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## THE EUROPEANIZATION OF POLISH CLIMATE POLICY

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**ABSTRACT:** The goal of the work was to analyse the positions of the selected Polish political parties about the European Union climate policy and to assess whether and to what extent the process of Europeanization is taking place in Poland. Climate change negatively influences economic growth: it affects food security and limits industrial output and economic development. It reduces labour productivity and influences international trade. The scope of this impact will depend on political decisions and the effectiveness of climate protection measures taken by individual governments. The negative attitude of political parties to climate policy may make it challenging to undertake the necessary adaptation and mitigation measures, even despite changes in social perception in this regard.

**KEYWORDS:** climate policy, political parties, election programs, Europeanization, social perception

## Introduction

It is generally recognised that climate change's effects negatively influence economic variables. It affects, among other things, the agriculture sector and food security (Zhang et al., 2017; Karaczun & Kozyra, 2020) and limits the industrial output and economic growth (Chen & Yang, 2019). It will reduce labour productivity (Zhang et al., 2017) and influence international trade (Dellink et al., 2017). As Tol (2009) points out, the scope and strength of this impact will depend primarily on political decisions and the effectiveness of climate protection measures taken by individual governments. The negative attitude of political parties to climate policy may make it challenging to undertake the necessary adaptation and mitigation measures. As a consequence, it may affect economic and economic development.

Therefore, climate change is becoming one of the key themes in the politics of the European Union (EU). Since the beginning of climate negotiations, the EU has been striving to adopt a legally binding international agreement that would set out the obligations of individual states in the field of climate protection (Schreurs & Tiberghim, 2007; Kilian & Elgström, 2010). To prove its position, it adopted a strategy of "leadership by example," associated with adopting ambitious climate goals. The strategy has proved effective, at least in the initial period of the climate negotiations (Yamin, 2010). However, in the first decade of the 21st century, the differences in the approach to climate policy between countries became too large for the "good example" strategy to still be effective. This led to a change in the EU's strategy – from striving to be a leader in international negotiations to accepting the role of a mediator whose activity supports reaching a consensus between parties (Fischer & Geden, 2015; Bäckstrand & Elgström, 2013).

But the European Union has not abandoned its ambitious plans. The belief that actions should be consistent with the results of scientific research further honed the EU's priorities in the following years. In December 2020, the European Council approved the increase of the reduction of the greenhouse gas emission target from 40% in 2030 (compared to 1990) to 55% (European Commission, 2021).

Achieving this goal will largely depend on the activity of individual member states. Apart from the countries supporting ambitious climate policy goals, there are also countries that are far more sceptical. One is Poland, which is supported by some new member states (Skjærseth, 2018).

There are many contradictions in Polish climate policy. On the one hand, Poland is a country of climatic success. Despite the significant increase in GDP, greenhouse gas emissions have decreased significantly and are now 32% lower than in the base year (Ministry of Climate and Environment,

2021). The need to undertake actions in this area Polish government noticed in 1991 when it accepted the First National Ecological Policy (Resolution, 1991). A year later, Poland became a signatory to the UNFCCC, and in 1994 it ratified the Convention. In December 1997, Poland signed the Kyoto Protocol, committing itself to the annual average reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in 2008-2012 by 6%, and ratified it in 2002. At that time, the activities aimed at protecting the climate corresponded to the activities aimed at protecting the environment. As a result, throughout the 1990s, despite the growing social problems caused by the economic crisis induced by the transition from a centrally planned economy to the free market and the collapse of many large state-owned enterprises, politicians did not deny the need to undertake actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Karaczun et al., 2020). Nevertheless, in view of the urgency and importance of many problems caused by the transformation (e.g., inflation, drop in production volume, high unemployment, reduced profitability of agricultural production), decarbonisation was not treated as a priority.

In 2003 Polish Government adopted the Climate Policy (Ministry of the Environment, 2003). The document set a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2020 compared to 1988. This goal was higher than that presented by the EU at the time. However, it soon turned out that there needed to be a political will to achieve this goal.

On the other hand, Poland is seen as one of the leading opponents of European climate policy (Ancygier, 2013; Karaczun, 2018; Skjærseth, 2018). Kryk (2019) points out that Poland is decarbonising its economy slower than the EU average and warns that the situation may not improve, as it is predicted that fossil fuels will dominate the energy market even until 2050. Therefore, accomplishing the EU energy policy goals by Poland will require faster decarbonisation of the economy. However, in the opinion of Skoczowski et al. (2018), there is no political will for such actions. This approach of the Polish government may be due to two following reasons:

- different approaches of Poland and the EU to climate policy,
- the conflict over adopting the third EU Energy and Climate Package (2013–2020).

