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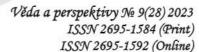*https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2061-4216*

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THE IMPACT OF EUROSCEPTICISM ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE UK PARTY SYSTEM IN THE CONTEXT OF BREXIT

Abstract. The article describes the cause-and-effect relationship between the spread of Euroscepticism and the transformation of the UK party system, which is established on the basis of a political science analysis of the program documents of parliamentary and other political parties.It is noted that a number of British political

parties have built their ideology on the key thesis of the need for the country to withdraw from the European Union. It is emphasized that the crisis social and economic migration phenomena in the European Union have created favourable conditions for the perception of Eurosceptic slogans by a significant part of society.At the same time, these actual circumstances have strengthened the disintegration vector, which is also due to the conservative political tradition historically inherent in British society and elites, expressed in the concept of parliamentary sovereignty of the UK, unlimited by joint acts of integration association.

Statement of the problem. Over the past decades, Euroscepticism has been intensively gaining an electoral base and expanding its influence on the programme guidelines of political parties not only in the UK, which has historically been characterised by traditional political conservatism and economic protectionism, but also in many other European countries. And later, against the backdrop of social, economic, migration, demographic, cultural and spiritual crises, it became one of the fundamental trends in socio-political development, resulting in the unfolding of disintegration processes in the formally integrated European political environment.

In the UK, this trend has manifested itself in two of the most visible ways.

Firstly, the political position of the Conservative Party, which was ruling at the time of the Brexit process, has significantly shifted towards Euroscepticism in the context of the European economic, migration, national, and cultural crises.At the same time, the last one should be considered in direct correlation with migration crises, which is quite understandable and logical given the combination of causes and consequences of the crisis of national and cultural identity in those countries that received the largest migration flows, including the Netherlands, France, Germany, and to some extent the UK, and others.

Meanwhile, the opposition Labour Party also did not take a strong and unambiguous Euro-optimistic position before the referendum on the country's withdrawal from the EU, and moreover, it was even critical of freedom of movement in the EU and some other key principles of European integration. This fact demonstrates the attempts of not only the Conservatives, but also Labour to take into account in their documents and public slogans the public demands that linked the possibility of solving many problematic issues to the strengthening of the UK's independence and its exclusive focus on ensuring its own national political, economic, cultural and spiritual interests.

Secondly, Euroscepticism has become almost the only ideological basis for the creation of some new political parties that have demonstrated fairly high electoral results in parliamentary and, especially, European parliamentary elections. Among

these parties that emerged on the basis of and with the aim of spreading the ideas of Euroscepticism are, in particular, UKIP, Brexit, and Reform UK.

It should be noted that historically, Euroscepticism is closer to the traditional political ideology of conservatives, given the slogans of strengthening sovereignty and statehood, limiting migration, and economic protectionism as mandatory components of conservative political ideology in its classical form.

At the same time, it should be added that the country's accession to the EU, as well as its withdrawal from this integration association, took place during the time in power of Conservative Party, which allows us to conclude that the political positions of the main British parties are heavily dependent on the fluctuations in electoral views, which is manifested, among other things, in the periodic transformation of the provisions declared by the main party documents, primarily manifestos.

Analysis of the latest research and publications. Certain aspects of the influence of Euroscepticism on the programme guidelines, political positions, and functional areas of activity of British political parties during the preparation and implementation of the UK's exit from the EU have been considered by such domestic and European, in particular, British, researchers asV. Besyrevych, A. Boulton, R. Boot, O K. Hissa-Ivanovych, A. Grubinko, A. Gentleman, V. Dzhumayeva, L. Cattel, L. Tompkins, D. McShain, N. Malik, R. Mason, V. Mitroshchenko, R. Peston, T. Haughton, V. Chekmak, I. Chervinka, P. Schnapper, A. Shulyak and others.

