

Łukasz SCHEFFS

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

ORCID: 0000-0003-2696-5735

Electoral Strategy as an Example of Unarmed Struggle. Reflections on the Art of War, or Sun Tzu's Thirteen Chapters

Abstract: In the work presented here, I would like to address issues related to electoral strategy understood as part of the broader issue of political strategy. Issues of the metaphor of warfare will also be addressed here. I will be looking for strategic thinking itself in the centuries-old work *The Art of War*, or *Thirteen Chapters* by Sun Tzu. In my opinion, this work contains several guidelines that can be found in contemporary thinking about political or electoral activities of political parties. These guidelines adapted to the language and realities of modern times can provide a recipe for effective and planned electoral activities. This paper will be of overview and organizational nature. I will base it primarily on the previous findings of other scholars who have made the issue of electoral strategy the subject of their deliberations. The paper will include elements of analysis of the literary cannon, or more precisely, its dissection. On the sidelines, there will be praxeological and socio-technical threads, as well as a few minor interjections related to the issue of metaphor as a means of expression and a way of explaining social reality.

Key words: electoral strategy, unarmed struggle, marketing

Introduction

The designed scope of the topic of this study requires at the outset some clarifications and a basic ordering of terminology. While the notion of strategy, even electoral strategy, does not raise major scholarly questions today, the term unarmed struggle may remain forgotten in modern humanities, or directly identified only with issues of military strategy and defense planning. Meanwhile, almost at the same time when the strategy from strictly military considerations permeated the widely understood social reality (Biskup, 2010), just as quickly the concept of conducting all kinds of social activities (unarmed struggle) in cases of modeling social behavior became an interesting perspective for explaining numerous processes, moreover, designing solutions, according to the articulated postulate about the usefulness of social sciences for the practice of everyday life (Czarnecka, 2010).

In the study submitted here, I would like to address issues concerning both electoral strategy understood as part of a broader issue such as political strategy, at the same time tackling the issue of the metaphor of struggle (war) and additionally tracing the origins of this strategic thinking in the centuries-old study *The Art of War*, or *Thirteen Chapters* by Sun Tzu. This is because, in my opinion, this work contains many indications (directives) that can also be found in contemporary thinking about political or electoral activity of political parties. Thus, I intend to find in the work dating back to 2,600 years ago practical advice that, adapted to the language and

realities of the modern era, can constitute a recipe for effective and planned political (electoral) activity¹.

I motivate the research procedure designed in this way by my own sociotechnical inclinations, where I understand sociotechnics as a set of recommendations on how to make conscious social transformations in order to achieve the desired goals, and the postulate that the statements of a great many thinkers can be treated as indications characteristic of social engineering. That is to say that “one can try to extract from the views of some author (who illustrates in a particularly condensed way the views of his/her historical period, group, environment, the forces behind him/her, the forces he/she represents) what is the result of the historical experience of his/her era, and what is his/her original proposal of sociotechnical recommendations” (Podgórecki, 1973, pp. 131–132). This way of reasoning was articulated more strongly by Janusz Goćkowski, who indicated that the literary cannon in the formulation of sociotechnical directives can be used in five variants: 1) as a source of ideas of operations of sociotechnical nature, which can be translated into the language of sentences of sociotechnical directives; 2) as a coefficient of understanding what happens to the living cultural personality under the influence of sociotechnical operations; 3) as information about what is permanent and universal in man, what belongs to the archetype and is, as it were, constitutive in the human condition; 4) as a representation of living people in their living situations, i.e. as a coefficient of understanding man as a multifaceted and simultaneous being, endowed with freedom, and thus not only unverifiable as an existence, but also unpredictable (in any case, not as much and not to such an extent as it is in case of non-human entities, especially things); 5) as a way of depicting the aspirations and attitudes of living people towards problems that, in a somewhat normal way, must always be (or, as a rule, are) in the field of interest of the social scientist (Goćkowski, 1966, pp. 151–154; Goćkowski, 1968). Otherwise stated, sociotechnical knowledge can be obtained from common-sense wisdom, specialized-professional knowledge and systematic verifiable knowledge, regardless of which of these we include universal truths contained, for example, in a literary work (Podgórecki, 1970, p. 97).