The Polish government did not deny the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as shown by its high activity during the international UN Climate Convention negotiations. However, it opposed the approach adopted by the European Union, which recognised decarbonisation as the primary goal of climate policy. The fast pace of energy transformation was also difficult for the Polish government to accept. It was due to the continuing dominant role of coal (both hard and lignite) in energy production. This resulted from the autarky policy pursued until 1989 and the belief that only basing energy production on own resources would ensure energy security. In the following

years, the second reason has become even more critical due to the increasing dependence of many EU countries on natural gas imports from Russia.

In 2007 as a part of the work on the EU Energy and Climate Package 2013–2020, the European Commission proposed a radical change in the system of emission allowances allocation. Until this date, Poland's power sector was not heavily troubled by the EU ETS because power installations received all the emission allowances (EUA) needed for free. The Commission proposed to replace the allocation based on historical emissions with a mix of auctioning and output-based allocation. It suggested that the distribution through auctions would cover 40% of the EUA in 2013, 70% by the end of 2020 and 100% by 2027 (Skoczkowski & Wronka, 2017). Although the negotiations on this solution lasted throughout 2007, they were disregarded by the Polish administration. It was not until the beginning of 2008 that the report was published at the request of the Polish Electricity Association (EnergSys, 2008). The report indicated how much the proposed solutions might affect the market and energy prices in Poland. It had a significant impact on the reception of climate policy in Poland and the belief of most politicians that European climate policy does not take into account the interest of Poland. This was reflected in the negative attitude towards climate policy expressed by the Polish decision-makers in the following years (Karaczun et al., 2020).

The main aim of the article is to determine whether the Europeanization of climate policy was taking place in Poland when it comes to the impact of EU patterns on the programs of parliamentary political parties. The authors defined the Europeanization process following the Ladrech (1994) concept as an *“Incremental process re-orienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organisational logic of national policy-making”*. This definition was further developed by Radaelli (2003) who pointed out that it is also a diffusion process of public policies, shared values and norms into public discourse and political structures. It is both direct, primarily to the national political circles in which the parties of the member states operate, and indirect (Mair, 2007). Ladrech (2002) also distinguished areas in which a potential impact may take place. We decided to analyse one of them, i.e., *“policy / programmatic content,”* about the single policy area (climate policy). It results from the assumption that the abovementioned issue was not present on Poland's party agenda before the EU's accession. It is the sphere of policy in Poland, which should be considered driven (directly and indirectly) by the EU institutions, decisions and expectations.

## Research methods

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The paper analyses the evolution of parliamentary political parties' views on climate policy in subsequent parliamentary elections starting with Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004 and ending with the parliamentary elections in 2019. The decision to assess the standpoints of the selected Polish political parties based on the analysis of their elections programs was made following the assumption that they are developed by the parties' key authorities, constituting the most tangible form of presenting views and announcing actions on the issues mentioned above.

The research consisted of two stages. The first was a content analysis of 26 parliamentary parties' election programs from 2005-2019. This phase provided empirical data for conducting Social Network Analysis (SNA – the second stage of the study). The social network perspective focuses primarily on links between individuals (in this case, between the parties positions and indirectly between the parties themselves), providing an opportunity to analyse and graphically present the structure of relations extracted on this basis (Batorski & Zdziarski, 2009). SNA enabled the development of a map of linkages between political groups that share the same views on climate issues (configurations of parties)—sharing the same ideas among parliamentary parties allows us to pursue a coherent policy towards the EU. This type of research is helpful because it makes it possible to present how the structure of the climatic concepts of Polish parties has changed in recent years.

The categorisation key takes into account the coding schemes created by The Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) and The Comparative Agendas Project (CAP). Both of them identify parties' attitudes towards environmental issues. However, considering the Polish context, we decided to create a unique coding scheme. We use quasi-sentences as the unit of observation. After a pilot study of elections programs, we created fourteen main categories of statements included in the final qualitative content analysis – party attitude to: “further coal extraction,” “replacement of coal stoves,” “prosumer energy programs,” “energy efficiency (and/or thermal modernisation),” “limiting carbon dioxide emissions,” “development of renewable energy sources,” “afforestation,” “nuclear energy,” “natural gas,” “shale gas,” “exclusion of coal as an energy source,” and “UE Climate Package.” Due to the fact that in the Polish public debate, the anthropocentric paradigm of climate change has been denied for years, we also decided to distinguish additional categories, i.e., “global warming (acceptance of the human influence theories)” and the “denial of anthropogenic climate change.” The attitude to the above-mentioned issues was presented by political parties 109 times in the 26 programs covered by the analysis.

