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Communicating environmental issues on British mainstream party platforms

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Introduction

In April 2019, London witnessed the 'rebellion' and the subsequent arrests of thousands of environmental activists, which eventually led to the announcement of a 'climate emergency' by the parliament (Stuart 2020: 488). The motion was advanced by the Labour Party leader (Walker 2019). In December of the same year, the country held general elections, the second after the Brexit vote (Prosser 2020).

Contemporary politics has witnessed how niche issues can emerge from the fringes and challenge political reality. In the 2019 UK general elections, environmental issues gained unusually high salience compared to the previous elections. As N. Carter and M. Pearson (2020:2) mentioned, "two main political parties in Britain had never taken such a radical approach to climate change at any previous general election".

Did that mean environmental issues were no longer niche since the political mainstream occupied them? One place to look for the answer to this question is the electoral manifestos of mainstream parties.

Developing a concept of 'niche parties' and a discussion of niche and mainstream relations by B. Meguid (2005) helped analyse political parties and their electoral performance from a new perspective. Studies in the field have identified that niche issues can also appear on the platforms of mainstream parties (for example, Meguid 2005; Abou-Chadi 2014), and niche parties can shift their profiles to the mainstream for better electoral results (Meyer, Wagner 2013). It could be considered that niche issues have gained 'independence' from niche parties and taken different journeys on different party platforms.

Some scholars argue (Meyer, Miller 2015:261) that niche issues can exist only in systems with more than two parties, since there is a need of 'objective reference' beyond the political mainstream. The party system of Britain is unique in that sense.

As the report by R. Cracknell *et al.* (2023) illustrates, although the electoral competition has been predominantly between two mainstream parties, there are also niche

parties in the parliament. For instance, the Green party managed to win seats in the parliament for the first time in 2010 (Cracknell *et al.* 2023:10).

In fact, on the one hand, the British party system has an environmental niche party. On the other, as N. Carter and M. Pearson noted (2020) environmental issues increased their importance for mainstream parties during the 2019 elections.

Does that imply that they are no longer niche?

This work argues that the answer is not straightforward. It depends on how a mainstream platform integrates those issues and communicates them.

Research questions and objectives

To better understand the relations between environmental issues and mainstream party platforms, this thesis advanced the following research questions:
1. What is the primacy of environmental issues within British mainstream party platforms?
2. How are environmental issues communicated within British mainstream party platforms from the perspective of political form analysis?

The primacy of environmental issues considers their contextual and structural position on party platforms. It also covers the cases of communications and translations between niche and mainstream issues. Those indicators help find the relevant relationship model between environmental issues and mainstream party platforms. The models of niche to mainstream relations are developed by this study based on the structural and functional features of Lotman's (2005) semiosphere. This approach allows us to identify the functions of niche issues on the platform related to their primacy.

In order to study the communication of environmental issues, this thesis refers to the political form analysis by P.Selg and A.Ventsel (2020). The focus on public communication forms helps to reveal trends that otherwise, for example, in content analysis, will not be observed and interpreted. In cases where the content is the same or similar, the forms can be different, and that difference can identify the primacy of a niche issue on a party platform.

This political form analysis is a variation of a relational and interpretive methodology. Thus, the results of this study are interpretations and do not anticipate providing causal explanations.

This thesis follows two objectives:

- to enrich the methodological repertoire of party manifesto analysis by employing the political semiotic approach;
- to illustrate how the form of communication can convey information about niche issues.

The thesis starts with the Literature review. It first introduces the concept of a party manifesto and discusses its functions and argues for comparing manifestos of consecutive elections from the perspective of translation studies.

This is because parties can change some positions on platforms, but the change of their ideological stance is rather a more complex process (Buckler, Dolowitz 2009). Thus, every manifesto can be considered as a variation of the previous one, which can contain changes but keeps the ideological stance.

The Literature review also discusses voters' possible reactions to those changes in manifestos. It introduces the concept of a 'niche party' and compares the existing definitions of it.

It then moves on to provide information about the general electoral dynamics in the UK. It presents the historical path of the main parties and talks about the peculiarities of the British party system and electoral rules.

The final part of the Literature review concludes with the 'battle' between quantitative and qualitative interpretive methodological approaches for studying elections. There are no suggested winners or losers in the battle, but it is a deliberation to find the best fit for answering the research questions of this thesis.

In Section 2, the main concepts of this study are defined. It discusses public communication forms and forms of power and governance suggested by Selg and Ventsel (2020). Concerning niche to mainstream relations, the thesis defines them through the semiosphere-based models and discusses the indicators of issue primacy.

The definitions of the main concepts are followed by the research methodology, which discusses the steps of the analysis and introduces the study material; a party manifesto.

The section also discusses why the elections from 2017 and 2019 were chosen. The reasons behind considering those two elections are contextual and methodological. Between those two elections, the importance of environmental protection in British public discourse had increased significantly (Kenny 2022:9). Additionally, these two elections belong to a 'new reality' for the UK. Such a change can be considered a litmus test for understanding if environmental issues were affected by the dominant discourse of Brexit. Concerning the methodology, this thesis supports a diachronic analysis of party manifestos, which allows

approaching them from the perspective of translation studies. Thus, there is a need to have party manifestos from two consecutive years.

The choice of mainstream parties is straightforward in the British case; this study analyses the manifestos of Conservatives and Labour.

After describing the research methodology, the thesis turns to the main findings. Section 4 covers the analysis of each party platform from 2017 and 2019. The analysis examines the primacy of environmental issues and is followed by the implications derived from political form analysis.

Eventually, Section 5 juxtaposes the main findings of this thesis. It identifies the changes in issue primacy between two elections and describes the main trends of communicating environmental issues. It is followed with a Conclusion, which summarizes the main findings and provides suggestions for future research.

1.Literature review

1.1.Party platforms

Political parties appear to be mostly in the mode of competition in democratic political systems. Competition is shown by similar entities creating some uniqueness to try to stand out, while staying loyal to the general rules of the political entity. There are various mechanisms to deliver that uniqueness. One such medium is party manifestos.

This part starts by introducing the communicative functions and the style of party platforms. It discusses their potential to change. Drawing from the idea that party platforms are able to change (Janda *et. al* 1995) while party ideologies are more difficult to change (Buckler and Dolowitz 2009), this work suggests studying party manifestos from the perspective of translation studies and identifying the original and translated texts in order to better recognize and interpret the changes within them.

Each party's image exists in people's minds in some form, and is generated from the "vague policy package condensed in, and rendered by, one word or slogan" (Sartori 2005[1976]:294). One party can generate different images among people (*Ibid*).

The concept of party image can be understood in the frames of the Peircean triad, as the same object (here, the party) can have different interpretations and attract a variety of population groups.

Janda *et al*. (1995:171-172) defined the party identity through party image. In this approach, the party image consisted of people in the party and their followers. In addition, it covers party positions towards policy domains, which can be potentially changed (*Ibid*).

The following question is therefore relevant. If those changes happen, how do people still create a mental picture of a party? Indeed, there should be some stable and sustainable attributes to make the association happen. Sustainability is supposed to be provided with the ideological makeup of the party. According to Buckler, Dolowitz (2009:13-14), it is

challenging to change the ideology of a party, given that it can result in losing voters and influence the relations among party members.

Thus, the party platform can be considered the representamen of the party image. More specifically, it represents one part of the image, which Janda *et al*. (1995:171-172) called the 'policy face' and proposed the possibility of 'facelift'.

Platforms are also known as party programs or manifestos. This work uses these names interchangeably.

According to the study by Eder *et al*. (2017:76), a political platform is a "compendium of valid party positions". It is a legitimate source for getting the attitudes of parties regarding various policy domains (*Ibid*).

Political platforms are a significant source of material for campaigns since they communicate with potential voters. They also have a symbolic designation apart from their functional significance. Platforms indicate the beginning of electoral campaigns (*Ibid,* 2017:77).

Electoral manifestos serve different functions and fulfill various objectives. Along with carrying information about a party image, they can indicate the changes in party approaches (Janda *et al.* l995; Abou-Chadi 2014; Schumacher *et al*. 2015) as well as be one way of party categorization (Mair, Mudde 1998). Concerning the categorization, P. Mair and C. Mudde (1998:218-219) have problematised that approach since platforms serve particular electoral purposes and focus on policies. The authors suggested that platforms will not illustrate well the ideological picture (*Ibid*).

Although platforms are designed for specific elections, temporally they go beyond those elections. Evidence suggests that party manifestos can reference the past, present and future (Müller 2021). It also found that the parties in power refer to the past more than the ones in opposition (*Ibid*, 2021:587).

The diverse temporality of party platforms, afforded by the versatility of language, underlines the importance of language use in them. The focus of the way of communication makes manifestos a comprehensive source for understanding the peculiarities of each party and to disclose the meanings behind their positions, attitudes and pledges.

Promises are essential part of party platforms. With the example of British parties, A. King (1981:310) illustrated that the promises of parties usually lacked clarity, which made it difficult to assess their performance concerning those pledges (*Ibid*).

According to T. Matthieß (2020), compliance with pledges helps incumbent parties not to lose votes in the upcoming elections. This phenomenon is called "retrospective pledge voting" (*Ibid*, 2020:776-777).

Based on the discussion above, it can be suggested that the electoral process includes all time periods, where the past determines the vote cast now for the future.

Time is also a factor with regard to voters' responses to the changes on the platforms. As the study by J. Adams and Z. Somer-Topcu (2009) suggested, when a party moved towards the center during one electoral period, the voters responded to that change during the following one (Adams, Somer-Topcu 2009: 678).

The intersection of different temporalities in party manifestos and their communicative function paves the way for considering the semiotics behind them.

1.1.1.The semiotics behind party platforms

The discussion above implies the double role of political manifestos. On the one hand they are mediums of communication. On the other hand, they can be the message.

Technological developments directly affected the selection of different mediums to deliver messages of party platforms more efficiently. For example, H. Penniman (1981:129-130) illustrated the shift towards cost-effective campaigning when referring to the electoral performance of the Spanish Communist Party in 1977. The party invested in crowded outdoor rallies, which did not result in good electoral fortunes. For successive elections, the Communist Party and others followed TV-based campaigning because it incurred lower transaction costs (*Ibid*).

Technological changes meant that the document of the electoral campaign was communicated through a more efficient medium. Thus, the way party platforms are presented is changing over time to meet the needs of technology.

With the rise of the internet, online activism has become a central part of electoral campaigns, which, among other things, covers social sites (Dobber, de Vreese 2022) and social bots (Rheault, Musulan 2021).

Online advertisements bear some risks and weaknesses. For instance, it was found that, through Facebook Ads, parties reached only a tiny proportion of people and needed to communicate their policies to broader electorate (Dobber, de Vreese, 2022).L. Rheault and

A. Musulan (2021) studied how social bots appeared to be an inseparable part of electoral campaigns, analysing the case of the Canadian elections from 2019.

Thus, the forms of presenting party platforms have changed. Drawing from K. Marais's (2019:145-147) '(Bio)Semiotics theory of translation', it can be assumed that the materiality of the representamen, or its specific characteristics, have been changing. Visual perceptions are no longer only about rallies held in the squares; audio signs are not only about a specific device. Thus, the representamen of manifestos is being diversified, but its central role remains almost the same.

Manifestos can also change. Those changes can infer various things. For instance, alongside the position change, it can mean changing the salience of issues (see also Janda *et al.* 1995; Abou-Chadi 2014) or "attention to issues" (Schumacher *et al.* 2015:1040). Voters also can give salience to an issue, then find the party that best represents that issue, and vote accordingly (Belanger, Meguid 2008). Parties can also change their profiles, turning from niche to mainstream (Meyer, Wagner 2013).

Therefore, parties can adjust their platforms, but yet something stays intact and supposedly substantiates the party image in humans' minds.

M. Ojamaa and P. Torop (2015:63) noted in their work, that "Translation in its essence is repetition with variation". The dynamics of party platforms can be described in the same way. If a platform is a translation, it should have an original text and the translated one. Referring to Anton Popovic (1976:226), the original one will be a proto-text, "an object of inter-textual continuity". The continuity comes with a meta-text, as an illustration of two merged texts and a variety of the proto-text (*Ibid*).

Drawing from this, every previous platform can be considered a proto-text for the next one. Alternatively, the very first platform of the party can be considered the original text, and all other platforms will become the meta-texts, creating what P. Torop (2000:72) called 'seriation'.

Voters' response to those translations can be delayed. However, it can be considered that the phrase 'delayed response' suits more political science. According to L. Ellestrom (2019:25), interpretants can appear from communications that happened in the past. The reaction to the object, here the change on the platform, can be attributed to the interpretant of a previous communication, here the previous election. Therefore, it can be considered that the relationship between platforms and voters does not cover the period of one election.

Besides voters' and parties' perspectives, there can be the third scenario. There is also a possibility of an ideological change in the party, as in the case of the New Labour in Britain (Buckler, Dolowitz 2009).

Buckler and Dolowitz (2009) suggested that the change of identity should treat party history carefully and should be the response to the external environment, which is making a party less competitive (*Ibid*).

Therefore, ideological change is about embracing new time and space and advancing new meanings. This provides a new angle for viewing party platforms from the perspective of translation studies. According to Marais (2019:129), translation is "any negentropic work that causes change to any part of the semiotic triad, or the relationships between them, or the time and space of their occurrence".

In the discussions above, the only way to detect the 'new' is about turning to the past. Thus, a synchronic encounter of relations between a party platform and other actors, especially voters, entails the convergence of different temporal realities, which makes meanings tangled and communication less valid and thorough.

In fact, voters continue voting, and platforms are changing according to different stimuli. This indicates that each side implements what Marais (2019:125) called 'negentropic work' for meaning making.

The focus on one party platform developed for a particular election can tell little about its meanings. It will be analytically more valuable to differentiate which are the new meanings of the platform and which are the repeated ones. To that end, it is suggested studying platforms from the perspective of translation.

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In summary, party platforms are central to the electoral process since they provide an entire encounter about party positions and attitudes towards different issues (Eder *et al*.2017).

The change in party platforms can be approached as an example of translation with a meta-text and a proto-text. It was also suggested that the change in party identity could be studied from the perspective of bio(semiotics) theory of translation by Marais (2019).

The next part of the literature review introduces the concept of niche parties. It also discusses different approaches to niche and mainstream relations.

1.2. Niche parties and niche issues

Before starting the discussion about niche parties and niche issues, it is important to define an issue in the context of party politics. How does it differ from other identical concepts, such as policies or policy domains? G. Sartori ([2005[1976]:292), who supported minimal definitions, gave the following conceptualization of an issue, "a bounded set of problems that can be isolated and is indeed perceived in isolation – not only in its distinctiveness but because of its distinctiveness". This rigid conceptualization helps to apply different measurements to issues and use party platforms for the analysis of electoral behaviour.

Now, when an issue is more precise, the concept of an issue voter needs to be conceptualised. G Sartori (2005[1976]:293) saw a fundamental difference between issue voters and voters with party identification. The latter vote for the candidates with whom they have been identified. That type of voting usually has a trend of long-term commitment *(Ibid)*.

The critical part for an issue voter is the perception of an issue and, more importantly, the fact that voters' dispositions towards the issue cause the vote choice. Hence, the causality puzzle should be solved to call someone an issue voter (*Ibid*, 2005[1976]:296).

One example which demonstrated the importance of issues in voting was provided by Brian May (2012). The rock musician mentioned in his article that although he was a Conservative voter, he resisted one of their policies, precisely the badger hunting, and claimed to never vote for David Cameron (May 2012).

In fact, B. May (2012) opposed the position of a party with whom he had identified himself before. That voting behaviour fits with what is called the "defection point" when the stance of a party towards the issue challenges the commitment of voters toward candidates (Sartori 2005[1976]:297).

Not only can voters cast a ballot for a specific issue, but parties can also be organized around some particular issues or appeals. Niche parties are one example of them.

As defined initially by B. Meguid (2005), niche parties appeared to be the response to the decline of cleavage-based voting. Meguid (2005:347-348) has conceptualized them as new parties which advance issues that have not been part of popular political deliberations. Their platforms are not wide. It is not easy to tell whether they are right-wing, left wing or center parties. It is also challenging to identify niche party voters according to the classical partisan divisions *(Ibid)*. The coinage of the concept was followed with several interpretations and reinterpretations. For instance, Adams *et al*. (2006:513) took the ideological indicator for defining niche parties, narrowing them to Greens, Communists and Right-Wing parties.

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Meyer and Miller (2015:262) have advanced the concept of party nicheness, which makes the niche party an 'ideal type'. Another approach to party nicheness was suggested by Bischof (2017:224), who considered 'niche segments' and included the specification of party platforms in the calculation of party nicheness.

Only when more than three parties exist in that system does the niche party concept become meaningful. This is because there are more than one lines of communication unlike the two-party systems (Meyer, Miller 2015:261).

Meyer and Wagner (2013) found that niche parties were likely to become mainstream for better electoral fortunes. Meanwhile, the evidence did not suggest any opposite shifts (*Ibid*).

The mainstream parties respond to the success of niche parties differently. About-Chadi (2014:11), analysing political parties of Western Europe from 1980 through 2011, has found that mainstream parties decrease their focus on environmental issues when Greens register success in elections. This was attributed to the fact that the mainstream considered them issue-owners *(Ibid)*.

B. Meguid (2005:349) advanced three possible strategies for the mainstream response to niche issues, which can affect the electoral success of niche parties. Mainstream parties can consciously discount the issue, creating an impression among voters that the issue is not so salient. They can also consider those issues with the original or opposite position advanced by niche parties. Each strategy will have a different influence on the electoral performance of a niche party. The scenarios vary between niche parties losing their distinctiveness, the ability to attract voters, and niche parties becoming issue owners (*Ibid*).

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The coinage of the term niche parties by Meguid (2005) was followed by several attempts at reconceptualization by other scholars. Niche issues and niche parties appeared to influence the political mainstream and be influenced by it.

The concept of niche parties and issues was suggested to not be meaningful in two-party systems because there is no 'objective reference' there (Miller, Meyer 2015:261). This makes the case of the British party system a not typical but relevant case study for niche issues.

The following chapter will discuss the British party system, introduce its mainstream parties and give a succinct overview of the role of environmental issues in party politics.

1.3. Parties and electoral dynamics in Britain

This part of the literature review discusses the peculiarities of the UK party system and electoral rules. It also describes the historical dynamics of the two-party system and briefly illustrates the electoral fortunes of main parties over time. This part also gives a brief picture of environmental issues in British party politics.

