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Europe as a Symbolic Resource

On the Discursive Space of Political Struggles in Poland

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to reconstruct the structure of discursive positions pertaining to the relationship between Poland and the European Union (EU). Such a problematization draws on the assumption that Europe is always understood in relation to the nation state and, in turn, the image of the latter is explicitly referred to or can be inferred from the vision of the EU. The analysis of the empirical data has revealed three discursive positions which organize the production of meaning and govern the strategies of representation. The first position represents the EU as a chance for the further modernization of Poland. The second position perceives the EU as the game of interests between sovereign nation states. The task of the nation state is to benefit from cooperation within an extra-state structure and to retain maximum sovereignty at the same time. The third identifies the EU as "a threat" hostile to the nation state and its interests. The chain of equivalence connects the EU with almost all negative social phenomena. The discursive analytical assumptions adopted in the paper help to show how the same topics and words (chance, threat, interests, nation, state, sovereignty, "Europe of fatherlands", and modernization) acquire different meanings in the context of particular interpretations of other words.

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1.   Introduction

The relationship between Poland, but also other Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries (Batory 2002: 526; Grabbe/Hughes 1999: 189), and the European Union (EU) is often differentiated into two distinct phases. The first phase, called by Stadtmüller (2007: 6) "the age of innocence", is characterized by a lack of knowledge and real understanding of the European Union as an institutional structure. At that time Polish foreign policy was guided by the broad principle of Europeanization perceived as "the return to Europe" (Törnquist-Plewa 2002). The second phase emerged with the start of negotiations in 1997, when enthusiasm began to cool down and initial consensus was gradually replaced by political tensions. I would also distinguish a third phase starting with the accession in May 2004. In this phase Poland switched from its status of an object which is acted upon, to a full actor which has to face and react to the challenges resulting from EU membership. This has created a completely new situation in which European issues, regardless of their salience, necessarily have to become a part of the internal political discourse with parties debating the question of EU reforms, future treaties, further development, models of institutional structure, enlargement plans, and so on.

Although it is difficult to agree with Laure Neumayer's opinion that European issues played a crucial role in the CEE countries' politics, she convincingly argues that the pro-European line was a normative theme, in the sense of a general rule that political actors adopted after 1989 in order to avoid stigmatization as anti-European forces (Neumayer 2008: 8). This normative theme obviously led to the collusion of political parties on the issue of the European Union – a situation highly inconvenient from the perspective of party identity. With the lapse of time and growing importance of EU issues, a pragmatic theme, connected with instrumentalization of the EU issue, emerged and started to shape the behaviour of political parties. Parties had to act according to the political logic of identity and difference. The "Yes, but" rhetoric became a clear linguistic sign of the discursive strategies of political parties. On the one hand, it is shaped by the necessary allegiance to the EU, on the other hand, by an equally necessary instrumentalization of the EU issue employed by the political parties to differentiate between each other. Such logic led to the ambiguity of political utterances pertaining to the issue-ambiguity, one has to add, is a source of permanent problems political scientists face.

While Neumayer has used political utterances mainly for illustrative purposes, without pondering the argumentative strategies of political actors, my aim is not only to reconstruct and illustrate the structure of party positions within the political landscape with appropriate excerpts, but also to analyze how political positions towards Europe and the EU, as well as lines of division between them, were built. If a discourse is a set of categories, ideas and concepts, which gives meaning to the social and physical objects (Hajer 2006: 67) and politics is about making a diagnosis of reality and providing justification for such a diagnosis,[1] I am interested in the structure of discursive positions, political agents were able to take in Poland while speaking about Europe and the EU. What are their constituting elements (ideas, concepts, categories), the connections between these elements and the argumentation strategies aimed at justifying a particular articulation of Europe and the EU? In line with those who employ various discourse analytical approaches

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1   A view widely held among discourse analysis working both within the Habermasian tradition and in the critical discourse analysis (see Habermas 1999; Van Leeuwen/Wodak 1999). They are both interested in the argumentation which used to justify certain statements.

in the study of EU constructions, I assume that, in order to establish a certain vision of the EU and Europe, it is necessary to scrutinize the articulation of collective identity related to the various dimensions of the nation state (Wæever 1998: 113). Therefore, I am also going to analyze how visions of the state carried in party discourses were articulated in connection with and in relation to Europe.[2] To sum up, it is the aim of this study, to reconstruct discursive positions on Europe and, given the inherently relational character of discourse, its relationship to the (nation) state.

Overview of the Literature

It would not be too bold a generalization to say that one can distinguish between two different strands of literature reflecting on the political party positions and discourses on Europe or, to put it in another way, different visions and constructions of Europe conveyed by party discourses. Firstly and not surprisingly, there is a large number of studies situated within the field of (comparative) party politics including the growing body of literature devoted to the issue of Euroscepticism and Europeanization (Poguntke et al. 2007; Pennigs 2006). Among many theoretical studies, the ones most often referred to are the papers of Kopecky/Mudde (2002), Szczerbiak/Taggart (2000) and Ladrech (2002). The most general framework to tackle the issue of Europeanization of political parties was developed by Ladrech holding that both qualitative and quantitative methods are appropriate to measure changes in the party programmatic statements, and that references to the EU in the party manifestos are of crucial significance for this task.

The other articles referred to above, discuss the issue of party positions towards the EU with particular focus on different types of Euroscepticism. The differentiation between soft and hard Euroscepticism proposed by Szczerbiak and Taggart (2000) and its subsequent critique developed by Kopecky and Mudde (2002) led to a fourfold typology of attitudes towards the European Union: Euroenthusiasts, Eurosceptics, Europragmatists and Eurorejects. These categories were invented to serve as an ideal type and point of reference necessary to qualify the position of a given party. As it immediately turned out, this framework also proved problematic, leading to some mistakes and posing obstacles for those who have tried to apply it to their own empirical work (Szczerbiak 2008a: 225f). It is commonly claimed that the proposed taxonomies are too simplistic and lack cues on how to operationalize the proposed categories of analysis (Enyedi/Lewis 2008: 239; Batory 2002: 535). Hence, they tend towards impressionistic, relatively shallow and imprecise analyses of programmatic statements ("ideologies"), unable to make sense of the attitudes of political actors. From the discursive perspective adopted here, one could say that the main problem of these taxonomies lies in the commonly shared positivistic assumptions which treat ideological language and discourse as a reflection of reality and make a strong division between discourse and reality. The authors, instead of searching for underlying convictions about reality held by political actors so as to be able to establish patterns of thinking on the EU, look for the attitudes of political parties towards the EU and Europe expressed through ideologies and try to squeeze them into general categories (e.g. Szczerbiak

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2   I am interested in various dimensions of the state's existence (character of the community, classical attributes of the state – sovereignty and interests, economy or culture) not only nation and state structure. Therefore I am closer to Diez' (2001: 13) than Wævers (1998: 113) conception. Whereas the former suggests that in order to establish different conceptualizations of Europe it is necessary to take into account a least political, econo-mic and cultural metanarratives. Related to self-identity, the latter deems significant only the idea of nation and state.

2008a). The problem is that party ideologies are quite complex constellations of signifying elements aimed at defining reality and justifying this definition, constantly changing according to different contexts in which they appear. Furthermore, there is nothing like the EU or Europe per se but rather a variety of political or scientific discourses on Europe. If one adds additional factors to the already mentioned problems such as ambiguity of political statements, internal divisions, lack of explicit statement on certain issues and the constant changes of party positions; the problems this perspective has to cope with become clear.

These problems are successfully avoided by those working at the intersection of EU studies and discourse analysis. I am thinking especially about two fields within this approach: multi–level governance and studies on foreign policy as the outcome of the constellations of state, nation and Europe (Wæver 2005a: 203f). The first approach refers to the study of discursive change, employing a precisely designed set of categories necessary to code discourse categories, analyzing historically and culturally specific configurations of certain categories or meta-narratives and applying concepts strongly rooted within post-structural currents of discourse approaches (Jachtenfuchs/Diez/Jung 1998; Diez 2001; Laclau/Mouffe 2007).[3] The second emphasizes the relationship between discourse and foreign policy and points at the multilayered character of discourse with the tiers of discursive structures made of a certain number of core concepts. It is argued here that a particular constellation of the concepts nation, state and Europe (Wæver 2005b) as well as the idea of international relations (Larsen 1997) is responsible for a certain vision of Europe which, in turn, shapes the trajectory of foreign policy related to the EU. Both schools share a number of premises and claims which are very close to the view adopted in this paper. First, they suspend the strict division between ideology and interest, which is important for comparative party politics, but misleading when it comes to the explanation of the behaviour of political actors. It by no means entails any kind of naive idealism but rather the strong conviction that interests are an inherent part of the worldview of actors, in other words, they are discursively constructed. Second, they underline the importance of domestic struggles between political parties, and thus, it are party programmatic statements which constitute the main source of these studies. Thirdly, as the reality is discursively constructed and politics is the domain where discourses compete, one cannot speak of one, but rather many different "Europes". It is not possible to find the paradigmatic Europe serving as a kind of the Sèvres metre, because we are always already speaking from discursive positions. Fourth, research efforts are aimed at establishing the relationship, configuration and hence the meaning of elementary components, ideas and concepts which constitute discourses. The problem with these approaches is that, despite the significance they ascribe to the discursive level, they provide relatively general analysis of discourse. However, if one wants to grasp nuances of party position it is necessary to include even the smallest elements, like the recurrent use of certain metaphors, key words or topics and the function they play in the text.

