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DEBATE, VALUES, IDENTITY

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Quarterly

Debate, values, identity

Dear Readers,

the articles in the presented issue of the journal „Przegląd Zachodni" (Western Review) address both the present day and the turbulent history of the twentieth century. Each essay stands on its own, but their common thread is an interchange of ideas in public debate – both parliamentary and intellectual ‑ as well as issues of identity and its representations in collective consciousness. Three decades have passed since the historical turning point that shattered Europe's divides and ushered in an era of remarkable prosperity. The current debate, however, is taking place against the backdrop of developments that are converting the previous stability right before our eyes into the fragility of today and the unpredictability of tomorrow. The international community is being put to the test by prolonged deadly wars, while massive migrations change the image of societies and have an impact on the functioning of governmental institutions. A three-decade perspective also implies a generational transition, and as a result, a different understanding of past events and present concerns.

Europe must constantly reflect on its identity, hence – among other issues – the question of the concept of Central and Eastern Europe. Rigorous democratic mechanisms are needed to validate the performance of European Union institutions, which is especially vital in the context of the accession of further countries, with Ukraine leading the way. The prevailing imbalance between security and freedom generates the temptation to call democratic values into question, raising legitimate worries about media freedom and similar issues.

In this anthology, we blend these extremely relevant concerns with historical studies. On a micro scale, the legacy of the Pomeranian Kosznajderia and the dramatic decisions related to the German National List (*Deutsche Volksliste*),, as well as the tough problems relating to the areas merged into Poland after World War II, highlight the issues of identity established over centuries that can be so easily destroyed or lost. The myths that shape collective identity may suffer a similar fate, as evidenced by the articles on the variously perceived (or exaggerated) myth of the leader (Stepan Bandera) and a political squandering of such a myth (Aung San Suu Kyi).

We are glad to present to you yet another special issue of „Przegląd Zachodni" (Western Review) containing articles originally published in Polish in the quarterly of the Institute for Western Affairs.

Natalia Jackowska

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The axiological dimension of the debate on the place of East Central Europe within Europe

The crisis of Europe may be interpreted in different ways, in view of the ambiguity of both the notion of "crisis" and that of "Europe". Looking at the issue from the perspective of the history of political ideas, it can be seen to have been one of the most frequently occurring interpretational questions in discussions on the condition of Europe at least since the times of the Enlightenment. "Were the ever more frequent use of this notion to be regarded as a sufficient indicator of a real crisis," writes Reinhart Koselleck, "then we would necessarily be living in an all-consuming crisis" (Koselleck 1990: 59). The interpretation of the condition of Europe in categories of crisis may be regarded – paradoxically – as evidence of the vitality of European intellectual life. European thought has reached a level of critical self-reflection, which continues to encourage the casting of doubt on the principles that lie at the foundations of social life. In recent years, the crisis of Europe has been linked primarily to certain events relating to the European Union which undermine faith in the future of the European project. The issues most often cited in this context are the migration crisis of 2015, Brexit, and troubles with East Central Europe.

This article will analyse the debate concerning the place of East Central Europe (a notion with a variable semantic range, although it usually has Hungary and Poland at the forefront) within the European Union. The debate naturally takes place on different planes; one of these is the discussion carried on at the level of *political axiology*. Each of the sides refers to certain values, to general notions, which are treated as criteria for the evaluation of political events and processes. Freedom, equality, sovereignty, tradition, protection of identity – these are just a few examples of such values. The research problem addressed here is the identification of the values that are at stake in this political dispute.

On reading the discussions on this subject, one may reach the conclusion that the source of many of the conflicts is disagreement on fundamental values. This concerns both the values cited by the parties to the debate, and – in cases where the same terms are used – the ways in which they are defined. Political discussions are often imbued with ill will, irrational means of persuasion, and simple demagogy. I wish to analyse here the way of thinking of those participants in the debate who support the countries of East Central Europe, extracting from them the most substantial arguments. Guided by the Latin motto *sine ira et studio*, I consider how they perceive the nature of the dispute, and what its consequences will be for the future of the European Union. Of course, this dispute is nothing new; indeed, it continues a long tradition whereby Europe's East stands in opposition to its West. I shall thus begin by introducing the wider historical context of this discussion.

The symbolic geography of Europe

Let us begin with the general notions used by those participating in the discussion. In Western Europe, such countries as Hungary and Poland are usually referred to as being in Eastern Europe, or less commonly in East Central Europe or Central Europe. Representatives of those countries prefer to think of themselves as representing Central Europe. Of course, the choice of terminological convention is not an inconsequential matter. Political notions are not axiologically neutral terms; they are primarily carriers of certain meanings. The aforementioned notions are not merely geographical terms, but denote certain cultural or political subjects. Looking from a historical perspective, we note that these terms are of quite recent origin. Until the eighteenth century, according to the dominant interpretation, Europe was divided into North and South. Countries such as Russia and Poland were regarded as Northern countries. The division into Eastern and Western Europe was an invention of the Enlightenment. In the eighteenth century, this new partition began to displace the North–South division from public discourse. At present, Russia is seen by many authors as a country that is politically and culturally different from Central Europe, or even as a non-European civilisation. It should be noted, however, that according to the symbolic geography of the Enlightenment, both Russia and Poland belonged to Eastern Europe. According to Larry Wolff, author of the important book *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Russia was subjected to the same identification process as Poland – it

was a country between Europe and Asia. Wolff seems to be correct in stating that such names as East and West have no objective meaning – they are simply a matter of perspective. What was once Northern Europe was redefined in the eighteenth century as Eastern Europe. In Wolff's view, this coincided with the introduction of the term "civilisation" into public debate. This term initiated a new way of thinking about Europe, wherein Western Europe was the measure of civilisation. The idea of civilisation was a key reference point that enabled the articulation of the idea of Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century. According to this theory, Western Europe was the inventor not only of Eastern Europe, but also of itself (Wolff 2020: 28).

We may therefore speak here of the application of an Orientalist discourse to part of the European continent. However, there is an important difference from Edward Said's original version of Orientalism. In his book *Orientalism*, Said writes that the West adopted the concept of the Orient as something entirely different from the West, as a subject that lies outside Europe – not only in a geographical sense – and thus defined Europe's borders (Said 2005). Wolff's concept of Eastern Europe is similar, but not identical. The relationship between Western and Eastern Europe is semi-Oriental: we cannot say that Eastern Europe was perceived as something outside Europe – rather it was considered partially European.

How was the term "civilisation" understood? In the eighteenth century, civilisation denoted an advanced level of material, intellectual and moral development; it was the culmination of human progress (Malia 1999: 27–28). Barbarism, in turn, was viewed as its antithesis. On the scale between barbarism and civilisation, the inhabitants of Eastern Europe were not complete barbarians, but nor were they fully civilised. Eastern Europe, under that interpretation, had the potential to become more Western through progress in certain areas of life. However, a key feature of this civilising process was not persuasion, but rather the imposition of certain standards from outside. A good example of this way of thinking is supplied by Voltaire, who was fascinated by Peter the Great and later by Catherine the Great. Voltaire saw them as philosopher-rulers who were bringing civilisation to the East – and that fact, in his eyes, justified the violence that they employed (Wolff 2020: 319–380; Malia 1999: 42–50).

The notion of Central Europe changed the region's symbolic geography, but not instantly. To begin with, as we know, the term served primarily as a concept in German foreign policy. The idea of *Mitteleuropa* gained currency as a result of Friedrich Neumann's book of 1915. Although Neumann was a liberal, and his attitude to the nations living between Germany and Russia distinguished him favourably from the more aggressively inclined German politicians, the

German *Mitteleuropa* denoted a sphere of German economic and political hegemony (Meyer 1955: 194–217).