This study will be of overview and organizational nature. In it, I will rely primarily on the previous findings of other scholars who have made the issue of electoral strategy the subject of their deliberations. The paper will also include elements of analysis of the literary cannon, and more specifically, its dissection. Praxeological and socio-technical themes will appear on the sidelines, as well as a few minor interjections related to the issue of metaphor as a means of expression and a way of explaining social reality.

Strategy in political science

Originally, the concept of strategy was derived from the theory of the art of war, hence the reference to struggle, or at least the metaphor of struggle (war) in politics, appears in the title and later in this paper. The essence of strategy found its way into the focus of other, non-military spheres only in the 1950s and 1960s, with particular attention to

¹ I carried out a similar thought process at one time with regard to *Niccolò Machiavelli's philosophical treatise, The Prince* (Scheffs, 2023).

organizational and management theorists. Those conducting research on strategy, in an attempt to clarify its roles and meaning, as well as the meaning of its application, reached and still reach today for knowledge from the field of economics, sociology, psychology, as well as marketing and communication theory (Stępińska, 2004, p. 49; Kolczyński, 2008, p. 32; Mrozowska, 2009). A general definition of strategy boils down to defining it as “the choice of objectives and policy rules that give direction to the organization’s marketing activities, determining the size, mix and allocation of resources in accordance with the changing market situation” (Kotler, 1994, pp. 55–58). Strategy is also an effort to be distinguished from others and clearly define one’s identity (Obłój, 1995, pp. 32–33), or, finally, “a system of values that makes it possible to recognize and evaluate opportunities and threats, which in turn makes it possible to take action to ensure long-term existence” (Prymon, 1991, p. 145). A special feature of strategy is the so-called strategic thinking, which means: 1) striving to know the situation, exploring opportunities, choosing goals and principles of resource utilization; 2) applying a set of methods and techniques of analysis and synthesis, enabling the realization of these aspirations and gathering the necessary information for this; 3) having the will to continuously change the areas and ways of operation of the organization in accordance with the changing environment (Gierszewska, 1995, pp. 14–15). Thus, the purpose of strategic planning is to formulate an unambiguous orientation of the organization, the practical implementation of which provides an opportunity for its survival and development. However, it should be emphasized already at this point that “strategic planning (thinking) – in view of the uncertainty and complexity of the environment – must remain rough planning, creating only a general framework for action. Its concretization can reach the level of formulating the so-called strategic success factors, which are indications for operative action” (Koziół, Wojtowicz, 2006, p. 6).

Turning from general remarks on strategy as such to a discussion of political strategy, it is appropriate to mention that, at least in Polish political science, three basic directions of its research can be distinguished. The first, which derives from the aforementioned military trend, deals with the strategies of the state implemented in the international arena in relations with other states and international organizations. In these considerations, the concept of national strategy is often used. The second direction focuses on the activities of political parties, as actors on the political scene, participating in the decision-making process carried out in modern democracies. The third trend undertakes research on the strategies used by interest groups (Skrzypiński, 2009, s. 139).

Political strategy is “the totality of concepts, ideas and assumptions that define the vision of the development of political relations in the perspective of at least several, more often over a dozen years” (Muszyński, 2001, p. 200). Thus understood, the strategy determines, in particular, the long-term goals of a given political entity, such as a political party, and the basic features of the political and socio-economic system, as well as the main values, intended to form the basis of the political program, the implementation of which, in turn, is one of the objectives of the functioning of the entity in the public and political sphere (Alberski, 2008, p. 5). One should note, it also includes the relationship of a given entity to other participants in the political system and elements of its environment. Also included in such operationalized strategy are the ways and means of realizing the intended political goals (Stępińska, 2004, p. 26). Thus, strategy is a *de facto* response

to structural uncertainty relating to the future. The formulation of an accurate strategy allows the organization to behave adequately in the face of changes brought about by the political, social or economic environment (Zawadzki, 2004, p. 13). This does not change the fact that political strategy remains a subjective way of interpreting, most often by political elites, objective transformations taking place in the social environment (Szczudlińska-Kanoś, 2011, p. 140). In addition, political strategy can take the form of a loose set of concepts, ideas and assumptions, or it can be a compact document that defines the directions and goals of prospective development and formulates ways and means of realizing the intended goal (Wojciechowski, 2014, p. 109).

