

Populist Discourse in the Polish Media

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10. Constructing ‘the Others’ as a Populist Communication Strategy. The Case of the ‘Refugee Crisis’ in Discourse in the Polish Press

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Introduction

Few events can give as good insight into populist communication mechanisms as the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ which took place in Poland in September 2015. The case of Poland is particularly illustrative for several reasons. Firstly, events related to the large-scale movement of people as a result of the war in Syria and the destabilization of North Africa and the Middle East overlapped with two electoral campaigns that year (presidential in May and parliamentary in October). This facilitated a strong politicalization of the migration issue and promoted its use for building a comparative advantage over political opponents.

The close link between an anti-immigrant agenda and the right-wing identity, characteristic of Western countries, puts pressure on Polish political parties in the 2015 elections. This was exacerbated by specific conditions of the political competition in Poland, dominated by the decidedly right-wing agenda of two key opponents – the then ruling Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform, hereafter PO) and Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice, hereafter PiS), the largest opposition party.

Secondly, in Poland, a traditionally emigrant country, not only had the issue of immigration not been politicized until then, but also the media had not before taken much interest (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2007). The ‘refugee crisis’ of 2015 led to a sudden increase in interest and media coverage on the subject. Polarization of opinions at the media level was reinforced by the political parallelism characteristic of the Polish media system.

Thirdly, the socially dominant vision of the Polish national identity – ethnic or near-ethnic, with a high threshold of inclusivity, combined with the presence of anti-Semitic and Islamophobic attitudes – opened up opportunities for the production, dissemination, and legitimisation of content directed against immigrants as external ‘others’ that threaten the national community (Bobako, 2017; Zubrzycki, 2014). The academic literature on the Polish political and media discourse revealed and confirmed high level of xenophobia, racism and Islamophobia disseminated by both journalists and politicians (Bielecka-Prus, 2016; Cap, 2018; Kopytowska et al., 2017; Kotras, 2016; Krzyżanowski, 2018; Legut and Pędziwiatr, 2018). Even more importantly, scholars have also noticed strong interconnectedness between populist discursive strategies and the religious discourse about the others (Krotofil and Motak, 2018).

Fourth and finally, the scale of migration to Europe in 2015, and the related need to coordinate the activities of the EU Member States, forced action from EU institutions. This created a fertile ground for the emergence of strong Eurosceptic tendencies which viewed EU attempts to solve the problem as unauthorized interference in national sovereignty (see Balcer et al., 2016).

Although the ‘discursive shift’ (Krzyżanowski, 2018) in regards to the issue of migration occurred in many fields of social and political life, in the sphere of party politics, policies (Łódzki and Szonert, 2017), and social media discourse (prejudice, fear) (Hall and Mikulska-Jolles, 2016), this text will focus exclusively on selected titles of print media representing the right-wing editorial line.

The aim of this chapter is to analyze the mechanisms of discursive representation of the immigrant ‘others’ as an important element of the populist communication strategy, encompassing three constitutive entities: ‘the people’ – the in-group, ‘the political elite’, and the excluded ‘others’ – out-groups. It will identify the ways of categorizing and characterizing the immigrant ‘others’ and of using the figure of ‘the others’ in the argumentation about the in-group. It will also discuss the theme of political elites as a subject which, in right-wing populist discourse, is constructed in close relation to the immigrant ‘others’.

Populism and the Exclusion of ‘the Others’

Despite growing consensus on the definition of populism, the status of ‘the others’ as its constitutive feature and its position in relation to ‘the people’ still raise certain doubts. The core of populism is considered to consist in constructing or emphasizing a sense of attachment to the community, associated with sharing a specific social identity (Reinemann et al., 2017, p. 19). Researchers also agree that another constitutive populist component is ‘the people’ as opposed to ‘the elite’, with this antagonism presented in moral terms in the populist narrative (Hawkins, 2009, pp. 1043–1044; Mudde, 2007, p. 23; Stanley, 2008, p. 102).

Differences of opinion appear in relation to the figure of ‘the others’, which can be presented as a deviant, foreigner, criminal, representative of an ethnic minority, etc. Some authors consider ‘the others’ to be an inherent element of populism, differing only in the way it is positioned in relation to ‘the people’. As mentioned in chapter 1, J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007) describe populism as a style of political communication that can take on different variants depending on the specific characteristics of its constitutive elements. The so-called *empty populism* includes only ‘the people’ as a constitutive signifier of any populist ideology, while the most elaborate version (*complete populism*) is augmented with negative references to the elites and exclusion of ‘the others’. This exclusion of ‘out-groups’ is a consequence of the perception of ‘the people’ as a monolith with homogenous characteristics and interests. As a result, all those groups that do not have the characteristics of ‘the people’ are excluded from it. According to J. Jagers and S. Walgrave, anti-elitism creates a vertical axis of populism, while the excluded ‘others’ constitute an internal threat and are situated in a horizontal dimension. They are an inner group, stigmatized and imagined to be a burden and a threat to the community. They are charged with all negative phenomena affecting the

population and transformed into scapegoats, motivating demands to expel them from the territory occupied by the community (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007, p. 324).

Other authors emphasize the vertical rather than horizontal dimension of this phenomenon. In this perspective, the top position is occupied by the elites, which are not homogeneous but internally differentiated, intrinsically bad, and who conspire with 'the others' against 'the people'. On the same vertical axis, 'the others' are below 'the people' (Abst and Rummens, 2007, p. 418). This positioning, of course, does not have a strictly topographical sense, but is mainly a kind of metaphor that allows attribution of a moral meaning to the mutual relations. Those who are at the bottom or outside are thus distant from the identity, which is eternal and unchangeable, positively valorized, or even sacralized, and essentialized (as in the case of the nation in nationalism). This means not only abandonment of any attempt to integrate the difference, but, on the contrary, affirmation of the imagined and discursively constructed 'true essence' of the people as the source of all virtues.

Positioning also allows for the attribution of responsibility for phenomena detrimental to 'the people' and the identification of relationships between individual entities. For example, R. Brubaker (2017, p. 362) points out that the most frequently quoted current definition of populism (by C. Mudde, 2004, p. 543) is too minimal, because it concentrates only on the vertical dimension, while neglecting the horizontal dimension. According to Brubaker (2017, p. 263), populism moves within a two-dimensional social space defined by two intersecting axes. The opposite poles of the vertical axis are occupied by political elites on the one hand, and negatively valorised disadvantaged groups on the other, i.e. those at the bottom of the social ladder—parasites, deviants, dangerous people, undeserving of benefits and unworthy of respect; in other words, all those who can be described as incompatible with decent, respectable, normal, hard-working people.

In the horizontal dimension, 'the people' is understood as bounded collectivity, and the basic opposition runs between the inside and the outside. What is important is that there is tight discursive interweaving between the vertical and horizontal dimensions. This allows for the presentation of elites as not only detached from the lives of ordinary people, but also uprooted from the nation, cosmopolitan, loyal primarily to international structures (e.g. the European Union), or ready to accept immigrants even at the expense of the interests of their own nation (Pelinka, 2013, p. 8). The elites are also presented as conspiring against the nation or actively cooperating with other minorities to weaken the national identity. These activities and networks of relations change the elites' position in relation to the community. The elites are no longer simply *up there*, but are also outside the community. The relationship between the vertical and horizontal axes is therefore more complicated in actual political or media discourse than many definitions assume. The task of the researcher is to then analyze the methods of discursive articulation of both dimensions in relation to the constitutive elements of populism.