After the Second World War, the countries that came under Soviet dominance were generally referred to as Eastern Europe, and this term became synonymous with the Soviet bloc. As Piotr Wandycz noted ironically, "the subordination of this region to the Soviet Union obtained, one might say, a historical justification. For it appeared that the individual countries, somehow unable to exist independently, became, in accordance with their historical destiny, a part of the communist empire led by Russia" (Wandycz 1995: 12). Important scholarly works by such authors as Oskar Halecki, attempting to establish criteria for the division of Europe that were founded in solid academic knowledge, although inspiring for some researchers, did not change the status of the debate or the notions used therein (Halecki 2002).

Changes to the region's symbolic geography arose from essays by leading intellectuals from this part of Europe: Milan Kundera, Czesław Miłosz, and György Konrád. It is thanks to them that the notion of Central Europe, with a positive semantic range, was introduced permanently into the language of politics and culture. Particularly an essay by the first of those listed, titled *The Tragedy of Central Europe*, echoed widely and remains today a standard work of the subject literature. Although the author would distance himself from it, it remains an important reference point in discussions on the topic. There is no need to give a detailed analysis of his position. I wish merely to highlight those features of Central Europe identified by Kundera that direct our attention towards quite different aspects of the region's identity. Kundera distinguishes Central Europe from Russia – in not only its communist incarnation, but also that of the nineteenth century. He rejects the view that there exist cultural connections between the nations of that region and Russia; he refers to Slavophilia contemptuously as a "political phantasmagoria" (Kundera 1984; Bobrownicka 1995: 91–100).

Three points in Kundera's essay are of notable importance for the identity of Central Europe. First, Kundera believed that Central Europe preserved a concept of culture characteristic of European modernism. Just as in the Middle Ages the main reference point for Europeans had been religion, in modern times it was culture that had become the sphere of life in which the matters of greatest importance for the human condition were discussed. In that region especially, owing to the experiences of communism and fascism, this kind of thought became a matter of exceptional importance. The second question was that of the understanding of a political community. In contrasting the way the Russians understood the notion ("the least variation on the greatest possible territory") with

the Central European understanding ("the greatest variation on the smallest possible territory"), Kundera perceived a radical difference. Indeed, he believed that the Europeans in Central Europe retained the sense of contingency in history. The nations of that part of Europe, knowing the experience of existential threat, continued to feel the tragicality of history and the fragility of their own survival. Similarly to the Hungarian historian István Bibó, Kundera emphasised this profound dimension of the experience of the small Central European nations. They have a fear, deeply coded in their own historical memory, that their existence is constantly under threat (cf. Bibó 2012).

Postcolonialism or a return to Europe?

After the fall of communism, that positive sense of the experiences of the nations that had freed themselves from Soviet domination was also noticed by outside observers. Sympathising with those nations' aspirations, they believed that their experiences might provide a desirable adjustment to Western democracy. A good example is Thomas L. Pangle, a leading American political philosopher, who believed that Western democracy was in a state of crisis and in need of revival. He sought the source of such a revival in, among other things, reflection on the subject of the experiences of communism in the works of intellectuals from that part of Europe, which he saw as an antidote to Western relativism and the banalisation of public debate. "In Eastern Europe the divine spark has a presence that for too long has been missing in the West: thought is serious, evil has a meaning, heroism makes demands. Three reservoirs of human depth—love of country, religion, and art—still brim with juices of life that are becoming scarcer in the West" (Pangle 1992: 87).

In evaluations of the significance of the experiences of countries in the region, that point of view did not find widespread acceptance. The intellectuals who supported the transformation tended to view the distinctness of that part of Europe exclusively in categories of backwardness. "In returning to the European structures," Bronisław Geremek wrote of the Polish experience, "we must be aware of our culturally peripheral nature, but at the same time remember that in the past millennium there were moments – sometimes quite long-lasting – when Poland was an important element of the world of European civilisation" (Geremek 2013: 89). A consequence of the adoption of such perspectives was the imitative nature of the transformations, both in Poland and in other countries of the region, which gave rise to frustration among some of the intellectual and political elites.

Analysing the political transformations in Poland after 1989, Zdzisław Krasnodębski noted that the model the Poles had chosen to imitate was a reduced version of contemporary liberalism, absolutising individual freedom and the state's axiological neutrality, and marked by a distrust of strong group identities. In questions of key importance for the countries of the region, such as settling accounts with the past or the place of religion in public space, solutions were imposed – in the name of liberalism – that led to impoverishment of the public sphere. Instead of drawing on their own rich political traditions – the "democracy of the nobility" or the Solidarity movement – which offered an axiologically more valuable version of freedom, the Poles created a "democracy of the periphery" (Krasnodębski 2005). In a similar spirit, conservative historian Andrzej Nowak argues that colonialism, understood in a cultural sense, has been rejected only in relations between the former colonial powers and non-European nations: "It is not permissible today to claim that someone's culture, for example, that of African or Asian countries, is worse or lower. That is outlawed. But not in relation to all: a colonial political culture can most certainly be implemented… within Europe." Thus, in many countries of the European Union, an attitude acknowledging the existence of a kind of internal colony is still present and approved. In that author's view, the countries of East Central Europe are constantly shamed, scolded, and subjected to re-education. They have been placed in the role of a pupil whose role ought to be limited to mastering the lessons given by more civilised nations; they are not expected to produce anything original (Nowak 2021). The conservative Márton Békés, one of the creators of Hungarian memory policy, takes a similar view: "Thirty years after the fall of communism one can say confidently that internationalism itself is alive and well, except that it has taken on different forms (globalisation, the 'open society'), and the logic of colonialism remains an integral part of its arsenal" (Békés 2021).

Attitude to Europe – now often reduced primarily to attitude to the European Union – is one of the most important indicators of ideological orientation in the countries of East Central Europe. It is a persistent element in discussions of ideology in this part of Europe. In the past, however, this dispute often took the form of a discussion between Occidentalism and anti-Occidentalism. In many countries there are examples of a kind of ideological nativism – an affirmation of that which is home-grown in contrast to that which is Western. Štúr's movement in Slovakia, Hungarism in Hungary, Sarmatism in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth – these are examples (although clearly different in many respects) of attempts to build a nation's own identity in opposition to, or at least with the retention of independence from, the West.

At present, however, one may note a significant difference from these older ideological orientations. Contemporary conservatives or nationalists usually consider themselves Europeans, people of the West; their objection to the ideological tendencies manifested within the European Union grows out of the conviction that it is the modern Western European countries that are abandoning European values. Moreover, they question the very opposition of local versus European.

In Polish debates, this position was formulated by the renowned conservative essayist and poet Paweł Hertz. In his view, Poland always belonged to Europe; there is no non-European Polish culture. He saw as a great mistake the attempt to contrast Polishness with Europeanness:

> The sin against the notion of Europe is the idea that it is possible somehow to belong to it directly, bypassing membership of a specific national community, bypassing the obligation to work on those issues that are crucial for that community. This is a sin of ahistoricity, the lack of a sense of history, namely the casting off of a genealogy without which the notion of Europeanism becomes empty snobbery, a fashion, a whim (Hertz 1997: 100).

In this view, the affirmation of Polishness is not merely something consistent with Europeanness, but is a necessary condition for it.

This attitude of presenting oneself as a defender of true European values in the face of the opinions of the dominant political forces in Europe has been noticed by political scientists who disfavour the anti-liberal turn in East Central Europe. In the view of Ivan Krastev and Stephen Holmes, the people of that region felt themselves fully to be Europeans even before Brussels began the project of their "Europeanisation", and that project was thus taken to be unnecessarily offensive (Krastev, Holmes 2020: 69). The same authors note with irony that the former peripheries of Europe are now styling themselves on its centre (ibidem: 70).