One of the ways to make the goals of a political entity (political party) more realistic is electoral strategy. This one should be considered a method, technique and decision-making procedure that serves to maximize the electoral result in a specific place, time and circumstances (Jakubowski, 2013, p. 30; Skrzypiński, 2004, p. 40). A well-constructed electoral strategy is a plan that determines how a political entity is to act during an election campaign and how to respond to actions taken by competitors. Such a strategy also includes electoral tactics, i.e., ideas and actions (often ploys) used to implement the strategy. The development of such a strategy should be preceded by a strategic analysis, such as market penetration, maintaining market position, development or growth and new ventures. Undoubtedly, a different strategy should be taken by entities currently in power, while another should be taken by those just aspiring to such power (Stępińska, 2004, p. 27).

Developing a strategy is a key, perhaps the most critical element of an election campaign. Its assumptions are the foundation on which the entire electoral message, all communications and activities (printed materials, spots, etc.) are built (Ferenc, 2001, p. 63; Kinastowska, 2020, p. 23). If one were to try to draw a line between political strategy and electoral strategy, one could say that the former should be regarded as a planned implementation of political objectives on the basis of – as mentioned above – subjective interpretations of the current situation, while the latter should be seen more instrumentally, as a system of rules and principles of action that, again in a planned manner, set the framework for purely operational undertakings (Potarzycka-Szczerba, 2015, p. 147). Both constitute, or at least at the normative layer should constitute, a kind of dialogue between political parties and their potential supporters (voters) both in the electoral period and beyond (Walecka-Rynduch, 2010, p. 378). Often, however, and this should be acknowledged, strategies remain only a “rationalized” suggestion and hypothesis as to the evolution of relations and interactions between political actors (Skrzypiński, 2011, p. 47). Still, regardless of whether the adopted (developed) strategies are actually implemented or not, their multiplicity testifies – again, at least declaratively only – to the validity and legitimacy of the phenomenon. Indeed, the available studies list, among others, rational, irrational and mixed strategies, strategies of the ruling party, opposition, regional leader, follower, new brand. There are also characterizations of the strategies of partisanship, strong contrast, ideological difference, organization building, coalition building, positive campaigns, negative campaigns, confusion, hardening, broadening, reversal, neutralization, spatial penetration, social penetration, internal representation, concession, authority and popularity, escalation, shock, wave, and other strategies. (Opiola, 2010, p. 18–20; Pietraś, 2012). In a word – it is already difficult to figure out which of these strategies is

superior, which less important, in which to see the chances of victory, and which to treat at most as a supplement, a detailing of a certain political offer.

Metaphor versus the concept of unarmed struggle

Wojciech Chudy began his reflections on how to win public sympathy and obedience with this statement: “The principle of political struggle, formerly identical to the rule of war, is being [...] civilized: heads are not cut off, but counted, or, as the language of American democracy puts it, ‘Ballots instead of bullets.’ However, political struggle, today as in the past, is associated with war. Nowadays it is a war for collective consciousness or for political beliefs expressed in the form of an unconscious reflex in favor of some value or person” (Chudy, 2005, p. 239). Metaphors – because nowadays talking or writing about political war is nothing more than actually using this phenomenon – are a great tool to understand and explain to others the motives of human action in the world of politics, among other things. Allegories help us fruitfully interpret politics itself as a metaphor, but also explore the inclinations of politicians to colorfully describe reality. Thanks to this, we discover the goals guiding them and try to at least reveal (understand) their way of seeing reality. Naturally, it is not a tool free from weaknesses or even flaws, though. (Kostecki, 2016, p. 366). Metaphor can be both a metacategory, in which case it takes the form of a specific field of knowledge; it tries to explain, systematize certain general regularities and observations of social life, but it can also be a simple construction on the principle of “society as”; then it takes the form of a colorful figurative, or symbol (Kostecki, 2020, p. 149).