Theoretical Assumptions, Methodology, Research Questions and Data

The theoretical and methodological perspective adopted here draws upon the discourse theories of Foucault (2002), Laclau/Mouffe (2007), the critical discourse analysis of Fairclough (2003) and the discourse-historical approach of Wodak (2000). Despite their mutual distance, both perspectives can be treated as

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3   For example "nodal points" (Laclau/Mouffe 2007: 120).

complementary to each other and equip the research project with a set of ontological and epistemological assumptions concerning reality (discourse theory) and a "tool–box" necessary to analyze linguistic realizations of meaning (critical discourse analysis [CDA] or Wodak's discourse–historical approach). First, discourse theory assumes that all objects and actions are meaningful and that their meaning is conferred by historically specific systems of rules. It tries to understand how particular structures of meaning make certain forms of conduct possible. Secondly, what is important for this perspective is the constitutive character of language which is not a neutral, passive, and transparent medium expressing pre-given identities and objects. It is rather a social practice which, ascribing meaning to certain entities, constitutes social identities, relationships between them as well as systems of knowledge and beliefs (Fairclough 2003: 36; Philips/Hardy 2002: 4). Thirdly, one of the important features of discourse is its unstable character. Meanings cannot be definitely fixed and, due to specific shapes of articulation processes, the same signifier can have another meaning in the counter-discourse (Howarth/Stavrakakis 2000: 7). Fifthly, concerning the question of power, it is linked to the processes of exclusion and "othering" necessary to institute identity. Within this perspective, power is tantamount to the exclusion of certain possibilities. It may also mean, more generally, the ability to decide on the structure of social world through the imposition of the vision of lines and frontiers along which processes of inclusion and exclusion operate. Thus it is necessary to analyze the construction of "the other" as the mirror image of the identity of the self.

Translating the above-mentioned premises into the language of the party political field which is studied here, one can say that political parties are important actors which struggle to achieve hegemony through the ability to impose a particular construction of reality. Effectiveness in the promotion of a particular vision of reality is of crucial importance. Only the ability to set apart from other parties justifies and legitimizes the very existence of a party. It is also important since parties struggle not only to discursively position themselves but also to position others. Politics is mostly about deliberately drawing lines of division in a way most convenient for the political party (Hajer 1995: 53). All this means that party discourses create various kinds of subjects and simultaneously position these subjects vis-à-vis one another. This is done by naming, attributing certain features and justifying this particular choice to achieve legitimacy (van Leeuwen 2007: 91f).

Given this relational character of discourse, it is not surprising that the specific vision of Poland is always intimately connected with the vision of Europe. First, given the relational character of discourse, when Polish political parties argue about Europe, they necessarily argue about Poland. The specific vision of Poland as a sovereign nation state, logically and politically entails a particular concept of the EU architecture (for another example see Hansen 2002: 2). Secondly, this specific vision of Poland is the outcome of the institutional structure of the EU. As the EU affects its member states, it is no longer possible to speak about them alone without any references to Europe. Thirdly, the vision of Poland is connected with the context of the political discourse as such. The EU is important for Polish politicians since it is the civilizational and geographical point of reference, it is a project Poland participates in, it is an important focus of Polish foreign policy and, last but not least, it is an enabling and constraining structure. Therefore, an analysis of the landscape of discursive positions on Europe has to take Poland into account. Fourthly, given the pluralistic space of democratic politics, and hence the many positions the actors may take, there is not one but many "Europes" and, respectively, nation states. Therefore, fifthly, ideas, concepts and categories related to "Europe" are not fixed in any final sense, but take on different meanings depending on the

various discursive positions taken by the political parties and groupings. Sixthly, the aim of political actors is threefold: to provide a definition of reality, to justify it, and to do that in a way which facilitates the credible construction of positive self-presentation and negative presentation of "the other".

I am interested in the structure of discursive space related to Europe, defined as positions and relations between political parties. I do not cover the whole discursive structure but only the discourse of relevant political parties between 2004 and 2007. There are three general questions which can be further broken down into more detailed questions: What positions could be taken by political actors arguing about Europe? How is the relationship between Poland and Europe within a given position articulated? How and along what lines of division are these positions differentiated from each other?

In order to answer these questions the empirical data has been chosen. The research was pursued on the basis of three types of data: party manifestos[4] (and, as a supplement, selected statements and resolutions), short hand notes of parliamentary debates on government information on Polish foreign policy presented by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs,[5] as well as policy statements of the consecutive prime ministers.[6] Manifestos are definitive statements of party positions. Although these manifestos are rarely published by the media, discussed by the party's rank and file, or considered seriously by party opponents, they provide an image of the state of mind of party leaders. They also provide the most general framework on which parties build their public image and identity, construct campaign issues, and refer to in their justification strategies pertaining to certain decisions or public statements. A manifesto may also be an instrument through which parties are made accountable for not keeping their electoral promises. Although the manifesto may not attract too much attention, a lack of manifestos is taken by the political opponents as an evidence of inability to govern. Yet manifestos are often short, extremely general, evasive, vague, and selective. This might be a very interesting research task, but from the qualitative, discourse-analytical perspective aimed at the reconstruction of discursive complexities, elaborate statements are more interesting. This is especially the case in such type of research which is not interested so much in quantifying discourse. What counts here is not the number of such statements uttered publicly, but their presence in the public sphere as such. Therefore it was a deliberate decision to choose more elaborated but still relatively conventionalized types of discourse as a supplement to party manifestos. Prime and foreign ministers' statements and reactions of parliamentarians to their speeches can be perceived as sequences of speech acts when sides represent position of their parties. Ministers speaking as party representatives, present what they did, are going to do and what is their position towards certain problems, while the rest of parliamentarians react to the speech and present their positions.

Methodologically the research was inspired by the framework developed by Wodak and collaborators to study discursive strategies through which political realities and identities are constructed. I found it particularly appropriate to study strategies of politicians whose discursive activities can be analytically

4   The manifestos of six parties were taken into account: *Civic Platform*, *Democratic Left Alliance*, *Law and Justice*, *League of Polish Families*, *Polish Peasants Party* and *Self-Defense*.

5   Debate on the speeches of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adam Rotfeld, held on 21 January 2005; the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stefan Meller, held on 15 February 2006; and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Anna Fotyga, held on 11 May 2007.

6   Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (10 Novermber 2005), Jaroslaw Kaczynski (19 July 2006), Donald Tusk (23 November 2007).

broken into three dimensions: definition of the situation, justification, and the construction of identity and difference. The matrix proposed by Reisigl/Wodak (2001) consists of five analytical categories which overlap with the aforementioned three parts: (1) nomination – construction of actors by naming; (2) predication – attribution of properties, traits; (3) argumentation through which actors legitimize or delegitimize certain statements or actions; (4) perspectivation pertaining to points of view from which actors construct discourse; (5) intensifying or mitigation strategies necessary to change epistemic status (Reisigl/Wodak 2001: 44f; Reisigl 2008: 99).

For the sake of this study, I am using three categories of analysis which, on the basis of the literature on the subject and the initial familiarity with the empirical data, are broken down into detailed categories which organize reading and analysis of empirical data (Table 1). As it has been mentioned above, in the national political discourse on Europe, the question of Europe is always directly and inextricably linked to the national discourse per se and in order to understand the representation of Europe and its functions one always has to take national discourse into consideration. I analyzed how both entities were constructed vis-à-vis each other, what the dimensions, elements and traits ascribed to both entities were, how such representation was justified and how it was positioned against other positions in discourse.