Historically, the central struggle in the UK elections has been mainly between two or 'two and a half' parties. The half referred to Liberal Democrats (Siaroff 2003:276). However, in 2015 the Scottish National Party came third in general elections (Cracknell *et al.* 2023:5).

It is worth taking some historical detours to depict the overall dynamics of the party system in the UK. The nascent form of two-party competition emerged in Britain in the late seventeenth century, when two groups, Tories and Whigs, started to oppose each other in the parliament (Ingle 2008[1987]:6-7).

In the late eighteenth century, an ideological distinction between Tories and Whigs became visible and stronger. That was related to the different issues, such as the revolution in France, the extension of the voting rights. Whigs were the proponents of those issues, while Tories were opposing (*Ibid*, 2008[1987]: 9)

In the nineteenth century, parties witnessed the development of a new wealthy class, who got the right to vote with the support of Whigs and established their own party; Liberal party (*Ibid*, 2008[1987]: 9-10).

The late nineteenth century and early twenty century was the period when Labour leaders got organized and established their party for the need of better representation (*Ibid*, 2008[1987]: 15). The party was established in 1900. [1]

During the 1990s, the Labour party started to adjust its ideology to the imperatives of the new age. This process gave birth to New Labour (Buckler, Dolowitz 2009).

Alongside Conservatives and Labour there were other parties represented in the parliament. Among them there were also niche parties.

The elections from 2010 appear to be quite relevant for this work since it was the first time the Green party entered the parliament with one seat at the Brighton Pavilion (Cracknell *et al.* 2023:10). Moreover, the elections resulted in the coalition government between Conservatives and Liberal Democrats (*Ibid*, 2023:11).

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[1] Labour. Labour's Legacy. Retrieved from: https://labour.org.uk/about/labours-legacy/ 19.05.2023

The Conservative Government was formed after the elections in 2015. The Green Party increased their vote share. Those elections were also successful for UKIP as they got their seat in the parliament but lost it in the subsequent election (*Ibid*, 2023:10, 12).

The so-called Brexit elections in 2017 challenged the strength of the Conservative Party, resulting in a minority government in coalition with the Democratic Unionist Party (Hobolt 2018:3).

Most votes of the 2017 general election were distributed between two main parties, with other parties losing shares, which appeared to bring back the two-partisan Britain (Hobolt 2018; Prosser 2018). With that said, Liberal Democrats increased their seats in 2017 (Cracknell *et al.* 2023:9). The elections in 2019 brought back the Conservatives' ever strength, resulting in the majority of Conservative MPs in the parliament (*Ibid*).

The famous 'first past the post' system is at the heart of British general elections. It is also known as the 'simple plurality system' (Blackburn 1995:362). This is quite different from proportional electoral rules. More specifically, the votes or rather share of votes do not necessarily imply potential number of seats in the parliament. That translation is not proportional (*Ibid*).

It can be assumed that in comparison to proportional electoral systems, pluralistic ones 'interpret' votes rather than 'translating' them. According to K. Marais and K. Kull (2016:175), "there exist some forms of interpretation which are not translations, ie. to which the evaluation of equivalence or adequacy do not apply". The 'adequacy of translation' here is about proportionality.

As it can be witnessed from the dynamics described above, Westminster parliament is home not only for mainstream parties. Thus, it can be considered that the UK party system has that 'objective reference'[2], which can help distinguish issues (and parties) between mainstream and niche.

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[2] Meyer and Miller (2015:261) considered the importance of the 'objective reference' for calling issues and parties niche. The two-party systems lack that reference, since there is only one line of communication (*Ibid*)

1.3.1. Environmental issues and political parties

As mentioned above, the Green party succeeded in elections in 2010 (Cracknell *et al.* 2023:10). However, the issue of environmentalism first appeared in party discussions by Liberals during the 1960s, when they advanced a 'new environmental agenda' (Webb (2007 [2000]:106). The followers of the new Green party were considered to be former Liberal supporters (Ware 2009:86).

Since there are different Green parties in the UK, it is worth specifying that this work refers to the Green Party of England and Wales. It was initially founded in 1973 but got its name 'Green Party' in 1985 (Carter 2008:224).

Since its establishment, the party passed through quite a lot of electoral defeats in general elections but succeeded in some local elections and the ones for the European Parliament. The success in the European elections in 1989 made the party compete for a record number of seats in the general elections of 1992, which they eventually lost (*Ibid*).

Poor performance of the Green party in general elections was usually associated with different conditions, such as lack of proportionality in the UK electoral system and the shortage of state support to minor parties (Carter 2008:227-228).

Unlike other European Green parties, the UK Greens did not emerge from the grassroots movement. Environmental movements in the UK preferred being distanced from party politics to influence main parties better (*Ibid*, 2008:229).

United Kingdom championed several environmental initiatives. For instance, it was the first country to pass the 'Climate Change Act' in 2008 (Lockwood 2013: 1339). After the environmental strikes in 2018 and 2019, the parliament announced 'Climate Emergency' (Stuart 2020: 488). The motion got parliamentary backing when put forward by the Labour leader in 2019 (Walker 2019). The elections from 2019 witnessed 'competitive consensus' among political parties about climate change, which implied an increased salience of the issue (Carter, Little 2021:9).

Although climate change increased its salience in the 2019 party manifestos compared to 2017, the media coverage was dominated by the Brexit campaign. The climate discourse was mostly advanced by the opposition (Carter, Pearson 2020:2-3).

In 2018 the prime minister, Theresa May delivered a speech announcing a long-term environmental plan and started her speech by referencing the promise they made in their manifesto from 2017 (Mount 2018).It says, "we pledge to be the first generation to leave the

environment in a better state than we inherited it (The Conservative and Unionist party manifesto 2017:26).

Concerning British public, between 2018 and 2019, the importance of environmental issues reached 'record' high level (Kenny 2022:9). Hence, as also mentioned by Carter and Pearson (2020:1), the elections in 2019 witnessed increased salience of environmental issues. In the UK, the attitude towards the environment has also been shaped by the documentaries presented by Sir David Attenborough. For instance, his 'Blue Planet' appeared to raise political and media interest in plastic waste (Males, van Aelst 2020).

Thus, environmental issues appeared to be popular in the UK among different circles, starting from mainstream/niche parties to the British public.

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In summary, despite its non-proportional electoral rules, some niche parties gained seats in the Westminster Parliament. One of them was the Green Party of England and Wales.

It appeared that between 2017 and 2019 elections, environmental issues became salient. This makes it interesting to study how the priority of other issues affected the communication of environmental issues.

The next part discusses approaches to studying elections. It suggests using political form analysis for the analysis of party manifestos.

1.4.Methodological aspects of studying niche parties, elections and manifestos

This part illustrates how different scholars have been measuring the concept of niche parties. It covers the main approaches to studying voting behaviour and introduces the method of political semiotics. The discussion suggests analysing party manifestos through political form analysis to understand how parties prioritize and problematise niche issues.

Since the coinage of the term (Meguid 2005), the concept of niche parties has got different measurements. The initial ones were mainly categorical (Meguid 2005; Adams et al. 2006) until scholars put forwards the concept of party nicheness (Meyer, Miller 2015; Bischof 2017). The source for these measurements is mainly the party manifesto.

The quantitative approaches to understanding people's voting behaviour were criticized by Bevir and Rhodes (2016:7-9). The crux of criticism was that those approaches do not consider beliefs linked to specific actions. The interpretive approach considers them attached to the actions, making it difficult to study them separately (I*bid*).

Many voting models apply rational choice theory, implying that voters are reasonable actors whose actions aim to fulfill some purpose. It is supposed that their behaviour is consistent (McGann 2016). Bevir and Rhodes (2016:8) criticized this approach for reducing 'all motives' to the concept of a 'preference'.

The rational-choice theory assumes voters can compare and contrast all possible choices and make preferences. Even if someone is voting for their preferred issue or casting a ballot for the ideology they favour, they ultimately make a rational choice since they choose for a reason (McGann 2016).

Indeed, for interpretive political science, such an approach contradicts the idea of 'situated agency,' given that a person cannot vote based on a 'pure reason,' as "reasoning occurs in webs of beliefs" (Bevir and Rhodes 2016:14-15).

At the same time, the proponents of rational choice theory can add that voters should be rational to keep the power account for their actions (McGann 2016:5).

What is striking here is that both quantitative and qualitative studies, which include more than one case, need to employ some semiotics. They need to gather different cases in one sample based on relevant criteria. As put by P. Selg and A. Ventsel (2020:173), "The ways through which discrete elements are translated into a more or less continuous whole (system) of meaning is the research object of semiotic explanation". Therefore, both approaches employ translation when sampling and can be studied semiotically.

The previous parts of this work suggest studying political platforms also from the perspective of translation. That idea can be extended from the quote above by P. Selg and A. Ventsel (2020:173). It can be argued that a platform is a 'whole' including different issues that have appeared inside through translation. Thus, political platforms can be considered a research object for semiotics.

A party platform is also condensed political content, discussing issues and positions. From an analytical point of view, it is crucial to analyse what the content says and how it communicates the messages. Political semiotics, particularly the political form analysis, provides an analytical approach to exploring the ways of communication.

The concept of niche issues appears to be an inherently relational term. Meyer and Miller (2015:261) state that "a party's status as niche (or mainstream) party depends on the issue emphasis of rival parties". Thus, the concept of 'niche' derives from the dynamics and relations existing in the party system.

P. Selg and A. Ventsel (2020) developed a methodology to analyse the political content from the perspective of the relational approach. They created a continuum of

meaning-making systems, putting a metaphorical system at one end and a metonymic one at the other. The former is based on similarities and the latter on differences (Selg, Ventsel 2020:174). It is essential to note that in their approach, the 'political' comprises power, governance, and democracy around which or about which public communication evolves. (Ibid).

Political communication is defined as 'public communication'. The 'public' does not refer to specific places and locations. It is about public 'trans-actions' and is defined "in relation to power, governance, and democracy as different dimensions or moments of hegemony" (*Ibid*, 2020:176).

Incorporating Jakobson's language functions into the discussion of hegemony, Selg and Ventsel (2020:176-177) advanced six types of public communication forms, which are the varieties of metonymic/metaphoric meaning-making systems. The forms will be explained in the next chapter.

It can be suggested that the form analysis will allow researchers to understand the priority of issues for parties, as expressed in political manifestos.

Political semiotics also considers the problematisation of issues, which can also be derived from the forms of communication. Selg and Ventsel (2020:55-59) provide a typology of problems based on whether there is a shared solution to them and if there is an agreed definition of the problem. On this basis, they put forward the following types: simple problems, where conceptualizations and solutions are agreed, complex problems with clear definitions but disputed solutions, wicked problems without clear-cut definitions and solutions and deproblematised problems without straightforward definitions, but suggested solutions.

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To sum up, the concept of niche parties has been operationalized categorically and continuously. The followers of interpretive theory criticized the quantitative analysis of voting behaviour for either not considering the meanings behind the actions, positing them separate from actions, and for reducing them to objective, measurable concepts (Bevir, Rhodes 2016:7-9).

This part also suggested that even quantitative analysts employ semiotic tasks. For instance, while constructing samples, they translate cases into one whole.

Political platforms were approached as another case of translation. In order to understand how niche issues are translated into the communications of platforms, it was

suggested to rely on political form analysis. This approach can help to interpret how parties prioritize and problematise issues

2. Main concepts: public communication forms and semiosphere-based models of niche-mainstream relations

This part defines the main concepts of the thesis. It starts by introducing the forms of public communication and discusses how each type of governance can approach problems. Then it moves to the models of niche-mainstream relations, which are developed based on the functional and structural peculiarities of the semiosphere.

2.1. Public communication forms

In order to understand how environmental issues are communicated on party platforms, this work refers to the public communication forms advanced by P. Selg and A. Vetnsel (2020). To identify a particular form of communication, form analysis suggests the typical attributes of governance, democracy and power of each of them.

This part compares and contrasts six forms of public communication. It draws particular attention to how issue problematisation works in each case. Certain similarities and differences are shared among the types, but each similarity gets its peculiar manifestation in the given form. To illustrate that, it is helpful to start with phatic and emotive forms of communication.

Selg and Ventsel (2020:185) define the phatic form as 'public auto-communication' and attribute it to the 'authoritarian populism'. It is an 'auto-communication', since the public is addressed as 'us' and there are references to 'common places' (*Ibid*).

Along with developing and sustaining the relation with 'us', phatic communication strengthens the unity of a group through calls and statements, which are easy to understand but do not contain rigid argumentations. The power emanates from producing intuitive, experience-based knowledge, such as 'tacit social knowledge', which eventually depoliticizes

reality (*Ibid*, 2020:185-186). The authors also refer to 'tacit knowledge' as 'taken-for-granted knowledge' (*Ibid*, 2020:198).

As put by Selg and Ventsel (2020:182), the addressees of this form of communication belong to the 'docile citizenry'. They are usually reluctant to acknowledge and / or ignorant about advanced discourse, norms, or facts (*Ibid*).

The next communication form, which shares similarities with the phatic one, is emotive, where the main emphasis is on the speaker. One similarity is that both phatic and emotive forms fit better into the logic of metaphoric meaning-making. However, if phatic communication relies on sentiment and 'common places', the emotive one pushes forward the binarism between 'us' and 'others' (*Ibid*, 2020:185,203).

Selg and Ventsel (2020:203) describe the emotive form as 'public non-communication'. This is because the conversation with the audience is usually through 'others'. The addresser's contact with the public is mediated through two main feelings; "fear and love" (*Ibid*, 2020:204).

This communication frequently refers to propaganda. The type of governance which fits this form is 'totalitarian populism', which, similar to the authoritarian one, deproblematises reality (*Ibid*, 2020:201,203).

The poetic communication form shares some similarities with the emotive one. They both rely on propaganda but express it differently. This type of communication is defined as 'public relations management' (*Ibid*, 2020:187).

Poetic form is focused on messages which divide and unite. They are framed in a way that makes them memorable, with rhymes or familiar metaphors. This form also deproblematises reality and is peculiar to 'democratic populism' (*Ibid*, 2020:186-187). Selg and Ventsel (2020:187) indicate that the power here is derived from symbolic 'world-making'.

It can be assumed that the poetic form suggests flat communication among its agents. In contrast, conative communication is based on hierarchy. This form of communication is described as 'public administration' since it deals with performance, completion of tasks, results, rules, and regularities (*Ibid*, 2020:190).

Among all forms of communication, power plays the most crucial role in this case. As mentioned above, the conative communication is hierarchical, coming from laws and public announcements, which do not include any civic engagement. People are subordinate to laws and subjected to them. The governance here resembles 'clientelism'. The unity is preserved with the help of subjectification and the communication of 'formal civil rights' (*Ibid*, 2020:189-190).

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Conative power derives from domination (based on resources or position), and people follow that hierarchy, given it is rational behaviour (*Ibid*, 2020:190).

If conative communication requires legal recognition, a referential one needs to be legitimate, which matches deliberative democracies.

Instead of laws and formal rules, the referential communication is about 'social rights', opinions, thoughts, and suggestions (*Ibid*, 2020:193).

The focus of referential communication is on the context. Whatever is discussed procedurally and factually fits the general understandings and norms (*Ibid,* 2020 191-192).

The need for good argumentation, achieving consensus or standard agreements stay at the core of this communication. The ability to deliver any one of those elements is the source of power relations in deliberative democracy, which is common to network governance (*Ibid*, 2020:194-196).

The most metonymic form of governance, which includes the extreme form of communication, is 'democratic pluralism'. The communication is metalingual, focused on a code and most of the time aims at challenging it (*Ibid*, 2020:199).

This form questions the accepted norms. The vector of this communication is towards everyone. It goes beyond legality and legitimacy and tries to create new grounds. These dynamics are peculiar to 'metagovernance' (*Ibid*, 2020:197-199).

It was argued in the literature review that political form analysis would better illustrate how issues are problematised on party platforms. It can be assumed that more metaphoric public communication forms, such as emotive, phatic and poetic, are oriented towards deproblematisation.

In terms of 'clientelism', where conative form dominates, all problems 'should be solvable' given the importance of the effectiveness of policy performance. To not harm the authority of the hierarchical power, we suppose that complex problems can be deproblematised. In addition, complicated solutions can be attributed to simple problems to

showcase the competence of authorities. Both strategies which resemble the phatic logic can lead to strengthening the hierarchy.

Concerning the wicked problems, since 'clientelism' is focused on performance indicators and effectiveness, the problem can be divided into small projects and monitored.

In deliberative democracies, complex problems require the cooperation of communities and experts that delivers results.

Metagovernance, as Selg and Ventsel (2020:69-70) note, addresses wicked problems. Thus, it can be considered that each type of governance has its own way of treating problems.

Environmental issues, such as climate change, are inherently uncertain. They belong to the 'classical list' of wicked problems (Selg, Ventsel 2020:58). Therefore, it can be assumed that the solutions should come in the metalingual form.

That said, manifestos include promises in their structure (Blackburn 1995:286). Thus, the texts are likely to be purposefully more persuasive and influential. That implies that even wicked problems can be discussed through phatic or emotive forms.

The ontological ground of political form analysis is that communication helps to construct reality. Therefore, this thesis refers to that methodology to unravel the hierarchy of communication forms, in order to understand how parties prioritize and problematise environmental issues.

In summary, this part illustrated how the communication of environmental issues is defined in this thesis. It described six public communication forms that Selg and Ventsel (2020) developed and suggested how different types of governance could approach problems. It also illustrated how the political form analysis could help to answer the research question of this thesis; how environmental issues are communicated on party platforms.

2.2. The puzzle of old and new: models of niche-mainstream relations

The literature review illustrated several disagreements among scholars concerning the definition of niche parties. More specifically, it was a debate over the 'old' and the 'new'. Some authors considered that a niche party should be a new party (Meguid 2005:347), while others (Wagner 2011:5) did not exclude a case when an old party decides to be niche or when a niche party is old. The original definition also claimed that a niche issue is new (Meguid 2005:348). In contrast, Meyer and Miller (2015:261) suggested a possibility when a

widespread issue is presented through a new lens. These disagreements can be addressed by revisiting the features of the core and periphery in Lotman's (2005) semiosphere.

Before moving to modelling, it should be noted that that this work follows Bischof's (2017:224) definition of niche issues, which are "either located at the periphery of party competition (regional, agrarian) or had not been recognized prior to their introduction to party systems by new, emergent party families (ecology, extreme right, euroscepticism)". Out of these five issues, this thesis focuses on ecology. However, the models can be used to analyse any of the five.