Although colloquial speech has long used phrases such as: to stay on the battlefield and to beat one’s brains out, it is in recent years that military vocabulary has become particularly prominent in the language of modern politics (Pacula, 2012, p. 35–36; Podracki, Mrysińska, 2006). The metaphor of battle (battlefield) is a catchy one, and regardless of how it sounds: necessary. Aggression that is visible on a daily basis in the behavior of both individuals and large social groups is, after all, due not only to their nature, but also to the social relations in which we live (Kostecki, 2016, p. 371). In this sense, on the one hand, it is an allegory that reduces the complexity of the social world, on the other hand, it is a neat rhetorical figure that brings us closer to the concept of understanding politics as competition, among other things.

The distinguishing feature of politics conceived in terms of competition is the two-tier nature of its rules. On the one hand, we are dealing with officially functioning political norms defined, among other things, in the Constitution and specific laws, the observance of which is supervised by independent courts (including bodies that adjudicate the political responsibility of persons holding high public office or the constitutionality of legislation), while on the other hand, we are dealing with a certain degree of development of political culture and a type of elite. Conventions understood in this way make it possible to accentuate dissent or hostility, at least in the declarative layer, conventionality and ritualization of certain behaviors (a kind of face painting with war colors) (Pawelczyk, 2007, p. 48–49). The prospect of gaining power or significant influence is already enough to make most social actors willing to exploit any possibility of struggle,

especially if they are able to create justifying derivations. Politics, described by the analogy of struggle, “is captured as a continuous process of change and conflict, which, if they can be articulated in an intentionally unconstrained manner, bring with them their own solutions, sometimes requiring changes in the rules of the game [...] The struggle for power [is then – editor’s note] violent and tends to encompass ever higher levels of values. As a result, the stakes in this game are high, and its outcome is uncertain” (Pawelczyk, 2007, p. 73). This does not change the fact of the popularity, usefulness and tendency to use this stylistic (rhetorical) figure.

Thus, since both the concept of strategy, which has lost – at least in the social sciences – its purely military dimension, and the term combat have become somewhat “civilized,” it is now all the easier to reach for the concept of unarmed combat, understood as an “intermediate level.” This is nothing more than a struggle with occasional use of physical violence and frequent – if not always – use of psychological violence. Indeed, psychological violence in particular is one of the most significant forms of action in almost all unarmed struggles (Rudniański, 1983, p. 31 and 35). Methods of subjugating controlled systems and their environment, referred to as unarmed struggle, include, among others, the method of depravity situation (when the controlling system prevents or hinders the controlled system from satisfying elementary needs – biological), the method of potentiation of non-elementary needs (it consists in creating in the controlled system a general attitude towards non-elementary needs – power, money), the method of channeling ideals (based on the deeper layers of the human psyche, when the controlling system affects the ideals and values of the controlled system) and the method of intensification of anxiety (which is aimed at strengthening the subordination achieved by all the above methods) (Mlicki, 1986, p. 36–37; Rudniański, 1978; Rudniański, 1979). All of them serve the purpose of subjugation and are aimed at inducing the potentially controlled to behave in certain ways. Not only to achieve the projected assumptions, but also to avoid an open clash. In other words, their meaning boils down to replacing direct (open) combat with indirect, non-armed forms. And now it is only necessary to look for these kinds of treatments (indications), understood more broadly, as various kinds of means of effective influence, in Sun Tzu’s work. Such practice is implicit in the opinion contained in the introduction to the online edition of *The Art of War*, or thirteen chapters, where one can read that: “The highest achievement is to defeat the enemy without fighting” (Tzu).

Possible unarmed struggle, or Sun Tzu’s purpose directives

Adopting a *relata refero* perspective, I now intend to “give the floor” to the Chinese war thinker, or the sages and commanders he quoted,² tracing his and their insights to directives (purpose sentences) that indicate what to do, what to refrain from doing, what measures to take, what to anticipate and what to know about in order to achieve the intended (expected) results. Transferring Sun Tzu’s insights from purely military operations, I want to further situate them within electoral strategies. On this occasion I take the

² The following consecutive quotes are from the same work by S. Tzu, *The Art of War; or Thirteen Chapters*.

liberty to call them methods of unarmed struggle, while absolutely not usurping the right to expand the catalog of these struggles, originally proposed elsewhere by J. Rudniański. However, I use this term to illustrate the activities undertaken during the design and implementation of electoral strategy, keeping in mind that this is a form of struggle that remains in the realm of metaphor, although I would like to note with regret at this point that from time to time it happens that in political practice there are also acts of violence (Kościuk, 2005).