The trouble with liberalism

In debates on the subject of the transformations in East Central Europe, much has been made in recent years of the notion of illiberal democracy. Of course, the term is not new – it gained popularity thanks to Fareed Zakaria, who even in the late 1990s was observing with unease the spread of that type of political regime. Zakaria refers to modern liberal democracies as mixed regimes, in which the most valuable element is liberalism, which he sees as encompassing constitutionalism, the division of powers, and guarantees of

individual freedoms. From his standpoint, government by the majority and elections are of lesser value (Zakaria 2003: 26).

Until the time of the famous speech by Viktor Orbán in 2014, the term had been used with a pejorative meaning. Orbán helped to assign it a new semantic range. He questioned the view that liberalism is the most valuable component of contemporary Western political systems. In his view, there is no reason to identify liberalism with freedom. A key issue, however, is the inability of liberal systems to carry out policies in accordance with the national interest. Orbán's position was not simply a reversal of Zakaria's. The latter referred to a debate well known from the history of political ideas, alluding to the praise of modern freedom in the dispute with contemporary advocates of ancient democracy (see Constant 1991). Orbán, in turn, referred to concrete issues familiar from Hungarian experiences since 1989. In his interpretation, the key issue for liberalism is the principle that one person's freedom ends where another's begins. In the reality of post-communist Hungary, that principle became a justification for a system where "might makes right". He gave as an example the situation in the banking market, where large banks took advantage of such freedom to dictate terms to customers. In the light of that interpretation, it is thus hard to speak of equality (*Victor Orbán's speech…* 2014).

A second question is the activity of what is called the third sector. Orbán's critics see that sector as building a civil society, thereby realising the liberal ideal of an intermediate sphere between the individual and the state. Liberals believe that a characteristic of populists is an aversion to civil society. A well-known proponent of such a view is the liberal political scientist Jan Werner Müller. In his book *What is Populism?* he argues that "the opposition from within civil society creates a particular moral and symbolic problem: it potentially undermines [the populists'] claim to exclusive moral representation of the people. Hence it becomes crucial to argue (and supposedly 'prove') that civil society isn't civil society at all, and that what can seem like popular opposition has nothing to do with the proper people" (Müller 2017: 78).

According to Orbán, that sector consists of organisations engaged in influencing governments; they mislead public opinion by claiming political independence. In fact, they are organisations run by unelected politicians, financed by politically engaged entities. Thus, from Orbán's standpoint, the liberal ideal of civil society is merely an ideological justification for specific political interests, serving as an underhand form of political struggle.

Liberalism has been a disappointment to many East Central European writers, and has become an object of criticism. Some see in this the weight of that region's dark past. The rebirth of anti-liberalism is sometimes inter-

preted as evidence of the stubborn persistence of nationalist thought matrices and a political culture that is not adjusted to modern democracy. According to Vladimir Tismaneanu, in interpreting the post-communist ideological landscape, one needs to remember the old axiom *ex nihilo nihil* (nothing comes from nothing): "[…] much of the nationalist pathos is not just the resurrection of interwar right-wing trends, but the prolongation of a xenophobic subculture that lingered under communism (both within and outside the party)" (Tismaneanu 2000: 49).

Other authors believe that the problem is more complex, and that criticism of liberalism cannot be reduced simply to a consequence of the presence of patterns of thought and action that were shaped in the interwar period. Krastev and Holmes, the aforementioned authors of the book *The Light that Failed: A Reckoning,* in evaluating critically the anti-liberal turn in East Central Europe, see the problem in modern liberalism itself. They write that ideological supremacy has "conferred such normative legitimacy on Western institutional forms as to make copying them, for those able to do so, seem obligatory" (Krastev, Holmes 2020: 14).

The proper context for this anti-liberal turn, therefore, is the character of the transformations of Western ideas, institutions and practices. Liberalism has rejected pluralism in favour of hegemony (ibidem: 16), which provoked an objection. The authors go on to claim that such a reaction to a world devoid of political and ideological alternatives was probably inevitable. They see this "absence of alternatives", and not the "gravitational pull of an authoritarian past or historically ingrained hostility to liberalism", as the best explanation for the dominance of an anti-Western ethos in post-communist societies today (ibidem: 14).

Leaving aside the questionable claim of the dominance of an "anti-Western ethos" in post-communist societies, it is worthwhile to pay attention to this voice in the discussion of liberalism in East Central Europe. Liberals themselves, writing from various perspectives, also note the problematic status that liberalism has gained in that region. A liberalism which in the eyes of many of its supporters is an internally rich and diverse current in political thought has transformed into something resembling a mandatory doctrine, and any objection to it is taken as a completely irrational position. This is reflected in the ritual and somewhat fictional character of political life in the post-communist states. Krastev and Holmes observe, while keeping things in proper proportion, that the transformative style of imitation of political systems disturbingly resembles the parliamentary elections held in communist times, when "voters, overseen by party officials, pretended to 'choose' the only candidates who were running for office" (ibidem: 18).

The political transformations in East Central Europe took place under the slogan of a "return to Europe" following decades of forced separation. Accession to the European Union could be read as the final break with communism, and liberalism seemed to many writers to be the natural opposite of communism (Szacki 1994). However, some critics of liberalism believe that it exhibits many disturbing similarities to communism. Ryszard Legutko, Polish conservative philosopher and politician from the Law and Justice party (PiS), claims that this similarity applies not to some warped contemporary form of liberalism, but to liberalism as such. He thus rejects the view that great diversity exists within liberalism or that there are some liberal traditions that have been forgotten (cf. Rosenblatt 2018). Liberalism, in its triumph, revealed its nature. What is this similarity, in Legutko's view?

> Socialism and liberal democracy turned out to be wholes that unite everything, that tell their supporters how to think, what to do, how to evaluate events, what to dream of, what language to use. They had their favourite human types and their model of an ideal citizen (Legutko 2017: 10).

Therefore, since the fall of communism, in place of a triumph of authentic diversity, we have observed the invasion of new formulas that standardise thought and behaviour. "Liberal democracy is a powerful unifying mechanism, blurring the differences between people, imposing a uniformity of views, behaviours, and language" (ibidem: 11). Legutko considers it an error to treat liberalism (and its constitutional incarnation) as a complete opposite of communism in terms of interference in individuals' lives. This remark may come as something of a surprise, because the liberals' programme contains the principle of limited authority and division of powers. It is the classical liberals – John Locke, Montesquieu, and Constant, to name a few – who made the fundamental contribution to the development of that doctrine (see Legutko 2011). Liberals also warned against other threats to the freedom of the individual that appeared in the epoch of mass society: the "tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling" (John Stuart Mill) and the tyranny of public opinion (Alexis de Tocqueville). Contemporary liberalism, according to Legutko, has a different face. We can witness the delegitimising of ideas and practices that lack a liberal–democratic provenance: "the political system should penetrate every element of collective and private life […] Not only the state and the economy should be liberal, democratic or liberal–democratic, but the whole of society, including ethics and mores, the family, churches, human attitudes, schools and universities, organisations and the community, and also culture" (ibidem: 38). For Legutko, there is a striking similarity

between communism and liberalism in their approach to history. Both of them grow out of the adoption of an optimistic, future-oriented vision of history. "Both systems clearly cut themselves off from the past. A natural approach – resulting chiefly from faith in *techne* – is to think in categories of progress, with all of the consequences of that" (ibidem: 17). He also sees a similarity in that "communism and liberal democracy are regarded by their supporters as optimum and final systems: both were to constitute an end to history understood as a sequence of systemic transformations" (ibidem: 75). Thus, the idea of the end of history should not be viewed as a mere fashion. In Legutko's interpretation, it is one of the pillars of the existing political orthodoxy.

