into three thematic blocks (economy, social policies and state model) and each of the participants has three minutes to present their proposals, six to respond to their contenders and one for the final exhibition. The debate is scheduled for 9 December at 11:45 pm, after its star program "En tu casa o en la mia." (20Minutes, 12/4/2015)

The planned schedule raises a great controversy and protests. Union, Progress and Democracy (UPyD) presents a complaint to the Central Electoral Board, which is responsible for guaranteeing the electoral process. The Board accepts this and orders that the debate be broadcast in "prime time", since "RTVE's own information coverage plan for these elections indicated that the debate would take place in prime time", if done otherwise "political and social pluralism and respect for neutrality of the information that RTVE must maintain would not be respected, precisely because the information that emerges from the seven-way debate cannot be allowed to reach voters in the same way as one emanated from two-way debates" ( News Council, 12/9/2015)

Finally, the debate is broadcasted in prime time by TVE (La 1, Canal 24 Horas, Canal International and the website of RTVE). It only gets a discreet audience (see table), despite

being the most pluralistic debate of the campaign, since it is the only one in which minority party leaders, Alberto Garzón (IU) and Andrés Herzog (UPyD) participate, as well as representatives of nationalist groups. Both Garzón and Herzog asked, unsuccessfully, throughout the campaign that the debates were not limited to two or four candidates.

### **Electoral and political information on television**

Political parties control more and more political and electoral information on television. Their communication departments produce their own information, or rather propaganda. They record and distribute the signal and images of their political acts and rallies, make the 'message', the headline 'of an important act coincide with the news programs so it is broadcasted live, facilitate the statements of their leaders, convene press conferences in which no questions are allowed. Journalists are more and more tend to remain silent. And all this, is sometimes possible with their own collaboration and with the connivance of the directions of their media.

To this, in the public media, such as TVE, the phenomenon of "electoral blocks", which introduces the criterion of "proportionality" in electoral information, the time dedicated to each party is proportional to its results in the last similar elections. The Electoral Law (1985) establishes this proportionality, which all parties have on public TV for the free advertising spaces, but not specifically for the news spaces. However, the Electoral Board, controlled by the parties, has extended this criterion to what is mere information. (Díaz Arias, May 20, November 27, 2015).

In a statement before the electoral campaign, the CRTVE News Councils, professional representative bodies, request that "the electoral information is elaborated exclusively with journalistic criteria" and reiterate their disagreement with the formula of adjusting the times of electoral news proportionally to the results of the previous equivalent elections "(Council, 1/12/2015).

This formula also hurts minority or new parties. However, it favors large formations, little or not interested at all in changing this practice.

It could be said that the criterion of proportionality, added to the control that the parties have over the information generated by them turn what could be news into mere propaganda. To this politicization of the management of public television, including TVE, must be added also the consequent favoritism towards the ruling party.

During the campaign, TVE broadcasts an interview with Mariano Rajoy (October 26) and Pedro Sánchez (November 3) in prime time, but does not invite Pablo Iglesias and Albert

Rivera, who protest. The Council of Information also does this and asks that the leaders of other political formations be interviewed, with exclusively journalistic criteria, in order to "reflect the plurality of Spanish society itself" (News Council 11/3/2015)

During the electoral campaign, this professional body, again, claims impartiality and stresses that "the imbalance in TVE news in favor of the government's party, and especially the next general election has reached intolerable levels" (News Council, 11/12/12, 2015).

TVE could serve as a counterbalance to the "electoral show" if it were to be considered by the citizens as a neutral field, without partisan turns, and capable of offering quality plus plural and independent information. In short, a public television capable to guarantee the constitutional right to information

But the partisan drift and the bad journalistic practices, denounced daily by the Information Council of TVE, have provoked the discredit of the public and state corporation.

TVE is no longer an informational reference since the elections of 2011. Audiences aside, the CIS post-election poll finds this: TVE is the second option (18.9%) among those who choose television to follow political and electoral information. The first is La Sexta (21%), channel of the private group Atresmedia. They are followed by Antena 3 (18.1%), also of Atresmedia, Telecinco (12.4%) and Cuatro (5.5%), both of the Mediaset group. (CIS, January-March 2016)

## **Conclusions**

The campaign of the general elections of 20 of December of 2015 marks the beginning of a new time for the political issues in the Spanish televisions. Private channels propose changes, innovation, infotainment, pop politics, but also bet on different formats, more dynamic and more attractive for the viewers and, in short, for the voters.

TVE seems to add to this trend. It has lost the news leadership but, paradoxically, in this campaign it has achieved its best results with the interventions of the candidates of the PP and PSOE in an entertainment program ("En tu casa o en la mía").

However, the overall analysis of the programs in which the political leaders have intervened shows that the debates, a traditional and informative format, reach the highest audience in this campaign.