Li Ch'Üan: "Arming oneself foreshadows war, and war is a matter of great importance. Someone who gets involved in it without prior preparation can be considered a fool" (p. 9).

Chang Yü: "When troops are ready to repel an aggressor, the arguments of the parties, the possibility of settlement, the courage of the enemy, then the conditions of the season and finally the difficulties of the terrain are considered first. After considering these three elements, the general is ready to announce the attack" (p. 9).

"The elements of the art of war are, first: the characteristics of the space in which the war takes place; second: the evaluation of external conditions; third: calculation; fourth: the confrontation of one's own and the enemy's forces; fifth: the chance of victory" (p. 32).

"Know yourself and know the enemy, only then will your victory not be threatened. Know the conditions of the terrain and weather well, then your victory will be complete" (p. 67).

Strategy is as much as **adequate preparation**, discernment of the terrain, in other words, the market (system). The basis for starting any activity within the political (electoral) activity must be a good (maximum in-depth) analysis. It is necessary to reach out to diverse sources and data, to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of one's own, but also of the competition. Only a proper calculation of opportunities and threats, strengths and weaknesses will allow you to answer the question of whether and how to prepare for competition. What is the position in relation to the competition and potential buyers of the offer (voters)?

"By command factors I mean the qualifications of commanders, their wisdom, sincerity, humanity, courage, strictness" (p. 10).

"By tactics, I mean organization, control, entrusting appropriate functions to officers, marching efficiency, good provisioning" (p. 10).

"[...] a general should create situations that will suit his qualifications. By creating such a situation, I mean prudent courage under difficult conditions and maintaining balance in a changing situation" (p. 11).

Developing an appropriate strategy should involve both the **recognition of factors of an external nature**, as mentioned above, **as well as one's own capabilities and capacities**. The prepared strategy must be designed in such a way as to take into account the circumstances provided by the external world, but also the skills, aptitude and appropriate background. Planned events, messages, activities, in a word, everything that constitutes a campaign plan must take into account one's own cognitive, intellectual and

organizational abilities. Resources (including human resources), the way they are to be used and properly managed at every stage of soliciting voters' support and votes must be meticulously assessed.

"Certainly, the one who does not make calculations at all squanders the chance to win. For this reason, I always carefully analyze the situation so that the terms of the confrontation are completely clear" (p. 15).

The starting point, therefore, is **diagnosis**. An assessment of the situation, followed by a possible decision on the strength and scope of electoral actions calculated to gain a leadership position, strengthen one's negotiating position in future coalition talks or simply make one's presence felt in the political arena, increases the chances of victory. The strategy adopted, therefore, must be de facto linked to discerning the situation and defining one's own position.

Tu Yu: "The attack need not be ingenious, but it must be extremely fast" (p. 18).

"Therefore, it is of utmost importance in war to break down the enemy's strategy" (p. 21).

Li Ch'Üan: "Attack the enemy's plans in their formative stages [...] The best strategy in war is to thwart the enemy's plans" (pp. 21–22).

Tu Yu: "Don't let your enemies unite" (p. 22).

"The next useful thing is to preempt the enemy's attack" (p. 22).

"Usually, the one who first occupies the battlefield and waits for the enemy there is in a better position than the one who later enters the scene and moves into battle" (p. 39).

T'sao T'sao: "Move to where there is a gap. Strike there and cut off the retreat. Always strike the enemy unexpectedly" (p. 39).

To be first, or to anticipate the moves of rivals, here is another indication of a well thought out and developed strategy. The effect of being first (information received earlier usually exerts a greater influence on the formation of an overall impression) (Aronson, Wilson, Akert, 1997) is one of the most effective ways of building a sense of superiority, both in political rivals and other participants (observers) in the electoral competition. The image of superiority built in this way positions all participants in the rivalry in the minds of the audience, while defining their positions in relation to each other. Being first also allows one to further impose a convenient narrative on the entire rivalry. And when rivals still fall in line with the prepared manner of the "electoral story," then the sense of competitive advantage will further increase.