Social Network Analysis was conducted in UCINET with visualisation in NetDraw. The affiliation networks were created (between parties and statements – announced in their programs from each electoral year). Then, the so-called 2-mode networks (parties – statements) were simplified to 1-mode networks presenting linkages between parties in different electoral years. The expression of the same electoral demands by different parties in a given election year was considered a linkage between them. The network data is undirected and binary. This procedure paved the way for a statistical comparison between party networks regarding the agreement on climate issues before every election since 2005.

## Results of the research

The linkage network (2-mode, reduced to “anti-transformational” statements) is presented in Figure 1.

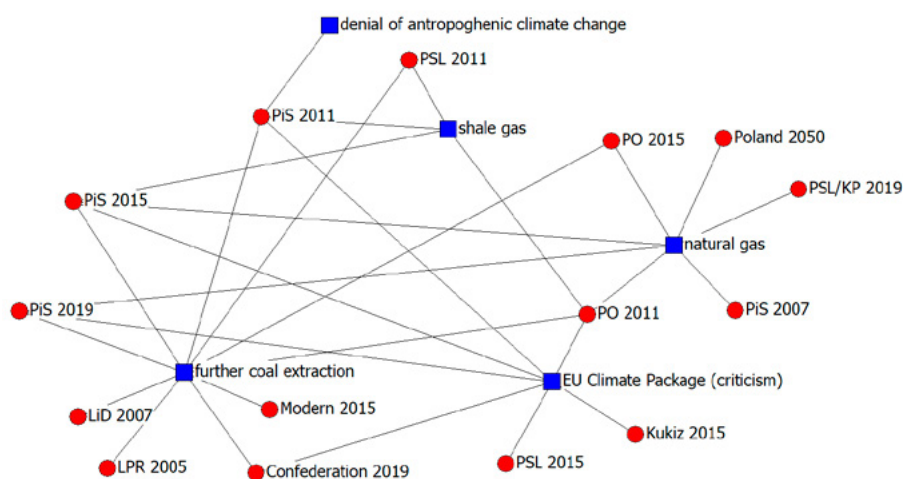


Figure 1. The linkage network (between parties and “anti-transformational statements”)

Among the group of “anti-transformational statements,” the highest value of the degree is attributed to the electoral demand to keep coal as an energy resource. The number of electoral requests regarding the issue of maintaining coal as a source of energy has changed over time. However, the idea of coal extraction was still supported in 2019 by the ruling party (PiS) and the right-wing Confederation. In addition, during the last elections campaign, both right-wing parties added to their manifestos the demand to mitigate (PiS) and terminate (Confederation) the EU Climate Package. The criticism of

the current obligations for Poland resulting from the package has been present in the PiS program since 2011 and was also present in the manifestos of the following parties: the PO (2011), the PSL (2015) and the Kukiz'15 (2015). Currently, among the issues that can be treated as having a negative impact on the climate, the demand to continue the combustion of natural gas is supported by three parties (PiS, Poland 2050, PSL/KP), while other political groups did not express their opinion on this subject before the last elections. In addition, during the analysed period, the parties abandoned the demand to use shale gas as a source of energy. Also, the current ruling party no longer denies the impact of human activity on climate change. As shown Table 1, every party with its representatives in the Polish parliament declared support for anti-climate issues at least once. However, the SLD made such statement only in 2007 (when it formed a part of the Left and Democrats). The above data indicate a gradual evolution of the party's positions towards the assumptions of the European climate policy. The number of supporters of coal-based energy has significantly decreased. Currently, no party officially denies the impact of human activity on climate change.

The cumulative network considering "pro-transformational and anti-transformational" issues (statements – parties network) is presented in Table 1. In the cells of the table, the presence of X denotes the existence of an issue in the individual program. The presented data allows tracking changes in the same groups' programs over time.

