



You have downloaded a document from
RE-BUŚ
repository of the University of Silesia in Katowice

Title: Civic Platform Party (PO) partisans and Law and Justice (PiS) partisans. Meanders of two political identity narratives. Empirical study

Author: Zbigniew Zagala

Citation style: Zagala Zbigniew. (2018). Civic Platform Party (PO) partisans and Law and Justice (PiS) partisans. Meanders of two political identity narratives. Empirical study. W: M. S. Szczepański, W. Tomala-Kania, Z. Zagala (red.), "Identity narratives : interdisciplinary perspectives" (S. 167-187). Katowice : Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.



Uznanie autorstwa - Użycie niekomercyjne - Bez utworów zależnych Polska - Licencja ta zezwala na rozpowszechnianie, przedstawianie i wykonywanie utworu jedynie w celach niekomercyjnych oraz pod warunkiem zachowania go w oryginalnej postaci (nie tworzenia utworów zależnych).



UNIWERSYTET ŚLĄSKI
W KATOWICACH



Biblioteka
Uniwersytetu Śląskiego



Ministerstwo Nauki
i Szkolnictwa Wyższego

Zbigniew Zagala

University of Silesia in Katowice

Civic Platform Party (PO) Partisans and Law and Justice (PiS) Partisans Meanders of Two Political Identity Narratives Empirical Study

And how can we ever come to an understanding if we all have a world of things inside ourselves and each one of us has his own private world. I put in the words I utter the sense and the value that I expect them to have, but whoever is listening to me inevitably thinks that those same words have a different sense and value, because of the private world he has inside himself. We think we understand each other, but we never really do!

Luigi Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*

Introduction

For over ten years, the political life in Poland has been significantly affected by the dispute between two parties: Civic Platform (PO) and Law and Justice (PiS). For a long period of time the controversy has been something more than a struggle between two different sets of opinions concerning political issues expressed inside and outside the Parliament. These are two different narratives that concern almost every problem or situation that can be a subject to political interpretation. Important events such as Smolensk air crash or Warsaw Uprising, famous people both living and already deceased, including Lech Wałęsa or Major Zygmunt Szendzielarz “Łupaszka,” symptomatic words such as for example, *Poland exists only in theory*, or *Nobody is going to be deprived of their life by this man ever again*, are only a few of many striking examples of politicised subjects of dispute that for the recent ten years have become occasions for a confrontation of attitudes and opinions, going far beyond the strictly political problems.

Differences in opinions, views, and judgements that compose the aforementioned picture of contemporary Poland, its past and future, are obviously typical not only of politicians. The dispute has been arising among family members, friends, and in occupational environments, and it has been driven by voters of both parties, their partisans, and even people who are little interested in politics.

This is because media that are involved in this conflict, perform a significant role in its strengthening, and frequently even escalation, through their narratives. Its sharp character often encourages some journalists to formulate a thesis about two metaphoric Polands inhabited by two tribes that are alien to each other. Although they use the same language, they cannot communicate because different meanings are attributed to the same notions.¹

The goal of this paper is an attempt to describe these two metaphoric tribes, their objective characteristics and qualities, as well as their shared beliefs and identity-related distinguishing features. The results of the sociological research performed by Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej [Public Opinion Research Centre] between 2001 and 2016, and a series of interviews conducted in spring 2016 with PO and PiS voters, constituted the basis for observations and conclusions formulated in the paper.²

PO and PiS Voters. From Sympathy to Antipathy

Certainly, for many contemporary young voters who played a very important role in the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2015, it may be hard to imagine that the two main, opposing political parties of PO and PiS, which were competing with each other in the two campaigns, ten years earlier had also been preparing for both the autumn parliamentary and presidential pre-election campaigns. Their goal then was the victory over Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (SLD) [Democratic Left Alliance] and the formation of a coalition government. In the parliamentary elections both parties won

¹ Tiny, hand-written notes that were made on the margins of a book that has recently been borrowed from the library can be a small but symptomatic expression of engagement of some people in the analysed dispute. While reading this historical novel by a contemporary Polish writer, the previous, anonymous reader of the book, using her (as can be supposed on the basis of the handwriting) hand-made notes, commented on the existing political situation in Poland while comparing qualities of some contemporary political leaders with certain historical characters. The nature of the comments shows that the book reader is not a PiS supporter. The aforementioned situation may constitute the reason for considering the much broader phenomenon of permeation of the described political dispute into all spheres of life in Poland. Journalists – the commentators of this reality – in this context speak for example, about two versions of history, that is, history as approached by Civic Platform (PO) or Law and Justice (PiS), about a Civic Platform (PO) or Law and Justice (PiS) type of book, their poem or interpretation, etc.

² Interviews were conducted with twelve people declaring significant interest in the current political events, which was one of the criteria of the interviewees' selection for the research. Pre-election support granted to one of the parties of the political dispute: PO or PiS, was the next important selection criterion. Some survey participants emphasised this by defining themselves as Platformers [PO supporters] or PiSowcy [PiS supporters]. Two people participating in the survey described themselves as previous PO voters that voted for the representatives of Nowoczesna.pl party in the last election.

288 parliamentary seats, while gaining the support of over 51 per cent of voters. This created proper conditions both for the formation of the government called POPiS, which had been appointed several months before the governmental election, and for the implementation of political changes declared in the pre-election campaigns by both parties. They were described with a slogan affirming the formation of The 4th Republic of Poland. However, this government was never formed. Negotiations between the potential coalition members can be perceived as a symbolic beginning of the fundamental conflict between PO and PiS. They were unsuccessful, and consequently, PiS formed a governmental coalition with Samoobrona [Self-Defence] and Liga Polskich Rodzin [LPR – League of Polish Families]. Thereupon PO became the largest opposition party in the parliament.