The negative assessment of the shape of liberal democracy has a direct connection with the criticism of today's European Union. "Just as the Soviet Union was once painted as the vanguard of progress, so now that role has been ascribed to the 'West', often meaning the United States, or sometimes the European Union. We are left to follow in their footsteps" (ibidem: 72). Liberal democracy thus did not release the creativity of previously enslaved societies, but imposed on them a comprehensive vision to imitate, which – to Legutko's disappointment – those nations accepted. The Polish author complains: "We did not therefore invent a single institution, a single custom, or a single solution. Everything that was done in our countries – in education, the law, the political system, the media, civil society – was an imitation of those who had come before us" (ibidem: 72–73).

What is the place for the European Union in that interpretation? Legutko says that it recreated the liberal–democratic order at supranational level. In contrast to those who see the European Union as an embodiment of a multinational bureaucracy that restricts all kinds of freedom (especially economic), Legutko views it as a legally binding creation of liberalism:

> The doctrine in force in the European Union states explicitly that it is the final system, representing the emanation of "European values", being the crowning of the history of the European nations, requiring absolute defence and intensification. This doctrine is accompanied by the practice of building successive levels of control and regulation, detailed legislation and judicature (ibidem: 111–112).

Accession to the European Union not only failed to create conditions for authentic debate about the future, for free discussion on the principles constituting the political system in European countries, but it led to the imposition of intellectual conformism. Asking certain questions and stating certain opinions became suspicious in the light of the new orthodoxy. The author writes with bitterness:

> All of this serves to deepen the impression that the debate about political systems that has carried on in Europe for two-and-a-half millennia has reached an end, and that it has been definitively decided not only at an intellectual level or at the level of a particular state, but on the scale of a continent, or in fact the entire globe, because the Union has become the highest arbiter assessing all political phenomena in the world, and – like the Soviet Union at one time – the hope of oppressed peoples on all continents (ibidem: 112).

We should add, for fairness, that Legutko is naturally aware of the difference between the USSR and the EU. The source of his concern, and the motivation of the comparison, is the tendency to insist on uniformity, as manifested in many areas of life.

The trouble with the nation

The end of communism in East Central Europe was interpreted in different ways. For liberals, it signified above all the obtaining of individual freedom. Another important thread in the discussion was the restoration of national sovereignty. Since in modern democracy the people are usually identified with the nation, the regaining of national sovereignty was understood as synonymous with democracy. Meanwhile, in Western Europe, we have been faced for some time with, firstly, the separation of the notions of democracy and the sovereignty of the nation, and secondly, a distrust towards national identity. A new phenomenon to appear is that of democracy without a nation (Manent 2009).

As noted by the previously cited Jan Werner Müller, the architects of the post-war Western European order viewed the ideal of national sovereignty with great distrust: "How could one trust people who had brought fascists to power or extensively collaborated with fascist occupiers?" (Müller 2017: 134). Consequently, distrust towards unlimited national sovereignty, or even unlimited parliamentary sovereignty is somehow built into the DNA of post-war European politics (ibidem: 135). Müller sees justification for this distrust. The project of European integration grows out of the assimilation of such a vision by European politicians. He writes that European integration was a component part of this overall attempt to limit the national will: adding limitations at a supranational level to those that existed at national level (ibidem).

Frank Furedi, a British sociologist with Hungarian roots, who actively supports the Hungarian position in European discussions, nonetheless observes that the memory of the experiences of the Second World War, and especially of the Holocaust, is used instrumentally. The crimes committed then are treated as delegitimising national identity as such (Furedi 2017: 54). Support

has been gained for the interpretation of nationalism as presented in Carlton Hayes' classic essay *Nationalism as a Religion*, according to which nationalism has become the irrational equivalent of religion (ibidem: 51). Supporters of this view refer to the radical revision of old formulas of identification and the creation of new types of identity. Furedi cites Ulrich Beck, who argued that politics should be deterritorialised, and identity denationalised. Until recently, the dominant way of thinking about politics, in which the most important concepts were the nation, the nation state, sovereignty, and borders, has been rejected. The new quality of the European Union is to be based on, among other things, the replacement of these categories with new ones. The highest value in the new European canon is now diversity, to which the nation state is perceived as an obstacle. Furedi says that diversity is acquiring a status close to sacredness (ibidem: 69).

Advocates of diversity criticise nationalism for falsifying the question of human identity. They argue that a person is composed of different overlapping identities. Moreover, identity is not something fixed, but rather has a fluid character. The false vision of identity as something fixed and undifferentiated, according to Jan Werner Müller, lies at the foundations of contemporary right-wing populism. He believes that today's populists promote a vision of a homogeneous nation, which is a fantasy.

Defenders of the traditional concept of national identity reply in turn that the fantasy is the belief that there is written in national identity an undifferentiated, homogeneous concept of a community. Those who have made diversity the highest political value seek to question the types of identity that assume something fixed in them. Müller believes that a people (or nation) with an established identity that can be articulated through a system of representation is a fiction created by populists. The fluid nature of identity cannot be captured by essentialist formulas. However, Furedi believes that one can identify and represent the "sentiments, interests, traditions, and practices through which a people are constituted" (ibidem: 70). For the defenders of traditional identity, the nation is a value that should be protected. According to the Hungarian historian István Bibó's well-known formula, it is the largest community within which people are capable of communicating without difficulty (ibidem: 73). For the supporters of the new identity, the European Union is a cosmopolitan empire which grows out of the overcoming of national borders and of the egoism that calls to mind the worst pages of history (ibidem: 79). On the one hand this conflict is presented as a clash of particularism with universalism; on the other, it is viewed as a return to a well-known conflict of the past – that between patriotism and imperialism.

The Israeli political scientist Yoram Hazony, author of a book defending nationalism that is also valued in conservative circles in East Central Europe, claims that the conflict between imperialism and nationalism is the most important dispute of our times. In Europe it takes the form of a dispute between those who favour deeper integration and the construction of a new European state, and those who support the preservation of nation states. For Hazony, such phenomena as Brexit, as well as the resistance of East Central European countries to deeper integration, are hopeful manifestations of an awakening of nations (Hazony 2018).

Although liberals usually refer to this phenomenon with disapproval, some of them understand the historical determinants of such an attitude. According to Krastev and Holmes, the countries of East Central Europe are unwilling to accept such a comprehensively negative view of nationalism, firstly because those countries were born "in the age of nationalism following the break-up of multinational empires after the First World War", and secondly because "anti-Russian nationalism played an essential role in the basically non-violent anti-communist revolutions of 1989" (Krastev, Holmes 2020: 89).

In the search for new formulas for the legitimisation of the post-national political order whose emanation is to be the European Union, various ideas are put forward. In such notions as "constitutional patriotism" or "transnational constitutionalism" what comes to the fore is the idea of the rule of law – the will of the people should be replaced by a legal standard. In such a system, a particular role is assigned to the judicature. In the view of György Schöpflin, a Hungarian political scientist and former Fidesz MEP, a dangerous turn has been taken in the European Union regarding the understanding of the role of the judicial branch, and particularly of constitutional courts, in a state's political system. This change is a consequence of a lack of trust in nations. The experience of Germany, where Hitler won democratic elections, left a deep mistrust towards them. The creators of the post-war order decided that democracy needs additional safety measures. A result of this is the strong position of the Federal Constitutional Court within the German political system. In the European Union the quality of democracy is assessed on the basis of the position of constitutional judiciary. The current state of affairs would have no doubt perplexed the advocates of democracy in the nineteenth century – constitutional courts are defending democracy against parliaments. In Schöpflin's view, this has created the problem of the judicial branch's exceeding its defined competences (Schöpflin 2021). He believes that a kind of "outsourcing" of power has taken place – the authority that formerly rested with democratically elected representatives has been transferred to the courts. The centre of gravity of pow-

er has moved from the legislative to the judicial branch. This long-established tendency has intensified as a result of the triple crisis that the EU has experienced in the past two decades: the rejection of the constitutional treaty by key member states, the expansion to the East, and the 2008 economic crisis. Unable to find a way out of this crisis, the Union is more and more often attempting to impose its will. The "consensual *polis*" in which decisions were the subject of consultation has been transformed into a "punitive *polis*". In the European Union, which includes many countries with different institutional and legal traditions, with different ways of regulating the place of the constitutional judiciary in the political system, any attempt to introduce uniformity in that area must lead to arbitrariness. Certain states are reprimanded for measures that are accepted in others (such as the way in which members of constitutional courts are appointed). This leads to a justified sense of frustration and a tendency to regard the decisions of EU institutions as diktats from above (ibidem).