"The strategy of war is to be cunning and create illusions. Therefore, if you are capable of something, pretend to be awkward; if you are active, create the appearance of passivity. If you are close, create the appearance of great distance, if they believe you are far away, find yourself unexpectedly close. Try to mislead the enemy, create disorganization in his army and only then strike" (p. 11).

The Grand Duke stated: "If someone is unable to influence the enemy's army, he does not deserve to be called a good strategist" (p. 24).

Nothing builds a position as effectively **as setting an interpretive framework** for a given socio-political reality and current issues. This is because setting the boundaries of language means outlining the limits of perception of reality (Wittgenstein, 1970, p. 67). Such a way of doing things allows one not only to name situations, people and circumstances, but ultimately causes political rivals to begin to speak and understand the social world as the race leader wants.

“When the enemy is concentrating, prepare to repel the attack; when he is strong, avoid him. Try to anger the enemy general and mislead him” (p. 12).

Chang Yü: “If the commander is fierce and prone to anger, insult him and make him angry until, annoyed, he moves against you without a plan and recklessly” (p. 12).

Li Ch'Üan: “When the enemy is calm, irritate him” (p. 13).

“When the enemy is united, try to separate him” (p. 13).

“A master fighter achieves victory without anger. This means that whatever he undertakes, he achieves success and victory by merely thwarting the enemy's plans” (p. 30).

Chen Hao: “I do not foresee unnecessary moves in my plans and not a single step in desperation” (p. 30).

Meng: “Drive the enemy mad, use ploys until his forces are dissipated” (p. 71).

Nothing is as empowering **as exploiting emotions**. Evoking any social changes, including campaign management through strategic planning is effective, and certainly such a message is strengthened when there is an appeal to emotion. Emotional impact can be made on both outsiders observing the electoral competition and one's political opponents (competitors) (Pawelczyk, 2007, p. 109). Hence, negative advertising is often used in election messages. Its meaning boils down to influencing the attitudes of the electorate and election results by criticizing political opponents (Stępińska, 2001; Knabaj, 2008; Rafałowski, 2022). The effect is also seen as a situation in which the opponents themselves, provoked, abandon their previously prepared strategy and begin to react unexpectedly to actions aimed at them. Then it can be concluded that the primary goal of such action has been achieved.

Chang Yü: “People treated with gentleness, justice, righteousness, will be unanimous and willingly obey the commands of commanders” (p. 9).

‘I Ching’ (Book of Changes) says: “When people are happy and carefree, they forget about mortal danger” (p. 9).

Ho Yen-Hsi: “The difficulties in training commanders are the same today as they were centuries ago” (p. 20).

Wang Hsi: “If we entrust the administration of the army to an ignoramus in war affairs, then we will introduce chaos and frustration among the soldiers” (p. 25).

Chang Yü: “In order to manage a great mass of soldiers, it is first necessary to assign responsibilities to generals and subordinate officers, to establish responsibilities and military ranks and grades” (p. 33).

“Order or disorder depends on organization. Courage or cowardice depend on circumstances, strength or weakness on (innate) predispositions” (p. 35).

“The combat expert prudently selects his people to be able to act in any situation” (p. 35).

Li Ch'Üan: “The brave can engage in combat, the cautious should take a defensive position, the wise should engage in counseling. In this way, every soldier's talent is utilized” (p. 35).

Chang Yü: “The method of promoting people is to place the sensible and the foolish, the wise and the brave accordingly. They should be assigned tasks where they can perform. Do not involve people in activities for which they are not suited. Select them according to their ability and capacity to perform the assigned tasks” (p. 36).

Ho Yen-Hsi: “Wu Ch'i said: “The responsibility for the success of a million people in war depends on the individual. The commander can unleash the spirit of victory in them” (p. 47).

“Troops will be punitive if the command's orders are consistent and effective. If orders are inconsistent and goals are not achievable, troops will disobey. If the orders are appropriate and enforced in a balanced way, the relationship between the general and his troops will be satisfactory” (p. 62).

“If the general is morally weak and his discipline imperfect, if his instructions and orders do not flow from wisdom, if the duties of officers and soldiers are not clearly defined and the ranks are not very compact, then the army is a mess” (p. 65).

“The general selects such men who, like his closest servants, are ready to descend into hell after him. He treats them like beloved sons, and they are ready to die with him” (p. 66).