In her seminal work, Meguid (2005:348-349) suggested that mainstream parties decide the likely electoral success or not of niche parties through developing certain strategies. These three strategies have potential to define the electoral fortunes of niche parties.

This work delves into the integration of niche issues in party manifestos, focusing on how they relate to other issues of the platform. More precisely, it considers how central the issue is for the mainstream party and how that communication is built.

Hence, the semiosphere-based models do not take into account the electoral performance. Since the approach in this thesis is interpretive and the focus is on the niche issue per se, the current analysis has not considered those causal relations.

D. Bischof's (2017:227) quantitative measurement of party specialization calculates how focused party platforms are on specific niche issues. It provides a picture of, for example, how ecology-focused the party is, given its emphasis on environmental offers in relation to others (*Ibid*).

This can imply that more specialised parties will give primacy to niche issues in their platforms. The approach suggested in this work describes the representation of that primacy, looking at how the issue fits the 'intra-manifesto dynamics'. Since the focus of the suggested models is on mainstream parties, the mere consideration of issue emphasis will not illustrate how a niche issue is integrated into the mainstream platforms. The integration implies relations with other issues, which can be expressed through the means of communication, translation, structural organization of a text, as well as through the contextual primacy. All these factors together will constitute the primacy of a niche issue on mainstream platforms.

The discussions in literature review illustrated that party platforms reflect most of the developments in electoral dynamics. Moreover, they provide a space for adjustments. As put by Eder et al (2017:76), they are "compendium of valid party positions". It can be considered if there are any articulations during the campaign which do not fit the manifesto, they are

deemed to be 'alien' or conflicting. As noted by Janda *et al* (1995:172), "parties consciously try to shape their images so that the public sees what the parties want". It can be considered that deviations are not that much welcomed. Drawing from Lotman's (2005:210-213) explanation of 'border' and 'external space', the fact that something can seem 'alien' means that the platform has unity and a core language of communication (Lotman 2005).

The core language is the ideology of the party. To illustrate their ideological positions, electoral platforms will translate issues into their core language. In addition, each issue on the platform also has its language. Referring to Selg and Ventsel (2022:673), it can be suggested that every issue has the potential to be a 'meaningful whole', hence a context, and comprise a bigger context; the platform.

The current approach distinguishes between niche and mainstream languages. As mentioned above, the work defines niche issues as new or peripheral, referencing D. Bischof's (2017:224) conceptualisation.

One of the mainstream issues, which some scholars working with niche parties mentioned consistently, is the economy (Meguid 2005; Wagner 2011; Bischof 2017).

Platforms host mainstream languages at the core and niche languages stay on the fringes. A mainstream language can either translate a niche language or leave it untranslated. That case can refer to situations where parties here and there (on the edges) mention a particular issue to ensure its presence. However, the issue only stands out once translated into the mainstream language or assessed as 'alien' or 'untranslated'. For instance, an issue of environmental protection can be on the platform for the sake of presence. It can also be translated into many mainstream languages (economy, healthcare, education, defence, etc.), such as clean energy or environmental education.

Therefore, the internal organization of party platforms can be analysed from the perspective of the semiosphere, for two reasons. Firstly, like the semiosphere, which, according to Loman (2005), is the delineation of the area where semiosis deems possible, the platform is the space where the party creates the face of its communication, demarcates the zones of interest, and deliberates on them mostly in its core language. Secondly, by demarcating those zones, platforms exercise the functions of a border peculiar to the semiosphere. As indicated by Lotman (2005), the border is about creating the unity and ensuring its distinctiveness.

Thirdly, the border of the semiosphere is a window of communication with the outside and is the space where most of the translation happens. It belongs to the internal and external areas of semiosphere (*Ibid*).

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Lotman's (2005) border is more like the door to the house; to let the stranger in, one should be acquainted with them at the entrance point. The stranger can only enter the house if that acquaintance has happened.

The border of the party platform, in the same way, can allow 'alien' issues inside, but firstly, it should understand them. The border is considered to be an area of intense   semiosis (*Ibid,* 2005: 212).

Referring to Lotman (2005:216), the communication of two different structures is possible through the third one, which is familiar to both. This feature can explain why some 'once alien' issues end up on party platforms.

One way of giving unity to different issues on the platform is putting them under demarcated parts, such as chapters, subchapters, etc. Moreover, given under which part the issue is discussed can also hint at the structural primacy of it.

The mentioned properties of the semiosphere help to model the relationship between a mainstream party platform and a particular niche issue. As suggested above, the mainstream language will be the language of mainstream issues. Niche issues are considered separate languages, which can be translated into the core language or stay on the platform as "a language-like, half-formed systems […]" (Lotman 1990:218). Issues can be at the border of the platform or occupy the external space.

 Although alien to a given semiosphere and hence contacted via its border, the external space can be the semiosphere of another reality (Lotman 2005:213). In this case, those realities can be other party manifestos or political contents.

Therefore, a niche issue can be inside or outside the semiosphere (a mainstream party platform). For each position, this work identifies two possible variations, which are developed considering the structural, contextual primacy of a niche issue, its translatability and communicability. Translatability covers niche to mainstream translations. Communicability is either direct or mediated by third structures, which support the communication between distinct issues.

The models and the analysis of platforms through the mentioned primacy indicators aim to describe and interpret the representation of the primacy. Whenever the issue is inside the platform, this approach analyses the integration of it. Whenever it is outside or at the border, the models explore the potential third structures, which can make the communication happen, but are absent on the platform.

For instance, integration was one of the components of the environmental problem in the study by J. Pollex and L. Berker (2022), which analysed how parties perceive this issue. In

their work, integration referred to the cases where the party platform connects environmental policy with other issues (*Ibid*, 2022:578). In the approach suggested by this study, that connection is analysed more closely, focusing on the communication of issues, their translation to mainstream languages.

It is believed that this approach will help create a more comprehensive understanding of how niche issues are 'represented' on mainstream party platforms. As for this particular work, this perspective allows to describe and interpret niche-mainstream relations from the perspective of the niche issue primacy in the electoral manifestos of mainstream parties.

2.2.1.Model 1: absence of a relation

Model 1

A niche issue

Platform
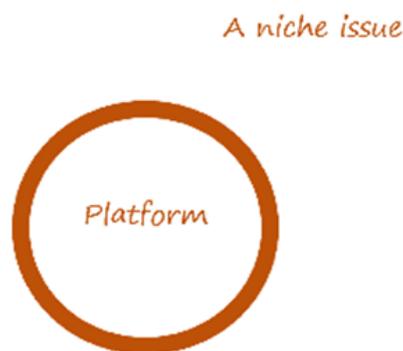
In the first scenario a niche language is in the external space. There is no communication between the issue and the semiosphere. It is not a case of intentional 'non-action', as in the dismissive strategy suggested by Meguid (2005:349). This model is instead a scenario when the issue does not relate to the party platform in any way whatsoever.

This model treats no information as information. The absence of relations hints at the lack of the familiar structure on the platform, with which the issue can communicate. It also illustrates the practical impossibility of getting the third structure. This can relate to situations when issues do not relate to the political agenda of the country, where the party is located. For instance, the issue of being anti or pro monarchy can be relevant to the UK political parties, but they are irrelevant for many parliamentary democracies.

2.2.2.Model 2: opposition

Model 2
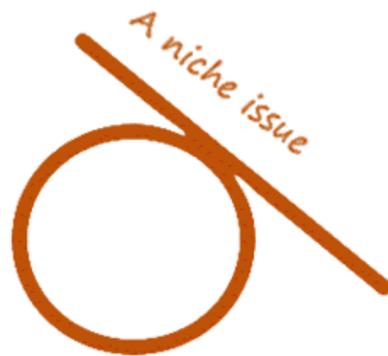
The second model represents a situation when a niche issue touches the border of the platform but does not enter it. Geometrically, the latter can be shaped like a tangent and a circle. In all cases, the radius of a circle will be perpendicular to the tangent, creating some 'opposition' between the core language of the platform and the niche language situated at the border. It is a case when the border identifies the niche language and then realizes that it does not belong to the inner world of the semiosphere in its given form.

The opposition does not imply the adversarial strategy discussed by Meguid (2005:349-350). Instead, it signifies intra-party opposition when there are two diverse approaches inside the party. Due to those contradictions issue does not enter the party platform and stays at the border.

The abovementioned scenarios are about cases where the issue is outside the platform. The subsequent two models refer to the cases where the issue is inside the semiosphere; either in the periphery or at the core.

2.2.3.Model 3:half-structures

Model 3

The third model is related to other languages of the semiosphere, which Lotman (1990:128) described as "languages which can serve only certain cultural functions, as well as language-like, half-formed systems which can be bearers of semiosis if they are included in the semiotic context".

In order to be included in the semiosphere, the peripheral languages need to become functional. The word 'functional' here means being translated into the core language. The modal verb 'can' in the quote above also implies the situation of 'cannot'. This is a scenario where the issue can be on the platform for one year but can be absent the following year.

For instance, according to the dataset from the Manifesto Project, the issue of environmental protection was absent in the manifestos of the British Conservative party during the consecutive elections following 1945, although it had a slight mention in the manifesto from 1945 (Lehmann *et al* 2022a).

This model does not exclude the situation when a niche issue is translated into the mainstream language of the party or when it communicates with mainstream structures. The function of the niche issue in this model is about showing presence. The latter can be done with different intensity.

However, this is a scenario where a niche issue does not cover a prevailing part of the platform. Geometrically, the niche issue is located inside of the 'platform area' delimited by the chord of a circle, which potentially can get as long as the diameter of the circle. However, in Model 3 it is always less than a diameter

Hence, Model 3 allows niche-mainstream communication and translation. Moreover, the issue can exist on the platform either delimited or merged with mainstream issues and be dependent on them for gaining the function of a language.

2.2.4. Model 4: mainstreaming 'the niche'

Model 4

The last model refers to the cases when a niche language develops into one of the mainstream languages of the platform. Since the model deals with mainstream parties, this scenario is about 'becoming'. One way of becoming can refer to the gradual morphing of the third model into the stage when the niche language covers the prevailing part of the platform. In this case the party starts acting as an issue owner. The party will try to emphasize that the niche issue is distinct from their other appeals, as in it "can be isolated and is indeed perceived in isolation – not only in its distinctiveness but because of its distinctiveness" (Sartori (2005[1976]:292).

The latter can be portrayed as an inscribed square to the circle, where the square is the core language. The shape of the square best fits the level of formalization of the core language. Moreover, geometrically the diagonal of the square is the circle's diameter. The areas of the square and the circle are both dependent on that. The longer it is, the larger they are, and the opposite.

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This part discussed how the main concepts of the thesis are conceptualized. It suggests analysing the communication of environmental issues through political form analysis and identifying how parties problematise environmental issues. The form analysis will help to understand the main trends in communicating environmental issues, disclose the hierarchies among the power forms and interpret their implications

Moreover, referring to the semiosphere, this chapter suggested four possible relations between a niche issue and mainstream platforms. The analysis of party manifestos from that perspective will allow for the study of the primacy of environmental issues on the party platform

3.Research methodology

This thesis analyses the inclusion and discussion of niche issues (or issues advanced by niche parties) on mainstream party platforms. It aims to go beyond the numerical measurements of issue emphasis and party position and relies on the explanatory power of political semiotics.

The work is focused on the issue of environmental protection. The choice has a theoretical and contextual justification. Firstly, when political scientists were developing the idea of niche parties, they referred to environmental parties as one such type (Meguid 2005; Adams *et al.* 2006; Bischof 2017). Hence, environmental protection is the issue that niche ecological parties advocate. Drawing from niche dimensions suggested by Bischof (2017:224), this work has selected the 'niche segment' of ecology.

Therefore, the focus here is not on niche parties but on the issues they advocate. The relations between mainstream and niche parties mainly refer to how mainstream parties treat a niche issue. The scenarios suggested by B. Meguid (2005:349) are an example of that. Although the end goal was to predict the electoral fortunes of niche parties, this was determined by the relation between a niche issue and a mainstream party *(Ibid).* Developing on that idea, this work suggests to delve deeper into the relations between niche issues and mainstream platforms.

This work examines the relations between environmental protection and mainstream party platforms. To that end, the thesis puts forwards the following questions:
1. What is the primacy of environmental issues within British mainstream party platforms?
2. How are environmental issues communicated within British mainstream party platforms from the perspective of political form analysis?

The answer to the first question will illustrate whether issues have contextual and structural primacy on platforms. It will also indicate possible translations of niche issues into mainstream languages. In addition, it will cover the cases when environmental issues are communicating with other issues on the platform through the third structures, which connect

them. Based on those criteria, the niche-mainstream relations can be attributed to one of the four models discussed in section 2.

Contextual primacy here refers to the discussion of environmental protection in the opening parts of a manifesto. Those parts usually are intended to summarise the main idea of a text. Contextual primacy is a binary concept. It either exists or does not.

Structural primacy observes the design of a manifesto text and the location of environmental issues. It observes if issues are discussed under a separate section, chapter, or a sub-chapter, within the overall organizational division of a manifesto text. Structural primacy is given to issues if all sections cover discussion about environmental protection, and at least one section is dedicated to environmental issues. Structural primacy ranges from issues being discussed under a separate section to being mentioned under a different theme. Putting issues under a specific title delineates them, granting them 'wholeness'. However, it is essential to consider how that 'wholeness' differs from other issues in terms of the structural organization of a text. For instance, environmental issues can be discussed under a subchapter, while the economy can be a manifesto section. This depicts hierarchy between those issues in terms of how much they are prioritized.

In case of niche-mainstream translations, the work focuses on phrases that include mainstream and niche languages. It illustrates what aspects of mainstream language they cover. For instance, 'clean energy' represents the energy industry which in turn relates to the mainstream issue of the economy. Hence, environmental protection is communicated along with the economy through the third structure. However, direct translations like 'green economy' can also exist. Those third structures are indicated for when translation and environmental protection is discussed with other issues (but no translated). The distinction between direct and indirect communication is mainly dictated by how manifestos make the gradation of political domains (for instance, a platform can discuss urban planning under a wider section dedicated to economy).

The analysis of primacy refers to the hierarchy in communication between environmental and other issues. The hierarchy implies the priority of one issue over another and identifies the function of environmental issues on the platform.

The application of political semiotics in the analysis of niche-mainstream relations serve two objectives. Firstly, the functions of the semiosphere help better examine the incorporation of issues on the platform. Secondly, the issues are not approached in isolation but in relation to other policy domains. This is more relevant to political form analysis.

In order to answer the second question, the work refers to the political form analysis. To study the trends concerning how environmental issues were communicated, the study first identifies the manifesto paragraphs which discusses them. This work considers the messages, which cover environmental issues and imply environmental protection. After the analysis, they are aggregated under common themes. Those themes derive from the analysis and are not selected in advance. This helps to identify the dominant forms of communication for each theme and disclose the meanings behind particular forms of communication. Additionally, this analysis of communication forms allows implications to be made about how parties problematised issues and what the communicational trends for suggested solutions were. This interpretation considers the context of where those messages were discussed.

Political form analysis also helps to observe how niche issues communicate with other policy problems of the platform. Moreover, it can disclose a party disposition towards environmental protection in relation to other issues.

The study material of the thesis is a party manifesto. The choice of party platforms is related to several factors. As discussed in the literature review, referring to Eder *et al*. (2017), a party platform is the primary document of the electoral campaign, which sums up party attitudes towards the main issues. In addition, party platforms pave the way for discussions in other mediums. They provide information to the media for developing and basing discussions (*Ibid*, 2017:76).

The work has selected the mainstream parties of the UK for the analysis; Conservatives and Labour. The decision to choose the UK, in turn, supports the choice for environmental issues. More specifically, as suggested by N. Carter and C. Little (2021:9), the attitude of the UK mainstream parties towards climate issues resembled 'competitive consensus' in 2019, which implied the increased importance of the issue in party politics

According to Meyer and Miller (2015:261), niche issues can exist only in the systems which have more than two parties, since there is a need of a 'reference', which is outside the political mainstream. That 'reference' also exists in the UK politics since there are niche parties. For instance, in 2010, the Greens gained representation in the House of Commons for the first time (Cracknell *et al.* 2023:10). With that said, it can be derived from the work by N. Carter (2008:229) that British environmental movements appeared to trying to be heard by the mainstream, rather than being associated with the Green party. Thus, the role of the mainstream in dealing with niche issues is essential but yet not straightforward.

This study has selected the snap elections from 2017 and 2019, which came after the Brexit vote (Prosser 2020:1). There are several reasons behind the choice of those particular

elections. Firstly, this work assumes that Brexit could have been a litmus test for understanding how critical environmental issues are for a party, or whether its primacy is lost in the context of Brexit. People started to grant more importance to environmental issues during the period between those elections (Kenny 2022:9). Moreover, the parliament declared the 'climate emergency' in 2019.[3]

Between those two elections, the world witnessed the birth of ecological activism among youth related to the figure of Greta Thunberg (Crouch 2018). It could be suggested that also influenced the popularity of environmental protection. Therefore, globally and locally the time between those elections was decisive for the popularity of environmental issues.

The choice of two elections helps to compare two manifesto texts from the perspective of translation. Hence, the 2017 manifesto is considered here as the proto-text, and the 2019 as the meta-text (as described in the literature review, referencing Anton Popovic (1976)).

This study does not consider how specific communication forms affected the electoral performance. Since manifestos are electoral documents, it can be supposed that electoral fortunes could also be considered in this analysis. The absence of that perspective in this analysis can be a limitation of this study. At the same time, since the analytical approach is interpretive and relational, it will be challenging to narrow down implications into concrete variables for understanding the interaction between the form of communication and the electoral performance. Additionally, environmental issues here do not cover animal protection. The work considers that given the possible electoral impact of those issues in the 2017 elections, they need to be approached more thoroughly (see also Barkham 2019).

The study materials are referred as follows:

- The Labour Party Manifesto 2017 -LPM 2017
- The Labour Party Manifesto 2019-LPM 2019
- The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2017-CUPM 2017
- The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019-CUPM 2019

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[3] BBC News 2019.UK Parliament declares climate change emergency. Retrieved from: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-48126677, 28.03.2023

4.Analysis of party platforms

The elections from 2019 and 2017 were snap elections, with the focus on Brexit (Prosser 2018, 2020). The second one from 2019 saw the Conservative Party triumph. Labour performed worse than in 2017. They lost many areas to Conservatives which were traditionally Labour strongholds (Prosser 2020:6).

The subchapters below analyse the manifestos from those elections to understand how environmental issues were communicated and what the primacy of that niche issues was. The discussion starts with the study of niche and mainstream relations and follows with political form analysis. The analysis starts with the platform of Conservative party and then moves to Labour.