**Table I. POLITICIANS AND TELEVISION- D 20- 2015 ELECTIONS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Politician</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Tipo programa</b>	<b>Canal</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Share</b>
7/9	Pablo Iglesias	El programa Ana Rosa	Talk Show	Telecinco	Mañana	527.000	16,7
9/9	Pedro Sánchez	El programa Ana Rosa	Talk Show	Telecinco	Mañana	457.000	15,5
14/9	Mariano Rajoy	El programa Ana Rosa	Talk Show	Telecinco	Mañana	543.000	20,9
18/9	Albert Rivera	El programa Ana Rosa	Talk Show	Telecinco	Mañana	512.000	20,3
18/9	Albert Rivera Pablo Iglesias	Salvados	Current affairs	La Sexta	Prime Time	5.214.000	25,2
26/10	Marian Rajoy	Especial Informativo	News	La 1	Prime Time		
31/10	Alberto Garzón	La calle pregunta- La Sexta Noche	Current affairs	La Sexta	Prime Time	1.046.000	9,6
2/11	Pedro Sánchez	Especial Informativo	News	La 1	Prime Time		
3/11	Pablo Iglesias	El Hormiguero 3.0	Talk Show	Antena 3	Prime time	3.823.000	21,7
7/11	Albert Rivera	La calle pregunta- La Sexta Noche	Current affairs	La Sexta	Prime time	1.153.000	9,8
8/11	Alberto Garzón Andrés Herzog	El Objetivo	Current affairs	La Sexta	Prime time		
21/11	Albert Rivera	¡Qué tiempo tan feliz!		Telecinco	Tarde	1.694.000	13,4
21/11	Pablo Iglesias	La calle pregunta- La Sexta Noche	Current affairs	La Sexta	Prime time	1.240.000	10
22/11	Albert Rivera	El Objetivo	Current affairs	La Sexta	Prime time		
24/11	Albert Rivera	El Hormiguero 3.0	Talk Show	Antena 3	Prime time	3.026.000	17,1
25/11	Albert Rivera	Informativos	News	Telecinco			
25/11	Pedro Sánchez	En tu casa o en la mía	Talk show	La 1 (TVE)	Prime time	3.733.000	20,4
26/11	Pedro Sánchez	Informativos	News	Telecinco			
27/11	Pablo Iglesias	Informativos	News	Telecinco			
28/11	Pablo Iglesias	¡Qué tiempo tan feliz!	Talk show	Telecinco	Evening	1.759.000	14,7
28/11	Pedro Sánchez	La calle pregunta- La Sexta Noche	Current affairs	La Sexta	Prime time	1.173.000	9,8
29/11	Pablo Iglesias	El Objetivo	Current affairs	La Sexta	Prime time		
30/11	Mariano Rajoy	Informativos	News	Telecinco			
30/11	Pablo Iglesias Albert Rivera Pedro Sánchez		Debate	Elpais.com 13TV			
2/12	Mariano Rajoy	En tu casa o en la mía	Talk show	La 1 (TVE)	Prime time	4.334.000	23%
3/12	Mariano Rajoy		Interview	13 TV	Prime time		
4/12	<b>Campaign start</b>						
5/12	Pedro Sánchez	¡Qué tiempo tan feliz!	Talk show	Telecinco	Evening	1.623.000	13,7
5/12	Mariano Rajoy	La calle pregunta- La Sexta Noche	Current affairs	La Sexta	Prime time	1.657.000	13,4
7/12	Pablo Iglesias Alberto Rivera Soraya Saénz de Santamaría Pedro Sánchez	7D- El debate decisivo	Debate	Antena 3 La Sexta	Prime time	9.233.000	48,4
8/12	Pedro Sánchez	El Hormiguero 3.0	Talk Show	Antena 3	Prime Time	2.836.00	15,6
9/12	Alberto Garzón (IU/U. Popular), Andrés Herzog (UPyD), PP, PSOE, PNV, Democracia, Unió, Podemos, Ciudadanos,.	El debate de la 1	Debate	La 1 (TVE)	Prime time	2.102.000	10,9
12/12	Mariano Rajoy	¡Qué tiempo tan feliz!	Talk show	Telecinco	Evening	1.781.000	14,6
12/12	Pablo Iglesias	Un tiempo nuevo	Current affairs	Cuatro			
14/12	Mariano Rajoy Pedro Sánchez	Cara a cara 2015	Debate	ATV	Prime time	9.728.000	48,7
20/12	Elections						

Compilation based on RTVE-Dirección de Análisis

**Table II. ELECTORAL DEBATES (1993-2015)**

Date	Politicians	Title	Moderator	Channel	Time	Audience (thousand )	Share (%)
24/5/1993	Felipe González (PSOE) José M <sup>a</sup> Aznar (PP)	El debate	Manuel Campo Vidal	Antena 3	Prime time 22.29 (Dur: 2h 15')	9.625.000	61,8
31/5/1993	Felipe González (PSOE) José M <sup>a</sup> Aznar (PP)	El debate decisivo	Luis Mariñas	Telecinco	Prime time 22.31 (Dur: 2h.28')	10.526.000	75,3
25/2/2008	José Luis Zapatero (PSOE) Mariano Rajoy (PP)	2008 Debate	ATV Manuel Campo Vidal	20	Prime time 21.59 (Dur: 1h.52')	13.043.000	59,1
3/3/2008	José Luis Zapatero (PSOE) Mariano Rajoy (PP)	2008 Debate	ATV Olga Viza	22	Prime time 22.00 (Dur: 1.39)	11.952.000	56,3
7/11/2011	Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba (PSOE) Mariano Rajoy (PP)	2011 Debate	ATV Manuel Campo Vidal	17	Prime time 21.46 (Dur: 2.06)	12.006.000	54,2
7/12/2015	Pablo Iglesias Alberto Rivera Soraya Saénz de Santamaría Pedro Sánchez	7D- El debate decisivo	Ana Pastor Vicente Vallés	Atresmedia La Sexta	Prime time 22.00 (Dur: 2.17')	Total: 9.233.000 A3- 5.027.000 (1 <sup>º</sup> más visto) Sexta 4.206.000 (2 <sup>º</sup> más visto)	48,4 26,2 22,2
9/12/2015	Pablo Casado (PP) Antonio Hernando (PSOE) Miguel Puig (Democracia) Montse Surroca (Unió) Alberto Garzón (IU/Unidad Popular) Andrés Herzog (UPyD) Aitor Esteban (PNV) Íñigo Errejón (Podemos) Marta Rivera (Ciudadanos)	El debate de la 1	Julio Somoano	La 1 (TVE)	Prime time 22.00 Dur: 1.34'	2.102.000 (11 <sup>º</sup> más visto)	10,9
14/12/2015	Pedro Sánchez Mariano Rajoy	Cara a Cara 2015	Manuel Campo Vidal	12	Prime time 22.00 Dur.: 2h05	Total: 9.728.000	48,7%