Moreover, it should be emphasized that even on a purely formal level antagonism resulting from the logic of identity/difference produces mobilizing effects in the electorate. As A. Pelinka (2013, p. 8), writes: "as long as there is a tendency to believe in the non-existent homogeneity of 'us', there is enough energy to defend 'us' against 'them'." At the substantive level, of course, the concrete content of the identity of 'the

people', as well as the antagonistic identity of 'the elite' and 'the others', depend on additional ideological elements articulated within the framework of populist logic. In the case of the Left, this could be content related to economic inequalities or cultural exclusion. In the case of the Right, it may be an ethno-nationalist idea of the nation as a community strongly bound together by bonds of blood, language, and common origin. The role of 'the others' in such a community may be played by many entities, including Muslims, Jews, Roma, feminists, or NGOs. R. Wodak (2015, p. 4) writes, "In short, anybody can potentially be constructed as dangerous 'Other', should it become expedient for specific strategic and manipulative purposes."

As mentioned above, many authors are not inclined to consider the figure of 'the others' as a constitutive element of populism. Proponents of a minimal definition of populism assume that populism can be combined with other ideologies. It can therefore become exclusive when combined with other elements of right-wing ideology. The exclusion of 'the others' is then not a feature of populism as a whole, but rather of a certain type of populism – radical right-wing populism (Pauwels, 2010, p. 1009; Rooduijn, 2014, p. 728). One important solution is the distinction between so-called inclusive and exclusionary populism (Filc, 2010; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). D. Filc writes: "Inclusive populism constitutes excluded social groups as a collective subject. Exclusionary populism excludes the other to preserve collective subjects that feel their identity threatened" (Filc, 2010, p. 12). Exclusionary populism occurs when certain groups feel that their identity is being threatened. This type of populism is based on a community understood as an ethnically or culturally homogeneous whole. On a discursive level, this is expressed in the construction of antagonism and exclusion of immigrants or ethnic minorities, e.g. through references to the national past, or national symbols that allow for a clear delineation of the intergroup boundaries.

The figure of 'the others' is therefore undoubtedly a constitutive element of right-wing populism. Moreover, several issues are important for the discursive perspective adopted here. First, one of the key features of right-wing discourse is the permanent attempt to delineate the boundary of 'the people', i.e. who belongs and who should be excluded (Betz and Johnson, 2004, p. 316). Secondly, populism rarely appears in a pure form – it always occurs in connection with some ideological system, hence the presence of 'the others' is much more frequent than the minimal definition would assume. Thirdly, if one accepts the thesis – uncontroversial in the light of contemporary studies of identity and discourse – of the relational character of each identity, then not only anti-elitism, but also exclusion of out-groups is an inseparable element of populism. In this sense, any reference to the category of 'the people' will always entail (already on an implicit level) a vision of 'the others'. Anti-elitism and exclusion of out-groups can therefore be seen as functionally equivalent elements of the discourse. They function as an external standard against which the group is defined and which strengthens its internal cohesion (Reinemann et al., 2017, p. 24).

Many researchers of right-wing political discourse suggest that the catalogue of populist properties should be expanded to include a few more elements. Firstly, there is a strong link between populist form and content which coexist within the discourse. Hence, analysis should take into account both these interrelated aspects. In practice, this means the realization of two tasks: analysis of the key aspects of content and identification of the linguistic devices instrumental in conveying the message and par-

ticular point of view promoted by this message (Mautner, 2008, p. 38; de Vreese et al., 2018, p. 425).

Secondly, a crucial role is played by the the 'us-them' opposition, which is part of a broader macro-strategy of creating fear. The discourse of the populist right is based on a homogeneous vision of an imagined people whose security is threatened by a foreign enemy (Pelinka, 2013, p. 8). The enemy's identity is based on ethnic, cultural, or religious criteria. The expression of these beliefs is in the use of scapegoating. Therefore, it is extremely important to identify and explain how fear is constructed in a populist discourse (Wodak, 2015, p. 20–22).

Thirdly, an important aspect of right-wing communication is the dissemination of conspiracy theories, which provide simplified explanations for the actions of social actors and the functioning of political life.

Fourthly, reproduction of the exclusionary agenda is often carried out through coded racism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia, the logical consequences of which are calculated ambivalence and various strategies for justifying and legitimizing the language of exclusion. These elements often appear under the banner of taboo-breaking and opposing the political correctness of the liberal elites (Ekman, 2015, p. 1995; Mudde, 2004, p. 554).

Fifthly, researchers also stress the category of crisis as an important aspect of populist discourse. The phenomenon of crisis is always mediated, which means that its character is determined by its representation by certain entities. In the case of populist narratives, we may observe 'spectacularization of failure' (Moffit, 2015, p. 190), 'agenda-extension' (Neuff, 2018, p. 28), or 'dramatization' (Albertazzi, 2007, p. 335). Populist methods of constructing a crisis facilitate raising the stakes of the political game and strong polarization, which in turn legitimizes the radical opinions and strong solutions proposed by populists. Exposing the negative aspects of the status quo is also consistent with supporting politicians who legitimize the need for radical change through a politics of fear.

Sixthly, Islam is the modern 'other' in right-wing populist discourse. Strengthening aversion to Islam not only allows for mobilization, but also encourages transcending national particularisms, cooperation between parties and, especially, extreme right-wing movements. Moreover, in the case of many extreme right-wing parties, Islamophobic slogans were part of a de-diabolization strategy, enabling them to throw off the stigmatizing odium of anti-Semitism (Ekman, 2015; Hafez, 2014). Islamophobia, understood as multidimensional prejudice and aversion to Islam and Muslim people, has many features in common with populism. Both are simplistic and dichotomous visions of the world divided between good and evil. In both cases it is also important to glorify the in-group and devalorize the out-group. Moreover, both rely on antagonism between two monolithic communities: the nation and the essentialized Islam (Hafez, 2017, pp. 396–397).

Finally, Euroscepticism (Pirro and Taggart, 2018) is an important theme in populist communication strategies. It is strongly associated with populism because of the nature of the EU itself and the problems it is currently experiencing. When it comes to the nature of the EU, its comprehensive architecture and the complexity of its political decision-making mechanisms are susceptible to populist criticism based on a simplified vision of reality. Moreover, problems related to the deficit of democratic legiti-

macy in the EU and current re-nationalisation tendencies correspond structurally to populist framing referring to anti-elitism and dramatization.

The Political and Social Context of Populism in Poland

In the face of a growing influx of immigrants into the European Union, in May 2015 the European Commission proposed an automatic distribution system among all member states for people applying for refugee status or other forms of protection within the EU. The system of relocation and resettlement proposed by the European Commission was to rely on four criteria: (1) the size of the population; (2) total GDP, reflecting the absolute wealth of a member state and indicating their ability to absorb and integrate refugees; (3) number of asylum applications received by a member state in the period of 2010–2014; (4) unemployment rate, indicating the capacity to integrate refugees. The then-governing PO party attitude towards the so-called migration crisis was marked by a securitization approach based on discursive construction of immigration as a threat and security issue. Such framing subsequently legitimized restrictive policy decisions towards migrants (Pędziwiatr and Legut, 2016, p. 683).

Consequently, Poland was among the states who rejected the idea of automatic distribution of the refugees. The PO and Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (Polish People Party, hereafter PSL) government declared at that time that: “We do not agree to the principle of compulsory distribution of refugees. We do not agree that someone would pick and send them to EU countries. We want to accept them, but only voluntarily and in numbers that we will determine” (Bielecki, 2015, p. 16).

However, in July 2015, the Polish government met with heavy critique from the EU for the lack of solidarity and egoism in its approach to refugees. In reaction to the pressure from the EU and the growing number of immigrants reaching the southern coasts of Europe, Warsaw finally decided to admit 2,000 people. According to the final paragraph of the information published on the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs: “For the Ministry, it is most crucial to guarantee the safety of our citizens. That is why the operation will involve collaboration with our security services and other countries which have some experience in this field” (*Polska podtrzymała*, 2015).