4.1. The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2017 (CUPM 2017): showing the presence of environmental issues

Conservatives mentioned environmental issues on their 2017 platform. The niche and mainstream relations cannot be understood referring to the first and second models introduced in section 2. To understand whether the third or fourth model fits better with the CUPM 2017, this work analysed the contextual, structural primacy of environmental issues on the platform. Additionally, it identified the cases of mainstream translation of environmental issues alongside the trends of communication through third structures.

R. Blackburn (1995:286) noted that electoral programs usually have a foreword written by the leader of a party. It can be considered that one characteristic of opening parts and generally the foreword is that they usually focus on the important aspects of a particular context, whether they are in a party manifesto or an academic paper. Hence, the mentioning of

environmental issues in those parts can imply they had been given contextual primacy within the platform.

In the 2017 Conservative Manifesto, the opening note and the foreword (CUPM 2017:1, 4-5), did not explicitly reference environmental issues. The sections were developed around the main problems named 'Five Giant Challenges' (CUPM 2017:6), and none referred to environmental protection in their titles. The absence of this issue being mentioned in the opening part implied the lack of contextual primacy given to this particular niche issue.

The manifesto comprised nine sections, including the opening notes. Environmental issues were discussed in three sections. Similar to the description of Model 3, the issues existed on the platform but they did not cover most of the space, staying as a 'chord of a circle' which covered less than half of the 'platform area'. It was deduced that issues also lacked structural primacy on the platform.

The 2017 Conservative Manifesto included communications between environment and mainstream issues, such as economy, international relations. In this very platform environment and economy were communicated with each other through the third structures, such as industry, businesses, energy, transportation, local communities, urban planning, and waste management. Although in some other cases those structures could themselves be mainstream issues, this platform discussed them under a larger section called "A strong economy that works for everyone" (CUPM 2017:11). In the case above, those third structures were familiar both to the economy and environment, which made the communication possible.

There was also communication between environment and international relations, which was mediated with Brexit talks and Britain's engagement in international development. Environmental issues were also discussed in relation to housing under the section 'A restored contract between the generations' (CUPM 2017:61). In that particular case, the section did not implicitly or explicitly cover a policy domain. For example, housing was not a part of an explicitly mentioned mainstream issue. Therefore, this case can be considered a direct communication.

Environmental issues mainly accompanied other policy issues. However, they were also presented as a separate issue in a separate sub-chapter, such as 'Protecting the global environment' (CUPM 2017:40). However, even in that chapter the issues were discussed from the perspective of international relations and the global role of the UK. Hence, the issue of environmental protection lacked 'wholeness' by itself.

When considering translatability, there were few cases of niche-mainstream translation on the 2017 platform. There were translations to the language of economy/transportation, such as 'low-emission buses,' 'clean vehicles,' 'clean power,' and for economy/agriculture, such as 'agri-environment system' and for law, an example was 'environmental legislation' (CUPM 2017:19, 24, 26).

Peculiar to the Model 3, environmental niche language resembles Lotman's (1990:218) "half-formed systems which can be bearers of semiosis if they are included in the semiotic context". Niche issues here became the 'bearers of the platform politics' when translated into the mainstream language. As a variety of Model 3, the function of the niche language was to show its presence on the platform.

Overall, in the CUPM 2017 the primacy of environmental issues was mediated by the primacy of the mainstream ones. The function of those issues was to show presence. With that said, the description of Model 3 accepts the possibility of gradual expansion of the issue primacy in consecutive elections. The form analysis below further illustrates how that presence was communicated.

4.1.1.Political form analysis: Brexit and environmental protection

As the Brexit deal was one of the main topics of this election, it became, unsurpinsgly, the context for discussing environmental protection. However, as C. Prosser (2018:4) indicated, Brexit did not stand out as a 'campaign issue' for mainstream parties, as much as internal matters. When observing the Conservative manifesto, the context of Brexit shed light on interesting trends in the way environmental protection was communicated.

The predominant form for the discussion of environmental issues was phatic, referring to 'common places'. The overall message was that "our energy policy" would invest in "meeting our global commitments on climate change" (CUPM 2017:23). There were also 'common places' in the introduction of the '25-year environmental plan' again in the context of Brexit. The manifesto stated that the plan would "chart how we will improve our environment as we leave the European Union and take control of our environmental legislation again" (CUPM 2017:26).This plan could be considered a goal of public administration since it was envisioned as way to make the actions it contained more concrete. However, the communication was more focused on creating a social relation with voters around that vision. The manifesto introduced the medium that would later explain environmental actions.

Moreover, it could be considered that environmental issues were deproblematised since the plan was introduced in the style of a 'definitive sounding' answer to the problem. The extract stated above was about the communication of mediums and visions of a solution, not the solution per se.

The focus on 'us' and the emphasis on 'our common places' led to 'public auto communication' (as Selg and Ventsel (2020:185) defined phatic communication). That choice of the phatic form could be interpreted in two ways.

Firstly, clear emotive communication with bold divisions between 'us' and 'others' could imply antagonism. However, even if it were 'metaphorical', it practically could not exist since most EU members and the UK were allies in the frames of other institutional frameworks. That perceived antagonism may have jeopardized other relations as well.

In fact, Brexit itself did not mean the end of relations with the EU, but potentially the opposite. The latter implied and enabled the beginning of a relationship on new terms.

Indeed, the mere reference to the emotive form could complicate future relationships. Furthermore, using more metonymic forms (referential, meta-linguistic) would have required more specific steps or arguments, which were perhaps difficult to formulate in the nascent phase of post-Brexit Britain. At the same time, there was a need to substantiate Brexit. The party needed to illustrate this scepticism towards the EU.

The second way to interpret the highlighted usage of the phatic form is through Brexit. This could be considered a product of Euroscepticism, which in Britain was primarily defined based on their 'otherness' (from European culture) (Spiering 2015). Again, this 'otherness' was about difference, not antagonism. In this manifesto the focus was on 'us' rather than 'our wholeness' constructed under the threat of 'others.' We could say that otherness in this context of the platform was also not about superiority. At least, it was not stated explicitly.

Alongside the phatic form, there were cases when the addresser's determination sometimes added persuasiveness to the communication. This occurred through the moving of the focus of communication to the addresser. There were examples of emotive-phatic forms of discussions on the platform that supported that goal. Such messages include: "We will deliver on our commitment to improving natural flood management […]" (CUPM 2017:26) and "We will continue to ensure that the public forests and woodland are kept in trust for the nation and provide stronger protections for our ancient woodland" (CUPM 2017:26).

The addresser's determination derived from the phrases, "we will deliver" and "we will continue to ensure". In both cases, what was to be provided or what was to be delivered was not a new goal but a 'continuation' of some process. Presumably, since Brexit was the central

theme of the manifesto, there was a need to highlight that the pledge was not about just 'continuation' but a 'better continuation'. That is why the platform discussed the cases of "improving" or "stronger protections" (CUPM 2017:26).

Therefore, the emotive form in those communications aimed at breaking the automatized understanding of the continuous process. One way of doing that was shifting the attention to the addresser's determination.

The communication of environmental protection became more explicated when being discussed concerning particular communities. For example, when it came to the post-Brexit stance on farmers, the party pledges to "work with farmers, food producers and environmental experts across Britain and with the devolved administrations to devise a new agri-environment system, [...]" (CUPM 2017:26).This suggested the communities were expected to be participants in those deliberations. This message can also be interpreted as the translation of environmental issues into the language of their social-ideological basis. According to R. Pogorelis *et. al* (2005:1002) the issues like 'agriculture', 'rural life' also 'laws' were owned by Conservatives. However, a careful consideration of the context could tell that it is the issue of Brexit being translate here, not the environmental issues.

The narrative of 'help' also extended to "Natural England to expand their provision of technical expertise to farmers to deliver environmental improvements […]" (CUPM 2017:26). The same deliberative and science-based medium for problem solving was offered in the case of fisheries (CUPM 2017:27). These examples resembled referential governance since they implied deliberations and expertise. However, they rather communicated the mediums and visions for solutions. They were, for instance, different from a concrete solution, such as pledging to provide "the same cash total in funds for farm support until the end of the parliament" (CUPM 2017:26).

When viewed alongside the consumer and producer rights, the environmental issues were framed conatively by subjectifying them to the legislations of the EU and UK, referring to the Great Repeal Bill (CUPM 2017:36)

The discussion above could suggest that referential and conative forms dominated, when messages were narrowed to particular communities such as farmers or fisheries. Those communities represented potential voters. However, in some cases, the solutions were delivered in terms of mediums and visions.

It could be assumed, where potential voters were concerned and the solutions were unclear, that there was a need to find something in between phatic communication and conative or referential forms. This is because phatic communication would address the "docile

communicating agent" (Selg, Ventsel 2020:182). However, the '25-year environmental plan' and the deliberations on environmentally friendly farming and fishing, did have concrete audiences. To address that challenge, solutions were provided in the form of well-argued visions.

Indeed, the post-Brexit environmental protections were topics of concern. For instance, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) mentioned about the risks concerning the delivery of some policies (CCC 2018:25). Those concerns also led to NGOs working in the sphere, to come together in the initiative called 'Greener UK' (Carter, Pearson 2022).

It can be assumed that those concerns could also create a need to make referential and conative statements. Referential communication enabled the discussion of the frames and approaches to solution. The focus on deliberation and argumentation might divert attention from the lack of concrete solutions, since they were supposed to be the results of deliberations

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4.1.2.Political form analysis: leadership and environmental issues

While analysing the media discourse on climate change in Great Britain, M. Gillings and C. Dayrell (2023:10) provided evidence for "collocate action in the second half of 2016, unveiling frequent mentions of the need to take action on climate change". However, the involvement of the general public in that action was noticed only from 2019 onwards (*Ibid).* Concerning climate change, the issue became more vocal in 2018 when protests organized by the Extinction Rebellion Group blocked off popular areas of London (Stewart 2020:488). Furthermore, the 2017 UK general elections and the campaign happened in the times of increased media focus on climate change scepticism generated by D. Trump's announcements and the subsequent changes in the US state documents (Gillings, Dayrell 2023:12;see also Borger 2017).

The anti-climate change rhetoric on one side and the post-Brexit environmental concerns on the other, made it difficult to totally ignore environmental protection in manifestos, given the latter would imply a certain position. As N. Carter and M. Pearson (2022) noted, since the UK pioneered the Climate Change Act, the respective field could become an arena for highlighting their 'post-Brexit global leadership' with reiterations of their environmental commitments.

The UK's position as the leader in the field was clearly emphasized on the Conservatives party platform in 2017, especially when discussing its global role. For instance,

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concerning climate change, it was mentioned that Britain is "at the forefront of action against global climate change," and "will continue to lead international action against climate change […]" and "will lead the world in environmental protection" (CUPM 2017:37-38, 40). In fact, it was noted that Britain was "the first country to introduce a Climate Change Act, […]", "transform the world's industries- […]" (CUPM 2017:19)", "champion greater conservation co-operation […]" (CUPM 2017:40). Even when the international cooperation was proposed, the superlative forms were still there, such as "establishing the largest marine sanctuaries anywhere in the world" (CUPM 2017:40).

Those discussions addressed climate change as an image of 'them'. Hence, the 'metaphorical antagonism' was directed at climate change, not other states. It appeared to have become a source of intimidation. On the other hand, emphasizing one's supremacy, compared with other countries, galvanized the image of a leader. Emotive phrases such as 'first country,' 'champion,' 'lead', and 'being at the forefront' constructed that image, which implied the actions focused on climate change were in the form of 'competition', with Britain as the leader (CUPM 37-38,40). However, it could be suggested that through that 'competition' Conservatives tried to build their electoral advantage. Thus, the 'competition' was indirectly communicated with the mainstream electoral competitor. Overall this approach deproblematised environmental protection. Specifically, the symbolism of competition shifted the focus from the problem to the addresser.

4.1.3. Political form analysis: the asymmetry of relations between economy and environment

Although environmental protection was discussed in the Conservative manifesto from 2017, there were some intra-party differences about how to reach carbon neutrality (Carter, Pearson 2022:2). The environmental messages of the 2017 platform sometimes lacked concreteness with respect to suggested solutions. The latter becomes more apparent when analysing environmental protection in the frames of economic policies, especially in the energy sector. It was essential for this analysis to delve into the hierarchy of communication forms, in order to interpret the focus of messages.

When discussing economy and environmental protection, there were a number of phatic messages. They had a focus on 'memorable phrases'. Such communication included phrases like "to turn brilliant discoveries into practical products and transform the world's

industries- [...]" (CUPM 2017:19) or "we will form our energy policy based not on the way energy is generated but on the ends we desire – reliable and affordable energy, seizing the industrial opportunity that new technology presents and meeting our global commitments on climate change" (CUPM 2017:23).

Although the dominant form of communication was phatic here, the overall message also delivered the need for changing the way that things had been done before, hence changing the code. This could be seen in words like 'transform' or 'new technology'.

However, it is difficult to confidently speak about metalingual power here since the suggested transformations were for meeting an existing target. Therefore, under the disguise of metalingual communication, one could identify the emotion of determination. This, in turn, made the suggested 'definitive sounding solution' to global commitments more compelling. The cooperation of phatic and emotive forms was also evident here: "We will ensure industry and businesses have access to reliable, cheap, and clean power" (CUPM 2017:19). The addresser's determination supplemented the absence of explained actions and targets.

Phatic and emotive forms could also serve another objective. It could be considered that the lack of concreteness also disguised the underachievement in the field, the gap between expected and actual results. According to the Carbon Brief article by S. Evans (2017), the UK was about to miss the EU goals on renewables set for 2020. Moreover, as put by Carter and Pearson (2020:3), D. Cameron's cabinet slowed down the progress towards climate-related goals, and Theresa May's cabinet "initially prompted little change" being busy with Brexit. Hence, introducing addressers' willingness and commitments in the field could have shifted the attention from anticipated results to the addresser's willingness to change the field.

It could be speculated that in order to substantiate the long-term perspective of commitments, the focus was also on the addresser's 'wish' and 'ambitions', even when the concrete targets were also presented. This could be observed in the messages, such as "We want almost every car and van to be zero-emission by 2050 – and will invest £600 million by 2020 to help achieve it" or "Our ambition is for Britain to lead the world in electric vehicle technology and use" (CUPM 2017:24). Both messages were focused on the addresser's goals. However, the first had concrete targets and was communicated as public administration goals.

The argumentation and substantiation appeared in the foreground where potential voters' spending was concerned, as, for example, in energy costs. The manifesto stated about "an independent review into the Cost of Energy" for proposing ways to "ensure UK energy costs are as low as possible while ensuring a reliable supply and allowing us to meet our 2050

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carbon reduction objectives" (CUPM 2017:22). Two things can be observed here. The overall discussion was referential since the review supposed argumentation for a decision. However, when it comes to the environmental target, it appeared as an intermediary variable. The actual argumentation referred mostly to low energy costs, not environmental protection.

The same approach was applied when discussing shale energy. The platform used arguments and substantiations concerning the USA on how shale energy improved the economy and decreased energy bills. As a part of that discussion, it is indicated that "shale is cleaner than coal. It can also help reduce carbon emissions" (CUPM 2017:23). The platform did not provide further substantiation for that particular statement. For instance, there could be a similar reference to the USA, introducing whether shale energy affected environmental protection. The manifesto lacked such reference. This in turn, highlighted the importance of shale energy discussion over environmental protection. With that said, that importance was later granted to environmental protection through conative communication, such as the feasibility of the shale industry being conditioned to "our rigorous environmental protections, […]" (CUPM 2017:23) or introducing "a new Shale Environmental Regulator" for "clear governance and accountability, become a source of expertise, and allow decisions to be made fairly but swiftly" (CUPM 2017: 23). Using the conative form, the platform created asymmetry of power relations between environmental regulations, protections, and energy industry. However, sometimes those protections were instead references to 'common places'.

Therefore, in some cases environmental protection was formed differently than the economic message in the frames of which it was discussed. While economic aspects could be well argued, environmental issues remained primarily phatic. Furthermore, better argumentation of economic benefits could also be related to the controversial environmental effects of the suggested economic solution. It could be considered that the controversy is, in a way, addressed by granting environmental protection some conative power.

The well-argued economic issue hinted at its priority. It can be considered that communicating ecological issues in a conative form made the addresser and addressees responsible not directly for environmental protection but for abiding by the rules and regulations. However, whether or not those measures will invest in improving the environment can only be analysed by engaging different communities, experts, and stakeholders. Hence, it will require referential power forms to identify the effect of conative communication. In addition, the reference to conative power here could be related to the wicked nature of the problem (the section on Discussion elaborates on this aspect).

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As for the phatic and emotive forms, they delivered rather affective communication, which on the one hand progressed the conversation about the issue and on the other hand constructed the addresser's determination about the topic. However, those forms in that case, if not accompanied with referential or conative powers, either lacked concreteness in proposing solutions or lacked solutions as such.

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Although included and discussed in the 2017 platform, environmental issues lacked contextual and structural primacy. Instead, they were often supporting structures for prevalent issues and were sometimes translated into the mainstream language. Their communication with the mainstream language was ensured through 'third structures'.

As for the communication of environmental issues, some implications can be made. Concerning the discussion of environmental protection in the context of Brexit, the dominance of phatic forms helped to balance curoscepticism and the potential new deal. When being discussed globally, the focus on emotive and phatic messages could have oriented towards the post-Brexit concerns related to environmental protection.

In the context of the economy, it was essential to check the hierarchy of forms when communicating messages. This was because the environmental message might have a different form from the broader economic message. That asymmetry could illustrate the priorities between issues. Moreover, a conative form surfaced where controversial issues were concerned. This work interpreted that as a mediating mechanism between the party and voters, distancing them from actual environmental protection (subjetctifying them by rules).

The existence of an emotive-phatic form of communication could suggest several interpretations. Firstly, there was a need to address the post-Brexit risks related to environmental protection discussed above. Given the growing scepticism at the time coming from the Trump administration (Gillings, Dayrell 2023:12), there was a need to reiterate the addresser's determination about those issues. The emotive form supported that aim. In addition, the communication of environmental protection was turned to the communication of achievements and global leadership.

As for the referential communication, the latter added democratic essence to solutions or mediums of solutions, which could 'hide' their controversial aspects, or that they lack concreteness.

4.2. The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019(CUPM 2019): communicating the increased emphasis on environmental issues

The years 2018 and 2019 witnessed increased attention on environmental protection in public discourse (Kenny 2022:9). The analysis also illustrated that environmental issues were given a certain level of 'wholeness'.