Compilation based on TVE-Dirección de Análisis/Barlovento Comunicación-Kantar Media Barlovento Comunicación-Kantar Media

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**Irony in the World of Politics: #20D in the Spanish Social Networks (Myriam Redondo, Ignacio Martín Granados)**

Since democracy was restored after the death of General Francisco Franco in 1975, free elections in Spain tended to consolidate two antagonist political forces, one of them representing the conservative ideological spectrum (first called Alianza Popular -AP- and afterwards Partido Popular -PP-) and the other representing a moderate left position (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE). On December the 20<sup>th</sup> 2015 (20D), those two parties were still ahead in vote intention, but people could choose between another two young and vibrant new parties (Ciudadanos, C's -center-right- and Podemos -left) and also among more than thousand small parties which presented a candidate to the presidency. Such variety reflected the ideological *mélange* of a country deeply hit by the economic crisis and also the relativity with which the Spaniards, disappointed by corruption, had started to watch everything in the political realm. Skepticism was one of the words best describing the general mood; polarization left-right was another.

It seems useful to introduce the five principal actors of 20D drama: PP (old conservative party in government, presided by Mariano Rajoy, a candidate 60 years old at the moment); PSOE (old moderate left party, presided by Pedro Sánchez, 44); C's (newcomer, center-right party, presided by Albert Rivera, 36); and Podemos (newcomer, left party steaming from the “Spanish spring” (the so called 15M, 2011), presided by Pablo Iglesias, 37). It is also necessary to mention a minority but active party in the social networks, Izquierda Unida (IU, old communist party, rejuvenated by its new president, Alberto Garzón, 30). Summarizing, there was an age rift between the president, Rajoy, and the rest of candidates, and there was also a gap between two ways of making politics: PP and PSOE, the old traditional parties, and Podemos, C's and IU, all new or renewed groups.

On October the 27th, the State Official Bulletin (Boletín Oficial del Estado, BOE) published the call for elections but, as usually, the political fight had started long before. In fact,

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the use of social networks -and Twitter above them all- was so common among the leaders and followers of the new political parties since the 15M movement in Spain that every day was a campaign day in the Net months before the election [Gualda 2016: 67-77; Navarro 2016; Lorenzo 2016].

### **The topics on the net**

In its beginnings, Podemos gained followers on Twitter by commenting on TV shows that invited their representatives, always adding the trending hashtags of those programs to their tweets. Many parties did the same before 20D, encouraging their politicians to participate in television debates and turning their claims there into mobilization messages on Twitter.

Supplementing television, Twitter and Facebook mobile apps were the “fourth screen” in which the Spanish followed and vividly discussed political TV shows or *tertulias* [López, Gómez 2016: 7-9]. Those of 20D were the elections of the *politainment*. Spanish politicians appeared much more on popular TV shows than in previous campaigns. There were three “infotainment peak moments” sharply discussed in the social networks during the pre-campaign: the funny interview to the vice minister, Soraya Sainz de Santamaría (PP), on the TV show *El Hormiguero* (The ant's nest, October the 6<sup>th</sup>); the cool debate between the leaders of Podemos and C's, conducted in a bar by the journalist Jordi Évole of the TV program *Salvados* (October the 18th); and the appearance of the leaders of PSOE and PP on “*En tu casa o en la mía*” (Your place or mine, November the 15<sup>th</sup> and December the 2<sup>th</sup>, respectively), a program where the singer Bertin Osborne holds informal dialogues with famous people at their home. The conversations of the two candidates with Osborne had unexpected effects on Twitter. Sánchez, the handsome and young politician, the aspiring candidate, was perceived in the networks as having airs and graces, while Rajoy (a member of the “*casta*”, the corrupt political elites according to the new parties) did a better interview and showed himself as someone good-natured and sympathetic, according to influencers. Osborne and Rajoy's conversation was an absolute success on the Internet.

All those showing offs of politicians on TV turned out trending topics in the social networks, especially on Twitter, so 20D can also be considered the “most digital elections”. But neither previous surveys undertaken by the official sociological entity (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, CIS) nor the network analysis that were developed in advance by marketing companies did anticipate the final results. Mariano Rajoy won the election while not being the most popular candidate in social media, and C's got a much worse position than their

digital activity indicated. The moral of it was that having more Twitter followers or savvy interacting with them did not guarantee victory [Bujalance 2016]. Though the leaders of the new parties (Podemos, C's) were more active in the social networks, in terms of follower gains they did not make their TV appearances as profitable as the old parties, and specially as Pedro Sánchez (PSOE) [Teruel 2016].

The following were the main topics discussed in the networks during the electoral campaign. They reflect digital and not necessarily offline trends -they were widely discussed in Facebook and Twitter, generating controversy:-

- PP, the party in power, haunted by scandals of corruption, did not manage to distance itself enough from its immediate rival, PSOE. Both were perceived as *casta* (#PPSOE) and had problems to keep the role of “moral authorities”. PP rallies were less attended than in previous elections (Twitter users highlighted the empty seats at the main meeting of the party, celebrated in Las Rozas Bullring). Rajoy was great in Osborne's show, but he did not wholly convince in the only televised debate he accepted to take part in (a face-to-face with Sánchez).

- PSOE was still blamed for its bad management of the economic crisis, which unfolded during the last Socialist government (2008-2011). For many people, Sánchez was handsome, alluring and forceful, but others considered him an “empty-headed” candidate (just another good-looking politician). At some points, he showed an excess of arrogance (he had to apologize for his belligerence during the televised debate with Rajoy). Newspapers and influencers underlined his rivalry with Susana Díaz, leader of PSOE Andalucía. At that time that was an underlying hostility, but the growingly open quarrel between both leaders would finally, and dramatically, split PSOE up in October 2016.