Table 1: Analytical Categories

Type of entity (nomination)	Dimensions of discursive construction (predication and argumentation)	Lines of division (perspectivation)

Poland	– Question of membership
	– Vision of the role as a member (active participant vs. passive beneficiary)
	– Vision of a state
	  • Reason of state/sovereignty
	  • Question of sovereign (type of community: society/ nation, its attributes)
	  • Definition of the situation (problems/resources)
	  • Position vis-á-vis EU/Europe(central vs. peripheral)
		– Positioning and counter-positioning ("us" and "them" constructs)
		– Lines of division on the basis of:
		  • Position within/ towards the community
		  • Identity
		  • Vision
		  • Aims
		  • Emotions

Europe/EU	– Status generally (identity, federation, confederation, Europe of nations etc.)
	– detailed definition of the situation
	  • Historical past
	  • Current state
	  • Future state
	– Decision-making procedures (reforms, voting mechanisms, institutional structure) and policy fields
	– Relations between member states
	  • Consensual/conflictual
	  • Basis of relationship (identity/ideology, interests)
	  • Old and new member states
	  • Distribution of resources between states	

2.   Setting the Polish Context

Before analyzing discursive space as constructed by party manifestos, it is necessary to provide general information on relevant actors,[7] their ideological profile, genesis, and their position within a party system measured by a share of votes they obtained in the consecutive elections held in 2004 (European parliament elections), 2005 (presidential and parliamentary elections), and 2007 (early parliamentary elections). Among crucial party actors in the period under scrutiny are: Law and Justice,[8] Civic Platform,[9] Democratic Left Alliance,[10] Self-Defence,[11] League of Polish Families,[12] and Polish Peasant Party.[13]

As it has already been said, the growing awareness of the costs connected with EU accession and negotiation talks strengthened critical voices which used the EU question as a kind of opportunity structure for their domestic popularity. All problems, divisions and differences of opinions between Poland and the EU could be and were easily translated into the language of national interests, which made the situation convenient for those parties which were eager to act under the guise of the real defenders of national interests. In fact, it shaped a new context to practically all groupings, regardless of their former attitude towards the EU. A particularly salient example here is the slogan "Nice or death" coined in 2003 by Jan Rokita, one of the then leaders of a strongly pro-European party – the Civic Platform. Highly critical voices were also possible due to the fact that the deal between Poland and the EU was negotiated by the left wing coalition

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7   Relevant political actors are, according to the Sartori criterion, those actors who were able to secure parliamentary seats (Sartori 1976). Only those parties and grouping which were successful enough to win seats in the *Sejm* (lower chamber of Polish legislature) are taken into account.

8   *Law and Justice* was a right-wing conservative party formed in April 2001. In 2005 the party formed a coalition with *Self-Defense* and *League of Polish Families*. Jarosław Kaczynski, the party leader took the premiership in July 2006. The party lost the 2007 parliamentary election and became the main opposition party. *Law and Justice* advocates "strong Poland in strong Europe", to refer to a party's slogan, what practically meant tough stance based on the traditional conception of sovereignty and national interests.

9   *Civic Platform* was formed in January 2001 defining itself as a liberal-conservative party. The party remained in opposition until 2007 when it won the parliamentary election and formed a coalition government with the *Polish Peasant Party*, with Donald Tusk becoming prime minister. While declaring itself as strongly pro–European, party leaders often used a strong language of national interests to defend the voting system guaranteed by the Treaty of Nice and "the appropriate" position of Poland in the EU.

10   *The Democratic Left Alliance* is the successor to the Polish communist party. In 2001, it won the parliamentary election and formed a coalition with the smaller *Labour Union*. Due to corruption scandals, the party then suffered a massive decline in support in the 2005 and 2007 parliamentary election. It presents itself as strongly pro-European. It was during the left wing government when Poland entered the EU.

11   *Self-Defense* represents a paradigmatic case of the populist's party. It was set up in the early 1990s as both a political party and farmers' union by Andrzej Lepper. *Self-Defense* emerged as the third largest party in the 2001 parliamentary election. After 2005 elections *Self-Defense* became a coalition partner with its leader as a deputy premier. It failed to cross the 5 per cent - threshold for parliamentary representation in 2007.

12   The *League of Polish Families* was formed in the run up to the 2001 parliamentary election as a coalition of various small right-wing and clerical-nationalist parties. Its relatively good score in 2005 parliamentary elections resulted in the status of the coalition party. It rejected the EU and claims the renegotiation of the Accession Treaty.

13   The *Peasant Party* was formed in 1990 as the organizational successor to the former communist satellite *United Peasant Party*. The party's share of the vote had been in steadily decline since 1993. Nevertheless it was able to cross the 5 per cent - threshold to secure parliamentary representation in 2005. After 2007 elections it was in coalition with *Civic Platform*. Its position towards the EU oscillates between modest approval and distance connected with slogans of national interests.

formed by the Democratic Left Alliance and the Polish Peasants Party (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej – SLD and Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe – PSL) which held power since the 2001 parliamentary elections. Three additional factors made the atmosphere tense on the eve of European parliamentary election particularly. First, the post-communist heritage of the ruling coalition made it easy to attribute disrespect for Polish interest to the people who before 1989 had been involved in the communist regime. Secondly, at that time corruption scandals connected with incumbent politicians were given a high profile, thus contributing to the rapid decline in public support for the government. Third, although not particularly salient, the issue of the European Constitutional Treaty gained much importance in the political debate. Its draft triggered arguments over the proposals to change the voting system in the Council of Ministers in a way that appeared to reduce Poland's influence secured by the Treaty of Nice. Obviously all political parties had to react and take a position and their reaction was predominantly negative. The general critique of all the opposition parties focused on two points: the lack of references to Christian values in the preamble and the changed balance of power between states connected with the proposed new voting system which, as was assumed, diminished Polish influences. Not surprisingly, in the June 2004 elections of the European Parliament (EP), the most Eurosceptic parties obtained 27 per cent of the vote (the nationalist Catholic League of Polish Families gained 16 per cent, the populist Self Defence of the Polish Republic 11 per cent of the votes). The governing Democratic Left Alliance (election coalition with Workers Union), which brought Poland into the European Union, gained less than 10 per cent of the votes in the EP election. The next parliamentary elections in 2005 resulted in the marginal victory of Law and Justice over Civic Platform. Despite previous declarations of both sides concerning future common government, parliamentary cooperation between 2001 and 2005, and common views on many policy issues, the harsh and bitter rhetoric of the electoral campaign, the victory of the Law and Justice candidate Lech Kaczynski in presidential elections, and conflicting power claims by both parties contributed to a climate of mistrust and subsequently led to the failure of the coalition talks. As a result, Law and Justice decided to sign "a stabilization pact" and then make a coalition deal with radical critics of the European Union: Self-Defence and League of Polish Families in May 2006 (Szczerbiak 2008b). Although entirely controversial, it was not the domestic but rather the foreign policy that provoked alarming comments from both political opposition within Poland and international actors. Yet in 2006 the leader of Law and Justice announced that he "re-claimed" foreign policy from the post-1989 establishment and declared a hard line in the Polish foreign policy based on national interests. In a coalition with parties which at best wanted renegotiation of Poland's accession conditions (Self-Defence), and at worst withdrawal from the EU (League of Polish Families), the government took unpredictable and inconsistent foreign policy tactics which, with their adversarial tone, led to domestic controversies and isolation on the international arena (Kaczynski 2008: 15). These controversies did not change the fact that the majority of political forces, except left wing parties, opposed the course of institutional reforms of the EU which were taken during German presidency. The main objection was connected to the "double majority" system in the drafting of the constitution. Both Law and Justice and Civic Platform advocated a so-called "square root system" which was finally rejected during the European Summit in June 2007. Due to the confrontational policy style of the Kaczynski's government, European and international issues gained more prominence in the parliamentary elections in 2007. The result of the election – the victory of the Civic Platform and the appointment of the government in the coalition with Polish Peasant's Party – cooled down the atmosphere around domestic but not necessarily European issues. While the international debate over the EU's constitutional reforms was finished with the signing of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2007, at the domestic level, the debate over the appropriate ratification procedure paved the way to further intense political conflicts.

3.   Europe as a Discursive Resource - Three Positions in the Political Space

As mentioned before, discourse should not be treated as a means of representation which can be freely moulded according to the actor's will and political interests at a given moment. Instead, it is a structure of meaning which results from relations between its elements. Discourse enables political subjects to speak on Europe but constrains what could be said by limiting the scope of positions which can be taken. These constrains may be both diachronic, connected with the history of the discursive field and a given political actor, and synchronic, pertaining to the structure of relationships between subjects.

Fine-grained analysis of the Polish case reveals three discursive positions, which could be taken by political parties in the examined period. Instead of treating them topographically, it is better to conceive them as the resources that actors can employ in order to build strategies necessary for the achievement of their political aims. Among these resources one can point at a number of discursive tools (ideas, concepts, categories, lines of argumentation, lexicalization, metaphors etc.) actors can use in their struggle for hegemonic vision and division of reality (Bourdieu 1990: 137). What is going to be presented in the following subsections are the most typical and coherent positions built around certain concepts which, as it is claimed here, are crucial to understand the way in which parties promoted particular visions of Europe. They are connected with the evaluation of the European Union rather than with its concrete shape, its institutional structure or relations between this structure and member states. Although they are not mutually exclusive, they come from different logics and pertain to different dimensions of reality and logics of abstractions; they are the perfect entry point into the structure of meaning. The first position is best depicted by the constantly repeated slogan of chance which must be used, the second one by the category of interests (both Polish and European), and the third one by the idea of Europe as a threat. In the context of concrete events (for example debate over the Constitutional Treaty) these positions serve as a set of building elements which can be (re)combined in various configurations rather than used in their most typical, coherent form. That is why analysts of Polish politics often write of vagueness, ambiguity or constant change of positions, neglecting the fact that certain actors use discursive resources from different positions (i.e. lexis, argumentation) while consistently expressing the same stance towards the EU.[14]