The determinants and reasons for the conflict are not discussed here as they are not the subject of interest of this paper. However, it seems reasonable to describe the electorates of the parties that had been declaring the formation of POPiS coalition before the analysed conflict emerged and escalated. Therefore the reasons and explanations why a given party was voted for by its proponents, as well as the party-related sympathies and antipathies should be looked at here. The willingness to vote for a particular party or parties, together with the antipathy towards other political entities, often constitute the essential distinguishing features of the political identity of individuals participating in the elections (Holmberg 2010).

In one of the first sociological surveys, the supporters of the newly formed PO and PiS political parties had the possibility to justify their intention to vote for them in the election that was planned for the autumn 2001. In both potential electorates, the reasons connected with postulated changes in the country were predominant (Pankowski 2001a). In their statements, PO supporters emphasised mainly the arguments that the party supported by them would create opportunities for positive changes (50.0 per cent), and that it had a good economic programme (44.0 per cent) and expert politicians who would be able to govern the country (34.0 per cent). On the other hand, the potential PiS voters specifically stressed the fact that the politicians they wanted to vote for were independent and not involved in any deals with other parties (44.0 per cent). Moreover, it was believed that they would create opportunities for the reduction of crime rate and would improve security (43.0 per cent). They were perceived as honest, reliable, and corruption-free (34.0 per cent) (Pankowski 2001a). The proponents of both parties claimed, most often of all the surveyed potential electorates, that the choice of new parties resulted from the fact that they were disappointed in the parties they had voted for in the previous election.

This reluctance towards previously supported parties, combined with the wish for changes was, as it seems, an important element connecting PO and PiS electorates. The rate of people declaring the will to vote for one more party, apart

from the one which is their first choice, is an impressive indicator of program convergence noticed by the potential voters of both parties. In the survey conducted in June 2001, the respondents asked about their electoral preferences could include PiS in their responses for the first time (the party had been formed a month before). While answering the question: *If you could vote for candidates of one more party, which party would you choose as the second one?*, the proponents of this party most frequently indicated PO (26.0 per cent) (Pankowski 2001). On the other hand, PO supporters, while responding to this question, most often indicated PiS (19.0 per cent). Furthermore, both parties occupied distant locations in the rankings of parties which their supporters would never vote for. Among PiS proponents, PO party was at the 7th position (15.0 per cent of the indications), and among PO supporters, PiS was at a distant 13th position (only 2.0 per cent of the indications). The same trends were reported in the next survey, conducted a month later, that focused on the issues of election (Pankowski 2001a).

The data presented in Tables 1 and 2 are a good illustration of changes in sympathies and antipathies of PO proponents towards PiS, and PiS supporters towards PO. The first includes the rate of supporters of both parties, asked by the interviewers of CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre] during several surveys conducted between 2001 and 2015, to indicate the party that they would be willing to vote for if they could vote not for one, but for two parties. Table 2, in turn, shows the rate of proponents of both parties, who in the same period and in the same survey, provided answers to the question: *Which parties would you certainly not vote for?* In the case of all the quoted studies, the tables present two parties most frequently mentioned by both categories of respondents. In Table 1, these were the parties that enjoyed the greatest sympathy from PO and PiS supporters, and in Table 2, there are those parties that were rejected by them. Data compared in both tables allow one to notice a significant evolution of attitudes of the voters of both parties, from growing sympathy through its collapse to the really explicit antipathy.

In the period of first several years of presence of both parties on the political scene (PO and PiS were formed in 2001), a growing sympathy of PO electorate towards PiS, and PiS electorate towards PO was reported in sociological surveys. This process is clearly illustrated by the result of research conducted in May 2004 as well as in February and June 2005 (Table 1). In the first one it appears that in the opinions of their supporters PO and PiS constituted two complementary parties of scarcely different programs. Thus, in both potential electoral groups they were the parties of the second choice. This means they were the parties that would be voted for, if it was possible to vote for candidates of not one, but two parties. Among PiS supporters, 33 per cent would vote for PO, and among PO proponents, 31 per cent would vote for PiS (Cybulska 2004). The supporters of both parties were also unanimous in their decisions concerning the parties they would never vote for (Table 2). In both cases these were Samoobrona [Self-De-

fence], and SLD [Democratic Left Alliance]. In the potential PO electorate the first of the parties was rejected by 65 per cent and the other by 24 per cent. The distribution of negative indications for Samoobrona [Self-Defence] and SLD [Democratic Left Alliance] among the potential PiS voters differed only with respect to the value of rates – 44 per cent and 40 per cent respectively (Cybulska 2004).

The other of the aforementioned surveys revealed that, less than a year later, for 40 per cent of PO supporters PiS was the party of the second choice, and for a slightly lower rate, that is, for 37 per cent of PiS supporters, PO was such a party (Cybulska 2005). The two major parties rejected by PO and PiS supporters did not change. They were still Samoobrona [Self-Defence] and SLD [Democratic Left Alliance]. However, the distribution of supporters of both parties that would not vote for the aforementioned parties changed. In the case of PO supporters the rates were 50 per cent and 33 per cent respectively, and among PiS supporters the corresponding rates were 25 per cent and 51 per cent (Cybulska 2004).

Table 1. Alternative political sympathies of potential PO and PiS electorates between 2001 and 2015 (data in percentage)

Surveys and the date when they were conducted	If you could vote for candidates of one more party, which party would you choose as the second one?	Potential electorates (parties of the first choice)	
		PO [Civic Platform Party]	PiS [Law and Justice Party]
June 2001 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/85/2001	PO [Civic Platform] PiS [Law and Justice Party] UW (Unia Wolności) [The Freedom Union] AWSP (Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność Prawicy) [Solidarity Electoral Action]	– 19.0 18.0 17.0	26.0 – 2.0 11.0
May 2004 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/82/2004	PO [Civic Platform] PiS [Law and Justice Party] UW [The Freedom Union] LPR [The League of Polish Families]	– 31.0 15.0 6.0	33.0 – 0 21.0
February 2005 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/28/2005	PO [Civic Platform] PiS [Law and Justice Party] UW [The Freedom Union] LPR [The League of Polish Families]	– 40.0 10.0 5.0	37.0 – 4.0 19.0
June 2005 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/100/2005	PO [Civic Platform] PiS [Law and Justice Party] PD-demokracy.pl [Democratic Party – democrats.pl] Samoobrona [Self-Defence Party]	– 48.0 8.0 6.0	44.0 – 0 12.0