At the same time, it can be stated that at the present stage of political science understanding of the transformation of the UK party system in the fundamentally new conditions of socio-political life, there is a lack of systematic understanding of the depth and consequences of the influence of Euroscepticism on this process.
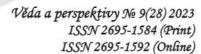
Thisresearch, in our opinion, should cover the following aspects:a) defining the content of the concept of "Euroscepticism" in its current pan-European context; b) identifying the key features of the functioning and development of the British party system after the country's withdrawal from the EU; c) establishing the presence of a Eurosceptic component in party documents and political statements of party leaders, which affects the current activities and further development of the respective political party.

The purpose of the article is to determine the extent to which the ideas of Euroscepticism have influenced the transformation of the British party system through a political science analysis of party documents and political statements of political party leaders.

The concept of the study is based on the hypothesis of the combined influence of the actual crisis in the EU and the historical British conservative tradition on the formation of public and party Euroscepticism as a leading ideological vector of the latest transformation of the British party system.

Presentation of the main material. In analysing the impact of

Euroscepticism on transformational changes in the British party system, it is first of all necessary to establish the content of the definition of "Euroscepticism", characterise its political origins and compare the relevant British processes and trends with similar trends in party development within the political systems of other European states, including fully integrated EU members.

In this context, it should be noted that there are different author's classifications of holders of political views on integration processes in Europe.

One of these classifications was proposed by P. Kopecky and C. Mudde, according to which several groups of political actors with different ideological orientations towards European integration are distinguished:

1. Euro-enthusiasts are those political parties, representatives of the party elite and part of the electorate who support the current direction of development of the European integration project and the project itself.

2. Europragmatists support European integration only to the extent that it coincides with the national interests of society and the state.

3. Eurosceptics are critical of European integration processes, but try to change the integration project from within without resorting to its complete elimination.

4. Europhobes reject the entire European integration project and unequivocally support the withdrawal of their countries from the EU (Kopecky, Mudde, 2002: 297-326).

Fromourperspective, thedisadvantageof this classification is a certain conventionality of the proposed division of nationally oriented political parties into Eurosceptics and Europhobes, infact, for example, P. Taggart does not distinguish Europhobia as an independent ideological trend at all, defining Euroscepticism as a position that fully or partially denies the idea of European integration [Oskin, 2009:26]. Based on the above position, Euroscepticism can be divided into two types depending on the extent of rejection of the European integration process - moderate (partial rejection) and radical (complete rejection).

A similar concept is offered by O.R. Tarnavskyi, who divides Euroscepticism into "hard" and "soft", depending on the declaration of a course to leave the EU (in the first case) or rhetoric aimed at situational criticism of the European common policy in solving a particular problem (Tarnavskyi, 2016: 340).In this version of the classification, "moderate" Euroscepticism is quite close to Europragmatism, conceptually based on the primary consideration of national interests that should dominate the implementation of state policy over the common interests of the integration association.

If we consider the evolution of Eurosceptic ideas in the documents, statements and practical actions of the two main parliamentary parties in the UK, it should be noted that the Labour Party under its most successful leader in modern times, E. Blair, was generally Euro-optimistic. At the same time, during the period

preceding his premiership, starting with the country's accession to the EU, Labour Party took a critical stance on European integration, and the Euro-optimistic trend was much more inherent in the Conservative Party, as D. Stevens convincingly demonstrated in his analysis of party manifestos of the 1970s and 1990s. (Stevens, 2013: 536-557).

In this context, an important and urgent methodological problem is the establishment of certain criteria and characteristics by which a political party can be considered Euro-optimistic, Europragmatic or Eurosceptical.
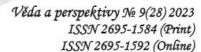
Fromourpointofview, the set of such criteria includes:a) provisions of party documents that reflect such issues as: the party's attitude to European integration as a project; position on the expediency of the country's membership in the EU; position on the quantity and quality of the country's integration while maintaining membership in the EU (joining or not joining the common currency, absolute or limited freedom of movement, Schengen area, compliance with migration quotas, etc.); views on the directions and possibilities of reforming the EU; views on ways to solve common European crisis problems; party positions on furthers trengthening integration and potential EU enlargement; b) political statements of party leaders on these issues; c) practical actions of political parties, in particular: the results of party voting in the parliament, the European Parliament, regional and local representative bodies; organisation of certain mass actions involving the electorate; nomination of representatives of a particular internal party direction to public office as an indicator of changes in the party's perception of European integration.