3.1   Europe as a Chance

From this discursive position, the European Union is perceived as a structure that has been looked at for a long time. The EU accession is unanimously and unambiguously represented as a positive event which constitutes a major cause of all positive changes Poland has experienced since 2004. The EU membership is a fulfilment of all strategic aims of Polish politics after 1989. Even more, Polish participation in the EU structures is inscribed in the long duration of Polish history: "Changed geopolitical position of Poland, especially the participation in NATO and the EU, have provided the best opportunities since a few hundred years. They are the essence of the Polish raison d'être" (Polska Obywatelska 2007: 22). Usually the period referred to, is shorter, pertaining to the post-war division of the continent into two parts. EU accession

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14   The slogan „Nice or death", uttered by Jan Maria Rokita, one of the then *Civic Platform* leaders, in 2003 in the parliamentary debate on the Constitutional Treaty, provides a particularly good example of such a mechanism. While it was expressed in an anti-European language of exclusively conceived national interest, this was expressed by one of the most pro-European parties and justified in such a way.

is not just a success for Polish foreign policy. It is a symbol of the end of an unjust separation from the Western world (Program Europejski Platformy Obywatelskiej 2005: 35), which was dreamed of by many generations of Poles (Manifest Europejski Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej 2005: 71). It is also connected with Solidarity as an oppositional anti-communist movement and its efforts to bring about "the dignified and sovereign existence of the nation" already in the 1980s (Program Europejski Platformy Obywatelskiej 2005: 35). Hence the EU is represented not only as a part of the post–1989 politics but also as the object of everlasting longing for restitution of normality. The historical perspective employed by politicians is not based on retrospective analysis of the past. It rather means to establish a chain of historical moments with a "European" event among them. This discursive mechanism helps to represent accession as a unique and extraordinary moment and as a context in and through which every decision, political step, institutional reform or meeting connected with the EU can obtain positive connotation. In other words, the EU is a legitimizing factor. Declarations of pro-Europeanness and of bringing Poland into the EU are elements of positive self-presentation. Europe and the European Union are equated with normality, civilization, high standards, sometimes explicitly stated, sometimes alluded to, most often assumed. As one of the first sentences of the post-communist Democratic Left Alliance's manifesto states: "We have kept our word by bringing Poland into the European Union on the best possible conditions" (Manifest Wyborczy Sojuszu Lewicy Demokratycznej 2006: 147, translation by author). Such a formula, although in this particular case adopted also to shake off the burden of the communist past and strengthen the social – democratic credentials (Tworzecki 2003), is a way to put a party in the glorifying context. "I want to say that Civic Platform is the pro-European party and that is why we follow with attention all the remarks of the Minister of Foreign Affairs concerning relations with our Western neighbour" (Jan Rzymelka in a parliamentary debate on government information on Polish foreign policy 2006, translation by author). References to Europe, expressions of support for the EU or declarations of being in favour of European integration are often articulated through hyperbole. Whereas it makes the grouping that uses rhetorical exaggeration vulnerable to accusations of unrealistic enthusiasm, it also provides legitimizing arguments by linking it to the positive connotations of the words "Europe" or "the European Union" and its derivatives.

The positive or even enthusiastic evaluation of membership leads to the question of the conception of Polish membership. One does not need to read carefully to locate relevant references. The appropriate position of Poland as a member is envisioned as something that does not yet exist. It is rather a task to be achieved than an already existing reality. It is a chance to do something, an opportunity which can be used, but also wasted. The obligation modality which expresses the position of the speaker and refers to the future (Richardson 2007: 60) is articulated here in more or less categorical expressions. As one of the party manifestos declares: "Poland should [...] through its activity in the process of European integration become one of the European leaders" (Polska Obywatelska 2007: 2). Another party used a much more resolute tone: "We have to adapt our national structures to all opportunities created by EU [...] but we also have to elbow our way in the EU, to reach a place where political decisions are being made and take a part in the decision-making process" (Marek Borowski in a parliamentary debate on government information on Polish foreign policy 2005, translation by author). Membership is depicted through three aspects: level of involvement, speed and position to be achieved. As to the first, it is often stated that it should be an active one, with Poland having precise ideas and a vision of the future Europe. Poland must be involved in all important political decisions and should be an active promoter of all steps necessary to make the EU more efficient and influential in the world. Ideally, Poland should be ahead of all European countries,

playing the role of an agenda setter, initiating certain issues and raising problems. That would give Poland a dominant position in problem-definition and issue construction and provide Poland with the most convenient solutions. As to the second, Poland should act fast both in its adoption of the EU requirements and absorption of financial means. The relationship between Poland and Europe is a dynamic one and expressed through a metaphor of movement or race. Poland should move very fast, because chances or "Europe as a chance" can "escape" leaving Poland in a "marginalized", "backward" position (Jolanta Szymanek-Deresz in a parliamentary debate on government information on Polish foreign policy 2007, translation by author). Thirdly, all above-mentioned claims are functionally connected with the future position of Poland. It should finally be able to function as one of the leaders of the EU countries. Poland is represented as having agency. Its role is not that of an object, but rather of a subject whose position depends on its own potential, ability and eagerness to contribute to the EU. The position of Poland does not come automatically from its existence, experience or resources, but requires efforts, especially in the field of relations with international partners. Only the active cooperation with them can provide Poland the recognition it deserves. Despite declared leadership aspirations, political discourse also employs the well-known historical frame of progress and backwardness (Jedlicki 2002: 14) where progress is equated with fast integration and backwardness with the present situation. Backwardness is either presupposed (what happens more often in party manifestos generally avoiding negative tones, see e.g. Manifest Wyborczy Sojuszu Lewicy Demokratycznej 2006: 146.) or explicitly articulated (in more spontaneous parliamentary speeches, see e.g. Zbigniew Chlebowski in the debate on policy statement of Donald Tusk 2005). Europe as a chance is contrasted with the threat of being isolated, marginalized and backward. A marginalized position means not only worse conditions but a situation which leads to the imitation of patterns invented elsewhere. Interestingly enough, it is not the integration per se, but rather the lack of integration which leads to the imitative modernization. Thus, the most dangerous for Poland is the attitude of a reluctant partner, stubbornly adhering to specific solutions and unwilling to take into consideration the interests of the other partners. The image of threat is used to legitimize political projects and decisions, or is part of delegitimizing of political adversaries (Polska Obywatelska 2007: 2; Manifest Wyborczy Sojuszu Lewicy Demokratycznej 2006: 154).

Strong aspirations to a leadership position in Europe are justified by the potential of Poland. The discrepancy between Poland and the EU is mainly limited to the economic sphere. The East-West division and the better position of Western countries is not constructed as a cultural gap, it is neither a question of different religions, nor of problems with trust or cultural capital. The potential differences are by no means of cultural or political origins, but rooted in economic deficiencies. In this respect, Poland is represented in quite negative terms as a poor and backward country. On the basis of the empirical data analyzed here, it is not possible to establish the causes of such backwardness. The sources of such a situation are hidden and externalized. They are hidden by the metaphoric nominalization "the tragic verdicts of history" (Program Europejski Platformy Obywatelskiej 2005: 39), when the set of processes with the actors involved is transformed into the noun, deleting agent and its activities (Fairclough 2003: 143). They are externalized through the references to tragic historical experience which happened to Poland. Thus, it is not the Poland or Poles which can, at least partially, be blamed for the state of the economy, but rather the external factors, be it enemies, historical forces, structural problems, the communist system and so on. Despite the backwardness which is constantly referred to either explicitly or implicitly, Poland is represented as a country which deserves and should strive for an appropriate position. Huge difficulties

located predominantly in the material conditions, do not prevent the portrayal of the country as big and populated enough to become one of the most influential European actors. "The chance appeared for Poland, a country with a considerable size and population, to play an inspiring role on the old continent" (Jolanta Szymanek-Deresz in a parliamentary debate on government information on Polish foreign policy 2007). Other factors of Polish strength are also named. "The problem is that, while having this potential of a big European country, the whole Polish legend of fight for freedom, big economic market, and also industrial and intellectual potential, also the spiritual one, we are not able to make good use of it" (Bronisław Komorowski in a parliamentary debate on government information on Polish foreign policy 2007). Such a construction of Polish problems, resources and position vis-à-vis Europe has twofold aims. On the one hand, the danger of becoming a marginalized and backward country can be used to stigmatize the opponents of the promoted political vision. On the other hand, the positive vision of Poland as a resourceful country, burdened with the heritage of an underserved past becomes a legitimizing argument. It strengthens specific political projects by providing a positive context, which can only be brought about through the implementation of solutions put forward by discourse users.

Although there are plenty of references to "the people" (Canovan 2008) they are not articulated in nationally or ethnically exclusive terms. "The people" are represented as society more often than as a nation. Even the nation on this discursive position is represented more in political – legal terms as a group of citizens or as community of different groups with equal rights (100 konkretów - Program Lewicy i Demokratów 2007: 1). Such a construction of national identity precludes the essentialization of identity in a sense of an inherent, changeless set of features common to national community. On the contrary, loyalties other than the national one are accepted as legitimate identity options. Hence the ideas of "European patriotism" or "double citizenship" (both Polish and European) are not only tolerated but warmly welcomed in the utterances of politicians. They are not perceived as contradictory aspects of identity, inimical to national loyalty, but as another dimension, in which the former one is nested (Bronisław Komorowski in a parliamentary debate on government information on Polish foreign policy 2007). Moreover, the difference between Poland and Europe or the EU is not exaggerated. On the contrary, even if it exists, it is systematically blurred or suspended. Poland is constructed as a part of Europe, not a distant country from the peripheries. As Prime Minister Donald Tusk put it in his policy statement: "In our speeches we often, including myself, refer to the comparisons to Europe. I would like us to stop differentiate in our language: We in Poland, they in the European Union. After all the European Union is here" (Policy statement of Donald Tusk 2007, translation of author).