Table 1 continued

September 2007 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/149/2007	PO [Civic Platform]	–	22.0
	PiS [Law and Justice Party]	8.0	–
	LiD (Lewica i Demokraci [The Left and Democrats] – a coalition of SLD [Democratic Left Alliance] + SDPL [Social Democracy of Poland] + PD [Democratic Party] + UP [Labour Union])	26.0	3.0
	PSL (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe) [Polish People's Party]	9.0	10.0
May 2009 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/73/2009	PO [Civic Platform]	–	19.0
	PiS [Law and Justice Party]	8.0	–
	SLD [Democratic Left Alliance]	20.0	4.0
	PSL [Polish People's Party]	15.0	13.0
November 2010 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/151/2010	PO [Civic Platform]	–	7.0
	PiS [Law and Justice Party]	5.0	–
	SLD [Democratic Left Alliance]	32.0	14.0
	PSL [Polish People's Party]	13.0	14.0
July 2011 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/92/2011	PO [Civic Platform Party]	–	6.0
	PiS [Law and Justice Party]	3.0	–
	SLD [Democratic Left Alliance]	32.0	8.0
	PSL [Polish People's Party]	11.0	12.0
July 2013 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/97/2013	PO [Civic Platform]	–	6.0
	PiS [Law and Justice Party]	4.0	–
	SLD [Democratic Left Alliance]	27.0	8.0
	Solidarna Polska Zbigniewa Ziobry [Zbigniew Ziobro United Poland]	1.0	19.0
August 2015 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], 111/2015	PO [Civic Platform]	–	6.0
	PiS [Law and Justice Party] (together with coalition parties)	8.0	–
	SLD [Democratic Left Alliance]	15.0	5.0
	Komitet wyborczy Pawła Kukiza (Ruch JOW) [Pawel Kukiz Election Committee (JOW movement)]	8.0	26.0

Source: the author's own case study on the basis of the selected research by CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre] listed in References.

As a conclusion to the survey conducted in June 2005, which was four months before the parliamentary elections, while commenting on the fact that nearly half (48 per cent) of PO [Civic Platform] supporters were also ready to support PiS, and 44 per cent of PiS voters would support PO if they had the possibility to vote for one more party, Agnieszka Cybulska stated that: "Electors of both parties are the closest to each other; their supporters recognise each other as the most attractive alternative for the elections" (Cybulska 2005a: 12).

After the coalition negotiations, conducted by PO and PiS representatives, which ended in failure in autumn 2005, the conflict between the two parties started to escalate, and the distribution of political support in Poland began to be increasingly polarised. In the early parliamentary election conducted in 2007, PO and PiS gained support of over 73 per cent of voters, and in the following election, of slightly less, that is, of 60 per cent of people participating. Both in the first and in the second elections PO obtained the highest number of votes and together with its coalition party – Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe [PSL – Polish People’s Party] – they took the power for the next two terms.

The declining sympathy and growing antipathy of PO electorate towards PiS, and PiS electorate towards PO after 2005 is well illustrated by data included in Tables 1 and 2. The results of the survey conducted in September 2007 revealed that, in comparison with the results of the survey conducted two years before, the willingness of PiS supporters to vote for PO decreased by half (to 22 per cent), and the wish of PO supporters to vote for PiS declined sixfold (to 8 per cent) (Table 1). In the same period, the aversion of PiS voters towards PO grew even faster (almost twelvefold, from 3 per cent to 35 per cent), similarly to the pace of growth of antipathy of PO voters towards PiS (nearly twentyfold, from 3 per cent to 59 per cent) (Table 2). The aforementioned survey also showed that, for the first time, LiD [The Left and Democrats] was the first party of the second choice for PO voters. It was the coalition of left-wing parties, in which SLD [Democratic Left Alliance], the party that belonged to those that had been most often rejected by PO supporters before, was the most noticeable participant. The presented data show that this party became the party of the second choice for PO supporters. In the same period of time, initially PSL [Polish People’s Party], and since 2013 Solidarna Polska Zbigniewa Ziobry [Zbigniew Ziobro United Poland], performed the same role in the potential PiS electorate. In 2015 Komitet Wyborczy Pawła Kukiza [Pawel Kukiz Election Committee (JOW movement)] became the party of the second choice for PiS supporters.

After 2007 the hostility between PO and PiS electorates became even more apparent. Smolensk air crash in 2010 and its consequences performed an important role in its intensification. However, it should be emphasised that if in the potential PO electorate PiS became the most disliked party still before the Smolensk air crash (in May 2009, this choice was made by 61 per cent of PO proponents), in the potential PiS electorate, PO became the most frequently rejected party a year after (in November 2010, 50 per cent of PiS supporters definitely would not vote for PO).

In the successive year of 2011, data that illustrate the mutual hostility of the electorates of both parties – PO and PiS – reached their extreme level. Three quarters (75 per cent) of PO supporters and over two thirds (68 per cent) of PiS supporters would definitely not cast their vote for the competing party.

It ought to be mentioned that, at the same time, the rate of people in PO and PiS electorates that would be ready to cast their additional vote for the party assessing the Smolensk air crash differently from the party of their first choice, declined to the supreme low values of a few percent (3 per cent in the potential PO electorate and 6 per cent in the potential PiS electorate). As the data included in Tables 1 and 2 illustrate, in the successive years, the rate of people in the potential electorates of both parties declaring the antipathy (or sympathy) towards the competing party was not significantly changed.