Later, in September 2015, Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz went a step further, announcing that Poland was ready to admit more refugees than previously declared. The decision was presented less as a humanitarian reaction to the dire situation of those fleeing the hostilities of the Middle East, but rather as a gesture of solidarity with European partners and their problems. Moreover, in her speech on September 8, 2015, E. Kopacz invited the leaders of all political parties to meet and try to reach a common position before the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting scheduled for September 22, 2015, at which time the EU was supposed to make decisions regarding the relocation of refugees. The invitation from E. Kopacz was perceived as a strategic move intended to share the responsibility for any admission of refugees with the opposition parties. In reaction, the leaders of the opposition called for parliamentary debate, assuming that it would give them the opportunity to express strong criticism of E. Kopacz’s government and to create a close association between the incumbent administration and the already controversial ‘refugee question’.

Just before the EU meeting, the Prime Minister E. Kopacz broadcasted a speech on primetime public TV legitimizing any future decision to accept additional refugees and claiming: "Poland will accept only refugees, not economic emigres, and I can say it already today – there will not be too many of them" (Premier Ewa Kopacz, 2015). Ultimately, on the 22nd of September, Poland decided to accept the EU proposal to take an additional 5000 refugees, voting against previous arrangements with the Visegrad Group countries which rejected the quota scheme (Bielecki, 2015, p. 1).

The softening of the government attitude towards the EU proposals was a preemptive strategy against PiS, the biggest oppositional party at that time. As the Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting was to take place a month before the parliamentary elections (25th of October, 2015), there was a threat that the expected decision of the EU regarding the quota increase for Poland would add fuel to PiS's narrative that PO neglected the Polish national interest and gave up her sovereignty.

The coincidence of the peak of the refugee crisis with the electoral campaign provided a window of opportunity for all competing right-wing groups, allowing them to produce and play on the fears of the majority of society, particularly young Poles. The tone was set by the most radical party – KORWIN. Its first electoral TV spot entitled "Invasion" framed the migration issue in strongly xenophobic and islamophobic discourse. Similar arguments were used by Kukiz'15 and PiS – two the biggest oppositional parties at that time. For example, during the September 2015 parliamentary debate, Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of PiS, spoke about 55 no-go districts governed by Sharia law and stated that Muslim refugees make toilets out of churches in Italy (Sejm, 2015).

Due to their victory in the October 2015 parliamentary elections, PiS was able to secure a majority of votes and became the new governing party. Initially the government of Beata Szydło declared its willingness to accept the decisions of the previous government concerning refugees. However, already in November 2015, just after the Paris terrorists attacks, government officials started to speak about their hesitation to take in any immigrants. The subsequent terrorist attack in Brussels was used to strengthen the rejection of the relocation and resettlement processes agreed to by the E. Kopacz government (Fomina and Kucharczyk, 2018, p. 188; Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 38).

Anti-refugee messages formulated during the election campaign by politicians as well as the anti-immigrant campaign carried out by right-wing media brought about a strong change at the social level. Although Islamophobic opinions had been present previously in the public sphere (Marszewski and Troszyński, 2015), opinion polls show a clear change in attitudes towards refugees, or more broadly, immigrants. This change can be observed in the results of polls on attitudes towards providing assistance to refugees from May–December 2015 conducted by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS). In the May survey, almost three quarters of respondents were in favour of accepting refugees (with 14% in favour of permanent residence) and just over one-fifth against. Those figures already changed in August; the number of people in favour of receiving refugees fell by 16% while the number of people against increased by 17%. In December, only 42% were in favour of receiving refugees, while 53% were against. Also, it is worth noting that the biggest change occurred among the youngest respondents, those between the ages of 18 and 24 (CBOS 2015). It is also characteristic

that these changes were not related to the real influx of refugees into Poland (Łódzki, 2017 pp. 166–168). One explanation for this phenomenon is the exposure of people to media messages, including political discourse represented by the media, informing about events related to the arrival of people from North Africa and the Middle East to Europe. This is confirmed, among others, by research with focus groups, which shows that the media were an extremely important source of information regarding refugees and immigrants (Łaciak and Frelak, 2018, p. 21).

Methodological Assumptions and Empirical Sample

Theoretically and methodologically, the chapter adopts a discursive approach and employs numerous analytical categories and frameworks developed within critical discourse analysis (hereafter: CDA). The latter relates to the field of research focused on relations between discourse, power, and inequalities and how discourse reproduces and maintains these relations of dominance and inequality (Mayr, 2008, p. 8). A huge body of literature already produced within this field has proven its particular usefulness in studying the mechanisms of exclusion, discrimination, and discursive representation of multifarious out-groups (for an overview see: KhosraviNik, 2014). A large portion of these studies focus on the media as an important segment of symbolic elites contributing to the production, reproduction, dissemination, and legitimization of exclusionary practices, racism, xenophobia, and discrimination. “Even if politicians sometimes have the first word on ethnic issues, for instance in parliamentary debates, their discourses and opinions become influential only through media accounts. Scholars and writers may publish books and articles, but the main results of these studies become part of the public domain only when reported and popularized in the news media” (Van Dijk, 2012, p. 17). Media are important actors in setting the public agenda, formulating the terms and framing specific issues as problems, controlling the hierarchy of importance of specific events, and promoting normative criteria of their evaluation (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 47). According to CDA scholars, media actors should be perceived as agents realizing specific discursive strategies—understood as more or less accurate and more or less intentional practices adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological, or linguistic aim (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001, p. 44).

Defined as a language in use discourse provides tools for talking about a given topic. It can also be perceived as a way of producing a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. What is particularly relevant here is that the constructive role of discourse does not exhaust itself at the level of specific topics or ideas. N. Fairclough and R. Wodak (1997, p. 258) describe discourse, namely language used in speech and writing, as a form of social practice. They emphasize the dialectical relationship between situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s); discourse is shaped by them, but it also shapes them.

To be more specific, discourse constitutes situations, knowledge and ideas, social identities and relationships between people. Discourse constructs groups by defining their interests, their position in society, and their relationship to other groups. As such, these mechanisms of construction are intimately linked to the mechanisms of power. By contributing to the constitution of social relations through regulating what and

how people communicate and think, language serves ideological functions through reproduction of social and political relations of power. According to T.A. van Dijk (2006, p. 126), ideology manifests itself through a very general strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. It permeates all levels of discourse including its ideational and formal dimensions. More specific strategies are captured by the concept of the ideological square. Discourses based on us versus them divisions emphasize good things about our side and de-emphasize bad things, while doing the opposite for 'the others'. Their bad qualities are enhanced, and good things are mitigated, hidden, or forgotten.

The main strategy is choosing the angle from which reality is talked about. Such action produces the ideological effects of reproducing and naturalizing specific significations of the world or, more narrowly, problem definitions. Another important strategy is categorization, which involves the construction of specific relations to other actors that entitle them to claim or do certain things (for example, promoting specific policy towards immigrants). This strategy is intimately linked with legitimization which articulates itself through justifying and sanctioning a certain action or power on the basis of normative, rational, moral or other reasons (Carvalho, 2008; van Leeuwen, 2008).

In order to study right-wing populist constructions of the immigrant 'others', this paper employs several analytical tools developed by CDA scholars. In their study of parliamentary discourses on immigration in six European countries, T.A. van Dijk and R. Wodak (2000, p. 29) propose a set of analytical categories, distinguishing between global discursive structures (macro-level) and local discursive structures (micro-level). At the level of global structures and strategies, they distinguish topics (macropropositions), positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation, and legitimization. At the level of local structures they enumerate actor descriptions ('us' versus 'them' divisions; categorization, descriptions, attributes); rhetorical devices – metaphors, hyperboles, euphemisms; indirectness, implicitness, presuppositions; argumentation (topoi, fallacies, counterfactuals, causal attributes). The paper employs some of these categories and adapts them to the heuristically useful framework developed by the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), which consists of a number of strategies and corresponding research questions: referential strategies (naming), predicational strategies (attribution), argumentative strategies (topoi), and perspectivization, mitigation and intensification strategies. These discursive strategies are further specified by the following questions: (1) How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes, and actions named and referred to linguistically? (2) What characteristics, qualities, and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events, and processes? (3) What arguments are employed in the discourse in question? (4) From what perspectives are these nominations, attributions, and arguments expressed? (5) Are the respective utterances articulated overtly; are they intensified or mitigated? (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001, p. 72–73).

