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**The Clash of Symbols in Forty Years of European Electoral Campaigns: A Path of Visual Analysis**

The paper presents the early evidence of an analysis of the symbols and images used by European political parties to describe Europe and its themes during the 40 years of European elections. The qualitative investigation in the field of visual studies uses multi-model discourse analysis and follows the theoretical framework of intertextuality. The data set uses the European elections archive created by the European Elections Monitoring Center, which currently contains over 3,000 posters.

From 1979, the date of the first European Parliament election, to 2022, the year in which the tenth was held, the European dream, like its negation, needed to be represented and visualized through images, symbols, and metaphors. During these forty years, the political parties have elaborated an extensive catalogue of visual metaphors, symbols, and images, by drawing on their political-symbolic repertoires and basing them on the communicative traditions and cultures, which vary in the different political areas and nation to nation.

The paper highlights, that in some case, there has been a recovery of already existing symbols, which have been reused and re-connoted in the light of the new European dimension. In others, the languages and metaphors of advertising were directly imported. In still other cases, old symbols have been re-semanticised, connoting them with different and, sometimes, opposite meanings. Childhood, the ship, borders, the nation, and food are some of the images and symbols around which this battle of signs and meanings was waged over the first 40 years of European electoral campaigns.