Table 2. Political antipathies of potential PO and PiS electorates between 2001 and 2015 (data in percentage)

Survey and the date it was conducted	Which parties would you definitely not vote for?	Potential electorates (parties of the first choice)	
		PO	PiS
June 2001 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/85/2001	PO [Civic Platform Party] PiS [Law and Justice Party] Samoobrona [Self-Defence Party] SLD + UP + KPEiR [Democratic Left Alliance + Labour Union + National Political Party of Pensioners]	– 2.0 46.0 54.0	15.0 – 37.0 59.0
May 2004 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/82/2004	PO [Civic Platform Party] PiS [Law and Justice Party] Samoobrona [Self-Defence Party] SLD + UP + KPEiR [Democratic Left Alliance + Labour Union + National Political Party of Pensioners]	– 1.0 65.0 24.0	7.0 – 44.0 40.0
February 2005 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/28/2005	PO [Civic Platform Party] PiS [Law and Justice Party] Samoobrona [Self-Defence Party] SLD + UP + KPEiR [Democratic Left Alliance + Labour Union + National Political Party of Pensioners]	– 2.0 50.0 33.0	2.0 – 25.0 51.0
June 2005 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/100/2005	PO [Civic Platform Party] PiS [Law and Justice Party] Samoobrona [Self-Defence Party] SLD + UP + KPEiR [Democratic Left Alliance + Labour Union + National Political Party of Pensioners]	– 3.0 73.0 63.0	3.0 – 47.0 79.0
September 2007 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/149/2007	PO [Civic Platform Party] PiS [Law and Justice Party] Samoobrona [Self-Defence Party] LPR [The League of Polish Families] LiD [Left and Democrats]	– 59.0 72.0 62.0 19.0	35.0 – 50.0 36.0 58.0

Table 2 continued

May 2009 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/73/2009	PO [Civic Platform Party]	–	40.0
	PiS [Law and Justice Party]	61.0	–
	Samoobrona [Self-Defence Party]	54.0	39.0
	LPR [The League of Polish Families]	40.0	17.0
	SLD [Democratic Left Alliance]	15.0	42.0
November 2010 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/151/2010	PO [Civic Platform Party]	–	50.0
	PiS [Law and Justice Party]	70.0	–
	Samoobrona [Self-Defence Party]	43.0	29.0
	LPR [The League of Polish Families]	27.0	14.0
	SLD [Democratic Left Alliance]	10.0	38.0
July 2011 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/92/2011	PO [Civic Platform Party]	–	68.0
	PiS [Law and Justice Party]	75.0	–
	Samoobrona [Self-Defence Party]	31.0	13.0
	LPR [The League of Polish Families]	16.0	4.0
	SLD [Democratic Left Alliance]	13.0	48.0
July 2013 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], BS/97/2013	PO [Civic Platform Party]	–	51.0
	PiS [Law and Justice Party]	74.0	–
	Ruch Palikota [Palikot's Movement]	37.0	59.0
August 2015 CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre], 111/2015	PO [Civic Platform Party]	–	63.0
	PiS [Law and Justice Party]	68.0	–
	KORWiN Party	43.0	25.0
	Twój Ruch [Your Movement]	13.0	28.0

Source: the author's own case study on the basis of the selected data of CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre] included in References.

Actually, both pre-election surveys conducted in 2015, as well as the results of parliamentary election conducted in the same year, allowed for the observation that the predominance of both parties over others, measured with the size of their electorate, was not as considerable as in the previous years. However, considering the fact that both entities were voted for by over 61 per cent, it was still remarkable, and the political conflict significantly affected the content and shape of the national political discourse. PO and PiS (together with KORWiN) were among the parties that had the largest negative electorates – around one third of the people declaring their participation in parliamentary election would certainly not vote for any of them (Cybulska 2015). The same survey confirmed that in the sphere of party sympathies and antipathies, the fundamental line of division in Poland occurs between PO and PiS voters. PO would not be voted for by 63 per cent of the people voting for PiS (together with Solidarna Polska [United Poland], Prawica Rzeczypospolitej [Right Wing of the Republic] and Polska Razem [Poland Together]), whereas PiS would not

be voted for by even more, because by 68 per cent of PO voters (Cybulska 2015). For over five years, while asked about the party they would certainly not vote for, the voters of both parties have responded according to the model in which PiS voters usually mentioned PO, and people voting for PO always indicated PiS (Table 2).

Similarities and Differences between Party Electorates of PO and PiS

In the analysis of the results of a survey conducted several months before the parliamentary election in 2015, Agnieszka Cybulska stated: “Although the emergence of new political initiatives slightly refreshed the traditional structure of political sympathies and antipathies that have been existing for many years, the major line of bipolar division is still observed. The political scene is still most strongly diversified by the division between PO and PiS. Electorates of both of these parties can be described as most separable” (Cybulska 2015: 11). The aforementioned conclusion means that electorates of both parties defined in 2005 as most *similar* to each other (Cybulska 2005a: 12), ten years later became most *separable* with respect to each other (Cybulska 2005a: 11). Does this “separability” manifested in the declared mutual aversion of PO and PiS voters find its reflection in the objective differences in the sphere of social composition of both electorates and their members’ opinions? In other words, are PO and PiS voters similar with respect to the important social and demographic features, or do they significantly differ from each other?; also, in which areas are the views of supporters of both parties convergent, and what are the significant differences between them?

The results of a survey conducted in October 2015 allow one to state that the potential electorate groups of both parties show quite remarkable similarity to each other with respect to sex and age structure. Although among people declaring their will to vote for PO there are more women (55 per cent) than among PiS proponents (51 per cent), and the average age of this party’s potential voter is slightly lower (49 per cent) than in the case of PiS voters (51 per cent), the differences are not statistically important (Badora 2015). Despite some differences, lack of statistical significance is also characteristic of social and occupational structures of the potential voters of both parties. Significant differences between the discussed electorates occur in the case of such qualities as the place of residence (half of the potential PiS electorate live in the country and in PO electorate there are 27 per cent of people living in rural areas), education (relatively high rate of PiS voters have vocational education, and of PO voters – secondary education), participation in religious practices (three fourth of PiS voters participate in religious practices at least once

a week, and there are 46 per cent of people attending such practices among PO voters), and declared political opinions (61 per cent of PiS voters declare right-wing views, and in PO electorate there are more people of centre and left-wing views – 62 per cent) (Badora 2015).