Regarding primacy, it is worth noting that, unlike the manifesto from 2017, the opening note included environmental protection in the list of guarantees (CUPM 2019: My Guarantee). The introduction also referenced environmental issues (CUPM 2019:2). Therefore, environmental protection was given contextual primacy on that platform.

The text of CUPM 2019 is divided into six sections and the opening note. Environmental issues were lacking in two sections titled 'We will focus on your priorities' and 'We will put you first' (CUPM 2019:9, 59). With that said, there was one mention of cleaning parks related to community service (CUPM 2019:19). However, that sentence lacked explicit reference to environmental protection.

Concerning the structural primacy of environmental issues on the platform, the manifesto explicitly mentioned these issues in more than half of its sections (five out of seven). The sections which lacked any discussion of environmental issues were those related to health, social security, crime and safety, immigration, and education.

There were cases of environment communicating with mainstream issues. Since the titles of sections within the 2019 platform were not thematic in terms of policy domains, the identification of direct and mediated communication was somewhat challenging. Environmental issues were communicated with structures like economy, energy, transportation, urban planning, housing, local communities (farms and fisheries), employment, businesses, enterprises, trade, international relations, Brexit. Hypothetically, many of those fields could be referred to as third structures strengthening environment-economy relations.

With that said, international relations had direct communication with environmental issues on this platform. The manifesto covered a separate part on the environment titled 'Fight climate change and protect the environment' (CUPM 2019:55), belonging to the section 'We will strengthen Britain in the world' (CUPM 2019:51). Environmental protection, or more precisely, the fight against climate change, was put alongside security issues and values (CUPM 2019:51). In addition, environmental protection was discussed separately under the

title 'Stewards of our environment' (CUPM 2019:43). Therefore, environmental issues got 'wholeness' in separate discussions under delimited parts. Granting separate parts to those issues, visually and thematically, gave them some level of 'unity' and 'distinctiveness'.

Although environmental issues appeared as a chapter and a subchapter, they both were parts of larger sections. Hence, structural primacy was improved in comparison to the 2019 manifesto but there was no separate section dedicated to environmental protection. It should be mentioned that the overall structure of the manifesto, especially the titles of sections, did not allow that to happen. The titles were focused on the addresser's determination, which challenged the identification of thematic connections between policy fields (as parts and a whole). This could be related to the need to bring the discourse of Brexit to the foreground through the affective tone of titles, explicitly referring to Brexit, Britain and addressing people, such as 'We will unleash Britain's potential' or 'We will put you first' (CUPM 2019:25, 59)

Environmental issues appeared not only in their niche language in the sections of the manifesto, but were also translated into the mainstream languages. The Table 1 below illustrates some examples of those translations.

Table 1. Niche-mainstream translation: phrases from the Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto (CUPM) 2019

Mainstream language	Translation (taken from CUPM 2019)
Energy	Clean energy
Infrastructure	Green infrastructure
Housing	Environmentally friendly homes
Industry	Green industrial revolution
Transportation	Low carbon flight Electric flight
Waste management	Plastic waste Recycled plastic
Economy	Clean growth

Table 1 above illustrates cases where mainstream language endowed functionality to the niche language. As it can be seen, there are similarities with the cases of communication mentioned above.

Drawing from the models in section 2, it can be assumed that the platform did not have 'third structures,' which would connect environmental issues with such areas as safety, school education, healthcare, and immigration. According to the Ipsos MORI Issues Index (Clemence 2019), most of the mentioned issues, in which environmental protection was not discussed, were the most salient problems for Britain in 2018. More precisely, among the top of the Ipsos Index were Brexit, healthcare, followed by immigration, safety, education, etc. *(Ibid).* Given that those issues were popular concerns among potential voters, it is supposed that they were presented separately. It can be suggested that the manifesto aimed at strengthening attention on those issues, highlighting their primacy through "exclusions that are inextricably linked to the construction of centres for those systems" (Selg, Ventsel 2022:674).

In terms of models, niche and mainstream relations in the 2019 manifesto were between model 3 and model 4, supporting the idea of the gradual progress of issue primacy between consecutive elections. A slight progress towards the model 4 implies that niche issues were not there just for 'showing presence'. The political form analysis below better illustrates that the platform highlighted the increased focus on those issues.

4.2.1. Political form analysis: introducing environmental protection

The introduction of environmental issues and technologies in CUPM 2019 included what J. Lammers and M. Baldwin defined (2018:2) as 'collective nostalgia'. The manifesto praised past achievements for present environmental targets. For instance, it put as "It is thanks to the innovations of British battery-makers and turbine designers that we are able to cut CO_2- […]" (CUPM 2019:3).

Detours of the past were found to be generally common among Conservative voters and politicians (Lammers, Baldwin, 2018:2-3). In addition, another study by Baldwin and Lammers (2016:14956) illustrated that references to the past made the communication of environmental messages more compelling for Conservatives. In the quote presented above, the reference to the past also could provoke the emotion of pride since innovations were mentioned. Pride, in turn, referred to 'common places'.

When the reference to the past was not there, there were cases when the present achievements in environmental protection were attributed to the addresser. For instance, it was noted, "It is precisely because we understand the concept of aspiration, and enterprise,

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that the UK is now leading a new green industrial revolution" (CUPM 2019:3). Additionally, the manifesto referred to the potential leadership, such as "most ambitious environmental programme of any country on earth" (Ibid). In those cases, the sense of present and anticipated leadership could evoke pride.

It could be assumed that the phrase 'green industrial revolution' also referenced the past. The narrative of historical leadership in that action could again fit well with Conservative psychology, returning to Baldwin and Lammers (2016:14956).

The phrase 'green industrial revolution' could be also understood here as poetic communication of environmental protection. The term generally refers to the new wave of industrial revolution which focuses on renewable energy, and grants opportunities for more jobs, economic growth (Clark, Cooke 2015: 119).

Environmental protection and economic growth usually appeared as opposite ends of a continuum. E. Goodstein (1999), referring to the US, illustrated how in people's perception, environmental actions were considered to support unemployment, which was scientifically proven wrong. Likewise, another study found that environmental protection had not been to the detriment of employment (Cole, Elliott 2007). One of the industries where that dilemma was quite vivid was mining, where some environmental factors could hinder job creation (Antoci *et al.* 2019).

D. Gugushvili (2021) revealed that in some European countries, there was a tendency to prioritise environmental protection, even if it was to the detriment of the economy. When it comes to environmental prioritization in the UK, evidence suggested 'noticeably sharp increase between spring 2018 and winter 2019' (Kenny 2022:3).

In fact, the phrase 'green industrial revolution' appears to be connecting environmental protection and the economy, which have been previously considered intrinsically opposite issues. P. Selg and A. Ventsel (2020:53) stated that "the poetic function is a primary verbal means for creating chains of equivalences between otherwise disparate and discrete units". The focus on the addresser's role in joining these opposite elements could be due to the need to highlight the increased emphasis on environmental protection in CUPM 2019 in comparison to CUPM 2017.

Therefore, if the phatic-emotive communication of the first message was better tailored for traditional Conservative voters (referring to Baldwin and Lammers (2016, 2018), the second message was likely aimed at communicating the increased attention on environmental protection in the manifesto.

Overall, the quotes communicated the achievements in the field. At the beginning of the manifesto, environmental protection was introduced not from a problem and solution perspective but from a point of success. The public communication forms used in those quotes invested in the deproblematisation of those issues.

Introductions require the creation of contact. In this case the creation of a contact was supported by emotive messages. That could be related to the need to underline the 'competitive advantage' of the addresser.

4.2.2. Political form analysis: Brexit and environmental protection

This platform, similar to CUPM 2017, was about finalizing the Brexit deal. Hence, environmental issues were also discussed from that perspective. The narrative of Brexit created some temporal hierarchy between the emergency of the Brexit deal and other issues, such as environmental protection.

The platform also often referred to the phrase 'post-Brexit freedoms' (CUPM 2019:5), implying that EU membership was somewhat restricting. Although environmental protection was not explicitly discussed with the given phrase, there were implications to that. The platform constructed asymmetric power relations between EU membership and better environmental benchmarks and regulations, where the latter hindered the former or rather, the new 'relationship' would 'allow' to advance better criteria (CUPM 2019:5). Moreover, new regulations were framed as 'our legal targets' and the change would follow 'Our Environmental Bill' (CUPM 2019:43), hence referring to 'common places' (Selg, Ventsel 2020:185). The phatic form of communicating national rules and legislations could be seen as a response to the highlights on post-Brexit standards of environmental protection, expressed by the Climate Change Committee (CCC 2018:19, CCC 2019: Progress in preparing for climate change). More precisely the report from 2018 mentioned, "This is an important moment to ensure that the UK legal framework over climate change is at least as strong as that provided under EU membership" (CCC 2018:19).

The conative-phatic communication somehow subjectified environmental protection; firstly to the Brexit deal, and eventually to the national legislation. The overall discussion was about control over controlling. This hierarchy, as discussed above, was constructed through affective language, such as 'allow us', which was implicitly related to the discourse of 'freedoms'. Therefore, it could be deduced that hierarchies were symbolic in order to bring

Brexit into the foreground of conversation and highlight the need for national 'control' of regulations.

The post-Brexit communication of environmental protection was also predominantly conative where local communities were concerned. However, the conative power was not only deriving from rules and policies, such as 'public money for public good' but assertive language, like "they must farm in a way that protects and enhances our natural environment […]" (CUPM 2019:42) or "we want those same farmers and fishermen to act as the stewards of the natural world" (CUPM 2019:43).

It could be assumed that the focus on addressees and their role of environmental stewardship, intentionally or unintentionally underlined the anticipated environmental benefits of 'public money for public good' policy. The policy was anticipated to bring better environmental protections ('public goods') than the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU, which was criticized on those grounds (Little *et al.* 2022:56, 58).

The communication of environmental protection also carried a poetic function. Brexit, per se, is an example of poetic communication. It is a made-up concept that is easy to remember, which divides the UK from the EU but requires some 'reunification' on new terms of relations. Another example of poetic communication of environmental issues in the frames of Brexit discourse was the phrase 'Buy British' (CUPM 2019:42). Through its poetic function, this label had the power to separate the British from others and reunite people under that label. 'Buy British' was an example of 'public relations management' for farmers. Moreover, the 'public money for public good' policy also contained the same poetic power. They were communicated as 'readymade solutions' for the problem. In fact, the actual implementation of some of those policies were more uncertain, which cost Conservatives votes in the 2022 local elections (see also Nevett 2022).

The conative-phatic, conative, and poetic communication forms prevailed in the discussion of environmental protection concerning Brexit. In this context, the focus was mainly on the need to own the regulations and demonstrate credibility in that field. The emergence of the Brexit deal rather reduced the problematique of environmental protection.

The prevailing poetic communication form concerning farmers and environmental protection, in turn deproblematised the transition from the EU rules and policies to the new ones.

 Consequently, although environmental protection was boldly present in the discussion, the form of its communication revealed what its position was in that discussion. The manifesto created symbolic 'if/then' or 'when/then' relations, where the Brexit deal was

the input, while the addressing of environmental issues was the consequence. The constructed causality deproblematised the shift, focusing on the emergency of a Brexit deal, subjectifying environmental protection (though not only this issue) to it. Hence, an urgent issue was approached from the perspective of a more urgent issue. Which one was which, would be left to the reader to speculate.

4.2.3.Political form analysis: new kinds, new code and new leadership

The discussion of 'new' and 'revolutionary' was apparent in the manifesto, which could be attributed to the new post-Brexit reality. As for the environment, there were discussions of "new air traffic control technology" (CUPM 2019:28) to cut emissions, "new kinds of homes" with decreased energy bills (CUPM 2019:31), and "new streets to be lined with trees" (CUPM 2019:31).

Messages on environmental protection were also discussed under so called "new deals" (CUPM 2019:26) or in the frames of "national renewal", for instance the investment in "flood defences" (CUPM 2019:27). In the mentioned cases, the environmental protection was communicated either through a regulation, or an investment target. Where the discussion did not specify concrete targets, it referred to 'help' and 'support' to reach environmentally friendly goals. Hence, both conative and phatic forms were apparent in that communication.

However, since it was discussed in the frames of the 'new', it supported the 'new world-making,' which, according to Selg and Ventsel (2020:205), was typical of poetic power. In addition, the 'new' used here was symbolic since all these discussions were happening under the title 'We will unleash Britain's Potential' (CUPM 2019:25). It could be implied that whatever was discussed in that chapter was considered already to be 'Britain's Potential'. The narrative of 'new' refers to 'unleashing' it. This supported Lammers and Baldwin's (2018) findings about general Conservative psychology, directed to the past. The 'new' was communicated from the perspective of the potential. Hence, 'new' was not ultimately real but symbolic. Some specific environmental issues discussed in those frames got solutions in the manifesto (e.g., flood defence (CUPM 2019:27).They were not necessarily deproblematised. The overall complexity of shift into the new reality was deproblematised.

'New' could refer also to the code. As discussed previously, the 'green industrial revolution' had the potential for environmental protection and economic growth (Clark, Cooke 2015). For instance, the Climate Change Committee report from 2018 underlined the

need to invest in renewables for curtailing emissions better and for getting less costly sources of energy (CCC 2018:37). Joe Biden's COP speech in Glasgow in 2021 also touched upon the discourse that tackling climate change had the potential of jobs and growth[4]. It could be considered that the reiteration of the coexistence of the two phenomena through different mediums was a way to challenge the old code and illustrate that those phenomena could coexist. It could be assumed that those repetitions generated many 'easily memorable phrases'. When it comes to the CUPM 2019, those phrases were apparent under the titles, which did not explicitly concern environmental protection. These included the phrases "clean energy and a carbon-neutral future means new kinds of jobs in new industries (CUPM 2019:36)" or a pledge to "prioritise the environment in the next Budget, investing in the infrastructure, science, and research that will deliver economic growth, not just through the 2020s, but for decades to come" (CUPM 2019:7). The latter phrase, although implied an action, it resembled more an ambitious vision.

A more concrete, solution-based communication of the 'new relation' concerned the "affordable and accessible clean energy" (CUPM 2019:40) and the investment in energy efficiency for lower bills (CUPM 2019:55). Although the last example was discussed under the title related to environmental protection.

It could be considered that more consistent communication of the 'new code' (in terms of forms) could create a better picture of the party's attitude on the issue. At the same time, even in a phatic form, it still might create contact with voters who were unaware of the economic benefits of clean energy or green economy.

What was consistent in the manifesto was the communication of leadership when discussing environmental protection. Starting from "world-leading target of Net Zero" to the pledge to "lead the world in tackling climate change", these phrases added emotive power to the communication, even when the main message was communicated in different forms, such as phatic or conative (CUPM 2019:55).

The reference to global leadership could evoke pride and make communication more influential. Then a question arises why it was necessary to accompany conative communication with the emotive one. In other words, why were solutions backed with emotions? Most of the time, the solution regarding public administration targets was about the future. As it was found by Baldwin and Lammers (2016:14956), environmental messages

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[4] Remarks by President Biden at the COP26 Leaders Statement 2021 (November 1). In The White House. COP 26, Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Retrieved from: https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/11/01/remarks-by-president-biden-at-the-cop26-leaders-statement/ 14.03.2023

directed to the future lacked influence on Conservatives. Therefore, it could be considered that the communication of pride somehow substituted the emotion that could be generated from the throwback to past achievements. At the same time, the reference to global leadership focused on the addresser's credibility and determination, which accumulated in the symbolic picture of a leader.

4.2.4. Political form analysis: stewardship means rules, fight means investment

There were two main parts explicitly discussing environmental protection in the manifesto: "Stewards of our environment" (CUPM 2019: 43) and "Fight climate change and protect the environment (CUPM 2019:55). The dominant form for communicating environmental protection in those parts was conative.

However, both parts had poetic communication within the beginning. This included the phrase: "conservation has always been at the very heart of Conservatism" (CUPM 2019:43, 55), which was "an appeal to the rhythm" (Selg, Ventsel 2020:238). The phrase connected the party ideology with the discourse of environmental protection.

In addition, the part on climate change praised past efforts for having the leadership in certain aspects of environmental protection, such as "offshore wind power" (CUPM 2019:55). The references to accomplishments and leadership were in a phatic-emotive form, such as "we are the world's leader […]" or "we will continue to lead diplomatic efforts […]" (CUPM 2019:55). It could be considered that the phatic form ('common places') allowed them to distance the achievements from all Cabinets, who invested in it while simultaneously crediting "the efforts of successive Governments" for current leading roles (CUPM 2019:55). Presumably, it secured the possibility of openly praising competitors but at the same time recognized their role in those accomplishments.

Overall, phatic and poetic communication gave the impression of being invested in the deproblematisation of environmental issues. Although the manifesto mentioned that "there is far more that needs to be done" (CUPM 2019:55), the communication of environmental issues started from the perspective of achievements in the parts dedicated to environmental protection. This could be related to the fact that the Conservatives were in the Cabinet, so they needed to portray the governmental performance on those issues. Too much praise for their Cabinet and the addresser-oriented communication could have generated disagreements.

Meanwhile, phatic and poetic forms of communication fit the purpose of presenting the Conservative Cabinet's role in those achievements with passively recognizing others.

Although throughout the manifesto the party predominantly addressed themselves as 'we', here, even when talking about their achievement, it was put as "a fantastic success story of Government and the private sector" (CUPM 2019:55). Hence, the Government was not specified. At the same time, the poetic power of the phrase that started the chapter passively kept the credits on Conservatives' side.

As mentioned above, conative forms prevailed in the parts on environmental protection and stewardship. Concerning the part titled "Stewards of our environment" (CUPM 2019: 43), the conative form was mainly about new or extended rules and regulations. It could be related to the fact that the Brexit context was apparent there. Hence, the regulation would address post-EU concerns about environmental protections, also noted by the CCC (2019) and CCC (2018:25).

The use of the conative form could also be related to addressing the recommendations advanced by the CCC, given that there was a direct reference to the CCC recommendations related to the Net-Zero 2050 (CUPM 2019: 55). The part titled 'Fight climate change and protect the environment' (CUPM 2019:55), had several such examples, starting from investment in energy efficiency to renewables. In this case, the conative form of communication was expressed as public administration targets.