- It was the campaign of the discourse of fear, used by conservative parties (PP and C's) in order to avoid a triumph of “the siren songs of populism” (the new parties, and specially Podemos). On their side, leftist parties (Podemos and IU) insisted in the ideas of freshness, real change, real democracy and revolution against the *casta*.

- There were two main new parties and had a very different electoral trajectory. Podemos, the rebel party lead by ponytailed Iglesias, challenging Constitution, Monarchy and established order, seemed to start from an inferior position, but gained political weight throughout the days. The contrary can be said of C's, the party represented by Rivera, that proposed “responsible change” inside the limits of Constitution and also negotiation, but that arose doubts in the social networks because of its lack of political definition (negotiation with whom?). Many people considered C's only a younger version of PP.

- Podemos and IU were not able to reach an agreement in order to present a common list

to the elections. This was celebrated by many orthodox communists voting IU (for them, Podemos was kind of heresy of the left) but also lamented by many new leftist voters who considered it the biggest strategical mistake of the campaign, impeding the triumph of the Left.

– After the transfer of leadership by Cayo Lara, in his 60s, Alberto Garzón became at 30 the youngest candidate to the presidency of the Government in the History of Spain. He started the elections as one of the most appreciated politicians (according to official polls by CIS). Around his fresh image (he was undoubtedly the most techie candidate), IU developed the smartest digital campaign.

– Hard personal attacks among candidates and fans were uncommon, and humor and irony prevailed in the networks. In November, Juan Carlos Monedero, co-founder of Podemos, insinuated that Rivera consumed drugs (Monedero naughtily touched his nose while talking about Rivera during a meeting), and C's threatened to denounce him. However, it was not a campaign distinguished by its roughness.

– With Mariano Rajoy perceived as an old politician distanced from the people -and also from his political opponents - the other candidates held ironic or white collar confrontations directed towards the weak flanks of the enemy: the corruption and the unpopular economic cuts imposed by PP, the incoherence and economic inability of PSOE, the affinity of Podemos with Venezuela or its hidden extreme-left agenda and its unrealizable promises, and the ideological vagueness of C's.

– It was a campaign with many winks to the young people and the pop culture. "Do not imitate, innovate", told Iglesias to his followers in a rally, personalizing the famous motto of the masculine brand Hugo Boss.

– The Spanish election of 20D was also the first in which Twitter allowed the use of animated gifs. They were very widely used, specially linked to characters of the pop culture. If a party launched a surprising message in a meeting, a Twitter user could publish a micro video of the popular soap opera Friends with one of its main characters showing astonishment. Animated gifs were a fast and funny resource for comments.

## **Digital strategies**

Pablo López-Rabadán, Amparo López-Meri and Hugo Doménech-Fabregat studied how the main Spanish political parties managed their digital profiles during the five months leading up to the elections. The most remarkable feature is the intense use of candidate-centered images (nearly 30% of all the digital messages got one) and posters [López-Rabadán, López-

Meri, Doménech-Fabregat 2016: 165-195].

Shortly before 20D, Internet Academi (an online training platform in Spain) held a meeting with the heads of the social networking teams of the main parties. It was widely streamed via YouTube with the tag #innovActionElecciones and provided interesting clues regarding digital strategies [Fernández 2015]. In general terms, everyone agreed in that dialogue that naturalness was the key to conquering networks, with spontaneous proposals that would captivate followers and achieve the organic virality of contents.

Social networking teams of the new or rejuvenated parties (Podemos, C's, IU) heavily relied on volunteers, while PP and PSOE had more professional teams. All of them coordinated their ranks and mobilized citizens through instant messaging systems, Telegram being predominant because of its privacy options and its greater document storage and transmission capacity compared to Whatsapp, although the latter was also used by PP, PSOE and C's.

Podemos (represented at #innovActionElecciones by Nagua Alba) emphasized "horizontality and collective intelligence", highlighting the "viralizing power of the Net". Internet is at the very origins of Podemos, which was born in the social networks and gets funding through them. "We are not professionals, we use social networks as we used them before being in politics", explained Alba as a reason for their success. Its 400 community managers spread across the country could be another reason.

C's (Javier Pereira) also excelled spontaneity, underlining that Rivera personally managed his account (Rajoy was the only candidate not doing so) and that he was among the most active politicians on Twitter. The strategy of Ciudadanos was segmentation to reach the undecided voters. His team consisted of 12 people, coordinated by the Communication Director of the party, but hundreds of other people replicated the political messages throughout Spain.

IU said to take very much into account the importance of social networks and was indeed very successful in using them, as this chapter will explain later. His chief of social networks, Sergio Mesa, confirmed that the minority party had little resources but had put a lot of confidence in social media strategy, using free tools to coordinate, develop campaigns and analyze positive and negative feedback on networks.

PP (Alfonso García) recognized greater difficulties in social media due to the traditional features of the party, but affirmed that they were making a determined transition to the networks, giving much importance to the conversation with the citizens, especially via email. In fact, email was the more time-consuming task for PP social networking team, according to García. The members of the networking team were assigned as follows: 10 to manage institutional accounts and "very young" volunteers and more specific teams for analytics and other

technology solutions.

At PSOE (Emi Escudero), the networking team reported to the Electoral Commission and was connected to 800 members of the party affiliated throughout the country who were responsible for echoing the central message. Escudero recalled that her party never questioned the importance of social networks and revealed that the team that managed them was mostly female and multidisciplinary. It counted on three graphic designers, an audiovisual producer and four people dedicated to the management of social networks.