The comparison of the aforementioned features of the potential electorates of both parties with those that were reported in the survey conducted ten years earlier, in 2005, allows one to draw a conclusion that no important changes have occurred in their social and demographic structures (Pankowski 2005). The change that took place in political declarations of PO and PiS supporters was the only significant one. In 2005, the majority of the potential voters of both parties defined their views as right-wing or centrist (more often PO – 61 per cent than PiS – 51.05 per cent). For the last ten years, in terms of their views, the proponents of both parties have moved towards their political opposites – PO towards left wing and PiS towards right wing. Centrist orientation has been predominant among PO voters (41 per cent) and right-wing orientation – among PiS voters (61 per cent) (Badora 2015).

The aforementioned movement of ideological declarations of the potential PO and PiS voters towards the broad spectrum ranging between the political right and left, finds only its partial reflection in the results of research focused on the opinions of both electorates on the subject of some more specific structural solutions (Roguska 2005, 2016). From the surveys conducted both in 2005 and in 2016, one may conclude that in many issues, the views of PO and PiS proponents were similar. In 2005 they included, among others, views concerning decommunisation, privatisation of state-owned enterprises and its pace, social policy of the state, employment policy, tax system, methods of fighting against crime, relationships between the state and the Church, as well as legal solutions concerning abortion. In all the mentioned problem areas, one can speak at most about a slightly different distribution of accents in the views of PO proponents in comparison with the opinions of PiS supporters. The attitude towards the European Union was the only problem that diversified the views of the proponents of both parties more clearly. The opinion that Poland should aim at the closest integration with the European Union was shared by 43 per cent of PO supporters and by considerably less, because by 26 per cent of PiS supporters (Roguska 2005).

The survey conducted eleven years later showed in turn the convergence of views of PO and PiS proponents in such areas as social policy, employment policy, tax system, and Eastern policy of the state (Roguska 2016). However, in comparison with 2005, in 2016, more divergences occurred in the views of both electorates. The most important of them are presented in Table 3. In the case of several opinions which the respondents were asked about both in 2005 and 2016, statements collected during both surveys are presented in the table.

Table 3. Distribution of opinions of the potential PO and PiS voters concerning selected issues (data in percentage)

Pairs of opposing statements	Year	Approval of statements in the electorates	
		PO	PiS
Poland should aim at the closest integration with the European Union	2005	43.0	26.0
	2016	66.0	27.0
Poland should aim at retaining far-reaching independence from the European Union	2005	33.0	49.0
	2016	17.0	49.0
Abortion should be permitted without any limitations	2005	28.0	26.0
	2016	26.0	12.0
Abortion should be completely banned	2005	48.0	52.0
	2016	27.0	64.0
Politics and public life should be based on the Decalogue and religious values	2016	10.0	40.0
Religious values should be binding only in private life of the believers	2016	82.0	40.0
Law should allow people of the same gender to enter into a formal registered partnership	2016	32.0	18.0
Law should never allow people of the same gender to enter into a formal registered partnership	2016	44.0	70.0

Source: the author's own case study on the basis of Roguska (2005, 2016).

The comparison shows that the main differences between the views of PO and PiS voters concern the attitude towards European integration. The views in this sphere have been clearly polarised. Already in the previous decade, PO proponents were more frequently the advocates of a closer integration of Poland into the European Union structures than PiS voters. Currently, this view has become a predominant opinion among PO electorate (66 per cent). In the same period of time, the rate of PO voters that were supporters of retaining a far-reaching independence of Poland from the European Union decreased by half (17 per cent). Among PiS supporters such an opinion has been shared by half of the potential electorate of the party (49 per cent). The rate of PiS voters who are euroenthusiasts has not changed either (slightly over one fourth). People belonging to the potential PiS electorate are the supporters of a complete ban on abortion more frequently than eleven years ago (64 per cent). On the

other hand, in the potential PO electorate such opinions have become clearly less frequent in the last decade (27 per cent). The belief that *Politics and public life should be based on the Decalogue and religious values*, is clearly less frequently observed in the potential PO electorate than in the PiS electorate. This opinion is followed by 10 per cent of PO voters and four times more of PiS voters. Differences between the discussed electorates in their approval for partnerships of people of the same gender are also considerable. Forty-four per cent of PO voters and 70 per cent of PiS voters are the supporters of the lack of legal possibility for such relationships to enter the state of matrimony.

The survey results presented before suggest that, if one looked for an explanation of the aforementioned shift of declarations of both electorates, that is, of PO towards left-wing and of PiS towards right-wing, it could mainly be found in the divergence of views in the sphere of impact of religion on legal solutions and political decisions. Such is the nature of the right-wing orientation of PiS voters, and the increasing centrist and left-wing orientation of PO voters. The distribution of emphasis in the views of both electorates on the subject of the postulated solutions in the sphere of economy or in social policy reveals in turn, that PO supporters are closer to political right, and PiS proponents are closer to political left.

Although some of the differences in the views of PO and PiS electorates are rather significant, it is difficult to find in them a convincing justification of the scale and intensity of antipathy between the proponents of both parties. As it can be presumed, these are not the differences in the approach of the proponents towards economic, social, or political growth of the state, but in the vision of the disliked party, its leaders, members, and supporters and all the features and motivations attributed to them that are important and determine the mutual aversion. These images, most often confronted with the ones that concern the party that is considered as one's own (its leader, members, supporters, and qualities attributed to them), constitute broader multithreaded narratives with these elements emphasised that are significant for the political identity of the proponents of a particular party.

Recognition of these narratives and elements forming them was one of the most important goals of the interviews with the proponents of both discussed parties. Although the key subjects of the interviews were those that concerned motivation for their own political choices, other aspects including the justification of party-related sympathies and antipathies, the questions referring to the history of their own interests in politics, participation in elections, and assessment of past and current political events were equally important. It was assumed that the responses of the interviewed people who were either PO or PiS supporters, would constitute a partly common and partly divergent story of the recent twenty years of Polish politics in particular. And actually, it was exactly like that.