However, those targets mainly specified the amount of budgetary investments. More concrete solutions were provided for those targets, which performed well. For instance, when it comes to the offshore wind industry, the Conservative's target was clear: "40 GW by 2030 "(CUPM 2019:55). It was 10 GW more than was suggested by the CCC 2019 report referring to the 'the March 2019 deal' (CCC (Reducing UK Emissions) 2019:59). Hence, in the case where the success was reached and recognized, the targets were more concrete, which delivered the credibility of the party in the field. Simultaneously, success was communicated through emotions, illustrating the global dominance in the field.

The emotive communication of the success was accompanied with the absence of any discussion on onshore wind power, as was also noticed by the Carbon Brief (Gabbatiss 2019). The CCC 2019 report, when indicating the success on the offshore side, referred to the need for actions on the onshore side and solar power (CCC (Reducing UK emissions) 2019:59). The influential and affirmative communication of offshore wind power could have aimed to disguise that absence.

Whether the issue related to environmental protection was controversial, the platform used the referential form of communication. For instance, where fracking was concerned, the manifesto used conative-referential communication. It noted, "We will not support fracking unless the science shows categorically that it can be done safely" (CUPM 2019:55). The platform referred to argumentative decision-making concerning the issue, giving higher power to science. However, since it did not explicitly ban the practice, it hinted at the possibility of such practice. For instance, Liz Truss made fracking possible, which eventually was banned again by Rishi Sunak in 2022 (Morton 2022). When it came to the discussion regarding when to "phase out the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars" (CUPM 2019:27), the party suggested "consult on the earliest date" (CUPM 2019:27, 55). However, the CCC had already proposed the date around 2030 (CCC (Reducing UK emissions) 2019:11). According to the Carbon Brief (Gabbatiss 2019), the deadline suggested by the Conservative Cabinet was 2040.

Hence, through referential communication, the platform neither explicitly mentioned the Cabinet's nor the suggestion by the CCC (2019). It rather drew attention towards consultations and democratic management. The latter also created a safe place of navigation for the future.

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Finding a consistent communication form with respect to environmental protection was a challenge. It all depended on the context of the discussion. The latter created a discontinuity in communication, making identifying the party attitude toward those issues complicated. The symbolic hierarchies deriving from conative power overshadowed environmental protection drawing attention to Brexit. This was also the case for the discourse about 'new' employing poetic power. The poetic and phatic communication linking environmental protection and economic benefits introduced the new code, which did not come from metalingual communication. This was simply because it was not communicated to break the discourse or change the values. The 'new', as such, was derived from the potential of the country, from 'common places. It instead became the medium for maintaining contact with voters.

Through the emotion of pride, the manifesto created influential language for communicating environmental protection, supporting the discussion of suggested solutions. The solutions were mostly in the form of regulations or targets, depending on the context. It was also implied that, through the referential power, the platform navigated the attention from the controversial issue to a more positive one, such as deliberations and expertise.

4.3 The Labour Party Manifesto 2017 (LPM 2017): communicating the party position on environmental issues

Generally, the Labour Party Manifestos (LPM)s from 2017 and 2019 were longer than Conservatives. As for the structure, the titles of sections and chapters were thematic, which makes it easier to identify direct communications and the mediated ones.

The Labour manifesto from 2017 was divided into thirteen sections, including the foreword. Sections, in turn, had their chapters. The foreword of the manifesto lacked any explicit discussion of environmental issues. Therefore, the latter lacked contextual primacy on this platform, similar to the CUPM 2017. Although Labour pledged to 'upgrade economy' (LPM 2017:4) in the foreword, they did not explain what this meant for environmental protection.

Out of thirteen sections, environmental protection was discussed in six. Hence, the issues were covering slightly less than the half of the 'platform area'. At the same time, the manifesto had a separate subchapter dedicated to 'Environment' (LPM 2017:93). The platform gave delimitation and 'wholeness' to environmental issues. However, as the analysis below shows, that part mainly addressed the opponent for 'broken promises' (LPM 2017:93). Overall, the manifesto lacked a section which directly covered environmental issues. Therefore, the platform did not provide structural primacy to those issues.

Environment and mainstream issues communicated through translation. The table below depicts the identified cases.

Table 2. Niche-mainstream translation: phrases from the Labour Party Manifesto 2017

Mainstream Language	Translation taken from LPM (2017)
Energy/Infrastructure	Low-carbon gas
Energy/Infrastructure	Renewable electricity
Energy/Industry	Renewable source
Energy/Industry	Zero-carbon source
Energy	Cleaner fuels
Energy	Renewable energy project
International relations/Trade	Environmental goods and services

International relations/Trade	Low-carbon products
Housing/Energy	Zero-carbon homes
Justice	Environmental tribunal
Transport	Ultra low-emission vehicle
Transport	Clean modes of transport
Economy	Low carbon economy

As can be observed from Table 2 above, some of those translations in turn were linking environmental issues with the mainstream ones. For instance, the phrase 'environmental goods and services' (LPM 2017:31), becomes the third structure connecting environment and international relations, since the discussion was about international trade. The vast majority of the translations were about energy, which sometimes again took the role of a third structure to connect the environment with industry or infrastructure.

There were also cases where environmental protection communicated with the mainstream issue through third structures but did not get translated into the mainstream language. Although that link was not mentioned explicitly, this analysis considered that issues such as businesses or employment, were the third structures to link environment and economy. As well, Brexit diplomacy and international development were intermediaries joining international relations and environment.

Despite the mentioned cases of communication and translation, environmental protection was still missing in certain areas, such as immigration, safety, healthcare, education and social security, as well as in sections called 'Extending Democracy' (LPM 2017:101) and 'A more equal society' (*Ibid* 2017:107). The lack of communication related to those issues could come from the reason this thesis argued for regarding CUPM 2017. That is that the issues of healthcare, safety, education and immigration were salient issues identified by the public (Clemence 2019: Ipsos Issues Index 2018). Thus, there was a need to deliver them separately to put more focus on them.

Therefore, concerning contextual primacy, this was not present in LPM 2017 since the opening part did not explicitly mention environmental issues. There was also a lack of structural primacy, since the 'coverage' of issues did not reach all sections and there was no section denoting environmental protection.

As this analysis showed, the mainstream issue of energy was connected with environmental issues more strongly. The cases of translation could signify that the

mainstream issue has integrated the niche into its sector. Thus, niche-mainstream relations of the 2017 Labour manifesto could be positioned somewhere between Model 3 and Model 4. Other than being present, environmental issues became a part of a particular mainstream policy.

4.3.1. Political form analysis: Brexit and environmental protection

The Labour discussion of environmental protection in the context of Brexit highlights the different interpretations, when compared to the CUPMs (2017, 2019). The Labour leader was criticized for the "lukewarm referendum campaign" (Prosser 2018:2).

The discussion of environmental protection in the context of Brexit was mostly oriented towards the addresser's determination on the issue. The mentioning of environmental protection together with workers' rights multiple times on the platform could have helped in the development of Labour's image of the pro-environmental mainstream party. Such discussion also made the Labour's position about the issue clear, since environmental issues were discussed alongside the original appeals of the party.

Delivering a message with negation highlighted even further the position of the addresser on the issue, such as "A Labour government will never consider these rights a burden or accept the weakening of workers' rights, consumer rights or environmental protections" (LPM 2017:26). Those rights were presented as the reasons why Conservatives were in favour of leaving the EU (LPM 2017:26). A direct reference to the political opponent when stating those rights also delivered a message about Labour's position.

Indeed, workers' rights were their original focus given their ideology. It could be considered that emotive communication of environmental protections in that context could have placed the same weight on the environment in voters' minds.

They were discussed together also in the part dedicated to businesses in conative-phatic form. The solutions were there but they were not concrete. The examples included changing the "Company law" or suggesting a 'reward' for businesses following the necessary rules related to workers' rights, environment among other things (LPM 2017:17).

More emotive communication was apparent, when discussing environmental protection together with workers' rights in global context, by the phrase like, "Labour is committed to ensuring respect for human rights, workers' rights and environmental sustainability" (LPM 2017:123). Moreover, the platform demonstrated the readiness of the

party to "not be afraid to disagree" with the "most important ally", the USA, if Trump administration ignored the values, on the basis of which their relationship was developed. Climate change was one of those values (LPM 2017:117). By rejecting the fear, they also accept the fragility of the delivered message. The aim of the message could have been the demonstration of addresser's determination.

Returning to Brexit, environmental protection was also used to show support for the EU and imply the continuity of the relations. However, the continuity was not about rejoining the EU but rather keeping the respective regulations.

Unlike the CUPM 2017, where there was a need to challenge the automatic perception of continuation, here the focus was placed on the need to keep the best aspects of EU. Environmental safeguards appeared to be one of those. The willingness to ensure this continuation was expressed in a conative form. The party pledged to "drop the Conservatives' Great Repeal Bill, replacing it with an EU Rights and Protections Bill" (LPM 2017:25).

It was not clear whether Labour's messages were aimed at praising the EU or passively addressing Conservatives' point of view. The manifesto created some sort of symbolic continuum, putting Conservatives on the one side and the EU on the other. By advocating continuation of relations, but accepting Brexit, Labour depicted itself as the 'successor of the EU', therefore the protector of the environment.

In addition, such communication could have been aimed at better attaching environmental protection to Labour's image. As noted by (Sartori 2005[1976]:293-294), the party image was usually associated with a policy or motto, which was generated in people's minds when party was seen or heard. Therefore, the reiterations about environmental protections and the construction of antagonism around environmental issues served to engrain it in the party image.

4.3.2. Political form analysis: 'non-communicating' environmental issues

Under the title 'Environment' (LPM 2017:93) the discussion of environmental protection was predominantly phatic and emotive. The phatic form was used to develop the understanding of 'us', our 'common places'. Some of those phrases used were: "our farming", "our environmental protections and […] the quality of our lives" (LPM 2017:93). Simultaneously, the same part referred to the competitors' "broken promises", "inaction", "bonfire of red tape" (LPM 2017:93), as apparent future threats. This resembled Selg and Ventsel's (2020:203)

explanation of emotive form of power, as "intimidating the "us" through "them"". For instance, the phrase "our air is killing us, […]" (LPM 2017:93), did not imply antagonism against natural phenomenon, but was maintaining the conversation about the constructed threat, attributed to the competitor who was directly mentioned. This was supported by constructing the fear for future, which was evident throughout the manifesto, not only in this part on environment.

Indeed, there were some suggested solutions, such as new rules and regulations, and the "Clean Air Act" (LPM 2017:93-94). However, the conative form of communication was disrupted by the emotive addressing of the competitor. The Act was presented to "deal with the Conservative legacy of illegal air quality" (LPM 2017:93). At the same time, under the part on 'Justice', the platform suggested having "Environmental Tribunal" and substantiated that with the example related to the quality of air (LPM 2017:81). In that discussion, the Government was not specified, and the communication was about solutions.

With regard to the discussions about farmers and fisheries the phatic-emotive form was prevailing in this part. At the same time, focus was on the addresser, pledging that "Only a Labour government" would focus and ensure sustainability and environmental protections in those fields (LPM 2017:93).

The phrase, "only a Labour government" somehow ignored other parties, which were considered intrinsically environmental or more environmentally friendly than Labour in terms of, for instance their electorate (Kenny 2022:13). The phrase implicitly removed the possibility of other parties entering the Cabinet, even in a coalition. Certainly, the electoral rules of first past the post did not guarantee an easy victory for those parties, but they did not exclude their success either.

According to the study by Kenny (2022:13), the evidence suggested that the electorates of Liberal-Democrats and Greens prioritised environment more. Moreover, the Labour's environmental appeals were not straightforward. A noted by Carter and Little (2021:8), they shifted from 'passive disagreement' to 'competitive disagreement' during the 2017 general elections.

Therefore, the dominant emotive power put the emphasis on the addresser, positioned the competitor as the threat and communicated environmental messages predominantly through the determination of the addresser and fear about the future. Hence, the issue of environmental protection was deproblematised, since there was a lack of concrete solutions in those emotive messages.

4.3.3.Political from analysis: symbolic mechanisms of subjectifications

When discussing environmental protection, the manifesto text created some symbolic hierarchies. One form of construction was the use of bullet points.

The second way of displaying some asymmetric relations were through the phrases like "missions" (LPM 2017:14) or "principles" (LPM 2017:20). Although they did not imply rules or regulation, they did get some symbolic conative power. This had the effect of subjectifying the party or the future Labour government. For instance, one of the 'principles' of Labour's energy policy was, "To ensure we meet our climate change targets and transition to a low-carbon economy" (LPM 2017:20). The message or principle was rather emotive, since it was focused on the determination of the party, drawing from the word, 'ensure'. However, since, it was framed as a principle and put as a bullet point, the message got conative power, illustrating the dependence of the party on that principle, or rather the determination of the party to depend on it.

The same can be said of the 'missions', such as "ensure that 60 per cent of the UK's energy comes from zero-carbon or renewable sources by 2030" (LPM 2017:14). Although the word 'mission' belonged to the affective communication, the target was communicated as a public administration goal. Phatic-conative and emotive-conative forms communicated environmental protection, as something, which was engrained in the party ideology or image. That communication, in turn highlighted their position.

Another symbolic hierarchy was created by subjectifying the solution of the environmentally friendly energy industry and transport to public ownership. Using phatic form of communication, the platform illustrated that "privatisation" in the energy sector did not benefit "our environment" or "air quality has worsened" (LPM 2017:20, 90). The criticism towards privatisation was communicated through passively addressing the competitor and through substantiating the statements with data.

Public ownership was rather presented as a solution, which for the energy sector was divided into actions put in the bullet points (LPM 2017:20). Those actions, although sounding like public administration goals and rules, did not have concrete targets. At the same time, putting them as bullet points, somehow created the perceptions of concreteness. When it comes to transport, the suggested solutions were about 'common places, such as 'leaving our air cleaner" (LPM 2017:90). Hence, we can talk about the communication of mediums and visions of solution, not the solutions themselves.

It could be assumed that since public ownership was at the core of Labour ideology, the construction of this hierarchy was designed to propagate and reiterate it. Although, it was the translation of environmental issues in the core language of Labour, this rather deproblematised environmental protection and brought privatisation to the foreground.

With regard to the energy sector, Labour's solutions were prevailingly phatic. Other than insulation, energy efficiency for homes and fracking which were communicated in the conative form, other issues lacked concreteness. For instance, Labour mentioned "carbon capture and storage", "tidal lagoons", "nuclear industry", but from the perspective that these mediums are generally helpful. An example of this was, "We are committed to renewable energy projects, including tidal lagoons, which can help create manufacturing and energy jobs as well as contributing to climate change commitments" (LPM 2017:21).

However, with mentions of 'low-carbon economy', the manifesto provided data on its performance and benefits. The pledge of the party on how they would further invest in that again lacked concreteness (LPM 2017:22). Although, when it came to fracking, the communication was conative-referential. The suggestion by Labour was substantiated with the reference to the CCC (LPM 2017:21). Such argumentative and concrete discussion of this particular issue could be related to the fact that Conservatives did not exclude the option of fracking and were criticized for their position (see also Johnston 2017)

The manifesto also included cases of poetic communication in the frames of the discourse about 'new', such as "new, state-of-the-art-low-carbon gas" (LPM 2017:12) or "zero carbon homes" (LPM 2017:60). In both cases, they were discussed in the context of phatic communication as 'readymade solutions'.

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The analysis of the issue primacy illustrated that environmental protection lacked contextual and structural primacy. However, it was integrated into one of the mainstream sectors; energy industry. That integration implied that the niche issue was not there just for showing presence. As the form analysis illustrated that was rather a communication of Labour's position on environmental issues.

While it was expected that the party in opposition would be critical of the Cabinet party, in this case that opposition detrimentally affected the problematisation of environmental protection. It shifted the attention to the addresser and the intimidation related to saving the future. All in all, it was suggested that the emotive power, as well as symbolic hierarchies and the translation of environmental issues into the core language of the party, engrained those issues into the party image.

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4.4. The Labour Party Manifesto 2019 (LPM 2019): communicating as an issue owner

Labour Manifesto from 2019 was structurally different from 2017. Overall, the manifesto was divided into six sections, including the foreword. The main sections were also separated into chapters. The structural difference of this manifesto from the ones discussed before was that it included a separate section, titled, 'A green industrial revolution' (LPM 2019:9). Unlike the other manifestos, the economy was approached from the perspective of environmental issues. That section included the field of energy, economy, transport, environment and animal welfare, and approached the issues from the lens of green industrial revolution (LPM 2019:11-26). Moreover, the section titled 'A new internationalism' covered a subchapter on 'Climate diplomacy' (LPM 2019:93, 98). All sections of the manifesto stated environmental issues with different intensities. The platform had given structural primacy to environmental issues. Additionally, the party leader mentioned environmental protection in the foreword of the platform. Therefore, contextual primacy was also there.

In this manifesto, alongside common mainstream themes which had communication with environment in the previous examples, the discussion extended to such mainstream sectors that other platforms lacked. Those examples were healthcare, defense, immigration and education. This implies that the third structure exists to make that communication possible.

The platform also included new phrases of niche-mainstream relations derived from translations. The Table 3 below depicts some identified examples.

Table 3. Niche-mainstream translation: phrases from the Labour Party Manifesto 2019

Mainstream language	Translation taken from LPM (2019)
Energy	Renewable energy
	Low-carbon energy
	Net-zero-carbon energy
	Renewable, low-carbon source
	Zero-carbon homes
Employment	Climate jobs

	Climate Apprenticeship programme
	Climate Apprentices
	Climate Apprenticeship Fund
Transportation	Zero-emission vehicles
	Ultra-low emission vehicles
Waste management	Recyclable steel plant
	Plastic waste
Healthcare	Net-zero-carbon service
	NHS forest
Justice	Environmental tribunal
International Relations	Climate diplomacy
	Climate change diplomacy
Food	Net-zero-carbon-food production
Trade	Environmental goods and services
Land management	Environmental land management
Technology	Clean technology

As it can be seen from Table 3, the translations also included those sectors that were not previously covered in discussions of environmental protection (in the previous platforms analysed in this chapter), such as healthcare and education. Moreover, the mainstream issue of international relations integrated environmental issues as a separate perspective.

Therefore, the LPM 2019 gave primacy to environmental issues according to all indicators. The latter resembles model 4, when the party delivers the distinctiveness of a niche issue and communicates it as an issue owner.

4.4.1.Political form analysis: introducing environmental issues

In the Labour Manifesto from 2019, the communication was prevailingly emotive when introducing environmental issues. It did however include some phatic and poetic forms. These further supported the development and crystallisation of emotive messages.