At #innovActionElecciones, all the parties stated that the purchase of followers or the development of smear campaigns, as well as the spread of propagandistic messages from automatic accounts (bots), did not obtain as much success as quality content. However, these tactics are hardly confessable even when it is obvious than bots and trolls are growingly used in political campaigns. The Spanish site Bots de Twitter ([botsdetwitter.wordpress.com/](http://botsdetwitter.wordpress.com/)) gave some local examples of such practices before 20D.

What were the preferred topics by party? Kantar, an established Spanish company specialized in media analytics and monitoring, data mined the most frequently used words by each of the five candidates on Twitter some weeks before the election. The list (as published by Verne, El País section dedicated to surprising phenomena on the Internet) shows that Podemos and PP were the two parties that better aligned their speech offline and online [www1].

<b>MOST USED WORDS BY CANDIDATE ON TWITTER</b>					
Spanish elections 20D (October 27 <sup>th</sup> – November the 19 <sup>th</sup> 2016). Kantar. (Candidates listed by number of followers)					
Pablo Iglesias (1,33 mill)	Mariano Rajoy (994.000)	Alberto Garzón (404.000)	Albert Rivera (396.000)	Pedro Sánchez (206.000)	
1. Country	1. President	1. Madrid	1. Spain	1. Rajoy	
2. People	2. Moncloa	2. Candidate	2. Rajoy	2. Spain	
3. Change	3. Spaniards	3. Plan	3. Democracy	3. Law	
4. Government	4. Meeting	4. War	4. Citizens	4. Government	



5. Interview	5. Spain	5. Street	5. C's	5. Politics
6. Thanks	6. Thanks	6. Defence	6. Spaniards	6. Right
7. Democracy	7. Law	7. Emergency plan	7. Gobierno	7. Unity
8. Win	8. Government	8. Work	8. Country	8. Catalonia
9. Want	9. Unity	9. Want	9. PSOE	9. Rights
10. Future	10. Employment	10. Proposals	10. Politics	10. Terrorism

Own elaboration

## IU and the youth

All along the campaign, IU had a remarkable mobilization role in social networks. The strategy was aimed at attracting a young voter who was elusive to the party, to remove the image of old-fashioned communism linked to its previous leader and to stress the brand of the party, which was not invited to the main TV debates. To achieve this, they developed a casual and humorous style taking into account every available multimedia options. The party used as many animated gifs or doctored photos as necessary to turn an idea into meme. At times they verged on provocation or hooliganism, as with the tag #VotaGarzonPrimo, which imitated the language of Spanish gypsies to ask for the vote. Another of its distinctive features was the decision not to erase tweets containing mistakes, but to apologize for them and to do it with sympathy.

IU social networking team worked in a place that became known as "La Cueva" (the cave). Garzón was so keen to technology that he even broadcasted in streaming, via Periscope, a surprise visit he paid to the place, introducing each member of the team to his followers. IU leader was always accompanied by a network manager, a photographer and a video manager, so there was plenty of material for the social networks.

At times, IU came to win 1.500 new followers per day for the official IU account and 2.700 for the account of Garzón. The party devised very witty labels that responded to situations that could be considered familiar to many people. #abuelasconGarzón (grandmothers with Garzon) accompanied the photo of an elderly woman attending an IU meeting; #YoaGarzon (what I would say to Garzon) was used in messages to silence the so called *cuñadismo* (brother-in-law science) This colloquial Spanish word is used to describe the clumsy arguments used by

people that have an opinion for every relevant topic (football, politics...) while not being and expert and frequently even understanding nothing.

One of the most successful hashtags devised by IU was #gatetesconGarzón (cute cats with Garzón). IU even asked its followers which tag they preferred -#gatetesconGarzón or #perretesconGarzón (cats or dogs)-, and pushed the triumphant tag, related to cats, cleverly joining the wave of so many people sharing cat's pictures in the networks and strengthening ties with animalists [Rubio 2015]. A video posted on Facebook in which a cat was raised to an stage where Garzon was on the verge to speak has more than 170.000 reproductions today [www2].

On Facebook, things were not that different and IU achieved also a great success. The party reached 9.5 million followers and got a million visualizations for its electoral spot while PP had only reached 680.000, Podemos 260.000 and Citizens 176.000. Though it is important to stress that this did not translate into electoral gains (in 1996, IU got 21 seats or 10.5% of the votes; in 20D, they got 2 or 3,67%), the opinion of many experts was that social networks were the only element that stopped the decline of the party and avoided the disappearance of IU under the overwhelming rise of Podemos.

The idea of attracting the young voter was in fact present in the strategy of the other parties as well. Streetwear and fashion received a lot of attention. PP focused on hipsters attending their meetings and released a video that was a nod to this urban subculture (presumably progressive). The video showed the friends of a young hipster interrogating him with concern after discovering that he would vote for Rajoy. His explanations intended to show that PP was a modern party concerned with aspects not traditionally linked to a right-wing party, such as protection of the environment [www3].

PP was not the only one to wink at hipsters. El Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV, Basque Nationalist Party) also spiced up its promotional material with such profiles.

But these efforts of the parties to dazzle the youth not always turned out well. Rubén Araguren became a symbol of rejection. In 2011, Rajoy did not reply to a question that this teenager prompted on Twitter under the excuse of his age: "15 years? How about we wait a little bit to discuss politics? Thank you". Four years later, before 20D, Araguren decided to continue the conversation with another message which became viral: "Me despreciaste con 15 años, el #20Dic no cuentes con mi voto" ("You looked down on me when I was 15, do not count on my vote on #20D").

Iglesias challenged the dress code during the whole campaign. He attended the reception of Constitution Day, one of the most formal political gatherings of the year, in shirt sleeves, and that same evening he appeared with a tie in a public act to present the proposal of Podemos for

the constitutional reform. Message: elegance to honor the people, not to honor the casta.