The possibility of multiple identities and the equation of Poland and the European Union have important consequences for the construction of national interest and state sovereignty. These two categories are not confronted with the EU. On the contrary, merely the EU can advance and secure the realization of interests of a given nation state. Polish interests are constructed as completely compatible with the EU and they can be only achieved through the EU. Such a construction, on the one hand, is supplemented with a consensual attitude reluctant to exaggerate differences and is sensitive to the common good; on the other hand, it expresses the concern that "a tough stance" may be considered by Western partners as an inability to negotiate and a stubborn attitude that claims too much (Jolanta Szymanek-Deresz in a parliamentary debate on government information on Polish foreign policy 2007). The same is the case for sovereignty, which is not treated as a traditional and unitary attribute of the state but rather as a phenomenon which can be shared when the state decides that it is in its interests to cede certain decisions to extra-state structures. From this discursive position such ideas are non-controversial and

taken for granted (Tadeusz Iwiński in a parliamentary debate on the government information on Polish foreign policy 2005). Arguments legitimizing Polish accession and membership in the European Union resort to a variety of motives: cultural, political and instrumental. Cost-benefit calculus is by no means the most important. Europe is a community of values which overlaps with Polish identity. It is a project which demands a certain degree of idealism and self-restriction. It provides security not only to Poland but to the rest of the world and stabilizes and deepens democratic procedures, still volatile and uncertain in the conditions of the post-communist state.

Positive hyperbole of the EU in relation to Poland is connected with an image which does not confine itself to the purely institutional structure aimed at advancing interests of particular countries. The main slogan which is used in relation to the EU is "chance" – an abstract noun with positive connotation. It is the EU membership that is captured extraordinarily often as a chance for Poland. Chance is represented as an opportunity, which should be filled by Poland with the concrete content. This chance can be used, but it can also be wasted. It is the specific political context and position of the discourse users (either in government or in opposition) which determine the concrete meaning of "chance". Generally speaking, its function can be twofold. Firstly, it confers positive meaning on the EU; secondly, it holds forth unfulfilled promise. It constitutes a part of prospective statements pertaining to the future which is not yet actualized. While helping political actors to claim "more EU" in Poland, hence legitimizing a particular vision of European integration, it also allows to explain undesirable aspects of reality as resulting from an insufficient level of EU integration. Within such logics it is the lack of the EU and European integration which is responsible for the current problems of Poland. The EU is also used interchangeably with Europe as a geographical and cultural space. What is more, the EU is referred to as the process of "European integration". Beyond that, collocations and metaphors with the adjective "European" are often used: "family of nations", "European house",[15] "European community", "European standards", "European level", "European civilization", and "European education" (Policy statement of Donald Tusk 2007). "European" is not simply a descriptive term here. In connection with other words it acquires a normative meaning. Its function is to make sense of the EU as a close, intimate, "warm" community, which goes beyond contractual bonds based on self-interest. It also serves as a marker of a better world, able to confer a positive meaning on the neighbouring words. "We are with you and with you we want to be a part of modern Europe as the world of tolerance, freedom and respect to the opinions of the others". These sentences from the manifesto connect Europe with positive attributes: modernity, freedom, tolerance, respect. It is a separate world, different from the space outside. It is represented as a space where Poland aspires to belong but is still outside, at least in certain respects. Europe as a word loaded with strong, positive values serves here as a legitimizing formula, creating community, referring to highly praised values and serving as a point of reference (100 konkretów - Program Lewicy i Demokratów 2007: 1).

Whereas political actors deny that the EU is a superstate (Policy statement of Donald Tusk 2007), they do not provide a detailed image of Europe in their discourse. It is rather represented as a structure *in statu nascendi* (Program europejski Platformy Obywatelskiej 2005: 35). One can more easily trace statements related to the future of the EU, which obviously help parties to present what they are standing for. However, it is also possible to find some statements on the current state of the EU on presupposed level. "The European Union should become a community, not only an agreement between states. [...] We support strengthening and improving the functioning of EU institutions – European Commission and

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15   For more on this metaphor see: Chilton/Ilyin (1993: 7f).

European Parliament" (Program Europejski Platformy Obywatelskiej 2005: 36). Despite the lack of explicit statements the text carries the message that communal bonds are too weak and that the EU does not operate efficiently enough. One can also find many declarations referring to the necessity of deeper and faster integration. On the assumed level they say a lot about perception of the actual state of European matters. The majority of such presupposed statements are related to democratic values and social dimensions understood mainly in economic terms as reluctance of wealthier EU states to provide financial support. The EU as a normative entity which is still to come is envisioned as a deeply integrated federal structure based on democracy and civic participation, with a common currency and an active role on the international arena through a common foreign policy (Manifest Europejski Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej 2005: 72f; Polska Obywatelska 2007: 22f). One has to add that this vision of Europe and its legitimization was used to promote various decision-making procedures. Left wing groupings promoted solutions of the Constitutional Treaty, whereas Civic Platform adhered to the solutions encapsulated in the Treaty of Nice.

Such a construction of Poland, the EU or Europe and their relationship certainly has its "other(s)" present as the excluded possibility at the logical level and at the level of discursive practices as the outcome of discursive construction. Most generally, "the other" was the opposite angle of "the most pro-European", according to self-definition, parties. The signifier "anti-European" established a chain of equivalence between multifarious elements. Hence "the other" was nominated and predicated through proper names (right wing, incumbent Prime Minister), attitudes (Euroscepticism, intolerance, confrontational, exclusionary attitude, national egoism, obsessions and phobias), properties of mind (short-sighted, narrow-minded, old-fashioned, with 19th century vision of sovereignty), activities and their outcomes (taking unnecessary tough stance in negotiations, isolating, marginalizing Poland, slowing down integration process).

3.2   Europe as a Game of Interest between Nation States

The most salient topos of this discursive position is the idea of Poland as a nation state permanently looking after its main national interest – independence. This category is used in a very traditional way, disregarding the fact of mutual bonds and necessity of cooperation between states in the unified Europe. Monistically understood sovereignty, used interchangeably with the category of independence, constitutes a basis for the European aspects of party manifestos and a crucial argument in the political debates. "The fundamental aim of foreign policy is the defence of the national interest. [...] The aims of our European politics: [...] inviolability of sovereignty of the Republic of Poland in foreign policy" (IV Rzeczpospolita – sprawiedliwosc dla wszystkich 2006: 127). The vision of European politics is based on the cluster of categories which constitute this strand of discourse. First, the strong attachment to the nation state functions as a basic organizing unit of social and international relations. The Polish state is the entity most often referred to. It is the basic and most important actor, expressing the interests of the community living within its boundaries. As Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz put it in his policy statement: "An independent and safe Polish state is a priceless good, worth every effort and every sacrifice" (Policy statement of Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz 2005, translation by the author). Secondly, interest becomes a crucial category, being represented in a reifying and naturalizing manner. It is perceived as inherent, changeless and obvious essence of the nation state. "National interest" is a phrase which seems to be of crucial value on this discursive position. "Poland needs a new European politics today [...] It is necessary to restore thinking guided by the category of national interest" stated in the first sentences of the

2005 parliamentary elections manifesto of Law and Justice (Program polityki europejskiej PiS 2005: 120). Interests are rarely represented as context-dependent and flexible. They are given and assumed rather than explained. Regardless of the frequency with which interests are referred to, it is very difficult to find any definition of them. They are rather invoked in relation to specific events and problems. Thirdly, the category of independence is represented as a supreme property of the state. It is necessary to note that the category of independence is used interchangeably with the category of sovereignty. In the Polish political culture the latter is less an analytical term, loaded normatively and burdened with historical meaning pertaining to dramatic events of the past. Such a set of assumptions reflects itself in the normative image of Europe as a loose network of states. It is aimed at providing a ground for negotiations necessary to find the biggest common denominator of divergent interests of nation states. Not surprisingly, this general vision of relations between Poland and the EU, strongly rooted in classical realist thought, determines a cold attitude towards the latter. In this respect, the following excerpt from the party manifesto is striking: "Only coherent politics, coordinated by the government, will help to limit the threats and use the chances connected with the participation of Poland in the EU" (Program polityki europejskiej PiS 2005: 120). Chances which the EU provides, so often invoked in the first discursive position, occupy here a second place, being preceded by "the threats". Although EU membership is positively evaluated it is treated as a dangerous necessity that can affect Polish sovereignty.