In the discussion on the subject of democracy without a nation, another important thread is the problem of the relationship between the people and the elites that represent them. One of the reasons why East Central European advocates are referred to as populists is that their argumentation frequently contains criticism of elites. It should be noted that, from the perspective of the history of political ideas, this is something of a novelty: formerly it was the conservatives who defended the need for the existence of an aristocracy, and saw in the people a threat to the political order. Now, the advocates of traditional values appeal to the masses and criticise the elites. Criticism of the "new aristocracy" is widespread not only in Europe, but also in the United States (see e.g. Deneen 2021: 194–220).

According to Chantal Delsol, a conservative French thinker who supports the rationale of the adherents of traditional values in East Central Europe, "the suspicion of the European elites towards the peoples is permanent, and comes to light at various turning points in our everyday history. We are democrats. But when the people do not vote as they should (do not accept the European projects that are proposed to them), we make them vote again until they give their consent" (Delsol 2020: 218). Commenting on the words of former European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, who said that "there can be no democratic choice against the European treaties", Delsol writes: "The European project is thus situated outside democracy, above the voice of the peoples" (ibidem: 219). She continues: "It is quite clear that the contemporary development of the technocracy, particularly in the European institutions, is a consequence of the contempt in which the elites hold the excessively conservative populace. It is a long time since we had to deal with such a lack of respect

for the incompetence of the masses, being at the same time an expression of distrust in democracy" (ibidem: 220).

Support from the European political and cultural elites for the European project is seen by critics as a consequence of their striving to free themselves from the limitations imposed by the traditional framework of the nation and the nation state. The English philosopher Roger Scruton, who probably enjoyed greater renown in the countries of East Central Europe than in his own country (Brzechczyn 2021), writes of the Western elites' "oikophobia". Patriotism and an attachment to one's native culture become the object of criticism and simple mockery. This is manifested, in Scruton's view, in the academic "culture of repudiation" which instructs one to view traditional identities with suspicion, and has developed a whole discourse based on the deconstruction, demythologisation and moral condemnation of its own tradition (Scruton 2006: 23–25).

Attitudes to the nation are revealed in the course of various discussions. It will be worthwhile to draw attention to two issues that are significant in this context. The first is the attitude to the past, as expressed in historical policy. The second is the attitude to immigration. Frank Furedi writes disapprovingly that rejection of the past is something that unites the various factions of supporters of further European integration (Furedi 2017: 79). In his view, Europeans treat their own history not as a foundation on which their collective life can be built, but as something from which they ought to liberate themselves (ibidem: 80). The attitude to history in East Central Europe is different from that which dominates in Western Europe. Western Europeans often refer to their own past with a feeling of shame, resembling the phenomenon that Pascal Bruckner called the "tyranny of guilt"; the people of East Central Europe are divided on this question, but many of them still speak of pride in their own past. The European Union's memory policy is oriented towards promoting a transnational past, or even – as Furedi argues – an anti-national past (ibidem: 81). Furedi sees in EU leaders' way of thinking a kind of teleological understanding of history: the transition from nation state to European federation is treated as some sort of historical necessity (ibidem: 84). He regards the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas as an exponent of the new way of understanding European identity. For the latter, a break with history is a moral imperative. The central event in the history of Europe is taken to be the Holocaust, which Habermas interprets as the second fall of man. The duty to break with the continuity of history results from the acknowledgement that it is worthy of condemnation (ibidem: 85). Furedi argues that the Holocaust is being used as an instrument in the battle with Eurosceptics. Opponents of deeper European

integration are presented as creating the danger of a return to the worst pages of history. This new policy of memory, where the central question is attitude to the Holocaust, is treated as a test of Europeanness for East Central Europe (ibidem: 92).

The immigration crisis has brought to light in dramatic fashion the differences of opinion as to the understanding of such notions as the nation, belonging, and identity. The "counterrevolutionaries" – as Ivan Krastev and Stephen Holmes call the opponents of liberalism from East Central Europe – see the weakness of the West as lying in the inability to treat seriously the difference between the nation and people who do not belong to the nation; hence the lack of understanding of the need to strengthen the territorial borders, which after all give a practical meaning to the distinction between "ours" and "foreign" (Krastev, Holmes 2020: 56). The unwillingness of countries in East Central Europe to accept immigrants is seen as a manifestation of xenophobia, moral immaturity, and inability to create a new type of political community not based on a homogeneous identity. The opponents of such an assessment claim that faith in the possibility of harmonious and peaceful coexistence by representatives of different cultures is naive, and that the history of immigrants in Western Europe shows that a multicultural society is highly unstable. Cultural differences often concern the most important values, and it is difficult to form a community with people from whom so much divides us. Besides issues relating to risks to security resulting from the mass inflow of immigrants, a fundamental argument put forward by the opponents of immigration is the problem of the protection of cultural identity.

Conclusion

The dispute analysed here is an example of a kind of discussion typical of post-Enlightenment culture, which reveals a difference in professed values. Even if the disputing parties use similar notions, they assign them a different semantic range. In the views taken of the difference between East Central Europe and the rest of the European Union, one can observe the presence of old ideas, dating back to the Enlightenment, about the failure of countries in that region to fulfil all European standards. The differences are given a pejorative connotation and are treated in categories of backwardness. In critics' eyes, the countries of the region have not learnt the lesson of twentieth-century history, and their way of thinking about such matters as the nation, the nation

state, sovereignty, and historical memory is not only anachronistic, but creates a danger of a return to an inglorious past.

In turn, in the voices of the defenders of East Central Europe – those from that region, and intellectuals from the West who sympathise with them – we hear disapproval for the way that region is treated by Western European countries and EU institutions. They believe that the issues they raise are ignored, they encounter a refusal to enter into discussion, and instead, efforts are made to suppress their voices by administrative means. Paradoxically, the region's advocates believe that they are better Europeans than their critics from the West; they are defending not so much an anachronistic concept of political order, but that which was valuable in European tradition.

What is the way out of this situation? It may be described with reference to the title of Albert Hirschman's classic work *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, naturally treating the notions mentioned in that title in a flexible manner.

Firstly, the dispute may prove to be a transient one. The ideological position of the states of East Central Europe may change following elections in individual countries, causing them to join the main current in European politics, at the same time consigning the aforementioned dispute to history. Thus, these states may remain loyal members of the European Union, revising their own position on fundamental matters.

Secondly, the dispute may be prolonged, deepening divisions within the European Union. The countries of East Central Europe may find allies among other EU members, and the problems that they raise may no longer be treated as a troublesome characteristic feature of that region, but as an alternative conception of European politics.

Finally, in a third scenario, in spite of the repeated declarations by the region's political leaders that they wish to remain within the European Union, and public support for membership of that organisation, if both sides toughen their positions, then those countries may leave the Union, or else attain a status whereby their membership has a purely formal character.

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the discussion concerning the place of East Central Europe in the European Union. The author focuses on issues related to political axiology. Analysing the statements of selected authors and politicians, mostly from Poland and Hungary, he tries to determine what values are at stake in this dispute. In the author's view, the two fundamental areas of discussion are the attitude towards liberalism, and the future of the nation and the nation state. The article ends with a forecast of the possible consequences of this dispute.