The paper is focused particularly on the first three strategies and corresponding questions and supplements them with the socio-semantic categorizations of different social actors developed by T. Van Leeuwen (2008). Some of T. Van Leeuwen's most relevant categories include: foregrounding/backgrounding, passivation/activation, aggregation, personalization/ impersonalization, individualization/assimilation, and functionalization. Further, as the role of the argumentation strategies in DHA is to justify and enhance the ways actors are nominated and predicated, it dovetails well with

the types of legitimization specified by T. van Leeuwen (2008, pp. 105–106): authorization, moral evaluation, rationalization, and mythopoesis. To summarize, the paper will analyze the strategies of categorization, predication, and argumentation, which at the macro-level perpetuate and legitimize populist delimitation strategies and specific forms and contents of in- and out-group constructions.

The empirical corpus is based on three right-wing print media: one daily newspaper *Nasz Dziennik*, and two weekly magazines *Do Rzeczy*, and *W Sieci* (see chapter 1). The most radical side of the right-wing discourse is represented by *Nasz Dziennik*, which promotes a national-catholic discourse with a strongly nationalistic tone (Starnawski, 2003). *Do Rzeczy* and *W Sieci*, in turn, despite some differences in the details of their agenda, position themselves as conservative titles, and the context in which they were created (under the rule of D. Tusk and his party, PO) gave them a strong anti-incumbent and anti-elitist character. They were the titles that took a radically oppositional position towards those in power at that time (Kulas, 2018).

One of the manifestations of incomplete albeit visible political parallelism in Poland is the direct and indirect media support of the PiS (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012). Hence, a strong similarity can be assumed between the discourse of right-wing politicians and the media discourse presented in the aforementioned titles.

As it was mentioned in chapter 1, the selection of sample material was purposive and covered both the period of the election campaign before the parliamentary elections (9 to 23 October 2015) and the post-election period (February–April 2016). The election period is sometimes extremely important due to the formation and testing of arguments, as well as the increased intensity of raising specific issues. Additionally, the inclusion of the electoral period in the sample makes it possible to identify possible differences in the way immigrants were represented. The key criterion for selecting press texts for the sample was the use of the word *migrants*, *refugees* and their derivatives.¹ It should be emphasized that the texts included in the corpus are not generically uniform; they include both short information, columns, comments, articles, opinions, and interviews.

Analysis

Refugees, Immigrants, or Islamic Terrorists? Nomination and Predication Strategies

In total, the analysis covered 61 texts, 10 of which were published in *Nasz Dziennik*, 23 in *Do Rzeczy*, and 28 in *W Sieci*. Apart from two cases, the texts did not deal exclusively with the phenomenon of migration or the issue of immigrants or refugees. In most of the texts, these were micro-themes that were part of a broader main theme – in some cases references to immigrants were only brief mentions that were part of argumentation on other topics. The two cases are texts on humanitarian aid provided on the ground by the PiS government in the Middle East and on migrant crime. Most of the texts were written by journalists and permanent publicists of the respective media titles.

The research corpus also included 19 interviews with representatives of the right-wing symbolic elites: Polish politicians, including MEPs (Andrzej Duda, Jarosław

¹ For more details about the selection criteria please check chapter 1.

Kaczyński, Beata Szydło, Zbigniew Ziobro, Ryszard Czarnecki, Ryszard Legutko, Artur Górski), German politicians associated with the conservative and extreme right wing in Germany (Hans Olaf Henkel, Alexander Gauland), journalists (Marzena Paczuska, Wojciech Cejrowski, Mariusz Max Kolonko), representatives of state offices (Roman Polko, Paweł Solorz), a lawyer (Stefan Hambura – representative of the families of the Smolensk victims), an academic (Stefan Wolniewicz – a professor known for his controversial opinions), and a priest (Waldemar Cisło).

The only interlocutor who formally violated the principle of lack of ideological pluralism characteristic for the media titles under examination was an interview with Leszek Miller, former chairman of Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (Democratic Left Alliance, hereafter SLD). However, in this case a representative of the extra-parliamentary post-communist party of the left played the role of the external entity, which in many topics (especially in relation to the important topic of immigrants) confirmed the editorial line of *W Sieci* magazine, thus naturalizing the beliefs proclaimed in its pages. The aforementioned selection of interviewees fits into the established model of entrenched coverage in the Polish political system. In this model, the media are not intermediaries nor neutral reporters, but become instruments for publicizing views and expressing support for a single political group or worldview (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2018, p. 243).

When it comes to nomination strategies, it is important to note the multiplicity of categories used. Thus, we can see the general terms typical of the analyzed topic: 'migrants', 'immigrants', or 'refugees'. They are all characterized by a high level of generality and apparent neutrality. However, a few specific characteristics should be noted. First, the systematic use of generic terms, covering whole social groups, with the absence of any individual representatives of the social groups referred to in the discourse, which is referred to as genericisation within T. van Leeuwen's (2008, p. 35) analytical framework. The use of plural nouns usually serves to create a symbolical distance and makes it possible to treat them as 'others'. A complete lack of individual perspective, quotations in the text, names, surnames, or other means of individual identification makes it easier to build distance and justifies a lack of empathy.

Another term that appears, always in negative contexts, was the category of Muslims or Islam, both as noun and adjective. Sometimes used to describe the country of origin, in many cases these terms were used as classifiers for the terms *refugee*, *immigrant*, or *migrant*. Discourse researchers write about this as *overlexicalisation*, i.e. when seemingly unnecessary words create the impression of over-completeness, but their presence signals ideological contention (Machin and Mayr, 2012, p. 37). It is noticeable that the terms *Muslim* or *Islamic* often appeared in contexts where it was not necessary as in a following examples:

"Both the Platform and the Left in general want to open the borders to Islamic refugees, which makes people anxious" (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 17, 2015).

"There is chaos and uncertainty regarding the future in the face of the invasion of immigrants from Muslim countries" (*W Sieci*, February 8, 2016).

"I dream of nothing more than referendums in European countries where questions about the death penalty, intolerance of sexual minorities, and attitudes towards Islamic refugees would be asked (*Do Rzeczy*, March 21, 2016).

These terms, which bring to the fore the religious and cultural aspects of identity, allow us to build a contrast between our own (implicitly Christian) identity and the Muslim identity. Secondly, they are part of a genericisation strategy that allows for the creation of a multidimensional distance between ‘us’ and ‘them’. In this case, they are included in an Islamophobic ideological structure that adopts a deterministic and essentialistic approach to culture as an ethnicized religion, exposes cultural and religious identity (and not e.g. economic interests or political rights), and suspends all internal differences between Muslims (Bobako, 2017, p. 159).

Thirdly, the adjectives *Islamic* or *Muslim*, apart from in descriptions of migrant groups, also appear in the examined corpus in the context of terrorism (e.g. “Islamic threat,” *W Sieci*, March 14, 2016; “Islamic terror,” *Nasz Dziennik*, October 9, 2015), which facilitates the construction of negative associations between these groups and frightening phenomena. Such an impression is also strengthened by the noun ‘Islamists’, associated today with religious extremism. Fourthly, there is a strategy of association, which additionally strengthens the connection of immigrants with terrorists. Association refers to groups formed by social actors and/or groups of social actors which are never labeled in the text (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 38). The most typical realization is parataxis, like in the following examples:

“It seems that it is not refugees, assassins, and dark-skinned rapists who are the biggest problem in Europe, but Poland and the changes that happen here” (*W Sieci*, February 22, 2016).