What Unites and What Separates PO and PiS Supporters?

The attitude towards the political system of Poland before 1989 is an important common characteristic of political identity of the supporters of both parties. They all assess that period negatively. This concerns both the respondents knowing the realities of life in socialism from their own experience, and also the younger respondents in their early twenties. Sometimes, the assessment of reality in Poland before 1989, particularly by elderly people, is less critical, but never positive. The contemporary supporters of PO and PiS, similarly, assess NSZZ “Solidarność” [“Solidarity” Trade Unions] in a positive way, as a movement that brought a systemic transformation of the state, and therefore, they voted for the candidates from “Solidarity” group in the parliamentary elections in 1989.³

These rather clear political declarations found confirmation in views on vetting and decommunisation which, in the light of the opinions of people taking part in the survey, are problems that constitute the area of consent rather than a sphere of conflict between the proponents of both parties. According to the majority of the respondents who agreed to comment on the problem, the processes should be conducted, because negligence in this sphere has its consequences in the contemporary times. Other respondents either did not want to present their views in this field, or they thought that in Poland, there were more important problems that should be focused on.

Ironically, opinions of the proponents of both parties on POPiS coalition were characterised by a rather surprising convergence. This political concept that was to be realised after the parliamentary election in 2005, and the failure of which was received with dissatisfaction by 41 per cent of PiS voters and 76 per cent of PO voters (Roguska 2005a), now does not seem to have even a single supporter. Only one person stated that: “Once it was real, but in this case the parties would melt to be one. Politicians of both of them finally stated that it was not beneficial, which was true. I can’t see any possibility to reach an agreement with reference to some issues.”

Another idea – the formation of the 4th Republic of Poland – that used to be one of the program slogans of the future POPiS coalition, clearly separates the current supporters of both parties. The respondents’ remarks allow one to state that this idea is approached differently in both described environments. In the statements of PiS proponents, there are clearly more references to the way it was approached in the period when the slogan was filled with content, that

³ As it may be deduced from the analyses, the election, because of its political and opinion-related importance, can be called the *founding election*. The method of voting in it (for the government or the opposition party) is clearly correlated with further political choices made by the participants in the successive parliamentary and presidential elections (Grabowska 2004: 164 ff.).

is, during the period between 2003 and 2005. Disclosing of the so-called Rywin affair could be perceived as the symbolic beginning of the period, whereas its end would be the time of the pre-election campaign in 2005. PiS as well as PO and PSL referred to the aforementioned idea differently. The meaning of the slogan implying the “formation of the 4th Republic of Poland” was expressed in a concise, and rather precise way by one of PiS voters, who additionally included his personal attitude towards the 4th Republic of Poland in his comment: “Honest, lawful, and strong state that refers to tradition and breaks with post-communism [...] it is certainly clear that this idea is close to me.” It ought to be added that such a view is quite typical of PiS supporters engaged in the survey, for whom the idea is still worth implementing.

PO supporters have a completely different attitude to the idea in question. In the respondents’ statements there is no reference to the primary meaning of the “formation of the 4th Republic of Poland” slogan. In 2016, it was explicitly associated with PiS, and the postulate of changing the political system. This may explain the fact that PO proponents’ reactions to the discussed slogan, without any exception, are now critical.

According to expectations, differences in the narratives of PO and PiS supporters occur in the assessment of Round Table debates and in the ways political events were described between 1989 and 1990. Although the opinions about Round Table talks are sometimes nuanced, it is symptomatic that among PO proponents, positive assessments are predominant, and among PiS supporters, positive assessments are accompanied by the explicitly critical ones. This regularity reflects the results of a survey conducted on the 25th anniversary of Round Table talks. It shows that positive attitude towards the agreements concluded at the Round Table was presented by 69 per cent of the potential PO electorate, and 37 per cent of the potential PiS electorate (Pankowski 2014). In the statements of PO supporters on the subject of political changes and people participating in them, the name of Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the Prime Minister, is often mentioned. He is described as a positive character of that period. Lech Wałęsa is mentioned less frequently, and if any of the PO supporters does it, they most often do it in a critical way. Some respondents remember their support granted then to Unia Wolności [The Freedom Union]. While describing the studied period, PiS proponents more often refer to another Prime Minister of that time, Jan Olszewski. In majority, they assess his activities in a positive way.

Asked about their support for the candidates for the presidential office after 1990, the respondents whose age allowed for the participation in elections mentioned people who, in majority, form two different groups of politicians. In the case of PO supporters they were: A. Kwaśniewski (or L. Wałęsa), A. Olechowski (or M. Krzaklewski), D. Tusk, and B. Komorowski. On the other hand, PiS supporters declared their support for L. Wałęsa, M. Krzaklewski, L. Kaczyński, J. Kaczyński, and A. Duda.

The scope of integration processes of Poland with the European Union was an important issue differing the electorates' opinions, which was most explicitly revealed both in the interviews with PO and PiS supporters, and during the discussion of the aforementioned survey by CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre] (Table 3). As it has already been said, the comparison of the results of the surveys conducted in 2005 and 2016 allows one to state that PiS proponents did not change their opinions on the subject of Poland in the European Union, whereas PO supporters, in majority, became the supporters of strengthening the integration processes.

This problem found its reflection in the statements of some PO supporters. While speaking about their anxieties associated with PiS taking over power in Poland, the respondents emphasised international consequences of this fact. Their fears concerned the possibility of weakening the relationships of Poland with the European Union, isolation of Poland and less financial resources granted to Poland from the European Union for the economic development. In these statements, integration with the European Union was perceived as a specific type of protection against the unfavourable consequences of a change of political power in Poland. In the interviews conducted with PiS supporters, the problem of the relationship between Poland and the European Union did not occur.