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Hegemon or loser? Analysing Germany's success in the Council of the European Union[1]

Introduction[2]

Germany is widely believed to be the hegemon in the EU's legislative process as it is perceived as the most effective country in attaining its preferences. In the literature, Germany is referred to as "the natural hegemon of any European political system" (Wallace 1991: 169-170) or "a reluctant hegemon: one whose economic leadership is recognized but politically contested" (Bulmer, Patterson 2013: 1387). In a May 2020 study by the Robert Schuman Foundation and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, which analysed the power of countries in the EU using a number of parameters [including voting power in the Council of the European Union (hereinafter the Council or Council) and the European Parliament (EP), positions held by the Commission and the EP, the number of registered lobbyists and journalists, and seats held by EU institutions and agencies), Germany emerged as the European Union's most influential player, achieving the highest ranking in terms of influence, far ahead of the other member states (Wiejski 2020: 10). The view of German hegemony also predominates among policy-makers. In a 2015 European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) survey of experts (politicians, officials, think-tank staff) in all member states, as many as 95% of them named Germany as the

[1] This article was written before the UK's exit from the European Union on 31 January 2020.

[2] This paper was written as part of the POLGER project (*Diskrepanz oder Interessengemeinschaft? Polnisch-deutsche Relationen in Institutionen und im Gesetzgebungsprozess der Europäischen Union*) conducted under a grant from the Polish-German Foundation for Science. For more on the results of the project go to: http://www.jmc.inp.uj.edu.pl/polger.

most influential actor in the EU and listed the country as their preferred partner in most EU policy areas (ECFR 2016). The view of Germany's dominance in the EU resonates especially after the eurozone reform, which took place in 2010-2015 (Brunnermeier, James, Landau 2016). The literature provides views that "as soon as the sovereign debt crisis began, it was widely understood that Germany's response would dictate its ultimate resolution" (Bernhard, Leblang 2016: 907), or that Germany was "central to the outcome of the eurozone crisis" (Bulmer 2014: 1245), and that "the terms of stabilization in the euro area […] largely follow the preferences of Germany, the country with superior bargaining power" (Schimmelfenning 2015: 190).

Interestingly, however, even though these views are strongly grounded in the literature and public opinion, there is hardly any research that would show their consistency with reality. While Germany's theoretical power in the EU, as estimated by formal indicators (e.g., voting power), is the greatest, the country's actual success in negotiations may be quite different. This paper aims to fill this gap by analysing Germany's real success in voting on EU legislative acts between 2009 and 2019 in the Council, the EU's key legislative institution. The main research question is: what did Germany's success look like in this period, as measured by the country's level of contestation of the legislative acts adopted in the Council? To answer it, three quantitative analyses will be conducted using descriptive statistics, linear regression and multidimensional scaling. Descriptive statistics will be employed to determine how often Germany voted against EU legislation in the Council between 2009 and 2019, as compared to other member states. By using linear regression, it will be possible to find out whether and how Germany's level of success (contestation) in this institution was statistically significantly different from the other countries. Finally, multidimensional scaling analysis will show with which member states Germany most frequently votes in unison or in divergence in the Council, thereby revealing the country's coalition capacity in this institution, especially when building blocking minorities and winning coalitions.

In the first section of this paper, a hypothesis is put forward that Germany achieves the highest level of success in Council negotiations. This claim has been derived from voting power theory, which points to the voting power of a country as a key determinant of its effectiveness in the EU. The second section discusses the methodology for testing this hypothesis with special focus on empirical material. In the third section, the aforementioned hypothesis is empirically tested using three statistical techniques, that is descriptive statistics, linear regression and multidimensional scaling. The conclusions provide a summary of the results obtained.

The hypothesis of German domination in the Council

The Council is the EU's key intergovernmental institution (Kirpsza 2011a; Ławniczak 2014), which plays a special role in shaping EU secondary law, notably legislative acts. Under the ordinary legislative procedure (OLP), the Council adopts legislation along with the EP while under the special legislative procedure (SLP), it is predominantly the privileged actor, which passes the final legal act having obtained the EP's opinion or approval (Kirpsza 2013).[3] According to Art. 16(3) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), the Council makes decisions by a qualified majority unless the Treaties provide otherwise. This is currently governed by the so-called "double majority rule" set out by the Lisbon Treaty of 13 December 2007, under which a decision is considered to have been passed if it is supported by 55% of voting member states (or 72% if the proposal has been submitted by an entity other than the European Commission or the High Representative) representing 65% of the EU population.[4] Under such a system, a blocking minority, i.e. a coalition of governments that can block the approval of a decision, is reached if the proposal is not supported by four Council members representing more than 35% of the population, or if fewer than 15 countries vote in favour of a decision.

According to voting power theory (Felsenthal, Machover 1998; Nurmi 2000), a member state's success in the Council is primarily a function of its voting power in the context of the voting rules that determine the conditions for building minimum winning coalitions. This power, measured by various indices (called voting power indices, see Holler, Nurmi 2013), determines a country's chance of winning or blocking a vote. In short, a country's chance of winning a vote, often measured by the Shapley-Shubik power index (Shapley, Shubik 1954), determines the number of situations in which it has a critical position; in other words, with its participation, the country is able to transform a losing coalition into a winning one. On the other hand, the chance of blocking a vote, in principle measured by the Coleman index (Coleman 1971)[5],

[3] The special legislative procedure is envisaged in 33 articles of the Treaties, with the EP passing the final legal act in three of them, the Council in 29 while the EP and the Council jointly in one.

[4] Once the Lisbon Treaty came into force, the following definitions of qualified majority voting (QMV) applied: 1) from 1 December 2009 to 31 October 2014 – the triple majority system established by the Nice Treaty; 2) from 1 November 2014 to 31 March 2017 – the double majority system with the possibility of returning to the Nice triple majority system if requested by any member state; 3) since 1 April 2017 – the double majority rule with no exceptions.

[5] More specifically, this is called the Preventive Power Index (PPI).

determines the percentage of all possible winning coalitions which, if left by a single country, will fail to pass a decision.

Based on the above assumptions, it can be predicted that Germany is the most effective and dominant member of the Council. Such a hypothesis results from two arguments. First, under the double majority voting system, Germany has the highest chance of winning a vote out of all member states. This country has the highest share of the EU's total population (18.54%), which constitutes 28.5% of the population required to reach the 65% QMV threshold. According to the SSI index, Germany's share is crucial to the formation of 15.12% of all coalitions winning a vote in the Council (Kóczy 2012: 157).[6] In this respect, the country is ahead of all other powerful countries, namely France (11.20%), the UK (11.11%), Italy (10.54%), Spain (8.34%) or Poland (6.53%). Significantly, this German advantage will continue even after the UK's exit from the EU (Kóczy 2016).

Second, Germany also has the greatest blocking capacity in the Council. Its population accounts for approximately 53% of the EU population required to form a blocking minority. According to the PPI index, there are 75.45% potential winning coalitions that will lose a vote after being left by Germany (Kleinowski 2015: 201-202). This indicates the country's very high capacity for blocking those decisions in the Council that run counter to its preferences, especially compared to other countries with the highest voting power, namely France, the UK, Italy, Spain and Poland, which have significantly lower PPI ratios of 61.10%, 59.12%, 57.42%, 45.28% and 38.02%, respectively.