Data presented in Table 1 showed that over the years, the parties have most often demanded support for the following: "development of renewable energy sources" (18 times), "afforestation" (13 times), "energy efficiency (and/or thermal modernisation)" (12 times). Other pro-climate issues were mentioned fewer than 10 times. The parties' support for the first three listed issues can be described as increasing over time and already appearing in the programs of 2005 and 2007. However, until elections in 2011, parties' election programs were not sated with climate policy content. The first broader reference to the assumptions of the EU strategy can be described as rather restrained – the parties defended the system of energy production based on the combustion of fossil fuels, and the first clear change took place only before the 2019 elections.

**Table 1.** Issues raised in the parliamentary parties' election programs in 2005-2019

Party	Development of renewable energy sources	Nuclear energy	Energy efficiency	Afforestation	Exclusion of coal	Global warming (acceptance of the human influence theories)	Limiting carbon dioxide emissions	Prosumer energy programs	Replacement of coal stoves	Shale gas	UE Climate Package – criticism (willingness to mitigate)	Natural gas	Denial of anthropogenic climate change	Further coal extraction
PiS 2005														
PiS 2007												X		
PiS 2011	X	X		X						X	X		X	X
PiS 2015	X			X						X	X	X		X
PiS 2019	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X
PO 2005														
PO 2007	X													
PO 2011	X	X	X	X			X			X	X	X		X
PO 2015		X		X				X	X			X		X
KO 2019	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
PSL 2005	X		X	X										
PSL 2007	X			X										
PSL 2011	X						X			X				X
PSL 2015	X										X			
PSL/KP 2019	X		X			X	X	X	X			X		
SLD 2005														
LiD 2007	X		X	X		X	X							X
SLD 2011	X		X	X		X								
Self-Defence 2005	X		X											
LPR 2005	X		X											X
Left 2019	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Palikot's Movement 2011														
Kukiz 2015											X			
Modern 2015	X		X	X				X	X					X
Confederation 2019		X									X			X
Poland2050 2019	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		



To compare party links with “pro-climate demands,” five 1-mode networks were created. The detailed data for every electoral year are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Parties' linkage network

Network (parties)	# of nodes	# of not valued ties	Avg. degree	Density	Components	Fragmentation
2005	6	6	1	0.2	4	0.8
2007	4	6	1.500	0.5	2	0.5
2011	5	12	2.400	0.6	2	0.4
2015	5	10	1.167	0.5	2	0.4
2019	6	22	3.667	0.7333	1	0

Table 2 indicates a high polarisation of the parties' positions on pro-climatic issues in recent years. During the 2005 elections campaign, parliamentary parties did not present a climate policy that can be considered coherent, which is proven by a small number of shared issues, a high degree of network fragmentation, and the presence of multiple components. Before the last elections, the number of shared issues, the average degree, and the density of the network were more than three times higher, while the number of parliamentary parties was the same as in 2005. Since the ideological composition of the Polish parliament was similar to the one in 2005, the main transition can be observed in the centrist and right-wing party attitude. The 2019 network has only one component, which means that each parliamentary party shares at least one pro-climate statement.

## Discussion

The analysis has revealed that direct references to climate issues appeared in electoral programs for the first time in 2011. The main parliamentary parties, i.e. the Law and Justice (the right-wing) and the Civic Platform (centre-right), criticised the EU climate policy, including the solutions implemented under the EU energy and climate package. On the other hand, the left-wing political groups, although they maintained their opinion on the impact of man on climate change, did not declare support for activities aimed at climate protection at the time.

The first clear shift in the attitude of the Polish parliamentary parties took place in 2015 and was visible mainly among the opposition, left-wing, and centrist political groups. However, the views of individual parties on climate issues at that time were still not fundamentally different.

A significant change occurred during the last election campaign in 2019. Not only were there parties that supported the need to implement active measures to protect the climate, but there was also a clear polarisation of positions in this regard. The right-wing parties (both the ruling Law and Justice and Confederation) pointed to the need to tone down the European climate policy. At the same time, the Confederation announced that it would take steps to abandon Poland's obligations imposed by the EU's energy and climate package. On the other hand, the left-wing and centre-right parties have declared their readiness to support climate protection and resign from fossil fuels.

The strategies adopted by Polish political parties were pragmatic. Before joining the EU and in the first years of Poland's membership (2004-2007), climate issues were not discussed in public, and they were absent from the political debate.