As it has already been mentioned, the questions concerning the reasons why the respondents voted for their favourite party were the most important part of the interview. The respondents were asked about motivation for their political choices, about the parties they cannot imagine voting for, and also about the largest differences between the party that enjoyed their support and the party or parties they would not vote for. The respondents, PO and PiS supporters, justified their choices, both positive and negative, referring to their own system of values, their opinions, and visions of the state they would like or would not like to live in.

Differences between the statements of PO and PiS supporters are clearly significant. Firstly, which is obvious, they are different in content. The concepts concerning Polish economy, which, according to PO proponents, are much better than those of PiS, implementation of pro-European policy, and the promoted values are the fundamental arguments with which PO supporters justify voting for their party and aversion towards PiS. According to some respondents, the same arguments support voting for Nowoczesna party. On the other hand, PiS proponents support their party because, as it was expressed by one of the respondents, it "aims at the formation of a strong independent state on the basis of national history and Christian values." The greatest differences between PiS and the parties that PiS proponents could not imagine voting for, are perceived by PiS supporters in "their rhetoric and approach to history, subjectivity of the state, patriotism, heroes, and the ethos."

Secondly, the motivation of PiS proponents is generally more complex than the one declared by PO supporters. Apart from the aforementioned arguments,

there are references to PiS's fight with crime, corruption, and the people from the previous system who have had significant impact on the current situation in the country in many spheres of life.

Thirdly, the ways in which political choices are explained by the proponents of both parties also differ from each other with respect to the proportions between the arguments that advocate the party considered as their own, and critical arguments used in descriptions of the disliked party (parties). In the statements of PiS proponents, motivations that determine giving support to their party are predominant over the arguments that result from criticism of the rejected parties (PO, Nowoczesna, and SLD). In the case of PO supporters, it is usually the other way round. In their statements, opinions which most often answer the question why I would not vote for PiS are larger in number than the statements answering the question why I vote for PO. This observation is proved by the results of the survey by CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre] that was conducted in spring 2016 (Cybulska 2016), so in the same period, in which the analysed interviews were held. The studies illustrate that among all the parties whose representatives sit in parliament, PO is the only party the voters of which, when asked about their sympathies or antipathies towards each party, grant higher values on the scale of aversion towards PiS, than those which describe their sympathies towards PO. This may mean that in the political self-identification of PO proponents, the antipathy towards PiS performs a more important role than the sympathies towards the party perceived as their own. It must be added that, in comparison with other parties, PO also enjoys the least sympathy in their own electorate, and PiS enjoys the greatest.

Among other issues and problem areas clearly separating the supporters of both parties, Smolensk air crash should be firstly mentioned. Opinions about the causes of the crash, about the actions of the authorities and the commission investigating these causes, and finally about the supporters of a narrative that is different from their own, as well as about the media promoting this narrative, are the crucial elements of the political identity of PO and PiS proponents. Both parties to the dispute concerning the aforementioned issues have their own stories about the catastrophe. Generally speaking, the participants of one of the parties (PO) most often claim that the causes of the crash have been fully explained, or explained in the majority of areas. In their view, even though Poland made some mistakes, it "passed the exam." The same people reject the conspiracy theories formulated by the other party to the dispute and blame that party for using the catastrophe in a political game. The objection against that accusation is, in turn, raised by the representatives of the other party to the dispute (PiS), while they are accusing the first party of mistakes or intentional negligence in conduct, and contempt for the victims, their families and citizens. According to this party, various problems associated with the crash have been still waiting to be explained. A large emotional load that permeates various areas of the story

of the catastrophe may be illustrated by the categories of notions that are used by both parties in the description of the supporters of a narrative different from their own. The proponents of both parties describe each other similarly while talking about the problems of the Constitutional Tribunal, economy-related affairs, lack of politicians' responsibility, foreign policy, and the state subjectivity.

Conclusions

In the descriptions of the followers of political parties, in their views and opinions, a clear co-occurrence of the elements of sympathy with and trust in the supported party, and the aversion towards or even rejection of other parties is often emphasised. This phenomenon is most characteristic of the polarised party systems. In Poland, it is typical of the electorates of all the largest political parties (Kowalczyk 2015; Cybulska 2016). In their opinions about parties and political movements, the proponents of PO [Civic Platform], PiS [Law and Justice], Nowoczesna Party, Kukiz'15, PSL [Polish People's Party], and SLD [Democratic Left Alliance] combine their sympathies with the party they would like to vote for, with aversion towards other parties with various intensity and in different proportions. However, the described phenomenon takes the most spectacular form in the case of PO and PiS electorates.

The division of voters into PO and PiS supporters, which has been observed for over ten years in Poland (although the essence of the political split within the population of participants in the elections in the contemporary Poland might be better described as the division into PO and PiS opponents) has similarly fundamental nature to the political division of Polish nation into the proponents of "Solidarity" and post-communist parties in the late 80s and beginning of the 90s, that is, in the period of change of the political system (Grabowska 2001). That division, which finds its reflection in voting for SLD [Democratic Left Alliance] or for post-solidarity parties, remained vital until the parliamentary election conducted in the autumn of 2005. Then, it lost its importance for the benefit of the one described in the paper. The subject area of the paper focuses on the description of the evolution of sympathies and antipathies between the two post-solidarity parties, and also, on the characteristics of similarities and differences in the sphere of social composition and selected views of the proponents of both parties, which constitute their political identities.

An interesting completion of the outlined image emerges from the answers to the last several questions of the survey, which concern information sources from which the respondents gain knowledge about the current events in Poland, and people with whom they talk about politics, who comment on the events, and who share their opinions with them. In compliance with expectations, the respondents' statements revealed that both groups function,

in the majority of cases, in different worlds of media narratives. While questioned about their favourite sources of information, and also about those they do not trust, the respondents, depending on their party sympathies, generally indicated two groups of sources. The first group, typical of PO supporters, includes such sources as TVN, TVN 24, Polsat, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Newsweek Polska*, *Polityka*, wp.pl, onet.pl, and interia.pl. It does not need to be added that in this group, there are most often sources that PiS proponents indicated as those that they try to avoid, or they reach for them less often, because they do not respect them. They, in turn, most often use such sources as TVP, TVP Info, *Do Rzeczy*, *W sieci*, wpolityce.pl, niezalezna.pl. Obviously, in both studied environments there are people who reach for both, that is, “Civic Platform-related” and “PiS-related” media to, as they say, “form their own opinion on the particular subject,” and find confirmation of the previously formed opinions, which can be observed on the basis of the context of some statements. It is no exaggeration to state that the two groups of information sources, while creating two different narratives about politics and its participants, are significant mechanisms supporting certain visions of reality shared by their users and balancing their political identities.