The above points lead to the following hypothesis: *Germany attains the highest level of voting success in the Council.*

Hypothesis testing methodology

Empirical material

The above hypothesis will be tested through a statistical analysis of Germany's success in voting on legislation in the Council. The data has been derived from the monthly registers of Council acts, i.e. monthly summaries of the results of votes that took place in this institution (Council 2020). These documents are available in the Council's document register and each file includes

[6] The data for the population of member states projected in 2020

the title of the legislative act, voting date, voting rule, and voting outcomes with information on which countries voted against or abstained.[7]

The analysis has been restricted to votes that meet three conditions. The first one concerned the timeframe: the votes that have been subjected to analysis took place between 1 December 2009 (when the Treaty of Lisbon had come into force) and the start of the current, ninth term of the European Parliament (2019-2024), which is 1 July 2019, the day before the first session of the EP's present term. Second, the analysis covered legislative acts, that is regulations, directives and decisions enacted in the ordinary or special legislative procedure (Art. 289 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union – TFEU). Thus, votes on non-legislative acts, such as those relating to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), were not included, due to the frequent lack of data on the results of votes on such regulations. Third, the analysis took into account only votes on the Council's final positions on proposals, which concluded legislative procedures. Hence, it excluded votes at the first or second reading of the OLP, which were then voted on again in the Council at the next reading. After applying the above criteria, a sample of 1,146 votes was obtained.

The collected empirical material has been processed in such a way as to obtain panel data, that is, to be able to describe the average success of member states in voting in each year of the 10-year period. In other words, the study focuses not on individual votes, but individual countries in every year of the 2009-2019 period [number of countries (28) x number of years (10)]. Every year is counted from 1 July of a given year (for 2009, by way of exception, from 1 December) to 30 June of the following year. The total database thus comprises 276 observations.[8]

Coding of the variables

The dependent variable in this study is a member state's success in the Council (*Success in the Council*). It has been coded quantitatively as the percentage of votes in a given year from the 2009-2019 period in which a country cast a negative vote, that is, it voted against or abstained. The higher the percentage, the lower the satisfaction with the final results of negotiations on

[7] The Council's internal documents are available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/public-register/.

[8] The database does not comprise 280 observations because Croatia did not become an EU member until 1 July 2013 so there is no data for this country in 2009-2013 (4 years).

a given act in the Council, and therefore the lower the country's success in this institution. Hence, an ideal assumption has been made that the member state succeeded in negotiations if it had voted in favour of a legislative act and that it had failed if it voted against or abstained. Admittedly, abstention and opposition are not identical means of voting and can result from different motives; however, the present study is based on the methodology of other empirical studies that treat both ways of voting as a single category (see Hosli, Mattila, Uriot 2011; Bailer, Mattila, Schneider 2015).

At this point, it should be emphasised that a country's vote in favour of a legislative act does not always mean that it has achieved success and satisfaction with the final outcome. It is argued in the literature that governments sometimes do not contest legislation in the Council when they are defeated in negotiations, because they are afraid that they will be accused by the domestic opposition or public opinion of badly defending national interests, and accordingly may lose political support (Novak 2013). Moreover, the lack of opposition may result from issue-linkage; despite losing negotiations on a particular regulation, the member state eventually supported it because in return it received (or was promised to receive in the future) concessions on another piece of legislation (König, Junge 2009). Unfortunately, it is not always possible to track down such situations due to the lack of information about the course of internal negotiations in the Council. Therefore, the assumed indicator of a member state's success in the Council, as measured by the number of contestations, is not ideal.

Besides the dependent variable, one independent variable and two control variables have also been coded. The independent variable is *State*. It is nominal and comprises 28 categories relating to each member state. This predictor will be used to analyse success in the Council from the point of view of its members, including Germany. The first control variable, *Period*, includes the impact of time on member states' success in the Council. It is nominal and consists of 10 categories corresponding to subsequent years (counted from 1 July to 30 June) from 1 December 2009 to 1 July 2019. The second control variable, *EU Policies*, will be used to analyse if and how member states' success in the Council varied across policy areas that the voted proposal concerned. These areas were defined using the European Parliament committees that had jurisdiction over the proposal. The analysis includes only those areas with at least 25 negative votes in the Council. As a result, the variable *EU Policies* consists of 10 categories: 1 – Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI), 2 – Budgets (BUDG), 3 – Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON), 4 – Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL), 5 – Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI), 6 – Internal

Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO), 7 – Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), 8 – Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), 9 – Transport and Tourism (TRAN), 10 – Legal Affairs (JURI).

Hypothesis testing techniques

Hypothesis testing will be conducted using three quantitative techniques. Descriptive statistics will be implemented first, notably measures of the distribution of the dependent variable (including the arithmetic mean). They will be used to compare the average success of Germany and the other member states in the Council from 2009 to 2019, both overall and in individual EU policy areas. In addition, descriptive statistics will make it possible to see how Germany's level of contestation has changed over time.

The second statistical technique is linear regression (Fox 2008). Its aim is to estimate the linear relationship (best fitted to the data) between the dependent variable (y) and the independent variable (x) under certain assumptions, and to determine the statistical significance of this relationship. In the present study, the dependent variable will be *Success in the Council* while the independent one – *State*, containing 28 categories corresponding to each member state (see the subsection *Coding of the variables*). Regression analysis will make it possible to test whether there are significant positive or negative relationships between specific member states and achieved voting success in the Council, as measured by the percentage of contested legislation. This technique will also allow to explore whether Germany's success in the Council in 2009-2019 was statistically significantly different from the other member states, and if so, to what extent and in which direction (was it significantly lower or higher?).

Finally, the third technique is multidimensional scaling (MDS, Cox, Cox 2001). It is used to investigate similarities between objects and detect hidden variables that explain them. MDS arranges objects in n-dimensional space in such a way that similar objects are placed close to each other and those that are different are located further apart. The advantage of this technique is that it positions objects according to their relative rather than absolute coherence, e.g. the coherence between objects A (Germany) and B (Poland) relative to their coherence with object C (the Netherlands). In the present study, MDS will involve arranging member states in a two-dimensional space (i.e., on a graph with x and y axes) in terms of the voting consistency in the Council in such a way that states voting in line with each other are close to each other and those voting differently are located further apart. Based on the obtained re-

sults, an analysis will be made of Germany's coalition capacity in the Council to show with which countries Germany most frequently votes in unison and divergence, and what capacity it has to build winning and blocking coalitions.

Hypothesis testing – analyzing Germany's genuine level of voting success in the Council

Descriptive statistics

Figure 1 shows the average success levels of member states in the Council. The points represent the average number of contestations (objections or abstentions) filed annually by a member state in the 2009-2019 period. As a reminder: the smaller the number, the greater the success. Overall, the figure confirms the finding that objections to legislation in the Council are still infrequent, which the literature explains in various ways, including "consensus culture", i.e. the deeply-rooted norm of making the broadest possible compromises (Lewis 2005; Ławniczak 2018), issue-linkage, i.e. trading preferences of varying intensity to reach a compromise that would satisfy all states (Kirpsza 2023; König, Junge 2009) or appropriate coalition dynamics aimed at building blocking minorities (Häge 2013). In the period under review, only 2.6% of legislation per year was contested, resulting in an impressive 97.4% level of support from Council members, well above the first threshold of the double majority rule (55%). Importantly, this level did not fluctuate significantly over time. This is because the ANOVA test shows that the differences in mean levels of contestation in the 2009-2019 period are not statistically significant (F=0.33, p=0.964). This means that – in line with some predictions (Kirpsza 2011b) – the financial and migration crises that hit the EU in 2009 and 2015, the prospect of Brexit, the rise of nationalist sentiment in member states or the seizure of power in some countries by populist and extreme parties (e.g., SYRIZA in Greece in 2015 or FIDESZ in Hungary in 2010) have not undermined consensualism in the Council. Between 2009 and 2019, the country that by far most frequently contested EU legislation was the United Kingdom, which opposed on average about 14% of legislation per year. By contrast, France (0.21% per year, only three contestations in the period under review) and Lithuania (0.39%, only four contestations) were by far the least contesting countries.