“They prefer to give flats from their modest resources and jobs to Poles from Kazakhstan than to immigrants and Islamists from Syria” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 12, 2015).

Another strategy of representation that reinforces negative connotations is role allocation. In short, it is based on attributing agency to certain social actors (activation) and assigning the role of passive object of influence from other entities (passivation) to ‘the others’. In the analyzed corpus, the active actions of immigrants or refugees are always negative. The texts not only suggest or openly mention their terrorist intentions, but also their disrespect for women, violation of the law, and criminal acts. Also typical for the ways of representing immigrants is the adjectival modifier *illegal*, which strengthens the image of immigrants as criminals, or more broadly, as people who pose a threat to the ‘we’ community because they violate legal or moral norms. In the third passage below, the image of the immigrant is further reduced to simply a problem for the host country:

“Europe is flooded with immigrants who do not want to integrate at all.” (*W Sieci*, February 1, 2016).

“In July last year, several dozen illegal immigrants near the town of Laval in France attacked Polish drivers. They destroyed the goods they were carrying. Similar attacks on Polish drivers by immigrants took place in Calais in January. Immigrants from a camp on the outskirts of the city were robbing cars, demanding that the drivers hide and transport them to the United Kingdom. They threatened the Polish drivers with knives and tried to get them out of their cabins.” (*Do Rzeczy*, February 15, 2016)

“Meanwhile, the immigrant problem is quickly approaching the Polish border. And recently it has started to cross it.” (*Do Rzeczy*, February 15, 2016)

This categorization also strengthens strategy of delegitimization through authorization built through the topos of law and order (Van Leeuwen, 2008). It justifies aversion towards immigrants or their rejection, by pointing to the necessity of respecting the law and possible or real violations of law and order (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). This mechanism of delegitimization and its accompanying topos are implicitly present in efforts to undermine the status of refugees. It is usually implemented through the introduction of quotation marks framing the group as undeserving and untrustworthy. At the same time, this allows positive self-presentation by pointing to a group of real refugees that deserve help (Goodman et al., 2017). In some cases, questioning of refugee status is explicit, as in the quotation from the Czech president, who reclassifies and divides immigrants into various groups. By comparing them with each other, he also achieves the effect of associating immigrants with terrorists. Sometimes discrediting is done by adding the word *economic*, which also allows for the treatment of this group as undeserving:

“The Czech President, Miloš Zeman, went even further. – Nobody knows how many economic immigrants, how many jihadist fighters, and how many real refugees are among them. If someone does not register and does not ask for asylum in the first EU country they come to, it should be assumed that they are not victims of war.” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 10, 2015)

“A classic example of organized global chaos is the invasion of economic migrants from Africa and the Middle East into Europe.” (*W Sieci*, February 1, 2016)

In the analyzed material, the mechanism of passivation arranges moral judgments in the opposite way. In this case, members of the ‘we’ community, e.g. Catholics, Christians, Poles, are represented as active executors of positively valorized actions, while the external group are passive receivers, or goals of these actions. Importantly, the passivation strategy often served to cast a negative light on the attitudes and actions concerning immigrants or refugees taken by the government of E. Kopacz. Therefore, it did not serve primarily to show immigrants as passive recipients of our help, but rather to criticize PO for being too open towards immigrants:

“As is well known, the new Polish government has upheld its predecessors’ declaration that they would agree to one single admission of a group of several thousand immigrants.” (*Do Rzeczy*, February 8, 2016)

“And if anyone has forgotten, in August 2015 the spokesperson of PO assured that Poland was able to accept any number of refugees. Fortunately, a good change happened.” (*W Sieci*, April 4, 2016)

“Both the Civic Platform and the broadly understood left want to open the borders for Islamic refugees, which worries people.” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 17, 2015)

Sometimes passivation strategy towards immigrants, when they are the goal of clearly positive actions, is accompanied by their activation, through which they are represented as performing clearly negative actions. This creates a sharp contrast between ‘us’ and ‘them’, which is additionally based on religious criteria and is associated with the violation of strong norms related to faith:

“The pope bowed down deeply to Islamic immigrants, humbly kissing their feet – this image from the last Maundy Thursday liturgy will surely remain in the memory not only of Catholics and Westerners, but also of hundreds of millions of Muslims for a long time. They already like to send each other pictures of him washing their feet two years ago (it was the first time that the Pope washed the feet of a Muslim) and they are filled with pride that the head of the Church worshipped Islam by succumbing to the followers of the Prophet.” (*Do Rzeczy*, April 4, 2016)

One of the important instruments of categorization is metaphorization, understood as a process of transference of one concept onto another. Metaphors facilitate understanding of a given domain through projecting knowledge about another familiar domain onto the first. Additionally, metaphors are used “to express an evaluation of the topic, to make an emotional and persuasive appeal, and/ or to reassure the public that a perceived threat or problem fits into familiar experience patterns and can be dealt with by familiar problem-solving strategies” (Musolff, 2016, p. 4). In the studied corpus, as is typical of discourse on immigrants, they are metaphorized primarily by references to water (flood as a natural disaster), invasion, and insects – pests:

“Now the Prague Summit, organized to discuss how to stop the spring wave of refugees on the border between Greece, Bulgaria and Macedonia, is again only commented on as ‘turning our backs on Berlin’.” (*Do Rzeczy*, February 22, 2016)

“War beyond the eastern border, an invasion of terrorists in the West – we need a new constitution for dangerous times.” (*Do Rzeczy*, April 4, 2016)

“As Muslim fleets approach the shores of Europe, they must first be called to turn back. If they do not listen, shoot them in front of the bow, once. And if they go on, shoot straight at them. Every country has the right to defend its borders by force – just as you and I have the right to defend the doors of our homes.” (*Do rzeczy*, April 25, 2016)

“As part of the expansion of the multi-culti programme, illegal immigrant populations have dispersed around Calais (...) The ‘jungle’ pals, from the camp of more than 10,000 people, plunder local farmers’ crops (...) In order to prevent the plague, the London government intends to spend £17 million on the construction of a four-meter wall.” (*W Sieci*, September 12, 2016)

Such methods of metaphorization convey several meanings. The immigrants represented in this way are dehumanized and de-individualized. They also become ‘the others’ because of the direct existential threat they pose to the community. The metaphors of water and pests are used to emphasize the powerful, difficult to control number of people. Moreover, all the metaphors suggest ways of a proper, political reaction, which can be reduced to negative actions: stopping, deterring, repelling, and – in the most radical variants – killing. The discussed directions of metaphorization, by alarming about the current or imminent threat, also contribute to the populist vision of a crisis threatening the identity of the community.

Constructing the threat posed by ‘the others’ and emphasizing the critical state of affairs was also possible thanks to the aggregation strategy of representation of social actors, according to the definition by T. van Leeuwen (Leeuwen, 2008, p. 37). This strategy is indicated, among others, by the use of statistical data, or the use of specific or indefinite numerals or other terms indicating the size of a given entity. In other words, the numbers indicating the massive scale of migration reinforce the rhetoric of

fear, hyperbolizing a given phenomenon, or building the impression of a large-scale problem. The presence of numbers is noted by many discourse researchers, indicating that they perform rhetorical functions, create the appearance of an objective and expert position, strengthen the credibility of the text, and legitimize certain political decisions as based on specific calculations (Wodak, 2018).