### **A viral campaign**

Many political memes got an organic push by famous Spanish influencers such as @diostuitero, @proscjoncio, @norkoreano or @gerardotc all along the campaign. But in other occasions the origin of the memes was not well identified. YouTube channels or web sites that published them on the first place disappeared after the Election Day, arising doubts on the veracity or spontaneity of the campaign.

The first meme units were the electoral posters, widely parodied. In the case of PP, the most commented aspect was the outstanding role given in them to the vice president, Sáinz de Santamaría, and the motto, "España en serie" (Spain seriously). The party in power decided to give visibility to its most recognized female representative because surveys reflected that her popularity was above Rajoy's. Some memes kept the slogan (Spain seriously) but added an image of the vice president the day that she attended the popular TV show El Hormiguero and crazily danced its disco styled theme song. Other memes offered different funny images and the logo standing between question marks: the face of the vice president was frequently substituted by other of Peggie (Sesame Street) or she was placed behind celebrities who seemed to steal her space. Rajoy's image was also target of similar experiments.

Regarding Sánchez, physical resemblances were found between him and the leading character of the famous US TV drama series Dexter, who is a serial killer [www4]. Some other Twitter users commented about his sex appeal. In the case of C's, tweeters mocked the large size of the posters, which showed Rivera's face at gigantic size at Puerta del Sol (the most symbolic square in Madrid).

IU went straight to the point and designed a headshot of its leader next to an empty bubble for Tweeter users to fill it. And they did, but other memes sprang forth making fun of the rest of the image. As in the case of Sánchez, there were references to the allure of the young leader [www5].

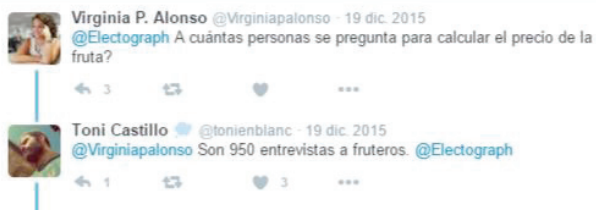
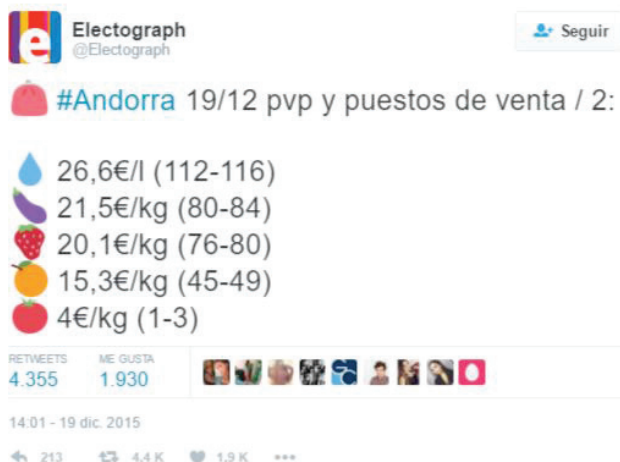
Podemos went viral during the elections to the European Parliament (2014) for an electoral image in which a serious Iglesias hid and peeked from behind a tree. That is still today one of the most parodied snapshots of this political leader. For 20D, the party chose a more sophisticated image of an smiling Iglesias, so Tweeter users preferred not to play with the official poster but did it with a photo taken by a journalist the night that the campaign officially started: Íñigo Errejón, second in command of Podemos and usually considered childish, was

fixing the official poster in a wall, but inside that poster the image of the leader was replaced by images of porno actors or popular comic characters such as Pocoyo, main role of a pre-school animated television series.

In just 48 hours a video coming out of the film channel Seestrena.com became viral. Making up the dialogue of one of the best-known scenes of Pulp Fiction, it showed Jon Travolta explaining to his casting partner, Samuel L Jackson, the keys of the Spanish elections (in the original dialogue, Travolta is explaining a weird trip to Europe): "The Reds [PSOE] say they know how to solve the issue of the crisis, but it does not seem to be the case. When they were in power they made it all worse. Bro, the Blue ones [PP], those in power now, their founders were ministers of Franco... Then we have the Orange ones [C's] and the Purple ones [Podemos]. The Purple ones say exactly the same as Blues and Reds but they mix it up with a "bro", a "buddy", a hashtag ... It sounds different, bro, they know how to do it. Then the Orange ones: no one knows what they are but they are friends of the Blues".

Another viral video was "Spain Wars". Just two days before 20D, The Force Awakens, Chapter VII of Star Wars, was released in Spain. In November, the Podemos-friendly collective "We think creative" uploaded a video to YouTube that compared the saga to the Spanish elections. The mayor of Madrid, Manuela Carmena (linked to Podemos) played as Princess Leia, and Monedero, co-founder of Podemos, played as Han Solo. It was a video full of winks to pop culture and to Spanish traditions. In the past, PP sources called *frikis* (Spanish word for geeks) to Podemos voters [www6]. Approaching the premiere of the film, the party of Iglesias spread the hashtag #unpaisconsufrikis (a country with its geeks) and tried to consolidate the perception of Podemos as the good party fighting the dark side of the force.

Fruits had an unexpected prominence. The current electoral law in Spain, dating from 1985, forbids the publication of polls since the fifth day prior to the vote. Many have questioned the desirability of maintaining such a provision in a world where people do not stop commenting on social networks automatically five days before a major event occurs. Surveys published by the foreign newspaper Periòdic d'Andorra, not subject to electoral restrictions, were reproduced on Twitter but replacing the name of parties for fruits, with hashtags like #disfrutalafruta (enjoy the fruit). PP was a drop of blue water, PSOE a strawberry, Podemos an egg, Ciudadanos an orange and IU a tomato, and vote estimations were narrated as if they were prices that rose and fell in a food market.