Interestingly enough, such a vision does not preclude the activity of the state. The role of state and its elites is not reduced to the reactive defence of *status quo* against the external forces. Neither is Poland envisioned as a passive member which tries to defend its interests. On the contrary, passivity is a feature attributed to the political opponents. "The presence of Poland in the European Union should help to satisfy Polish interests, not passive participation in its structures" (Program polityki europejskiej PiS 2005: 120). It is the active politics through which Polish interests can be defended and which help achieve a strong position in Europe. This aim is justified both symbolically, as the only status which is appropriate for Poland as a big country, and pragmatically, as the position which provides influence necessary to control social and political processes in Poland and the EU. Although there are a number of arguments legitimizing Polish accession, they have one, already mentioned and permanently invoked point of reference – "national interest". "The fundamental aim of foreign policy is the defence of the national interest" (IV Rzeczpospolita – sprawiedliwosc dla wszystkich 2006: 122). Not only this category is constructed through the reference to the "we" community created by nation. One can also find such categories as "national life", "national culture", "national tradition", and "national honour". They all construct the vision of the community as a national group. The nation is an entity that is rather taken for granted, not a phenomenon which requires a more or less precise definition. A contextual analysis provides additional information which helps to disambiguate this category. Statements like "traditional social order", "natural communities" (Program polityki europejskiej PiS 2005: 120), and "a thousand-year-old tradition of Polish nation and state" (IV Rzeczpospolita – sprawiedliwosc dla wszystkich 2006: 131) suggest that the nation is perceived as unchanging, natural and able to limit the space of identification with other communities. Although there are no explicit statements which would suggest a strong ethnic understanding of the term, categories like "Polish interests", "Polish culture", "Christian values" carry suggestions which may be very attractive to the more traditional part of the electorate. Ambiguity and implicitness play a double role, helping to attract support from more traditional groups, but on the other hand shielding against accusations of nationalism. The vision of the sovereign as a natural community based on Christian values is supplemented by a metaphor of the state as a structure which must serve the interests of the nation and where the nation can feel itself at home. It is the Polish state, not the EU, which is envisioned as a common house (Dbamy o

Polske. Dbamy o Polakow. Program PiS 2007: 1) and the principle of independence governs the production of discourse pertaining to interests and sovereignty. The vision of the strong, independent state with the monistically interpreted sovereignty is based on historical allusions and explicit arguments. The past problems Poland had with sovereignty, the loss of independence and attachment to the own state are claims which draw their power from the historical parallels. The idea of Poland as an old historic nation (Marek Jurek in a parliamentary debate on government information on Polish foreign policy 2005) and tragic experiences of the Polish history where Poland's sovereignty was violated - partitions in the 19th century, World War Two, the communist system after 1945 - are put forward as arguments pertaining to the theme of Polish sovereignty. They are designed to justify a reluctant attitude towards solutions which entail the transfer of sovereignty to other than national bodies. Historical parallels are also an important part of the argumentation strategy aimed at validating financial claims. According to this discursive position, dramatic past experiences justify financial claims directed to Western neighbours. These claims are not only legitimized through historical or moral arguments. The development of Poland and other countries of the region would also be beneficial for the whole European Union (Program polityki europejskiej PiS 2005: 122).

Positive self-presentation is not exhausted by the vision of a Christian nation. There are explicit normative statements which underline the greatness of the Polish nation. It is not only the demographic, intellectual, organizational and infrastructural potential which is a source of pride, but a national culture, the marker of distinctiveness and source of strength. The nation is constructed as a community whose identity is based on culture. The latter is not just a collection of norms, values and artifacts of many groups, it is reified "a national" resource which provides identity and which was "a space of independence in times of threat" (Program polityki europejskiej PiS 2005: 120). The monistic and essentialized conception of culture treats it as a set of coherent and unified norms, but also images of the glorified past organized around Catholic religion treated as natural worldview of the people. Culture is "a treasure" and as such must be taken care of, defended and cannot, by any means, be an object of any intervention from the EU. Therefore the idea of cultural sovereignty is put forward (Policy statement of Jaroslaw Kaczynski 2006). Culture is the sphere where sovereignty cannot be an object of any compromise. Although on this discursive position a certain limitation of national sovereignty is reluctantly accepted, it is not applied to the field of culture, represented as a fully independent sphere. Any possible interventions in this sphere are constructed as a danger posed to the fabric of society. Such perceptions enable political actors to develop parallels with the historical moments or at least allude to the common knowledge of the past problems with independence.

The rule of positive self-presentation also organizes representations of problems and threats. The definition of a situation is based on two assumptions which help to legitimize a conception of foreign policy and a conception of EU-membership promoted on this discursive position. The first assumption claims that the foreign policy of previous governments was passive and submissive. What was depicted on the first discursive position as the activity sensitive to the common European good and interests of other states unnecessarily becomes a servile attitude of Polish elites. The number of epithets and metaphors is employed to depict politicians and their activities. "Lobbistic deals", "ideology of euroenthusiasm", "the party of white flag" (Program polityki europejskiej PiS 2005: 120), "the politics of a masked ball", "politics on the knees" (Paweł Kowal in the debate over the policy statement of Donald Tusk 2007) are expressions used to accuse political opponents of disregarding the Polish raison d'état. All accusations are imbued with strongly populist tread and refer to allegedly soft stance of the Polish politicians towards the Western

elites. The metaphor of the party or ball, where procedures and interests are left behind being replaced by informal connections and cowardly negotiations constitutes a particularly illustrative example of such discourse. The conclusion is that Poland should be active and tough in its foreign policy in order to control the development of the EU and to avoid a secondary status, inappropriate to sizeable, populated country with the central position in Europe and glorious historical experience ("Solidarity" movement, victory over communism). Another legitimizing argument claims that activity is necessary in order to avoid imitative modernization which would condemn Poland to mechanical adaptation to foreign patterns, regardless of local peculiarities and traditions.

The second assumption justifies Polish membership by frequent references to economic backwardness. Economic difficulties are externalized by being entangled with historical argumentation. Although the structure of argumentation is very similar to the first discursive position, the salience and explicitness of historical arguments is considerably stronger. They are inscribed in the wider problem of the economic "chasm" between Western and Eastern parts of the continent with roots in the Yalta agreements in 1945. Growing out of the historical contingency, this division is used as an argument justifying financial claims directed towards Western European states. The rule of solidarity, constantly used in this context, resorts to the duty of Western countries to help their East European neighbours treated unjustly in the past. The EU, often equated with Western European countries, should act according to its own rule of solidarity to do historical justice and compensate for the past grievances caused by the division of the continent. The need and prospects of economic help is the main legitimizing argument in favour of EU membership. Therefore the assessment of Polish condition and status in the EU and its activities is based on the costs–benefit calculus that to a large extent is informed by the vision of international relations as a zero-sum game.

The discursive construction of Europe is organized according to a set of the following rules. First, there is a strong division between the normative and the descriptive vision of the EU and it is the former which provides the evaluating framework for the latter. The normative vision does not refer only to the future, it also represents the past. According to the Law and Justice manifesto, the founding fathers of the EU thought of Europe as a structure based on Christian values and current reality represents nothing but a deviation from this idea. Secondly, the current state of affairs is criticized as deviating both from the past intentions of the founding fathers of the EU and from the future ideal. It is seen as a structure in the crisis that is caused by the egoism of the strongest EU states (which are never explicitly named). Thirdly, the crisis manifests itself through manifold symptoms: "antichristian censorship" which denies the "natural" axiological basis of Europe, violation of the solidarity rule through reluctance to fill the gap between rich and poor EU countries, reduction of the whole EU integration to economic interests, creation of the multispeed Europe, with the exclusive group of states inclined only to satisfy their national interests, retention of the strong division between new and old member states in respect of financial resources and institutional position (Program polityki europejskiej PiS 2005: 121). Fourthly, it all leads to the vision of the EU as a vehicle advancing the interests of the strongest states. Therefore, the EU is seen as a threat and such a definition of the situation overlaps with the external/internal frame through which the EU is perceived. The EU as external threat is articulated through militaristic expressions ("to defend", "protection", "degrade", "battle") with manifold functions. They not only enhance the vision of the EU as a threatening "other", but also give credence to the historical allusions and build an image of the speaker as a relentless fighter for the national interest. Fifthly, the normative vision is based on the idea of shallow

integration (even though this word is used extremely seldom), the economic cooperation or platform of negotiations rather than a community. The category of "interests" is a predominant one, pushing aside such words as "community" or "integration". There is also no place for the difference between states in respect of the level of integration, hence the idea of multispeed Europe is rejected. Multispeed Europe would lead to an unequal treatment of states with the strong differences between the biggest and richest states and the rest. The basic rule determining the position of the state should be sovereignty which cannot be limited to certain spheres (i.e. foreign policy, culture). The EU is represented as a strong association between nation states guided by the principle of sovereignty. It is rather a platform for the advancement of separate and often contradictory interests, than the engine of integration which would bring benefits to all involved countries (Anna Fotyga in a parliamentary debate on government information on Polish foreign policy 2007). The EU is valued positively and accepted to the extent it allows for the maximization of the economic and geopolitical interests of Poland. It is more like an additional international agent whose influence and power are so big, that cooperation and alliance become inevitable. Not surprisingly, on this discursive position popular, although not particularly visible in the empirical data analyzed here, is the slogan of "Europe of Fatherlands". Its vagueness and clear reference to the nation state makes it a particularly efficient signifier in the political struggle.