Numbers are used to play rhetorical games. Even if current data do not allow the use of large numbers, the introduction of the markers of modality makes it easier to construct scenarios of future threats by mass immigration (e.g. *probably*, *certainly*, *possibly*, etc.). Moreover, if the figures relating to a given country are not large, one can increase them by referring to other European countries, alleged intentions of politicians of other countries or EU representatives, demographic forecasts concerning the fertility of immigrants, etc. In the examined corpus, specific but always different numbers were accompanied by adjectives such as *massive* or *unlimited*, which were supposed to not only indicate the threat or scale of the phenomenon, but also to delegitimize other political positions, especially the decisions made by Angela Merkel:

“In her recent speeches, Chancellor Merkel announced that during the upcoming EU summit she intends to address the issue of a new distribution of hundreds of thousands of refugees, which would confirm the information about the possibility of relocating as many as 100 thousand immigrants to Poland.” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 17, 2015)

“Sudden opening to hundreds of thousands, and probably millions of newcomers in total.” (*W Sieci*, February 22, 2016)

“Papal words (reinterpreted and taken out of context) are also a convenient weapon in the hands of supporters (also Catholic, because there is no shortage of them) of multiculturalism and unlimited admission of immigrants.” (*Do Rzeczy*, April 4, 2016)

Other predication strategies involved associating immigrants with a tendency towards violence, fanaticism, or sexually motivated contempt for women. Their essentialist and deterministic character consisted in the presentation of contingent properties as inherent features of a given culture or of culturalized Islam, which in their entirety determine the functioning of people arriving in Europe. The Islamophobic characteristics of the discourse were also expressed in the immigrants' assumed inability to integrate, and here integration is understood as assimilation. This discourse is based on the topos of culture as a closed, impermeable, and non-alterable whole. In this perspective, cultural otherness becomes an inherent and insurmountable difference:

“First of all, they're terribly noisy. They notoriously behave much too loudly, even for the standards of living in a dorm – says a law student. They also confirm the stereotypes concerning the attitudes of Muslims towards women. – They are too direct. They can scream behind a girl passing through a corridor: ‘What a nice ass!’. This is particularly interesting – they usually don't speak Polish, only English, but can catcall in our language – says the resident of the dormitory.” (*Do Rzeczy*, February 15, 2016)

“The Left would like to convince us that immigrants can be assimilated with time. – But how can we talk about the integration of people who come from another world?” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 9, 2015)

Uses of ‘the Immigrant Other’ in Populist Discourse – Argumentation Strategies

At the macro-level, the aim of the deployed argumentation strategies was to maintain an ideological division which would simultaneously legitimize the in-group and delegitimize ‘out-groups’. Dichotomization of social and political space is not, of course, a characteristic feature of populist discourse only, but rather a structural element of political language in general. On the other hand, when combined with other elements, such as references to the power/knowledge of the people, the negation of elites, the figure of ‘the others’ as an enemy, Islamophobic content, or hyperbolization of crisis aspects of situations, it ‘thickens’ the discourse in the populist and right-wing direction. In the case of the analyzed corpus, building the image of the ‘we’ community was closely connected with evoking the figure of ‘the others’, as well as political elites. In other words, each of the discursive subjective positions – the ‘we’ community, the political elite, and the migrant ‘others’ – was constructed within the framework of strongly interrelated discursive content.

Two argumentation strategies using the figure of the immigrant ‘others’ were crucial for building the ‘we’ community. These included specific (de)legitimizing arguments and *topoi* understood as content-related conclusion rules (Reisigl, 2014, p. 77). Firstly, the ‘we’ community (Poles, Christians, Visegrad group, Europeans) was presented as a current or potential victim of actions taken by immigrants and the elites that supported them. Secondly, the analyzed discourse also included justifications of Poland’s or the Law and Justice government’s actions, to weaken the face-threatening accusations of indifference or of racist or xenophobic motivations behind the reluctance to accept refugees.

The victim status, strongly rooted in Polish political culture and public discourse (e.g. on European issues), was constructed not only through references to the immigrant ‘others’, but also to political elites, mainly the PO government, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and EU politicians. The figure of the migrant ‘the others’ was used to build the narrative of the current or potential victim in many dimensions: religious, cultural, national, social, and economic. It should be stressed, however, that in the examined corpus, the *topos* of the burden (where immigrants are a burden on social expenditure) and economic uselessness of immigrants appeared only incidentally, and the few fragments related to this *topos* mainly concerned Western countries (e.g. Germany).

One of the important themes was Islam as a threat to the religious and national identity, which coincides with the findings of many researchers pointing to the importance of identity politics for the modern populist right-wing (Betz and Johnson, 2004; Brubaker, 2017). In this case, a special role is played by legitimization through mythopoesis, the use of cautionary tales in argumentation. These are narratives that depict what will happen if one does not conform to the norms of social practices. “Their protagonists engage in deviant activities that lead to unhappy endings” (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 118). They often use *ad exemplum* arguments, with selective references to current or potential phenomena involving migrants in Western European countries. In this line of reasoning, the countries of Western Europe have opened their borders to Islamic immigrants because of their interests or ideological assumptions. This has resulted in negative social and cultural phenomena due to the complete otherness of

immigrants, defined entirely by Islam. If Poland wants to avoid similar problems, it must neither accept immigrants nor the relocation system.

This type of content is usually presented with the topoi of danger and threat, of law, of numbers, and of culture. A characteristic feature of right-wing narratives concerning Western countries is reference to the category of multiculturalism. In right-wing discourses, however, it is not simply understood as a type of public policy employed to manage social pluralism, but an empty signifier usually decontested as a consent to the Islamization of Europe (Ekman, 2015, p. 1997). In many cases, this discourse is used to construct crisis scenarios that assume the exhaustion of the European ideal or the end of Europe. This is especially illustrated by the anti-utopian vision of future Europe in the third fragment below, presented as a natural consequence of accepting immigrants:

“In Europe, however, the multi-cultural policy has failed. I have received a lot of e-mails from people from Western Europe that show how it works. For example, an young Arab woman who held a boy's hand is locked in a room. She gets a knife, a gun, and is supposed to commit suicide because she disgraced herself and her family. And if she doesn't, her father, brother, or another relative will kill her. It is not spoken about loudly, but there are many such cases. Elements of Sharia law have been introduced into the German law when it comes to divorce according to Koranic law.” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 9, 2015)

“There is also the awareness that the presence of Islamic groups will be a pretext for the elimination of crosses in schools, because they may offend the religious feelings of the Islamic minority. This was the case in Brussels, where the Christmas tree disappeared at the express request of Muslims. Meanwhile, Belgium was a Catholic country only a few decades ago, and so everyone is aware of what may happen in Poland.” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 17, 2015)

“A classic example of organised chaos on a world scale is the invasion of economic migrants from Africa and the Middle East into Europe. It was programmed in Berlin and Brussels and threatens not only the security of the Union, but also heralds its moral and ethnic degradation. The aim of this plan is to deprive Europeans of their national identity, to control thoughts and views by changing the continent into a unified state, in which citizens will profess one ideology and one value, because there will be no room for independent thinking and independent decision-making.” (*W Sieci*, February 1, 2016)

Secondly, Poles who opposed the admission of refugees were presented as repressed in their own country because of the growing role of alleged political correctness. At the international level, this type of argumentation was used to defend Poland, which was criticized within the EU, and the Visegrad group, which opposed the admission of refugees and the EU's plan to relocate them. Here, the aversion to this group of countries was explained by the readiness of Western countries, especially Chancellor Angela Merkel's Germany, to 'mass' import immigrants. This is a variant of the systematically repeated *ad misericordiam* argument, which presents political, legal, and social reactions to hate speech as restrictions on freedom of speech motivated by political correctness. A special role is played here by legitimization through moral evaluation (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 109). This line of reasoning enables the victim-perpetrator reversal, where it is not immigrants or refugees who are in a diffi-

cult situation, but Poles, Christians, or other peoples of Europe, who become victims of migration or migrants. In addition, they are unable to articulate their opposition because of political correctness.