Chang Yü: “Good commanders are simultaneously adored and feared. That is the whole point” (p. 67).

“The ability to anticipate is the reason for the victory of an enlightened prince and a wise commander. This trait distinguishes them from ordinary people” (p. 79).

An invaluable component of any strategy is people. Not only to prepare the strategy itself, but, above all, to put it into practice. Thus, in the case of electoral activity, resources are needed: staff and very clearly defined tasks to be performed. Only a proper division of tasks, both those of a strategic and purely operational nature, can bring an organization closer to success. A separate yet important issue is the answer to the question of what the measure of success is. This again is to be derived from strategic assumptions.

Chang Yü: “Opportunism and flexibility are used in managing an army, but they are not suitable for managing a state” (p. 25).

“Only ‘natural’ (conventional) and ‘supernatural’ (chi) forces are used in battle but their combinations are countless, no one would be able to enumerate them” (p. 34).

Li Ch'Üan: “There are no fixed rules in the art of war. They change and depend on circumstances” (p. 35).

“If I am able to provoke the enemy’s move, and I conceal my moves, I can concentrate, and the enemy must divide. If I concentrate while he is distracted, I can use all my strength to attack his position” (p. 40).

“He who tries to intimidate the enemy first accuses him of not working properly” (p. 54).

Chia Lin: “Intentions and plans to harm the enemy do not come down to a single method. Sometimes one drags wise and noble people from the enemy ruler’s entourage to one’s side in order to deprive him of advisors. Sometimes treacherous and dangerous people are sent to break up his administration. False information is also sent to drive ministers away from the hostile sovereign. One can also send proficient craftsmen to offer their goods to impoverish his people. One can present the enemy with talented musicians and dancers to change his tastes. One can also send an enemy ruler a beautiful woman to seduce him” (p. 54).

Strategy is a mission, values, goals, but also **very** specific actions (activities). Among them, **plays** are also important. Admittedly, one could now delve into the axiology of such moves: whether it is legitimate, moral and socially acceptable, but putting these threads aside, one can certainly say that covert, camouflaged and sometimes outright disreputable actions are also used for the purpose of strategy, including electoral strategy (Scheffs, 2012). Using the work of a Florentine political thinker from the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it could be written here: “[...] a prince must use both natures, and that one without the other is not strong. Therefore, a prince, forced to know how to use the nature of animals well, should among them take the fox and the lion as a model, for the lion does not know how to avoid snares, and the fox how to defend itself from wolves. It is necessary, therefore, to be a fox to know what a snare is, and a lion to strike fear into the wolves [...]” (Machiavelli, 1984, p. 87). In other words, among the numerous means of courting the favor and support of voters, reaching for various kinds of solicitations is a common practice, which on the one hand ensures success, while on the other hand is sometimes abused. And, admittedly, one can contest this fact, pointing out, for example, how immoral this course of action is, but – again using the concept of N. Machiavelli – doesn’t the end justify the means?

Here Yu: “This is why those proficient in the art of war know where and when a battle will be issued” (p. 41).

“This is why, after achieving victory, I do not repeat the same tactics, but in the next battle I respond to the circumstances” (p. 42).

T’sao T’sao: “Troops faithfully accompany a good commander during a campaign, but they should not accompany him when making plans” (p. 73).

Chang Yü: “Plans and the line of action adopted earlier sometimes have to be revised” (p. 74).

“The basic principle of warfare, therefore, lies in being able to prepare perfectly against all enemy intentions” (p. 75).

Somewhat tautologically, it can be said that a well-prepared strategy is, on the one hand, the result of strategic thinking, i.e. one must, using the principles of strategy construction, anticipate the very necessity of developing an action plan, but to think stra-

tegitically is at the same time to implement the assumptions of the strategy in the spirit of purposeful conduct, i.e. in realistic, thoughtful and phased action, where nothing or really little is left to chance. To proceed (act) strategically is to prepare an appropriate plan, thinking in a planned manner, and further to implement the designed actions and, finally, still to evaluate and assess them (Trzeciak, 2014).