For instance, the phrase "climate election" or the pledge to launch the "Green Industrial Revolution" were expressed in poetic forms (LPM 2019:6). They were presented more like the 'readymade' response to environmental problems. At the same time, they carried the emotion of emergency, which was indicated at the end of the foreword (LPM 2019:8). One can also argue that the mention of 'green industrial revolution' is about common history and achievements, like in the case of CUPM 2019. The phrase "climate election" underlined the importance of the election for those voters, who cared about the environment. While the word revolution hinted at the need for drastic change. Therefore, the poetic power here further exacerbated the feeling of emergency.

The foreword directly referred to the competitor when discussing environmental issues, such as, "The Conservative Government is failing" (LPM 2019:6). Moreover, it constructed the image of 'them,' mentioning that "the big polluters, […] had a free ride for too long" (LPM 2019:6). This conversation created 'metaphorical antagonism' between 'us' and 'them'. In this antagonism, the elections were presented as "our last chance to tackle the climate emergency" (LPM 2019:8). On the one hand, there was a threat, 'climate emergency', on the other communication was with 'us' through 'them'. Thus, the dominant form here was emotive.

It can be assumed, if the prevailing form was phatic with the communication of the threat not boldly specifying the 'others' and not demonstrating willingness of the addresser to act, it could create a perception that the problem was 'unsolvable'. Hence, the determination accompanied by 'readymade solutions', such as "climate election", "climate jobs", "Green Industrial Revolution" (LPM 2019:6-7), implied the possibility of betterment.

In addition, the foreword was more or less specific about opening "a million climate jobs in every region and nation of the UK […]" (LPM 2019:7). This could aim at addressing the Unions' worries related to possible job losses, as a consequence of ambitious carbon-reduction targets (Proctor 2019).

Evi Zemanek (2022), when analysing D. Attenborough's documentaries, illustrated that if the 'vulnerability' of the environment was not communicated in those movies, there would be no necessity for action from people's perspective. However, if the environmental situation was depicted as lost, there would be no reason for people's more caring actions (Zemanek 2022:17). A significant difference between those documentaries and this manifesto is that the former focused on the context, highlighting environmental protection (Zemanek 2022:2). In contrast, the foreword of this manifesto focused on the Labour party, the addresser, implying that they were the one to deal with the situation, "to tackle climate

emergency" (LPM 2019:8). That message was delivered not directly but through illustrating that the competitor was failing the cause.

It can be assumed that a more addresser-centred communication of the issue eventually deproblematised the cause in the introduction, no matter how emotive it was communicated. The deproblematisation could have been prevented, if data-based evidence supported the claims. It can be argued that the foreword needs to create the contact with the audience. In this very case, the contact was created through highlighting the emergency of the problem.

4.4.2. Political form analysis: communicating a revolution from contacts to solutions

The general introduction to 'Economy and Energy' (LPM2019:11) under the section 'A Green Industrial Revolution' (LPM 2019:9) comprised predominantly phatic form of communication of environmental issues. However, it turned to be more argumentative, and performance based when Labour's targets of carbon reduction were mentioned.

Although it sounds contradictory, one source of the phatic power was the emotive messages. For instance, the manifesto explicated the emotive effect of the 'green industrial revolution', such as "Just as the original Industrial Revolution brought industry, jobs, and pride to our towns, Labour's world-leading Green Industrial Revolution will […]"(LPM 2019:12). In other words, what was implied in the foreword was denoted here. It can be assumed when emotions are directly mentioned that the aim of that communication is to build a social relation with the audience or to make sure that the social contact is there, so they can start conversations on solutions. Moreover, these messages were general, referring to the national fate and history. Thus, the social contact could have been created even with non-Labour voters.

With that said, the introductory part for 'Economy and Energy' (LPM 2019:11) presented the problem from the point of equity and justice, expressed in 'definitive sounding solutions', accompanied with addresser's determination. One example was the following: "We will make sure that the costs of the green transition fall fairly and are mostly borne by the wealthy and those most responsible for the problem" (LPM 2019:12). Although such phrases could resemble the communication of 'social rights' (as noted for referential communication by Selg and Ventsel 2020:194), the message lacked substantiated solutions, rather mentioning that Labour would "make sure" (LPM 2019:12).

Concerning 'Investments' (LPM 2019:13), the solutions were discussed in terms of referential governance, engaging "trade unions and businesses", as well as referring to the evidence-based approach to check the "environmental impacts". Furthermore, the solutions were in the form of public administration goals, like "climate and environmental targets" (LPM 2019:13).

In order to highlight the difference in the addresser's approach from their main competitor, the part included emotive messages. An example of this was, "We won't be afraid to tackle this wanton corporate destruction by taking on the powerful interests that are causing climate change" (LPM 2019:13). Although that did not directly address their mainstream competitor, it illustrated the decisiveness of Labour to act differently.

The focus on that part could also be related to the fact that there were articles mentioning that Conservatives received a large number of financial donations from firms, which were related to fossil fuels (see also Watts, Duncan, 2019; Duncan et al, 2021). It could be considered that those alternative actions were something that competitors could not afford, being under the pressure of those businesses. Therefore, the addresser, using emotive power, demonstrated their privilege in dealing with environmental protection.

Where ideological positions were prevailing, environmental protection served the purpose of maintaining contact, for instance, where decentralisation was concerned (LPM 2019:14). As for public ownership, this was presented as one 'solution' to environmental problems, such as "we will put people and planet before profit by bringing our energy and water systems into democratic public ownership" (LPM 2019:15). Hence, the idea of public ownership was the context, while environmental protection was the contact-making message.

Concerning the energy sector, the solutions were concrete, delivered as an action plan with measurable targets, communicated in the language of regulations, such as "windfall tax on oil companies" (LPM 2019:15). Hence, the communication was mostly conative. At the same time, when it came to their decarbonisation target, which was the crux of party competition, the poetic power prevailed, focusing on the rhyme, "30 by 2030" (LPM 2019:14). In addition, the platform committed to putting "the UK on track for a net-zero-carbon energy system within the 2030s – and go faster if credible pathways can be found" (LPM 2019:14). The poetic power of this target separated Labour from other parties, who were pursuing different end goals related to decarbonisation. For instance, the Conservatives target for "being carbon neutral" was 2050 (CUPM 2019:3). Hence, poetic form of Labour's message aimed at connecting voters around a different and faster goal.

However, Labour's targets mentioned both 2030 and the 2030s (LPM 2019:14). This delivered some ambiguity, about the feasibility of the goals. It could be related to the fact that initially their target was about carbon neutrality by 2030, but was changed in the manifesto, becoming less ambitious due to the pressure from the Unions (Carbon Brief, Gabbatiss 2019; Mason et al 2019).

At the same time, there was a need to substantiate that ambiguity since the decarbonization target was decisive for electoral rivalry, given that the Green party had been pledging for net-zero by 2030 before Labour announced it (see also Proctor 2019). The substantiation came with affective math language, "We will deliver nearly 90% of electricity and 50% of heat from renewable and low-carbon sources by 2030" (LPM 2019:14). Again, although the date and percentages sounded like concrete targets, they were in fact illustrating their ambitiousness (50% is the half, 90% is almost 100%). This is despite the fact that it had become more moderate than the original pledge. The decreased target, although challenged during the Climate Debate[5] by Green Party and Plaid Cymru, made the division between Labour and Conservatives wider over this specific issue.

There was a repetitive focus on the fact that a 'green industrial revolution' would create jobs. As mentioned above, this could be related to the pressure of Unions and their worries concerning the risks of jobs because of high climate commitments (see also Proctor 2019). The part on 'Skills' delivered the need to train the people for the "jobs of the future" (LPM 2019:18). It could be assumed that given the worries of the Unions, this part conveyed the message through referential communication, such as "make it easier for employers to spend the levy" or "We will further help small businesses by increasing the amount that can be transferred to non-levy-paying employers to 50% […]" (LPM 2019:18). Hence, the solution implied softening levies, as in easing conative power, therefore challenging the asymmetry.

4.4.3. Political form analysis: transport and environment

It was challenging to find trends for Labour's communication of environmental protection concerning 'Transport' (LPM 2019:19). When it was discussed in relation to privatisation or

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[5] The Channel 4 News #ClimateDebate - world's first party leaders' debate on the climate. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6bJhKvFVw4 12.05.2023

job creation, environmental issues were under-represented. For instance, the manifesto indicated, "completing the full HS2 route to Scotland, taking full account of the environmental impacts of different route options" (LPM 2019:20). The phrase would appeal more to those who were in favour of HS2.

When it came to air transport, the manifesto used conative-referential language, mentioning that "Labour recognises the Davies Commission's assessment of pressures on airport capacity in the South East. Any expansion of airports must pass our tests on air quality, noise pollution, climate change obligations and countrywide benefits" (LPM 2019:21). The conative-referential message on the one hand subjectified new respective policies to tests, and on the other it implied the possibility of expansions.

This approach could be related to the controversial essence of the issue, related to intra-party disagreements concerning the Heathrow airport expansion. The party leader voted against, while many MPs voted for, given that the expansion implied new jobs (Helm 2018).

During the Climate debate, the Heathrow expansion was used by the Green party representative against the Labour (alongside of the SNP).[6] Hence, similar to Conservatives, referential and conative powers were used to deliver fragile topics. Substantiation shifted the focus from the problem to the administration of it. In other words, good governance somehow overshadowed the actual consideration of environmental protection.

Concerning the emission reduction in the streets, the communication lacked a consistent form. On the one hand, there was a pledge to "help people to become less reliant on their cars, for our better health, for a cleaner environment and to improve quality of life in our towns and cities" or "help children's health and well-being […]" (LPM 2019:20). On the other hand, the manifesto mentioned "introducing measures to ensure the zones around our schools are safer, with cleaner air" (LPM 2019:20). In both phrases, there was a reference to 'common places', which in this particular case aimed at reaching many people, irrespective of their party identification. It can be assumed that a more assertive language would not appeal to many drivers, which in turn, would define their votes.

Moreover, as in the case of decarbonisation, deadlines and targets were communicated in a form of 'competition' with Conservatives. For instance, when it comes to "ending new sales of combustion engine vehicles", Labour pinpointed their target as more

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[6] *Ibid*

ambitious than the one by Conservatives [7](LPM 2019:20). Such communication activated the poetic power of targets, as in the case discussed above. The targets were presented as solutions around which voters should gather. Therefore, the more ambitious goal, which also fitted the CCC recommendations from 2019 (CCC (Reducing UK emissions): 2019:11), would secure the votes of those people who cared about the issue, and needed to choose between two mainstream candidates.

As for the discussion about 'Environment' (LPM 2019:22) under the section 'A Green Industrial Revolution', conative and referential communication forms were prevailing but sometimes generated contradiction. For instance, the introductory part put focus on asymmetric power relations with respect to environmental protection, referring to the "Climate and Environment Emergency Bill" or "EU standards of environmental regulation" (LPM 2019:22). At the same time, separate parts, which referred to the general public, resembled the communication of 'social rights'.

For example, when the 'Clean Air Act' was discussed, the manifesto was focused on the context, substantiating the suggestion with statistical data, referring to the benchmarks of World Health organizations (LPM 2019:23). The discussion was between introducing "scrappage schemes", "limits" and communicating rights, focusing also on children (LPM 2019:23).

An argumentative discussion from the point of 'social rights' also related to the part on 'Food' (LPM 2019:24), including where local communities were concerned. As for farmers' rights, the party pledged to "ensure rights of union representation for all food and agricultural workers" (LPM 2019:24). Furthermore, the narrative of support and collaboration was also evident when discussing farming in the frames of "environmental land management and sustainable methods of food production" (LPM 2019:23). As can be seen, the discussion fitted within Labour's ideological language.

Concerning more conative form of communication, the "legally binding targets" and the "Environmental tribunal" were highlighted when talking about nature (LPM 2019:23), although here the public administration targets were unclear, e.g. related to tree planting. According to the report of Carbon Brief from 2019 (Gabbatiss 2019), the latter was specified in a separate document advanced by Labour.

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[7] It should be mentioned that in the manifesto from 2019 the Conservatives did not specify the date (CUPM 2019:55). Perhaps the reference of the Labour was to Conservative Cabinet, which according to the Carbon Brief (Gabbatiss 2019) suggested 2040, as a deadline.

Conative power was also apparent in the solutions related to waste management, such as "We will make producers responsible for the waste they create and for the full cost of recycling or disposal, encouraging more sustainable design and manufacturing" (LPM 2019:24). Hence, encouragement was put hand in hand with responsibilities.

It can be considered that conative language, especially in terms of rules and regulations, aimed at delivering Labour's commitment to environmental protection. The addressees of that communication, who were directly mentioned were the producers of plastic (LPM 2019:24). At the same time, when the general public was concerned in relation to clean air and food, communication became more referential linked to people's rights and also delivered as public administration targets.

4.4.4.Political form analysis: from local contacts to social justice- the world of 'the new'

The communication of environmental protection was also apparent beyond the section on "A Green Industrial Revolution' (LPM 2019:9). In those parts, one noticeable form of discussion was the poetic-phatic one, most often related to the goal of being carbon neutral. For instance, concerning the NHS, the manifesto mentioned "our NHS becomes a net-zero-carbon service […]" (LPM 2019:32), or "new zero-carbon homes standard" (LPM 2019:78). Poetic-phatic communication supported the delivery of mediums or frames of solutions as given, without explicating concrete targets. Moreover, the poetic power created the discourse of carbon neutrality to gather people around the idea. Usually, the targets referred to "millions of existing homes […]" (LPM 2019:78) or "NHS Forest of one million trees, […]" (LPM 2019:32). Such numbers communicated the ambitiousness of aims but could create questions about the feasibility of their achievement.

To maintain social contact, the platform referred to the refugees of "environmental catastrophes" (LPM 2019:71) and pupils who will become knowledgeable about environmental issues and skilled in dealing with the "environmental emergency" (LPM 2019:39). The phatic power of such communication could create certain relations with the representatives of mentioned social groups.

Concerning Brexit, the communication of environmental protection was similar to the LPM 2017, since here the focus continued to be on regulations. There were discussions about "robust and legally binding protections […]", as well as "new legislation to ensure support and certainty for UK farmers, our fishing industry and protection for our natural environment"

(LPM 2019:91). However, the overarching form of communication was in the frames of "a new Brexit deal" (LPM 2019:90). This, together with the "new legislation" (LPM 2019:91), aimed at uniting voters around a new solution. This also highlighted its difference from their competitor by 'world-making' around the idea 'new'.

The same can relate to explicit discussion of environmental protection under the section 'A New Internationalism' (LPM 2019:93). However, when it came to the part on 'Climate Diplomacy' (LPM 2019:98-99), although environmental issues were discussed through the prism of justice concerning Global South, the prevailing power form was not referential but rather emotive. This part made references to the country leaders, who "champion a climate-change denial agenda" (LPM 2019:98), alongside citing Conservatives' leader's words. The manifesto referred to B. Johnson's' piece from the Telegraph from 2015, where he named global warming a "primitive fear" (LPM 2019:98, see also Grice 2021).

It could be considered that this part created the picture of "others" and communicated with voters through them. Moreover, the discussion illustrated that, "Only Labour can rebuild Britain's leadership on the most serious threat to our shared humanity" (LPM 2019:98). Therefore, the environmental problem lost its priority in this discussion, paving a way for constructed antagonism, and the addresser's capacities to save "us". Here, "our shared humanity" created 'us' through referring to 'common places'. It could be assumed that, through emotive power, Labour capitalized on the fact that the competitor had close relations with Trump, who was not popular in the UK (Perrigo 2019). Hence, the mentioning of J. Bolsonaro further exacerbated the image of 'them' but the focus was on Trump and Johnson.

The communication of environmental protection became more assertive where "climate justice" was concerned (LPM 2019:104). The social justice was also emphasized here, although communication was quite firm when it came to fossil fuels, such as "End all UK Export Finance support to fossil fuel projects […]", "Stop all aid spending on fossil fuel production overseas […]" (LPM 2019:104). At the same time, as S. Unsworth (2019) noted, Labour did not define what they called 'fossil fuel 'related projects. It could be assumed the lack of definition allowed the assertiveness, which, in turn supported the environmentally friendly image of the party.

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In summary, the Labour manifesto from 2019 gave primacy to environmental issues by all indicators. They communicated the problem from the perspective of the issue owner.

The communication of environmental protection in the LPM 2019 registered several main trends. The emotive communication was used to portray the competitor as 'others'. This

might have anticipated an aim that people would not go and vote for 'others' but rather choose 'one of us'. However, when the discussion was closely related to Labour's ideological focus, it appeared that the contact would be maintained with existing Labour voters. Poetic communication, expressed in the battle of targets, could be aimed at appealing to environmentally friendly voters with more ambitious goals and ambitions.

Whenever the addressees were not the actual voters, the party used strong language, such as when talking about natural reservations (LPM 2019:23) and banning international programmes (LPM 2019:104). As for the general public, the communication was mainly from the perspective of people's rights. The argumentative language was also used with fragile and controversial issues.

5.Discussion of main findings

This section compares the main findings of the analysis. The trends related to the intra-party dynamics are approached here from the perspective of translation studies, where the 2017 manifestos are the proto-texts, and the 2019 ones are the meta-texts (drawing from A.Popovic 1976:226). This allows us to better illustrate the changes in issue primacy.

The analysis of party manifestos from 2017 and 2019 illustrated that environmental issues had become more central both for Conservatives and Labour. The Table below summarizes the findings related to the indicators of issue primacy.

Table 4. Findings on the primacy of environmental issues: Conservatives and Labour (2017, 2019)

	Contextual Primacy	Structural Primacy	Function	Model
Conservatives 2017		9/3 Less than half of the sections	Communicating the presence of niche issue	3
Conservatives 2019	V	7/5 More than half of the sections	Communicating the increased emphasis on 'niche issues'	3 <- 4
Labour 2017		13/6 Less than half of the sections	Communicating the position towards niche issues	3 ->4
Labour 2019	V	A separate section	Communicating as an issue-owner	4

As can be noticed from the table above, Conservatives and Labour gave contextual primacy to environmental protection in 2019. If we try to integrate D. Delabastita's (1993:34, 36) 'transformation categories' into the comparative analysis of manifestos, then, in the case of contextual primacy, one can talk about 'addition'.

According to Delabastita (1993:36), a transformation could be intentional or unintentional. Given the strategic meaning of the manifesto for electoral campaigns, 'additions' were intentional here. It could be considered that there was a need to adjust manifesto texts to the changed 'cultural code'[8] for better electoral fortunes. The changed 'cultural code' here can refer to the increase in the importance of environmental issues among the British public between 2018 and 2019, as noted by Kenny (2022:9). That adjustment resulted in the contextual primacy of environmental issues on both party platforms from 2019.