At the same time, party documents are a key indicator that allows to determine the ideological orientation of a party, as they formalise party activities and serve as an objective source of programme goals and objectives, which can be traced on a rather illustrative example of the evolution of the Labour Party.

Accordingly, in the Labour Party manifesto of 2005 stated that "interests of Britain lie in an enlarged European Union " and Labour itself was "proud of Britain's membership in the EU", without which the country would be "weaker and more vulnerable" (The Labour..., 2005), which allowed us to characterise the position of this party as Euro-optimistic based on the main theses of the above paragraph: support for the idea of European integration; expediency of the country's stay in the EU; support for further EU enlargement.

A year before the referendum on the country's membership in the EU, the Labour Party reiterated that "membership of the European Union is essential for prosperity and security", as almost 3 million jobs depend on Europe and half of trade and foreign investment is with the EU (TheLabour..., 2015). However, the change of rhetoric from idealistic ("proud of membership") to pragmatic ("economisation") in terms of the expediency of staying in the EU indicated a certain shift towards Europragmatism.

Meanwhile, during the 2016 referendum, only 10 Labour MPs supported Brexit (218 were in favour of Britain's membership of the EU), and after the referendum, the party called for a new vote to "correct" the results of the first national poll with legally significant consequences (EU vote...). However, after the referendum, Labour representatives stated that they would be guided by pragmatism in the Brexit negotiations and would try to preserve the benefits of membership in the single market and the Customs Union (Owen Smith...).

In addition, in 2005 Labour Party declared that when joining the eurozone, which subsequently did not take place, it would be guided by economic interests and put the euroissue to a referendum (The Labour..., 2005).In 2010, after the outbreak of the eurozone crisis, the Labour Party simply repeated the thesis that the euro issue would be decided in a referendum (TheLabour..., 2010), but, interestingly, without any mention of the benefits of eurozone membership. The 2015 manifesto already stated this: The UK "will not join the euro" (The Labour..., 2015), i.e. it was no longer even a question of supporting a referendum on the UK's participation in the eurozone, but of consolidating in the main party document the key to choosing a particular option for the development of the British political and economic system, a purely Eurosceptic thesis about the inexpediency of introducing a single European currency instead of the stronger and more stable British national currency at that time.

Finally, before the 2017 elections, Labour declared that it would accept the results of the EU referendum and that the euro was no longer an issue at all (Manifesto 2017).

Moreover, Labour has gone the same way to a Eurosceptic internal party paradigm as with the idea of a single European currency with the issue of freedom of movement within the EU, which is one of the fundamental principles of European integration in general - from cautious enthusiasm to support for the complete suspension of this principle, which is quite tangible for the British population in the context of the migration crisis. Accordingly, the Manifesto of 2005 states that "for centuries Britain has been home to people from all over Europe and beyond" and that immigration should continue and does not pose any threat to British national interests (The Labour..., 2005).Instead, in 2015 Labour promised to tighten the conditions for EU citizens to be eligible for benefits and supported the idea of sending an additional 1,000 border guards to control the state border (The Labour..., 2015). After the referendum in 2016, the Labour Party openly acknowledged that "freedom of movement will end when we leave the European Union" (Manifesto 2017). In other words, Labour has moved away from the "open door" policy in this regard, recognising the need to control the number of migrants arriving in the UK from EU countries.

In addition, in 2015, according to the BBC, it was Labour representatives who were the first to propose strengthening the role of national parliaments in the process

of adopting European laws (The Labour..., 2015).

Thus, it can be concluded that British Euroscepticism is also linked to the idea of parliamentary sovereignty inherent in the British political system. In turn, the recognition of the unlimited law-making competence of the EU's joint bodies would certainly constitute a significant limitation of this fundamental principle of British political life, and this factor also influenced the formation of Eurosceptic attitudes of a significant part of the British political elite.

The Conservatives, in turn, are the political party that, as the ruling party, ensured the referendum process, preparation for it and practical implementation of the results of the expression of will.