[IMAGEN 1 – FRUTAS]

The system was popularized by the non-profit Electograph.com site. A previous similar use was seen in 2012 elections in France, where it is also forbidden to broadcast polling polls until the voting process finish. In that country, French people talked about temperatures in cities related to the candidates' surnames: Budapest (Nicholas Sarkozy) and Amsterdam (François Hollande). The hashtag was #RadioLondon, in reference to the BBC radio station that broadcasted messages for the French resistance during World War II.

Another very successful trend was represented by the hashtag #RescataMiVoto (rescue my vote). The collective Marea Granate (Maroon Tide), linked to Podemos, proposed a barter: those people abroad who could vote -but did not want to- could do it in representation of other people abroad who wanted to vote and could not do it. The bureaucracy that hinders the Spanish vote abroad has been highlighted in every recent election. In 2011, the Organic Law of the General Electoral Regime was reformed, establishing a complex voting system for Spanish

living abroad which has reduced participation considerably. In 2008, 30% of Spanish residents abroad voted; in 2015, only 4% did. Although the reform was implemented by PSOE with the support of PP and other regional parties, in 20D the system was highly criticized even by followers of these ideological groups.

Finally there was an odd phenomenon of revival related to the tweets of Sánchez. Influencers decided to recover his old tweets (very juicy and spontaneous, since they were written when he was not the socialist leader) and they republished them in situations far from their original context, thus giving them a new meaning. This happened during the election night, when the 2012 tweet “Vaya paliza me están dando” (What a thrashing!), published in relation to a board game, was revoked.



[IMAGEN 2 - paliza]

Another viralized revival happened with an old tweet of the PP leader Esperanza Aguirre. In 2011 she despised the popular encampments of 15M that gave rise to Podemos with this tweet: “A los gobiernos que indignan a la ciudadanía, se les quita el poder votando pacíficamente en las urnas #acampadasol #democraciarealya” ("If governments outrage citizens, you take the power peacefully voting in the ballot box)". Weeks before 20D, a

supporter of Podemos replied: "Thanks, you started everything" and the answer went viral [www7].

## The debates

Some digital media carried out live fact-checking during the three main debates that were held before 20D. The most recognized for that was the Laboratory of new technologies of ElConfidencial.com (ElConfidencial.LAB). Many other media launched digital polls after every debate in order to name a "winner".

On November the 30<sup>th</sup>, the newspaper El País achieved something long awaited by Spanish Internet users and highly demanded by Internet associations. Its digital team managed to organize the first debate broadcasted not on television but on the Net, #ELPAISDebate, which became worldwide trending topic. It was a streaming of more than four hours (with analysis and experts participation before and after the debate itself). The dialogue was attended only by Sánchez, Iglesias and Rivera, because Rajoy declined the invitation. This motivated El País to place an empty stand in the scene and sparked endless critics in the social networks. The candidate of Podemos even came to address the empty stand during the debate.



[IMAGEN3-portadaElPaís]

Many mocking tweets showed Rajoy hiding, debating as a hologram, substituted by a wax doll or appearing as a talking bust on a TV screen placed on the empty stand (#plasma,

Spanish synecdoche for big TV screen, became a common way of referring to Rajoy). Some memes also showed popular children comic taking his place. Other specially talked moment happened just after the debate. The wife of Pedro Sánchez made the gesture of victory behind Íñigo Errejón, who was being interviewed. According to the social networks, she "trolled" or "photobombed" him. Errejón's response shows the casual language style adopted by the youngest candidates in the campaign: "Parece que ayer, tras el debate, irradianos ilusión hasta entre las filas de @sanchezcastejon 😊👍" ("It seems that yesterday, after the debate, we spread the illusion even among the ranks of @sanchezcastejon").

On December the 7th the TV channels Antena3 and LaSexta (both members of the private audiovisual group A3Media) organized a joint debate with PSOE, Podemos and C's (#7DEIDebateDecisivo, the "decisive debate"). Rajoy declined the invitation again and sent Sáinz de Santamaría to avoid a new picture of the empty stand. During the two and a half hours of debate, there were more than 1.5 million related tweets, becoming worldwide trending topic, and again humor was the predominant note. The official account of the political series House of Cards launched the war of tweets with a message that stated: "Que empiece la carnicería" (let the carnage begin) [www8].

Netizens underlined the "reality show" style of the debate, with cameras installed inside the cars in which candidates were driven to the place as if they were cinema stars going to a gala. There was also mocking about how oldie it looked the use of paper notes by candidates, the nervous gesture of all of them, the bad English pronunciation of Iglesias and the solitude of Sainz de Santamaría, target of most of the critics [www9]. But the more acid comments were addressed to the president for not attending the debate (he said he would watch it on television). Once again, the word plasma expanded throughout the social networks [www10].

The president of the Government agreed to appear in only one live debate and only with his main political opponent, Pedro Sánchez (#CARAaCARA2015, face to face 2015). It was organized by the Spanish public television, TVE, and broadcasted for all public and private television channels in the country on December the 14<sup>th</sup> (#14D). The debate was generally considered boring, but the following topics were among the most vividly evaluated: the outdated stage and the obsolete format designed by TVE, the obsession of candidates with paper notes (used to read or to jot down) and the impassivity of the host (the famous journalist Manuel Campo Vidal) [www11].

The most difficult moment of the debate became trendy as well, with the socialist candidate accusing Rajoy of not being decent, to which the president replied "So far" and called the statement of Sanchez "mean, petty and miserable". Rajoy got confused and said "Ruiz", a



popular Spanish surname, instead of “ruin” (mean), which triggered jokes.

In the three main debates, the candidates of IU and the minority party Unión Progreso y Democracia (UpYD, Union for Progress and Democracy), Andrés Herzog, complained about not being invited. On 7D, an IU candidate's tweet that spoke of “democracia a régimen” (democracy on a diet) became the most retweeted message ever sent by a politician in Spain. IU team focused on making fun of the other's dialogue using gifs and pop culture referents, from Ernie and Bert (Sesame Street) to Rihanna. Accompanying the animated gif of a black cat that licked its nails [www12], the hashtag #FaltaGarzon (we miss Garzón) achieved great traction.