The following fragment comes from a text whose title (“On the trail of the thought-crime”) is an intertextual reference to the anti-utopian world of G. Orwell, which additionally hyperbolizes the negative situation of the ‘we’ community. On the other hand, the second and third passage refer to Western countries, presenting the alleged situation of average citizens who cannot express their opinions or are even subject to political repression. The third fragment refers to the media reactions after *W Sieci* weekly’s publication of a cover showing a white woman, screaming, naked and wrapped in the EU flag, with dark hands holding her arms and hair and tearing off the flag. The cover title reads: “Islamic Rape of Europe” (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 42). This fragment is a good example of the mechanism of discursive scandal described by R. Wodak (2015, p. 20). Provoking the scandal allow right-wing actors to present themselves as victims fighting for freedom of speech, understood as unlimited freedom to use words, including hate speech. In practice, therefore, it serves the justification of hate speech toward migrants:

“Poles are becoming victims of bullying by visitors from Arab countries who increasingly feel they can get away with it. When they try to protest, they are accused of ‘hate speech’. Prosecutors’ offices have become extremely sensitive. (...) What is worrying, however, is that attempts at public opposition to the opening of Polish borders to visitors from Arab countries are increasingly being suppressed on the pretext of fighting the alleged ‘hate speech’, and the police and prosecutors’ offices are chasing those who (...) declare their reluctance to the relocation of immigrants or at least try to inform about the dangers of admitting visitors from Arab countries.” (*Do Rzeczy*, February 15, 2016)

“One such example is Great Britain, where people are persecuted for defending their values.” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 17, 2015)

“It [the cover – A.L.] seems to have touched on an important taboo of Western society, which, paralyzed by political correctness, can no longer openly talk about the most important problems.” (*W Sieci*, February 22, 2016)

Apart from the aforementioned topoi of danger and threat, law, numbers, and culture, there is also an important topos of justice based on the ‘equal rights for all’ principle. This topos is used in statements in which victim status results from unequal treatment that violates the law and the principles of justice. This topos was used in relation to repatriates from the East, whose situation was compared with that of immigrants. These juxtapositions contained the mechanism of competitive victimhood, known also from the discourse regarding secondary anti-Semitism (see e.g. Vollhardt et al., 2015). According to this mechanism, it is the Poles who suffer most, and not the representatives of other nations. Moreover, the figure of the repatriates from the East made it possible to express attachment to the national ‘we’ community based on blood, language, and cultural ties. Thanks to this procedure, a hierarchy of empathy was also constructed, defined by cultural and religious proximity, and not by the need for help. The first of the following texts was given a title in the form of a rhetorical question, with the function of a reproach: ‘Can Poland afford a hundred Poles?’ Not only did it

imply criticism of the then ruling PO, but it also served to detach the incumbent elite from the Polish people:

“Poles from Mariupol cannot count on the amenities that immigrants get; they will not get “pocket money” and customized apartments of a certain standard. And there are only 100 of them, while there are supposed to be 12 thousand immigrants. (...) For our government, repatriates will be a priority, because we have it inscribed in our program, because they are Poles, and the task of the Polish government is primarily to take care of Poles, especially those whose grandparents were deported to die abroad, and whose grandchildren are still suffering for their Polishness and faith.” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 12, 2015)

“Wyszyński explains that these are the people who are directly affected by repatriation problems because they live in Poland but cannot bring their families back to their homeland. ‘Repatriates do not have such a right, but immigrants do’. Those Poles from Kazakhstan who managed to return very much want to bring their families to Poland.” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 17, 2015)

The PiS party attempted to maintain a positive image of themselves by using the strategies justifying their critical attitude towards the idea of admitting refugees. First of all, there was a strategy of re-categorization, especially regarding the categories of refugees and immigrants. Categories are important not only because they define ‘who is who’ and so ‘who gets what’ (Goodman et al., 2017, p. 106), but also because they allow a positive presentation of oneself as willing to help, but only specific groups constructed as really ‘in need’ and only based on existing rules of law. Such strategies are therefore often associated with the topos of law and order, topos of threat, and topos of disadvantage. The first points to the need to apply the law, while the latter two indicate the risks and disadvantages of admitting immigrants.

Secondly, the *retorsio argumenti* strategy was triggered to indicate that Poland was not breaking the law or showing a lack of solidarity with the EU. It was rather the EU countries that break the law, are inconsistent, and apply double standards in their ethical and political elections. The strategy of condemnation of the condemners was also used. Western countries were presented as reluctant to support their own Christian identity. This argumentation was also accompanied by attributes revealing the instrumental intentions of Western countries, especially Germany. Their aim was to pursue their own interests, i.e. to transfer some of the immigrants to other countries, and not for ethical reasons. This was intended to morally delegitimize all the critics of the PiS migrant policy and allow right-wing discourse producers to present themselves as ethically integral, demanding the maintenance of the Christian character of Europe, as well as referring to the category of national interest, on the basis of equality (each country in the EU pursues its own interest, but when Poland does this it is accused of lack of solidarity). This condemnation of the condemners was also visible in the characterization of the relocation of immigrants as *forced*. In this way, the EU institutions and Germany were portrayed as guilty of double coercion: against countries opposed to the idea of relocation and against immigrants themselves, who were aiming for richer EU countries. This discursive strategy yielded double benefits. It not only allowed the reversal of the EU’s criticism and accusations, but also implied that the groups coming to Europe were not refugees, but economic immigrants, interested only in improving their social situation.

“When Christians were murdered in the Middle East, none of the Western leaders cared.” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 9, 2015)

“Today, the European Union is demanding that we accept immigrants in the name of European solidarity, but I’m asking: does this solidarity also apply to us?” (*W Sieci*, May 18, 2015)

“It is hard to imagine a similar resolution against, say, Germany, after the declaration by Angela Merkel, which undermined the entire legal order of the EU by inviting ‘refugees’ to Germany.” (*W Sieci*, April 25, 2016)

“No one in Poland closes the border to anyone, although we do not agree that people should be brought here by force. No one in Poland will imprison them. However, if someone needs help, they will receive it from us.” (*W Sieci*, October 24, 2016)

“These people want to go to Germany and only to Germany. They have a picture of Angela Merkel in their hands, the same thing in their smartphones. How to force them to live in the much poorer Poland? This is absurd.” (*W Sieci*, February 22, 2016)

Thirdly, there were declarations of intent indicating the willingness to help, which took the form of apparent sympathy and formulas using the word *truly* to strengthen the declared intentions. As T. van Dijk (1997) writes, the formula of apparent sympathy appears when unfavourable solutions for immigrants are presented as conceived ‘for their own good’. Another proof of the inclusive intentions of the right-wing producers of this discourse were declarations of readiness to welcome Ukrainians.

“There will be no discrimination. I would give everything to immigrants, but I think it is important for the sake of Muslims themselves to settle in countries with large Muslim communities. Therefore, for them, the natural place of residence should be Germany, France, or the Benelux countries.” (*Do Rzeczy*, March, 21 2016)

“I explained that we have received many immigrants from Ukraine, that are assimilating well and are well received.” (*W Sieci*, October 24, 2016)

“People want to help Christians, but they realize that what Angela Merkel and the government of Ewa Kopacz are doing has nothing to do with help.” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 17, 2015)

Fourthly, justifications were based on delegitimization through rationalization, which pointed to the ineffectiveness of a solution based on the alleged opening of borders and relocation of immigrants. The argument of effectiveness, and not indifference to the fate of refugees, was supposed to justify the restrictive migration policy. This argumentation strategy also served to point out other unfavourable phenomena. For example, *argumentum ad consequentiam* was used to indicate that immigration would contribute to the increase in popularity of the extreme right.