Concerning the structural primacy, the manifestos from 2017 did not mention environmental issues in all their sections. In the case of Conservatives, the discussion on environmental protection existed in three sections out of nine, which is less than half of the sections the manifesto contains.

However, Conservatives increased that focus significantly on the 2019 platform. That manifesto discussed those issues in more than half of its sections. There were also two separate parts on environment, unlike the 2017 platform, which covered only one part. The separate part of the 2017 manifesto was a subchapter (CUPM 2017:40).[9] In the 2019 manifesto, one was a chapter (CEM 2019:55), another one was a subchapter (CUPM 2019:43).

The Conservative manifesto again employed the operation of 'addition' to translate the structural primacy of environmental issues from the 2017 text to the one for 2019. The 'addition' related not only to the number of sections where environmental issues were mentioned, but the levels of delimitation of those issues (from a sub-chapter to chapter). At the same time, the manifesto did not give structural primacy to environmental issues since they were not part of a separate section.

Unlike Conservatives, Labour gave structural primacy to environmental issues in 2019. When approaching Labour manifestos from the perspective of translation, it can be seen that the 'dominant' of the text has changed.[10] The 2017 manifesto discussed environmental

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[8] D. Delabastita (1993:13) defined cultural codes as "a particular aggregate of […] cultural sign systems […]".
[9] This work considered the separate part on the environment as a subchapter (CUPM 2017:40), since it belonged to a larger part, 'Global Britain' (CUPM 2017:37), which in turn was a part of the second section
[10] R. Jakobson's (1981 [1935]:752) 'dominant' is the component, which defines the rules of the text and determines its integrity.

issues in slightly less than half of its sections. The separate part dedicated to the issues was a chapter (LPM 2017:93).

In the 2019 Labour manifesto, environmental issues were discussed in all sections. Moreover, the party dedicated a separate section to 'A Green Industrial Revolution' (LPM 2019:9).

Therefore, Labour did not employ just an 'addition', but rather changed the rules of text organization. In 2017, environmental protection was approached in the frames of other mainstream issues. The structural change of the 2019 manifesto transformed that approach. Environmental issues, precisely the 'green industrial revolution', became the context for discussing mainstream issues.

Based on the analysis, some implications can be made about the functions of environmental issues in manifestos. In the CUPM 2017, where niche-mainstream relations resembled the Model 3, the environmental issues were on the platform for 'showing presence'. They were getting the 'function of language' when being discussed from the lens of mainstream issues.

In 2019 we can observe the difference. The Conservative manifesto started to highlight the increase in the emphasis on environmental issues. This could have been aimed at keeping those voters who were prioritizing environmental protection, and to appeal to the indecisive ones.

Regarding Labour, the context of Brexit helped at better communicating their position towards environmental issues. That might have positioned them as the 'pro-environmental mainstream party'.

In other words, the delivery of the party position towards those issues could anticipate connecting environment to Labour's image (this work refers to Sartori's (2005[1976]:293-294) definition of a party image). That communication morphed into the discussion of environmental protection from the issue-owner's perspective in 2019.

Given the fact that Labour delivered its position in their manifestos, it may have allowed the party to translate environmental issues into their ideological language (examples related to public ownership, decentralization, etc...). That was not quite as vivid in case of Conservatives.

This ambitious approach to environmental protection adopted by Labour in 2019 can have two consequences for the following general elections. Firstly, since the text of the manifesto and its structural organization is 'revolutionary,' any structural, contextual softening can cost votes and affect the developed image of the 'pro-environmental

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mainstream party'. Secondly, the lack of metalingual communication on party platforms does not make Labour the challengers, which perhaps they cannot afford being in the political mainstream. Thus, it can be assumed that the next manifesto will include more referential communication.

Since the Conservative party did not change the 'dominant' of their manifesto text in 2019, it gave them room to make issues more salient and continue communicating that salience.

5.1. Identified trends in communicating environmental issues: new 'worlds' or new codes: advertising economic benefits

From 2019, both the platforms of Conservatives and Labour aimed to send a message about the new reality, the 'green industrial revolution'.

It can be considered that the platforms tried to deliver the message that economic benefits and environmental protection can co-exist. This communication could hint at a 'new code' concerning the relationship between those two issues

Why does this work not consider this communication to be a metalingual one?

The metalingual power implies challenging the old and introducing a 'new' code (Selg, Ventsel 2020:199). Regarding the platforms from 2019, Conservatives and Labour were more focused on respectively decreasing bills and growing the job market, in which some environmental protection measures envisioned to eventuate.

The 'green industrial revolution', per se, is not about challenging the norms. It instead portrays the old code of industry from the lens of environmental protection. For instance, if platforms communicated the need for some economic sacrifice for environmental protection, that would be a 'new code', which breaks the grounds of old reality.

Therefore, the discourse of the 'new' on both platforms became instead a source of poetic power providing 'readymade solutions'. That discourse developed the need to compete on whose 'new' solution was better. Labour's 'new' was in the future, whereas Conservatives' was in the British potential. This finding agrees with the evidence suggested in the studies by Baldwin and Lammers (2016, 2018) discussed previously.

5.2.Identified trends in communicating environmental issues: environmental targets in the 'battlefield'

Reducing carbon emissions was one of the central parts of the manifestos when discussing environmental issues. The targets and deadlines for reaching carbon neutrality were one source of the competition between 'new worlds'.

The Labour Manifesto from 2019 focused on the poetic power of those targets, which, through their ambitiousness could have granted them competitive advantage in elections. In contrast, Conservatives mainly relied on the phatic power of those targets, which alongside emotive power provided 'definitive sounding' solutions which did not fit the wicked nature of the problem. On the other hand, they helped to deliver the addresser's determination about environmental issues, highlighting the UK's leading role in the global actions for environmental protection. Therefore, the constructed 'competition' was on a global level.

In those 'competitions' created by Labour and Conservatives, the winners would not beat the environmental problem. The discussions instead were more about who was or would be better in that endeavour either nationally or globally.

Since the Conservative's primary focus was on global leadership, there were few cases of developing the image of 'them'. In one case, for instance that image belonged to climate change. However, the emphasis was rather on being at the vanguards of the fight.

Where other issues were concerned, Conservatives referenced Labour and their leader, J. Corbyn, in the case of environmental issues, those references were lacking (not fully absent though).

Concerning the Labour Party, the manifesto from 2019 was primarily based on creating antagonism through directly referencing the competitor, constructing the image of 'others' and communicating with the audience through 'them'.

It can be assumed since Conservatives were in power and therefore shared the responsibility for existing environmental policies, that they needed to capitalize on past achievements with compelling language. In contrast, Labour, as opposition, capitalized on existing mis-achievements, intimidating with fear about the future.

5.3.Identified trends in communicating environmental issues: problem solutions and transparent management of problems

Argumentative solutions to environmental issues generally had three main trends in manifestos of both parties and from both years. One trend was using referential power to communicate controversial issues (for example, airport expansion for Labour, fracking for Conservatives). The solutions here were rather about the transparent administration and management of the problem. Usually, the platforms created symbolic or formal hierarchies, subjectifying solutions to the scientific expertise or tests. Thus, the referential power was accompanied with the conative one. These were cases when the solution was provided but did not address the core of the issue. Instead, it suggested a better management of the problem.

Those examples also illustrate the paradox of referential communication regarding wicked problems. As mentioned by Selg and Ventsel (2020:56-57), policy makers are not allowed to make mistakes regarding wicked problems. Hence, a better and more argumentative discussion related to the management of those problems becomes necessary in democratic governments, particularly when the cases are controversial.

Perhaps the wicked nature of the environmental problem can also explain why most of the solutions were put as public administration goals, rules and regulations. Those solutions were mediated either by law or performance targets. The measurability and manageability deriving from conative power make those solutions a better fit for environmental issues, given their wicked nature. They allow policymakers to monitor the performance. Moreover, they give the opportunity to citizens and activists to keep policy makers accountable. Although when citizens and activists are referring to performance related targets during the advocacy, they arguably communicate in a referential form.

Is there one best form of communicating environmental problems? Do the prevalence of phatic, poetic, and emotive forms deproblematise environmental issues?

The Labour manifesto from 2019 attempted to communicate environmental issues from the perspective of rights. Moreover, in 2023, Labour proposed the plan of approaching clean air as a human right (Adu 2023). It can be considered that such communication is the closest to the essence of the problem, since environmental issues derive from every person and their impact reaches each of us.

There are also more drastic measures. For instance bans, which contain conative power and do not accept compromises, as in the case of banning air transport expansion by Greens (Gabbatiss 2019: Carbon Brief).

With that said, it can be considered that environmental issues require advocacy and public relation management. Hence, poetic and phatic forms could serve that awareness-raising purpose. However, the latter is quite country specific.

It could be argued that awareness-raising could be redundant for the UK, the home of the Extinction Rebellion.[11] As of May 8, 2023, the environment was in the list of the top 4 issues, which the British public found important[12]. If it stays at the top, parties will need to tilt towards more concrete solutions, which will eventually better illustrate their position towards these issues. Those solutions would require either referential forms of communication or conative ones, depending on the external pressure of each party.

5.4. Identified trends in communicating environmental issues: Brexit and environmental issues

In 2017 and 2019, both manifestos discussed environmental protection in the context of Brexit. The Conservative Manifesto from 2017 used those discussions to balance between Euroscepticism and the potential deal. In 2019, the communication of environmental issues delivered the importance of controlling the field through the UK rules and laws. In both cases, environmental issues supported to deliver the importance of Brexit. Drawing from Selg and Ventsel (2020:78), it can be considered that here Brexit was presented as the 'instigator' of the problem.

Concerning the Labour manifestos from 2017 and 2019, the discussion of environmental issues in the context of Brexit mainly remained the same. The discourse of Brexit helped Labour to better deliver its position in 2017. In 2019 the impression was that the manifesto portrayed Labour as a successor of the EU in environmental protection and put the competitor on the other side of that continuum. Thus, the context of Brexit supported Labour in communicating its position more strongly.

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[11] Extinction Rebellion. About Us. Retrieved from https://rebellion.global/about-us/ 14.05.2023
[12] YouGov UK 2023. The most important issues facing the country. Weekly Tracker. Retrieved from: https://yougov.co.uk/topics/education/trackers/the-most-important-issues-facing-the-country 14.05.2023

Conclusion

The prevalence of niche issues is apparent in British party politics. From Brexit to environmental protection, these issues have challenged the political mainstream.

This work illustrated that the primacy of environmental issues on mainstream party platforms has changed between the elections of 2017 and 2019. That change could be observed concerning the contextual and structural primacy of issues and through the increased variety of niche-mainstream translations and communications.

The functions of niche issues have also changed. For Conservatives, it was a shift from showing the presence of issues on the platform to communicating that they gave them more emphasis. Labour delivered their position on environmental issues in the 2017 manifesto whereas in 2019 they communicated them from the perspective of being the issue owner.

The main communication trends covered both the deproblemtisation of issues and the discussion of solutions. The analysis suggested the environmental issues helped Conservatives to put Brexit to the foreground. The context of Brexit, in turn, helped Labour to better deliver their position on environmental protection and communicate them as one of their main appeals.

The parties also created 'new worlds'. They were located in different places. The analysis proposed that for Labour 'new' was in future, whereas for Conservatives it was in the potential of the country and people. However, the 'new' did not challenge the existing norms but symbolically demonstrated a new perspective of approaching them.

The solutions were primarily relying on conative power, though there were also suggestions based on arguments, deliberations. The manifestos from 2019 included more solutions communicated in a referential form than in 2017, especially with regard to Labour. However, referential forms did not always address the pure essence of environmental issues but emphasized its management. The work connected these aspects with the wicked nature of the environmental problem.

The results mentioned above were reached through employing two methodological approaches. Drawing from Lotman's (2005) semiosphere, the thesis suggested four models of relations between a niche issue and mainstream party platforms. The work developed indicators to analyse the primacy of a niche issue in electoral manifestos.

Another phenomenon that was dominant on party platforms was about messages, which had the connotation of 'competition'. For Labour, that was mostly about creating the image of others and communicating environmental issues through them. The poetic power of the environmental goals and targets supported that competition.

For Conservatives, the competition was on the global level, and the targets were the source of phatic power, illustrating 'definitive sounding solutions', which overshadow the wicked essence of environmental problems.

To study the communication of environmental issues, the thesis used the political form analysis by Selg and Ventsel (2020). This helped to better understand the dominant forms of communication. Those implications also shed light on how communication influenced the problematisation of issues and suggested solutions.

This work juxtaposed the findings derived from the analysis of different party platforms. It was concluded that all manifestos referred to the operation of 'addition', regarding the contextual primacy of issues.

Conservatives used 'addition' for all indicators. For instance, the structural primacy was also improved compared to the CEM 2017. However, their manifesto lacked a separate section indicating environmental protection, which also had to do with the design of manifesto sections and their titles. This study considered that particular design supported the delivery of Brexit messages.

The Labour Party granted contextual and structural primacy to environmental issues by changing the 'dominant' of the manifesto text compared to 2017.

Based on this research and these findings, it is suggested that emotive and phatic communication could raise public awareness of those issues and provoke interest around them. However, when environmental issues were already an important part of public discourse, parties would need to place more focus on the discussion of them in their manifestos.

The thesis utilized the explanatory power of semiotics to interpret these trends in party competition. Since the study material used was political party manifestos, this work did not extensively study other mediums of electoral campaigns. Therefore, there could be value in

future studies that compare those sources and identify whether parties deviate from their manifestos, for instance, during electoral debates.

Concerning the methodological aspects of the study, the semiosphere-based models could be further developed, including more indicators for contextual primacy and finding more generalizable definition of mainstream issues.

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Study Material: Party Manifestos*

- The Labour Party Manifesto 2017
- The Labour Party Manifesto 2019
- The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2017
- The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019

*The source of the study materials was the Manifesto Project Data Dashboard, cited as

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Kokkuvõte

Tänapäeva poliitika on olnud tunnistajaks, kuidas nišiprobleemid võivad äärealadelt esile kerkida ja poliitilisele tegelikkusele väljakutseid esitada. Need võivad saada osaks poliitilisest peavoolust.

See töö vaatleb, millistel viisidel peavooluparteid nišiprobleeme oma parteiprogrammides edestavad. See kommunikatsioon indikeerib ühtlasi, milline on nišiprobleemi tähtsus peavooluerakonna jaoks ja kuidas nad probleemi kommunikatsioonis konstitueerivad. Võrreldes 2017. aasta valimistega tõusid 2019. aasta Suurbritannia üldvalimistel keskkonnaprobleemid teravalt esile (Carter, Pearson 2020), mistõttu keskkonnaküsimused pakuvad head materjali Suurbritannia poliitika nišiteemade analüüsimisel.

Selle töö eesmärk on mõista, milline on keskkonnaprobleemide prioriteet Briti tavalistes parteiplatvormides, keskendudes ennekõike konservatiivide ja leiboristide seisukohtadele. Samuti uurin magistritöös, kuidas peavooluparteid kommunikeerivad oma parteiplatvormidel nišiprobleeme. Võrdleva vaatenurga huvides hõlmab töö valimisi aastatel 2017 ja 2019. Mõlemad toimusid pärast Brexiti hääletust (Prosser 2020). Keskkonnaprobleemide olulisuse analüüsimisel parteiplatvormidel toetub lõputöö Lotmani (2005) semiosfääri kontseptsioonile ja pakub välja indikaatorid, selle teema tähtsuse positsioneerimiseks. Probleemide kommunikatsiooni paremaks mõistmiseks on käesolevas töös kasutatud poliitilist vormianalüüsi (Selg, Ventsel 2020).

Töö esimese osa tutvustab poliitilise parteiprogrammi funktsioone ja nišiparteide mõistet. Samuti käsitletakse selles Briti parteisüsteemi dünaamikat ja keskkonnaprobleeme. Lisaks antakse ülevaade valimiste ja valimiskäitumise analüüsimise metoodikast. Teine osa kontseptualiseerib uurimuse põhimõisteid; probleemi olulisust, niši ja peavoolu omavahelist suhet kirjeldavaid mudeleid ning tutvustab Selgi ja Ventseli poliitilist vormianalüüsi. Kolmandas osas viiakse läbi analüüs, millele järgnevad neljandas osas esitatud analüüsi peamised järeldused . Käesoleva lõputöö järeldusi võrreldakse töö viiendas osas.

Uuringu tulemusena selgus, et konservatiivid ja leiboristid kasutasid keskkonnateemasid sõnumite edastamiseks erinevalt. Mõlemad poolel püüdsid luua arutelu "uuest". Konservatiivid seostasid "uut" Briti potentsiaaliga ning tõid paralleele ajaloost, samas kui leiboristid seostasid seda peamiselt tuleviku perspektiiviga.

Mõlemad partei kasutasid keskkonnateemasid, et rõhutada oma konkurentsieelist. Leiboristide eelis tulenes nende ambitsioonikatest eesmärkidest, samas kui konservatiivid rõhutasid Ühendkuningriigi juhtrolli globaalses keskkonnapoliitikas. Mõlemad parteid lootsid, et sellised sõnumid suunavad tähelepanu probleemilt osapoolte rollile selles. Lahenduste osas esitati neid peamiselt eeskirjade ja mõõdetavate eesmärkide kujul. Kui probleemid olid kompleksed, siis osapooled pakkusid rohkem argumente lahenduste leidmiseks. Seda lähenemist kasutati probleemi keerulise olemuse tõttu, mille lahendamine "ei ole lihtne, et sellega kiirustada". Demokraatlikes riikides eriti oluline tagada vastutustundlik juhtimine niisuguste probleemidega tegelemisel. Eesmärkide ja eeskirjade seadmine aitab mõõta tulemuslikkust ja tagada vastutustundlik juhtimine, kuid sellega on fookus nihkunud probleemi "juhtimisele", mitte lahendamisele. Analüüsi käigus leiti, et 2017. aastal oli keskkonnaküsimuste tähtsus konservatiivide jaoks "tajutav", kuid alles 2019 valimiste ajal hakkasid nad oma parteiprogrammis keskkonnateemadele suuremat tähelepanu pöörama. Mõlemal juhul aitasid keskkonnaprobleemid konservatiividel edastada sõnumeid seoses Brexitiga. Tööpartei puhul näitas uuring, et Brexiti kontekst aitas neil 2017. ja 2019. aastal paremini täita oma positsiooni ja pühendumust keskkonnaküsimustele.

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