The leading role of the Conservative Party in the process of the country's withdrawal from the EU also allows us to characterise its position as Eurosceptic, which at different times ranged from moderate Euroscepticism to quite radical.

For example, D. Cameron was at least a Europragmatist, not a Eurosceptic, as evidenced, in particular, by the fact that he resigned immediately after the referendum. At the same time, D. Cameron was quite clear in favour of maintaining EU membership even before the referendum, as exemplified by the following quote: "isolationism has never been good for the UK. Every time we have turned our back on Europe, we have regretted it sooner or later. Either we influence Europe or it influences us. And if something happens in Europe, we will not be able to pretend that the consequences will not affect us... It is in our national interest to maintain our common goals with the EU and therefore the UK should maintain its membership of the EU, because what happens to our neighbours affects us" (Swinford, 2016).

Unlike D. Cameron, T. May, at least in the real situational conditions prevailing at the time, was considered a convinced Eurosceptic, as was the vast majority of the government under her leadership. This position is illustrated, in particular, by her unambiguous answer to the question of whether she had any doubts about the correctness of the Brexit idea: "In 2016, the British citizens voted to leave the EU. The UK is unconditionally leaving the community" (Thegovernment's...). The Eurosceptic vector of T. May's views is also noted by British researchers, in particula R. Rose (Rose, 2019).

Separately, in terms of transformational changes in British political parties in the context of the EU withdrawal, we should note such a fundamentally new phenomenon as the emergence of "minor" political parties based entirely on the ideas of radical Euroscepticism.

First of all, in this segment of the British political environment, it is necessary to note the projects led at different times by the well-known populist politician N. Farage. These parties, both Reform UK and its former disbanded predecessors, UKIP and Brexit, during the period of N. Farage's leadership were Eurosceptic, populist political parties that advocated the UK's early withdrawal from the EU, even without any prior agreement. This position is demonstrated, in particular, by the

UKIP election manifesto of 2015, which characterises the EU as "a doomed superpower that tells us what to do but won't listen to what we want" (UKIP Election..., 2015).

In general, according to J. Buggini the phenomenon of the electoral success of the Brexit party against the background of the preparation and holding of the referendum on the country's withdrawal from the EU was that the party changed its far-right radicalism to Eurosceptic national populism and right-wing radicalism. In other words, the relatively high results in the British and European parliamentary elections and the significant impact on the results of the referendum itself were explained by the fact that this party, being moderately populist, was quick to respond to the demands and concerns of British society in the context of the growing European crisis.Moreover, this party also successfully broadcast them without appealing to racism, nationalism and xenophobia, that is made them acceptable and understandable to law-abiding, decent Britons of different backgrounds, and offered, at first glance, simple, clear, and effective ways to solve the most pressing problems of society [Baggini, 2013].

Conclusion. In such a way, analysing the impact of Euroscepticism on the transformation of the UK party system in the context of the country's exit from the EU, we can conclude that this trend was caused by the combined effect of two factors - external (actual) and internal (ideological).

An external factor influencing the growth of public and party Euroscepticism was the aggravation of a number of problematic issues in the common European space, some of which have escalated into a crisis (migration crisis, banking crisis, crisis of national and cultural identity, security crisis, etc.).

On the other hand, nationally oriented conservatism has historically been traditional for British society and political elites, reinforced by the principle of parliamentary sovereignty, fundamental to the UK political and legal system.

Analysing the impact of these factors on the UK's participation in European integration processes, it should be noted that its participation in common European institutions and implementation of joint decisions since joining the EU has never been identical to the integration of other member states. Therefore, the country's special status within the integration association has also contributed to the intensification of public debate on the feasibility of formalised membership with the actual dominance of national interests in state policy.

Thus, one of the consequences of these trends was the reformatting of party documents, including election manifestos, of the main parliamentary parties, aimed, among other things, at strengthening the moderate Eurosceptic component.

On the other hand, against the backdrop of the growing electoral popularity of Eurosceptic sentiments, new political parties have emerged in the UK with an ideology based entirely on radical Euroscepticism and uncompromising monosyllabic populist slogans. The active information and communication activities

of such parties on the eve of the referendum also contributed to the disintegration of the vote.

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