Summary

Electoral strategy and its components, understood as an element of a larger whole, i.e., political strategy, additionally identified with a form of unarmed struggle, is a subject as interesting as it is difficult to clearly conclude. Undoubtedly, much has been written on the various forms of courting the favor of voters, based on a clear and precise plan of action. Nevertheless, to assume that in a work on war strategy that was written more than two and a half thousand years ago, and still on another continent, in a culturally completely different reality, is already a risky concept. And yet in the thinking of the master Sun Tzu one can find many references to how to design an overall strategy of action, and even more so a plan prepared for electoral use. Since nowadays the struggle to gain and maintain power, or merely influence those who wield power, takes on a primarily symbolic dimension, although let's not deceive ourselves, many simply kill for power, strategy can also be treated purely symbolically. Then it will take the form of an unarmed struggle, the meaning of which boils down to the rule of one over the other.

The very recipe of socially efficient action (sociotechnics) that uses strategy (unarmed struggle) to effectively achieve the desired goals (praxeology) is quite obvious: adequate preparation, recognition of factors of internal and external nature, diagnosis of the initial situation, the effect of priority and the ability to predict the actions of rivals. What remains next is to set an interpretative framework to impose one's way of describing and, consequently, seeing reality, appealing to the emotions of all participants in the competition (actors and audience of the performance), and then the appropriate selection of people and planned ploys. All this together is expected to result in a planned success.

The Art of War, or thirteen chapters, was written for the needs of rulers planning open conflict, relatively to give them victory without the use of force, by the very fact of assessing their own and their opponent's capabilities. This peculiar recipe, usable also in electoral competition, was offered by a man who, far from our cultural circle, manifested rather a supernatural talent for strategic thinking. And this thinking is now an effective management tool. Not surprisingly, politicians, and those who support them, are also eager to use it. Wherever there are competitive elections, and where the fact of taking power is determined by the number of validly cast votes, the utility of planned action becomes invaluable. In order to gain favor and support, one must first plan the entire complex process of soliciting public acceptance, and then obtain that acquiescence. Probably Sun Tzu was not the first, and certainly the last, to draw attention to this regularity. However, it remains indisputable that his way of doing things is the modern basis for strategic planning, which by way of implementation has also become an indispensable part of the world of politics and competitive elections.

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**Strategia wyborcza jako przykład walki niezbrojnej.
Rozważania na kanwie *Sztuki wojny*, czyli trzynastu rozdziałów Sun Tzu**

Streszczenie

W prezentowanej pracy chciałbym zająć się kwestiami związanymi ze strategią wyborczą rozumianą jako część szerszego zagadnienia strategii politycznej. Poruszone zostaną tu również kwestie metafory walki. Samego myślenia strategicznego będę poszukiwał w wielowiekowym dziele *Sztuka wojny*, czyli trzynastu rozdziałów Sun Tzu. Moim zdaniem dzieło to zawiera wiele wskazówek, które można odnaleźć we współczesnym myśleniu o działalności politycznej czy wyborczej partii politycznych. Porady te zaadaptowane do języka i realiów współczesności mogą stanowić receptę na skuteczne i zaplanowane działania wyborcze. Charakter tego opracowania będzie przeglądowy i porządkujący. Opierał będę się w nim przede wszystkim na dotychczasowych ustaleniach innych uczonych, którzy przedmiotem swoich rozważań uczynili zagadnienie strategii wyborczej. Praca będzie zawierała w sobie elementy analizy dzieła literackiego, a dokładniej jego rozbioru. Na uboczu będą się tu pojawiały wątki prakseologiczne i socjotechniczne, a także kilka drobnych wtrąceń związanych z zagadnieniem metafory jako środka wyrazu i sposobu objaśniania rzeczywistości społecznej.

Słowa kluczowe: strategia wyborcza, walka niezbrojna, marketing

Author Contributions

Conceptualization (Konceptualizacja): Łukasz Scheffs

Data curation (Zestawienie danych): Łukasz Scheffs

Formal analysis (Analiza formalna): Łukasz Scheffs

Writing – original draft (Piśmiennictwo – oryginalny projekt): Łukasz Scheffs

Writing – review & editing (Piśmiennictwo – sprawdzenie i edytowanie): Łukasz Scheffs

Competing interests: The author have declared that no competing interests exist

(Sprzeczne interesy: Autor oświadczył, że nie istnieją żadne sprzeczne interesy)