[IMAGEN4-tuitGarzon]

The electoral night was the night of the *pactómetros* (imaginary machines to evaluate the possibility of pacts among parties). Citizens knew there would be so many possible political combinations that every time a new provision of seats was given during the official count of votes TV programs published the likely alliances. Those options were widely shared on social media.

Voter turnout was higher than in previous general elections. However, the apathy of the electorate caused some to emit bizarre null votes with the sole intention of showing them in the social networks. Those were ballots that compared politicians with the characters of Star Wars or with Spanish comics, for example, or ballots which turned the candidates into Magic cards. All of them became viral [www13].

For the first time since 1982, PP-PSOE sum of votes did not exceed 70% of the total, so many influencers or experts considered it the end of bipartisanship in Spain. The electoral outcome generated a blue map with predominance of PP in all the Spanish Autonomous

Communities except the Basque Country and Catalonia (where the winners of the night were the parties linked to Podemos). Even Andalusia provinces, traditionally a socialist feud, were under PP dominance excepting Jaen, Cordoba, Seville, Cadiz and Huelva. In Extremadura, another socialist feud, PP triumphed in the province of Cáceres and PSOE did in the province of Badajoz.

But under those predominant colors, the results offered a parliamentary landscape of 13 parties with an impossible arithmetic for pacts that sparked all kind of conjectures in Facebook and Twitter. None of the main groups obtained the absolute majority needed (176 seats) to invest its candidate on the first round. 123 seats went to PP, 90 to PSOE, 69 to Podemos, 40 to C's, 9 to ERC-CATSI, 8 to DL, 6 to EAJ-PNV, 2 to IU-UPeC, 2 to EH Bildu, and 1 Cca-PNC. The UpyD party was finally out of Congress and disintegrated after the elections. It would have been necessary to achieve an alliance of PP-PSOE, an alliance of PSOE with the parties to its left (Podemos, IU-UP and Catalan independent parties), or an alliance of PSOE with Podemos and C's (the two latter were fierce enemies) to guarantee an investiture. For the second round, it was only necessary that the number of yes's would exceed the number of no's.

The Christmas Eve after the elections, in his traditional speech, the King Felipe VI called for efforts of dialogue. But he decided to talk to the nation from a golden room in the Royal Palace and most of the observations went to the sumptuousness of the place, considered out of touch in a country still in crisis. Nine months later, with the parties not being able of achieving any constructive alliance, Spanish people went to the polls again on June the 26th.

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www3: PP election video “Piensa sin prejuicios” available at: <http://bit.ly/2hKZW5L>;

www4: Comparing Pedro Sánchez to Dexter (<http://bit.ly/2hIrf0x>); Sánchez “liking” himself (<http://bit.ly/2hVngAw>); Sánchez hiding the words “socialist” and “worker” in the electoral poster (<http://bit.ly/2i2RRIt>);

www5: Alberto Garzón and the empty bubble (<http://bit.ly/2hMJrFS>); Garzón joking about his attractiveness (<http://bit.ly/2gYyQcH>); Garzón compared to the leading role of Virgin at 40 (<http://bit.ly/2hVeIk2>); doctored pictures of Podemos' posters (<http://bit.ly/2hIIeAl>);

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www7: Pedro Sánchez, losing at a board game (<http://bit.ly/2i65Zk8>); Esperanza Aguirre urging Podemos to participate in an electoral process: <http://bit.ly/1LIcSRh>;

www8: Let the carnage begin, tweet by @houseofcards before 7D debate: <http://bit.ly/2hftLKM>;

www9: The political debate as reality show (<http://bit.ly/2i3l2LL>); the paper notes (<http://bit.ly/1HSZDRi>); the non-verbal communication (<http://bit.ly/2hIJXVZ>); nervous candidates (<http://bit.ly/2hfkJgB>); the loneliness and strenght of Soraya Sáinz de Santamaría (<http://bit.ly/2hITwnw>); the bad pronunciation of Pablo Iglesias (<http://bit.ly/2gZFABR>). The way this candidate pronounced “PriceWaterHouse Coopers” even prompted the appearance of an specific domain shortly after the debate: <http://www.housewaterwatchcooper.com/>.

www10: Rajoy as “plasma” president (<http://bit.ly/2hVV4xM>); as coward (<http://bit.ly/2hfcMs4>); and as a distant politician (<http://bit.ly/2hVVMuW> and <http://bit.ly/2i3qpKB>).

www11: Manuel Campo Vidal with paper notes (<http://bit.ly/2gZD8C3>) and “all alone” (<http://bit.ly/2gOY9e0>); Campo Vidal as Jon Travolta (<http://bit.ly/2hVDREw>) and as the popular entertainer Chiquito de la Calzada (<http://bit.ly/2hNaINQ>).

www12: The anger of Garzón as a black cat licking its nails (<http://bit.ly/2hIufwj>).

www13: Spanish political parties as contenders of Star Wars (<http://bit.ly/2hMtX4y>) or politicians as figures of Spanish traditional comics (<http://bit.ly/2hIcuwZ>). Candidates as Magic cards (<http://bit.ly/2gYPEvl>); candidates as characters of Games of Thrones (<http://bit.ly/2gYvA0N>), famous people or football stars (<http://bit.ly/2hetpUJ>). The ballots as toilet paper and jokes with the Spanish word “chorizo”, meaning both a popular food and -in informal terms- a thief, and thus used as a sharp critic to corruption among political elites (<http://bit.ly/2hO8zzB>).

## **2015 - Elections in Poland and Spain and their Consequences**

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