At the negotiation table, Poland stipulated several conditions be met for the Polish government to adopt the Package, including a transitional period for the energy sector in the new member states. During the period, some allowances were to be free (the mechanism for selling 100% of allowances was to be introduced in 2020) and the creation of a solidarity mechanism under which richer EU countries were to transfer a part of their revenues from the sale of emission allowances to poorer member states. The EU accepted most of the conditions, adapting the package architecture. In the following years, the European Commission made attempts the introduction more ambitious climate goals trying to take into account the situation of the "new" EU member states. This seems to be confirmed by the observation of Börzel (2003), which indicates that the Europeanization process is of a two-way nature and also means a change in the way the EU institutions operate under the influence of the Member States.

After the 2015 elections, a coalition of right-wing parties with an ambivalent approach to Poland's membership in the EU came to power. The changes introduced in the judiciary system led to a conflict with the European Commission and raised concerns about Poland's future in the EU. In the face of those mentioned above, the opposition parties started to change their approach to climate policy. They pointed out the negative impact of the government decisions affecting the country's importance in the European debate. By doing so, they could no longer criticise the need to protect the climate, which the EU considers an environmental, social and economic priority. The shift in the position was also facilitated by the fact that potential voters of the opposition parties recruit from groups open to environmental ideas (Cybulska, 2020).

Politicians also could not ignore the growing awareness of climate change in Polish society, which is evident in survey results. As indicated by Głowacki

(2018), since 2009, the number of people declaring that climate change is one of the greatest threats to modern civilisation has increased from 15% in 2009 to 26% in 2021. In 2016, only 45% of respondents were, to a considerable extent, concerned about the state of the environment in Poland. Over the next two years, there was a jump of more than 23 percentage points. The highest level of concern was found among people living in the largest cities (69% of responses), and the lowest – was in rural areas (20%) (Głowacki, 2018). Certainly, this impacted the election programs of parties referring to the city electorate – KO and Poland 2050.

## Conclusions

The analysis results indicate that in Poland, there has been a process that could be described as a “pragmatic, delayed Europeanization” of the Polish climate policy. Within its framework, the following three main phases have been identified.

The first phase was between 2007 and 2011 when the parliamentary political parties referred to pro-climate issues more frequently than in 2005. In this context, it needs to be mentioned that the 2011 election campaign stood out because the parties present in the Sejm directly quoted on the EU Climate Package for the first time. It should also be noted that the views presented by them negated the assumptions included in the Package. Most likely, it resulted from the conflict between Poland over the European Commission on allocating emission allowances (EUA) after 2012. The unanimous, negative attitude of Polish parliamentary parties to the solutions proposed by the EU presented in their election programs in 2011 probably contributed to the fact that in the following years, the Polish government vetoed three times the European Commission’s proposals to tighten the climate policy (Karaczun et al., 2020).

The second phase, the year 2015, was when the main party of the 2007-2015 government coalition departed from its criticism of the Package, and the PiS, which was coming into power, did not renew the previously expressed opinion that denied the impact of human activity on the climate. The pragmatic nature of the Europeanization process is evidenced by the fact that despite the opposing view on the European climate policy expressed in its election program, PiS, which won the 2015 elections, did not pursue an anti-climate policy in the EU arena. In the following years, Poland supported tightening the European climate target from a 40% reduction to 55% and did not veto the EU climate neutrality target in 2050. Poland has also not become an outsider of European climate policy, although it was certainly not one of its leaders (Karmowska, 2019).

The third phase (2019) was when two right-wing parties expressed a negative attitude to the EU Package. Still, at the same time, for the first time, the electoral programs of three parliamentary parties included the electoral to exclude coal as an energy resource. The distinctiveness of the third phase from the previous two is best reflected in the indicators of the network created based on the co-existence of pro-climate content in the election programs of parliamentary parties (presented in Table 2), including, among other things, an over 2.5-fold increase in the number of connections between the parties. Therefore, it can be expected that Poland will be less and less opposed to developing the EU climate policy in the following years. It is also because the political polarisation in this area, which took place after 2015, indicates that creating a broad, anti-climate coalition of Polish political parties seems impossible. Nevertheless, Poland's probability of pursuing a more pro-climate policy is also tiny.

### The contribution of the authors

Piotr Swacha – 40% (conception, literature review, acquisition of data, analysis and interpretation of data).

Zbigniew M. Karaczun – 40% (conception, literature review, analysis and interpretation of data).

Daria Murawska – 20% (analysis and interpretation of data).

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