The fact that the supporters of both parties generally share their reflections about politics with people of the same or similar opinions also has an impact on the strengthening of these identities. They often have such an opportunity in groups of close family members, but not always, because political divisions into “one’s own” and “aliens” also occur within some family circles (they may also have intergenerational nature), as well as within groups of friends. PO and PiS supporters also talk to people of different opinions, but the talks usually finish when they become too emotional in their nature. In the respondents’ views this happens obviously because of their political opponents who react to their interlocutors’ arguments too nervously.

The family groups and friends of similar political opinions, in which they discuss the current events associated with Polish politics, create an effect that is close to the one that was called “a filter bubble,” with reference to the activity of individuals on the Internet (Pariser 2011). In the everyday life of individuals, the function of an Internet browser providing information compliant with the earlier choices of other Internet users is used by family members, friends and acquaintances of the same, PO-related or PiS-related orientation. They reproduce opinions that create the only “true” vision of reality in opposition to a competitive reality, or realities which, in their view, are untrue. In the light of the collected empirical material, the thesis concerning “the filter bubble” is a presumption formulated on the basis of statements of some respondents rather than an explicit conclusion resulting from the conducted surveys. Therefore, this problem ought to be included in further, in-depth research focused on PO and PiS electorate.

References

- Badora, B. 2015. Kim są wyborcy, czyli społeczno-demograficzne portrety największych potencjalnych elektoratów [Who are the voters, or social and demographic portrait of potential electorates]. *Komunikat z Badań* [Survey Communication](41/2015). Warszawa: CBOS [Public Opinion Research Centre]. www.cbos.pl.
- Boguszewski, R. 2011. Parliamentary Elections 2011 – Interests, Voting Certainty, Electoral Alternatives, Negative Electorates. *Komunikat z Badań* (BS/92/2011). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Cybulska, A. 2004. Structure of Support for Political Parties in the Period of Transformation – Electoral Alternatives and Negative Electorates. *Komunikat z Badań* (BS/82/2004). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Cybulska, A. 2005. Structure of Support for Political Parties – Certainty of Electoral Decisions, Electoral Alternatives and Negative Electorates. *Komunikat z Badań* (BS/28/2005). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Cybulska, A. 2005a. Structure of Support for Political Parties Before Parliamentary Election. *Komunikat z Badań* (BS/100/2005). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Cybulska, A. 2007. Structure of Support for Political Parties – Electoral Alternatives and Negative Electorates. *Komunikat z Badań* (BS/25/2007). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Cybulska, A. 2007a. The Power of Political Preferences, Electoral Alternatives and Negative Electorates. *Komunikat z Badań* (BS/149/2007). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Cybulska, A. 2009. Electoral Alternatives and Negative Electorates. *Komunikat z Badań* (BS/73/2009). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Cybulska, A. 2015. Electoral Sympathies and Aversions. *Komunikat z Badań* (111/2015). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Cybulska, A. 2016. Social Approval and Disapproval of Parties and Political Movements. *Komunikat z Badań* (94/2016). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Cybulska, A. and K. Pankowski. 2011. Electoral Expectations and Motivations of Polish People. *Komunikat z Badań* (BS/87/2011). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Cybulska, A. and K. Pankowski. 2013. Who Should Be Voted for? Party Affinities and Aversions of Polish People. *Komunikat z Badań* (BS/97/2013). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Grabowska, M. 2001. Partie i elektoraty [Parties and Electorates]. In M. Grabowska and T. Szawiel, *Budowanie demokracji. Podziały społeczne, partie polityczne i społeczeństwo obywatelskie w postkomunistycznej Polsce* [Formation of Democracy. Social Divisions, Political Parties and Civil Society in Post-Communist Poland]. 174–216. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Holmberg, S. 2010. Nowe spojrzenie na identyfikację partyjną [New Perception of Party Identification]. In R. J. Dalton and H.-D. Klingemann (eds.), *Zachowania polityczne* [Political Behaviours], vol. 2. 156–172. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Kazanecki, W. 2015. Interest in Politics and Political Views Between 1989 and 2015. Declarations of Young People in Comparison with All Respondents. *Komunikat z Badań* (135/2015). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Kowalczyk, K. 2015. Sympathy and Aversion to Parties and Political Initiatives. *Komunikat z Badań* (99/2015). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.

- Pankowski, K. 2001. Before Parliamentary Elections – Voting Certainty, Electoral Alternatives, Negative Electorates. *Komunikat z Badań* (BS/85/2001). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Pankowski, K. 2001a. Parliamentary Elections – Voting Certainty, Electoral Alternatives, Negative Electorates, Explanations of Electoral Decisions. *Komunikat z Badań* (BS/100/2001). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Pankowski, K. 2005. Characteristics of Potential Electorates in Parliamentary Elections. *Komunikat z Badań* (BS/145/2005). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Pankowski, K. 2014. Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Round Table Debates. *Komunikat z Badań* (16/2014). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Pariser, E. 2011. *The Filter Bubble: How the New Personalized Web Is Changing What We Read and How We Think*. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Roguska, B. 2005. Potential Electorates on the Subject of Crucial Social and Political Issues. *Komunikat z Badań* (BS/130/2005). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Roguska, B. 2005a. On Attempted and Possible Government Coalitions. *Komunikat z Badań* (BS/190/2005). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.
- Roguska, B. 2016. Party Electorates – Characteristics of Views. *Komunikat z Badań* (95/2016). Warszawa: CBOS. www.cbos.pl.