“We are ready to get involved financially, and this is one of the things I will be talking about this week in the capital of the United Kingdom. But letting millions of immigrants into Europe does not solve anything. I think everyone knows that. That is why we will certainly not accept a permanent mechanism for relocating immigrants.” (*W Sieci*, February 1, 2016)

“Right-wing groups are growing in strength throughout the EU because Germany is interfering in the internal affairs of Member States.” (*W Sieci*, March 21, 2016)

Fifthly and finally, there is the figure resembling the ‘alibi Jew’ known from anti-Semitic discourse (Wodak, 1991). The argument’s credibility is reinforced by a voice of a person who is a representative of the ‘out-group’ affected by a given discourse. It is an external voice, whose essential feature in the analyzed discourse is not so much prestige or belonging to a foreign intellectual elite, but membership in a group to which a given argumentation refers (Nowicka, 2010). Such a procedure creates an impression of impartiality and fairness of a given position. In the quotation below this rhetorical figure is modified by the voice of a Christian Iraqi. On the one hand he belongs to the same denomination as the sender of the message, but on the other hand he shares geographical and national proximity with the Muslim ‘out-group’.

“I will quote here a statement by Father Douglas Al-Basi, an Iraqi who was imprisoned by Islamists, tortured, and threatened with death. During his visit to Poland, he talked about the situation in his homeland. He said that he knew Islam better than many Muslims. And he said, addressing us, the Europeans: ‘You say that terrorists are only 15% of Muslims. But this 15% is 300 million people. And if 300 million terrorists are not a problem for you, I congratulate you’.” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 9, 2015).

As can be seen in the aforementioned examples, the figure of the immigrant ‘others’ also gives a good insight into the mechanisms of constructing the criticized elite. Contemporary populism is directed “against elites who have opened the doors to foreign influence and to foreigners” (Pelinka, 2013, p. 9). The attitude towards immigrants is therefore part of the blame game between the producers of populist communication and the political elites, and determines their mutual positioning. The anti-immigrant discourse also includes attributes of subjects constructed as elites, their intentions, actions, and their relationships with immigrants. Until the parliamentary elections of 2015, the political elites responsible for migration policy and European politics, represented by the government of E. Kopacz, the political elites of Germany, especially Angela Merkel, and the EU elite, were the object of criticism. Naturally, after PO’s loss of power in 2015, the post-election critical discourse no longer concerned the national elites, but primarily foreign elites. Although partly anti-German, it was much more directed against the EU, reproducing many arguments derived from political, value-based, and cultural Euroscepticism.

At the national level, strategies of representation with regard to E. Kopacz’s government were oriented towards detaching governmental elites from the people and presenting the producers of discourse as aligned with the cause of the people. The PO-PSL government was presented as not caring about the interests of the nation and the sovereignty of the country, as well as succumbing to pressure from Western political elites, primarily Germany and the EU. The intentions attributed to those in power were twofold. First of all, they were accused of political incompetence and a post-colonial desire to please the West. Secondly, PO was presented as having ideological beliefs that linked it to the left, which was strongly criticized in right-wing weeklies. The following examples are based on authority legitimization (with John Paul II as authority)

and moral evaluation. The *ad populum* argument referring to “prejudiced emotions, opinions and convictions of a specific social group or to the vox populi instead of relevant arguments” (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001, p. 72) was intended to bring the views of the discourse producer closer to those of ‘the people’, not ‘the elite’. *Argumentum ad metum* was also used, which strengthened the sense of crisis and pursued a strategy of the politics of fear, characteristic of the populist discourse of the right (Wodak, 2015).

“Both the Platform and the broadly understood left want to open the borders to Islamic refugees, which is worrying for the people. The more so because they are aware that it is the German government that wants to share them with Poland and other countries. (...) These groups stand close to those European circles that focus on forcing the cultural revolution, which Pope John Paul II called the civilization of death. This danger exists. It is this informal coalition that wants to transform all those values that define us as Poles and Christians into Western societies that have been subject to such transformations for years.” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 17, 2015)

“The Polish government, succumbing to the pressure of Western countries with regard to the issue of Islamic immigrants, exposes its countrymen to economic danger.” (*Nasz Dziennik*, October 23, 2015).

The excerpt above not only detaches the Polish elite from the national tradition and discredits it by association with the left, but also shows its connection with Western elites, which are presented as being driven by geopolitical interest and left-wing ideology. In this case, the elite’s way of thinking is separated from the views of ordinary citizens. This is further reinforced by the topos of political correctness, which is imposed by politicians, deprives people of their freedom of thought, and makes it difficult for Western citizens to articulate their opposition to the admission of immigrants. In this perspective, the EU is a platform for the understanding of Western elites and promotion of German interests, and the relationship between Poland and the EU is based on the juxtaposition of two exogenous entities.

In one variant, Western elites are motivated by ideology, while in another, by hard national interests. The PiS government is represented in this scheme as an object of illegitimate external pressure. Based on imputation and *ad hominem* and *ad personam* arguments, Euroskepticism allows the party to be presented as defenders of the nation’s interests. It is also used to explain external criticism as motivated by selfishness and not by legal norms. Finally, it allows the use of the self-victimizing *ad misericordiam* argument, which presents Poland as a victim of external pressure. An interview with the then Prime Minister Beata Szydło, concerning the EU and representing it through the ‘us and them’ dichotomy, has a characteristic title: “They will not break us, we will be fine” (*W Sieci*, February 1, 2016). Another characteristic feature of right-wing populist communication is the use of the figure of the immigrant ‘others’ to build a vision of the crisis as deliberately – though covertly – triggered by Western countries. The construction of the crisis here is part of conspiracy theories that serve the monocausal explanation of complex social phenomena. Here, the overriding aim is to destroy the Christian identity of Europe motivated by left-wing ideology.

“Post-politics suffers defeat after defeat. Not only in Poland, but also in the Western world, as exemplified by the compromising of the flagship ideology

of so-called tolerance, i.e. multi-culti, as Chancellor Merkel finds out, rapidly losing public support. And the economic success and famous attachment of Germans to order will not help here: there is chaos and uncertainty in the face of the invasion of immigrants from Muslim countries.” (*W Sieci*, February 8, 2016)

“In Brussels, politicians are detached from reality. We complain that national politicians are locked in offices. However, how can we even compare them with EU politicians who live in golden cages? They are distant from reality by light years and are delightfully lulled to sleep by the music of their own ideology. Frans Timmermans, Vice-President of the European Commission, who is considered to be the chief wise man in the European Commission, talks rubbish, saying that receiving refugees will be ‘good for our souls’” (*Do Rzeczy*, February 15, 2016).

“All this shows how much the EU is becoming a masked omnipotent force, which leaves smaller countries with an increasingly narrow margin of freedom regarding their internal policy” (*Do Rzeczy*, April 11, 2016).

Conclusions

The analysis presented here allows us to draw a few conclusions. Firstly, references to constitutive elements of populism were an important aspect of the argumentation in the analyzed discourse. The ‘we’ community and ‘the elite’ (mainly the government of Ewa Kopacz, PO, Germany, the EU) were an integral part of argumentation about ‘the others’. Secondly, the leading theme was the exclusion of ‘the others’, related to the rhetoric of fear of ‘the others’, presented as completely different and dangerous. Its basic feature was the presentation of culturalized Islam as a threat to Christianity. Thirdly, Islamophobia also featured heavily. Fourthly, the strategy of elite representation was dominated by extreme aversion towards government and, when it comes to external elites, by anti-Germanism and Euroscepticism. Finally, the strategies of positive self-presentation were based on a series of victimizations and excuses that often used the strategy of ‘turning the tables’, projecting accusations against the producers of populist discourse onto ‘the elite’ and ‘the immigrant others’, e.g. accusations of the lack of empathy or solidarity.

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