Based on such exclusions and differentiations, the discursive "other" is an important part of this position. The identity is to a large extent built on the rejection, criticism and exclusion of other positions. Positive self-presentation is inherently connected with negative "other" presentation, because a harsh criticism is an inseparable part of the whole political project. "The other" appears in two different forms here. The first form can be depicted as an internal "other" constituted by political elites, other parties, incumbent politicians or previous governments in Poland. Here "the other" is envisioned as ideological, unrealistic, passive, submissive, disregarding national interests and cultural heritage, serving external interests, promoting a federal vision of Europe (Program polityki europejskiej PiS 2005: 122 f; Dbamy o Polske. Dbamy o Polakow. Program PiS 2007: 49). The second form is the external "other" identified with the EU, strongest EU countries, and the foreign media. Among the properties attributed to them are the following: egoism and self-interest (they do not want to allocate money for the accession, pursue only narrowly defined national interests), ideological attitude (liberal or socialist reluctance towards Christian values), centralism and hegemonic tendencies (the EU wants to centralize, strongest countries want to dominate new EU countries) or weak position in international politics caused by internal divisions between member states. Particularly striking in the representation of the external "other" is the general nomination, which avoids naming the subjects on which discourse speaks. Actors are referred to as "some" or "certain" (i.e. Dbamy o Polske. Dbamy o Polakow. Program PiS 2007: 49), which is obviously the way to avoid international reactions, but additionally, it serves other purposes. Firstly, it creates a community of the initiated, those who know what is the meaning of vague and general statements. Secondly, it enhances curiosity of those who are not able to decipher allusions. Thirdly, it increases the feeling of threat, by assigning negative intents and acts to the unknown subjects.

3.3   Europe as a Threat

The third discursive position was unambiguous in its rejection of EU accession. Yet before the accession referendum it was possible to construct statements which exhorted to vote against the EU. Hence, after the Polish accession to the EU, particularly interesting became the question how discourse users have restructured strong "rejectionist" positions in order to adapt to the new situation. An additional discursive problem was posed by the fact that the most radically Eurosceptic agents built a parliamentary base for the government formed after the 2005 elections.

The basis of this discourse is constituted by the set of claims known in the history of social and political theory as nationalism in its ethno-symbolic version. First, political and national units should be congruent and it is the most natural thing for the nation to have its own state (Gellner 1983: 1). As other nation states want to advance their interests, the fundamental task of Poland is to protect its sovereignty and independence, the supreme values without which the existence of the nation is no longer possible. Although independence is the value shared with the second discursive position, its interpretation takes a more radical form. "The state is independent, if it is not subjected to any external entities. The feature of the independent state is the primacy of its interests over those interests, which result from the cooperation with other states" (Dlaczego nie dla UE? – kontrowersje ideowe 2005: 150). Secondly, the nation is the only one sovereign and the state should serve its interests and articulate its alleged will. That does not mean absolute voluntarism of the sovereign. Its will is restricted and determined by the natural law, constituted in the last instance by God. Thirdly, the essentialism claiming that the identity of a nation is changeless is based on common history and national features, which are part of quasi–psychological theories. In the Polish case the nation is represented as an eternal monistic entity, bound by Christian values and an attachment to freedom which was proved many times in the history. "Traditional moral order of the nation" and the "fundamental role of Christianity" are constructed as eternal elements of Polish identity. This discursive position represents a typical traditionalist attitude based on the assumption of a sanctifying function of the past. That is why the nation's past with glorious historical moments is invoked more often than on the second position. Traditionalism is supplemented with an exclusivist attitude in a sense that the possibility of other worldviews or value systems is beyond the intellectual horizon. It is not possible to be a member of the Polish nation without a certain connection with Catholicism. Fourthly, the nation is represented as an entity strong enough to be fully autonomous, able to exist and develop independently of external influences. They are more often defined as obstacles to the natural existence of the national organisms, than as a stimulus of the development. Hence, extra state factors are represented as a threat, which should be opposed and countered. Sometimes the exaggeration of the external influence perceived as threat is pushed so far that it leads to claim the following: "The development of Poland is possible only beyond the EU" (Skrót program gospodarczego 2006: 76). Fifthly, the nation and its state are glorified entities. They have enough resources and strength to survive in the inimical world of other nations. Although its main factor of strength lies in its Christian identity and culture,[16] other factors are also mentioned. Among them are culture, territory, demography, economic potential (Janusz Dobrosz in a parliamentary debate on government information on Polish foreign policy 2007). All attributes and features of the nation and its culture are always put forward in the comparison to other entities. What is national is immune to any type of criticism, always already constituting the positive extreme of the

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16   For more on the intimate bond between religion and nation in Poland see Zubrzycki (2006).

analyzed problem. Thus, by definition, whatever and whoever is bad and deserves critique cannot be part of the nation. Such aspects are evaded, marginalized or deemed as non–national or even anti–national, contradictory to the real essence of the nation.

The language which constructs independence and full, undivided sovereignty as the supreme values makes sense of the world through the metaphor of conflict. Sometimes conflict can take the form of a struggle, sometimes it is envisioned as a manipulation aimed at hiding real intents and interests of the opponent. Such a philosophy expresses itself through a militaristic regime depicting the division between the nation and its enemies. Drawing boundaries and producing frontiers between the national entity and the extra-national phenomena are major discursive mechanisms which frame the representations of Poland, the EU and their mutual relationship. Consequently, the divisions between us versus them and internal versus external become crucial cognitive metaphors. Nationalist assumptions structure the EU related discourse along the strong dichotomy between two positions. "First, there is the traditional conception of sovereign and independent nation state, hostile to utopian ideas of fraternization of the people in international kolkhoz, unambiguously against melting the nations in a non-national pot. Second there is the federal, liberal and non-national conception, hostile to the independence of nations, perceiving happiness of humanity in creations such as the EU." (Dwie koncepcje, dwa obozy 2005: 149) Such a rhetorical strategy not only cancels any intermediate position and pushes political opponents to the extremes, but also, through strong evaluations, attributes to them unwanted, deprecatory and delegitimizing properties. Structuring the conflict in polarized terms enables to treat all political opponents as the enemies of Polish independence. What is also significant is the historical argumentation with allusions to communism ("kolkhoz"). The topos of the EU as a centralized structure, similar to the communist state, is often employed on this discursive position, drawing on the predominant cleavage of Polish politics between post-communism and anti-communism. The anti-communist language of the communist enemy changeless and permanently posing threat to the existence of nation is translated into the anti-European language. Thus the European Union becomes a discursive equivalent of the communist system. Such a mechanism, however, is only part of the larger argumentation strategy aimed at drawing parallels between various aspects of EU integration and dramatic, historical aspects of Polish history as the 19th century partitions, the communist system or betrayals in the past (Janusz Dobrosz in a parliamentary debate on government information on Polish foreign policy 2006). The mere fact of invoking the historical discourse does not distinguish this position from the first and particularly the second one. It is rather the function they play in the overall structure of discourse that marks the difference. The history on the third discursive position is constructed according to the romantic topos of messianism and insurrectionism. Analogies it provides serve as warnings against the EU. The past fights against the enemies and the redeeming properties of defeats constitute a historical chain in which the EU as a federalist structure inimical to the Polish independence is inscribed. Consequently, the difference between past enemies and the EU is systematically suspended (Dlaczego nie dla UE? – kontrowersje ideowe 2005: 151).

The conception of indivisible sovereignty and the construction of independence as complete autonomy of the nation state led to the rejection of membership. Nevertheless, a discourse of this type faces the problem of a wide popular support for membership. The question is how to reconcile the glorification of the nation with the fundamental critique of its opinions and decisions. A few discursive strategies which are employed aim at reducing the level of agency of the nation. First, it is argued that Poles voted for "the Europe of Fatherlands", not an ideological, federal structure. It is the specific vision of a European

structure which met with the acceptance of the electorate, but by no means has it entailed the acceptance of the European integration as such. "We can discuss economic issues, but I repeat again: the majority of Poles voted for the European Union as the Europe of Nations, not a federalized state, not 'United States of Europe', dominated by one ideology, contradictory to a large extent to the majority of opinions of our compatriots." (Janusz Dobrosz in a parliamentary debate on government information on Polish foreign policy 2005, translation of author) Secondly, it is claimed that people simply made a mistake as it had happened many times in the past. This explanation dramatizes the EU accession by comparing it to past decisions and activities of society which led to unfavourable consequences, including the loss of independence. Third, the Polish nation was betrayed and manipulated by the pro-European propaganda (Aby Polska Polska byla… nawet w Unii Europejskiej 2006: 143). The strength of argumentation is enhanced by lexicalization. Poland did not just enter the EU, as would be possible to state on other discursive positions. Poland was rather „pushed" (Aby Polska Polska byla… nawet w Unii Europejskiej 2006: 143) or „brought in" (Jan Łopuszański in a parliamentary debate on government information on Polish foreign policy 2005). Such words, through agent deletion (it is not stated who pushed or brought in) not only allow to construct accusations according to a specific context and arise suspicion, but also help to avoid references to the nation and enable to present the nation state as an object that is acted upon, rather than an active subject.

Declarations of rejection and withdrawal are supplemented by statements announcing strong defence of Polish national interests necessary in the hostile conditions Poland ended up with. Its membership should be active, but this time, contrary to other positions, the main activity must be oriented at preventing further integration by any means. Hence an apparently paradoxical support for further enlargement is constructed. It is believed that the bigger the number of member states the bigger and possibly insurmountable are the obstacles to deeper integration. Accordingly, only a very modest vision of the EU is promoted. It is reduced merely to a mechanism of economic cooperation between states. Sometimes the idea of "Europe of fatherlands" is invoked, but it lacks precise qualification necessary to determine the exact content. The vagueness of this expression helps retaining euro-rejectionist argumentation and at the same time positioning at a safe distance from the mainstream of political competition and public opinion which treat the EU as an important point of reference. Being against any kind of Europe would mean self-marginalization. However, one needs to add, the discursive construction of identity is based on a critique rather than a positive definition of the situation. The EU is consistently and unambiguously represented as a fundamental threat to all dimensions of the nation state. A "scare strategy", understood as the use of an exaggerated image and extensive attention to the alleged threat (Flowerdew/Li/Tran 2002: 325), guides the construction of the EU as actual and future entity. There are two crucial mechanisms on which this strategy is based: the de-contextualization and the generalization of the negative aspects of the EU so that they can describe the whole structure. The overall critique directed against the EU as a threat to sovereignty and independence, is broken into the detailed critiques of different aspects, all of them posing great danger to Poland. First, the EU is a superstate, a bureaucratic regime with centralizing tendencies aimed at eliminating all nation states. As it was already said, in order to make sense of this phenomenon, historical parallels are multiplied, all of them referring to the totalitarian and authoritarian experiences of the past. They do not only help to understand and stigmatize the EU, but also to predict its future, condemned to failure as all such regimes in the past. Secondly, the EU poses an economic threat and the Polish accession turned out to be not as profitable as it was allegedly promised before accession. The

idea of Poland as a future net-contributor is also invoked in this context. Thirdly, the EU is envisioned as an ideological structure that promotes regional and continental identity in order to eradicate the national one. More importantly, the EU rejects a centuries-old Christian tradition and God as a founder of the moral and social order. They are replaced by secular, liberal, and egoistic orders hostile to the national culture. The process of integration in general is represented as guided by the ideological attitudes. Representation in terms of a project or effort of all cooperating states is not possible here. The integration grows out of ideological thinking aimed at the radical re-socialization and cultural uprooting of member states. Fourthly, the threat posed by the EU is bigger and more dangerous than the previous violations of independence because it is difficult to grasp. It escapes easy conceptualization, it is a dispersed invisible threat, growing out of sources and applying methods of struggle which are difficult to identify. This epistemological argument helps to act in the guise of an insightful critique which is supposedly able to uncover the hidden reality. The vision of threat is enhanced by the militaristic lexicalization used to depict the relationship between Poland and the EU (for example battle, defence, attack, front) Sixth, the EU is envisioned as an institutional structure opposed to Europe, understood either in geographical or cultural-religious (Christianity) terms. Seventh, an exaggeration plays an active role in linking elements in the chain of equivalences, connecting the EU with the worst. In one of the election documents the EU is equated with the destruction of Polish agriculture, confiscation of Polish property, sexual deviation, euthanasia, killing of unborn children, cloning of the people (Dlaczego Liga Polskich Rodzin jest przeciwna wstąpieniu Polski do Unii Europejskiej? 2006: 76). Eighth, "the EU" as a category is sometimes metonymically replaced by "Brussels bureaucracy" or just "Brussels". It is also envisioned as a structure which serves the interests of the biggest states, especially France and (even more often) Germany. Although the EU is most often referred to as a monistic structure, it is also easy to find such definitions which identify internal differentiations, mainly on the basis of power, economic strength and size.

The social and political landscape of this position is informed by the vision of radical and insurmountable frontiers. "The other" of this position is being described as hostile, aggressive enemy, whom it is impossible to cooperate with. The line of division runs along the position in the structure of power. Discourse takes up one of the typical populist opposition between the people (in this case the nation and its state) and political elites (Canovan 1999; Mudde 2004). "The other" is characterized by its rejection and hostility towards nation state. The internal "other" includes Polish politicians of all groupings regardless of nuances of their attitudes towards the EU. Differences between them are minimized and presented, in an unmasking tone, as a smokescreen hiding their real "pro-European" face. Internal "others" are constructed through intentions or interests attributions. They are guided by ideology or material interests, seeking to reap benefits from the integration process. The external "other" is articulated through a number of nominations and predications: the EU as centralized structure, the United States of Europe (Janusz Dobrosz in a parliamentary debate on government information on Polish foreign policy 2005), politicians of the biggest European countries, world governments, the international capital. The characteristic feature of these two types of "others" is that they are not separated entities but inextricably connected through their hierarchical relation. Their bonds are based on the subordination of internal powers to external one. The former are sometimes (explicitly or implicitly) represented as executors of decisions which were made elsewhere.

4.   Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to reconstruct the structure of discursive positions pertaining to the relationship between Poland and the EU. Such a problematization of the research topic draws on the assumption that Europe is always understood in relation to the nation state and, in turn, the image of the latter is explicitly referred to or can be inferred from the vision of the EU. The analysis of the empirical data has revealed three discursive positions which organize the production of meaning and govern the strategies of representation. The first position represents the EU as a chance for the further modernization of Poland and its future position. It was occupied mainly by the Democratic Left Alliance and Civic Platform. The second position perceives the EU as the game of interests between sovereign nation states. The task of the nation state is to benefit from cooperation within an extra-state structure and to retain maximum sovereignty at the same time. Its origins are connected with the Law and Justice party. The third position can be identified by "a threat" as a keyword. The EU is rejected as a structure hostile to the nation state, its interests, independence, and sovereignty. The League of Polish Families should be mentioned here. The Self–Defence and Polish Peasants Party, groupings which are the main source of trouble for political scientists, based their discourse on the combination of elements taken from more than one discursive position, connecting, for example, nationalistically interpreted national interests with a pro-European attitude. The methodology adopted here helped to show how the same topics and words acquire different meanings in the context of particular interpretations of other words. Categories such as chance, threat, interests, nation, state, sovereignty, "Europe of fatherlands", and modernization are flowing between different positions but their meaning and their discursive significance are completely different. Comparative party politics with its focus on party attitudes, rather than analyses of the meaning of "Europe", overlook the fact that there are different entities which are hidden behind the same word. What is more, "Europe" may mean different things not only because there are different discursive positions but also because parties manipulate the ontological status of the entity by referring to actual or future state of the things. This analysis has focused on the general synchronic level, revealing the structure of discourse. It is less concerned with the parties which conveyed these structures in their statements. The next important step would be to analyze the diachronic dimension in order to show how parties took up those elements in their reaction for the immediate events in the current history of Poland – EU relations. It would analyze the details of the discursive reactions for the concrete events. A diachronic dimension would also show to what extent speaking on Europe can be understood in terms of the diffusion of ideas rather than a simple reaction of, first, the pluralization of the political sphere after 1989 and, second, the accession to the EU after 2004. The strength of the historical frames and topics mentioned here, suggests that the answer may be provided rather by the genealogical analysis of traditions of Polish political thought. Given that the diffusion does not express itself through mechanical adoption of the patterns invented elsewhere, it is necessary to take both dimensions into account to scrutinize how the international discourse is accommodated with the local ideas and frames.

It is also important to note that the "sleeping giant" already exists on the level of party discourse, in a sense that mainstream consensus over the EU so often assumed by political scientists, actually has a strong divisive potential articulated through different meanings of the same words. In fact, at least since the presidential elections of 2000, analysts of Polish politics were looking for the new dimension of political struggle, which could replace allegedly old-fashioned and worn-out divisions between post-

communists and anti-communists. For many the division over the European Union seems to be a good candidate in this respect. The EU accession, the necessity to cede certain prerogatives to the supra-state structures and the politics at this level, the European Parliamentary election campaign, have opened a new space of competition and provided new topics to struggle over. What is more, the issue is new, complex, pertaining to practically all dimensions of nation states and touching upon the most fragile aspects of its existence: identity, sovereignty, and prerogatives of the supreme institutions. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether in the nearest future it can take over the place occupied by already existing divisions. The European issue in Poland constitutes no more than merely one of many lines of political struggle and it is only one additional dimension of party identities. As this study has shown, this dimension is inextricably connected with the elements, themes and divisions already existing at the domestic level. The European elements were rather incorporated into the already existing structure of tensions than radically restructured the realm of political struggles. Finally, one has to notice the lasting potential of the distinguished discursive positions pertaining to the European issue. Given the structural properties of discourse as such, it is not only the domestic issues but structure of these positions as well which might affect in the future the processes of acquisition of the new content.

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