Of all member states, Germany is in a high fourth place in Figure 1. Between 2009 and 2019, this country submitted a total of 55 negative votes and

contested an average of 4.5% legislative acts per year. This result is surprising since it means that Germany achieved one of the lowest levels of success in the Council, as measured by the percentage of contested regulations. Contrary to expectations derived from voting power theory, this country loses a relatively high number of votes in the Council. Despite having the greatest voting power in this institution, Germany is often unable to build winning or blocking coalitions or negotiate compromises that would satisfy its preferences. This is all the more interesting that the other country with the greatest voting power, France, is at the other end of the figure, which implies that it is much more successful than Germany in pursuing its interests in the Council.

Figure 1

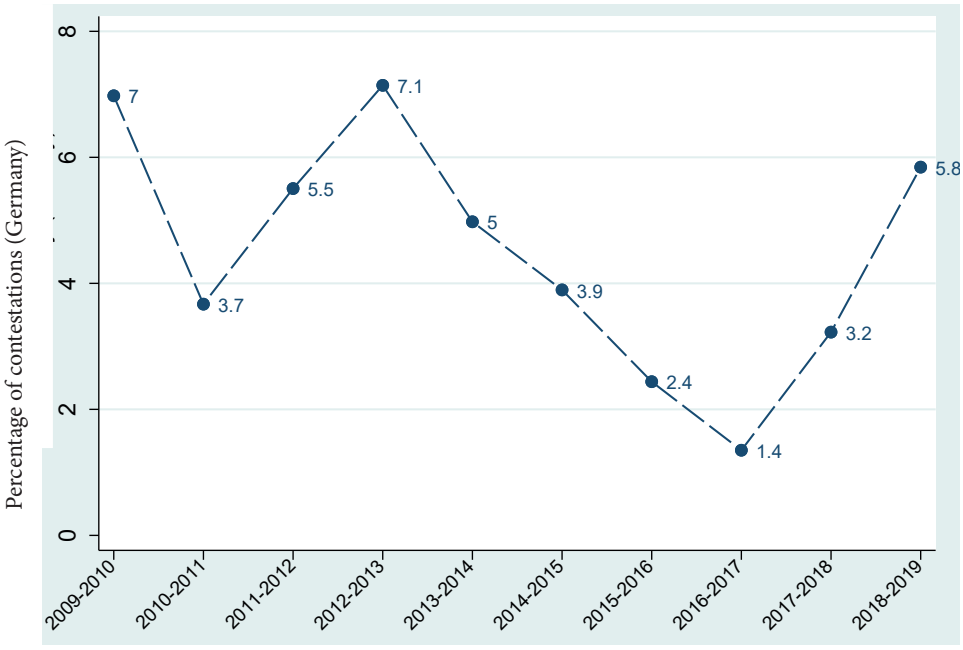
Average success of member states in the Council as measured by the number of contestations (objections and abstentions) between 2009 and 2019

Source: Council (2020)

Has this low level of Germany's success in the Council been permanent or has it changed over time? The answer is provided by Figure 2, which shows a temporal analysis of Germany's level of contestation in 2009-2019 (see the *Period* variable). Overall, it reveals the presence of several fluctuations. In the first period, roughly from 1 December 2009 to 30 June 2013, Germany lost the most votes, especially in 2009-2010 and 2012-2013 (about 7%). Then, the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017 saw a downward trend in the level of contestation, which in 2016-2017 reached its lowest limit – a mere 1.4%. This was followed again by a rise in the percentage of negative notes, up to 5.8% in 2018-2019. Overall, the above results show that Germany was less successful in the seventh European Parliament (2009-2014) than in the eighth (2014-2019). This assumption is confirmed by a statistically significant result of the Student's *t*-test for independent samples (t=-2.318, p=0.0491) which compares the mean values for the two groups (2009-2014 – the first group; 2014-2019 – the second group). This means that Germany's success in the Council was significantly different and higher in 2014-2019 than in 2009-2014.

Figure 2

Mean level of Germany's success in the Council as measured by the number of contestations between 2009 and 2019



Source: Council (2020)

What could be the reason for such a significant temporal change in Germany's level of success in the Council? The literature argues that the key factor determining the government's inclination to vote against EU legislation is its ideological positioning along the left-right line (Hosli, Matilla, Uriot 2011; Mattila 2009). Based on this argument, it can be said that the main reason for the increase in Germany's success after 2013 could have been the change of government in this country following the 22 September 2013 parliamentary elections. As a result, the centre-right *CDU/CSU-FDP* government was replaced by the so-called grand coalition of the *CDU/CSU* and *SPD*. This resulted in the government's shift toward the centre and forced a search for compromises between parties that were ideologically quite far apart. That change likely brought Germany's preferences closer to other countries and hence increased the possibility of their attainment. With regard to the rise in contestation after 2017, it could have been caused by the longest formation of a government coalition in German history after the 24 September 2017 elections, when first the so-called Jamaica coalition (the *CDU/CSU – FDP* – Greens), and then, with great difficulty, "a grand coalition" was built again.

Germany's level of success in the Council may vary not only temporally, but also materially. Table 1 features the mean number of EU laws contested between 2009 and 2019 by national governments in the ten most important EU policies (see the *EU Policies* variable). The table shows that during the period under review, Germany most often opposed legislation in four areas: employment and social affairs (14.2% of proposals contested in this area), agriculture and rural development (11.1%), internal market and consumer protection (9.7%), and transport and tourism (9.1%). At the same time, in these four policies, Germany was among the top three member states that most often lost voting in the Council. Moreover, despite its low level of contestation, Germany was also one of the three most frequently outvoted states in two additional areas: economic and monetary affairs (2.1%) and civil liberties, justice and home affairs (5.9%). Overall, in 2009-2019, of all member states Germany was the least successful in advancing its preferences in the Council in six out of the 10 policies under review.

Table 1.

Member states success in the Council (measured by their level of contestation) by EU policies 2009-2019

Member state	AGRI	BUDG	ECON	EMPL	ENVI	IMCO	ITRE	LIBE	TRAN	JURI
Austria	7.4	7.6	1.4	7.1	**8.8**	8.3	4.1	**8.5**	4.5	**9.8**
Belgium	5.5	1.9	0	2.3	4.8	4.1	4.1	.85	0	3.9

Bulgaria	1.8	0	0	0	7.1	**11.1**	2.7	1.7	0	.98
Croatia	0	0	0	7.1	4.0	0	**11.6**	0	0	0
Cyprus	1.8	0	0	0	2.4	0	1.3	0	1.1	.98
Czech Republic	7.4	0	.70	4.7	7.2	2.7	4.1	5.1	1.1	4.9
Denmark	7.4	3.8	0	4.8	7.2	4.1	0	0	1.1	3.4
Estonia	3.7	0	0	2.3	3.2	2.7	0	0	2.3	4
Finland	1.8	2.8	1.4	0	.80	1.3	1.3	2.5	0	.98
France	0	0	0	0	1.6	1.3	0	0	0	0
Germany	**11.1**	.95	**2.1**	**14.2**	6.4	**9.7**	2.7	**5.9**	**9.1**	3.9
Greece	0	.95	0	0	2.4	0	2.7	1.7	1.1	.98
Hungary	7.4	0	0	**14.2**	**12.8**	0	2.7	4.3	0	4
Ireland	5.5	0	0	2.3	1.6	1.3	0	1.7	3.5	0
Italy	1.8	1.9	0	2.3	2.4	2.7	0	0	4.5	3
Latvia	1.8	1.9	.70	4.7	4.8	1.3	0	0	0	0
Lithuania	1.8	0	0	2.3	.80	1.3	0	0	0	0
Luxembourg	1.8	.95	**2.1**	0	1.6	2.7	0	0	3.4	2.9
Malta	0	0	0	7.1	4	1.3	2.7	2.5	1.1	1.9
Netherlands	**12.9**	**14.3**	1.4	2.3	3.2	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.3	**8.8**
Poland	3.7	2.8	.70	11.9	**12.9**	2.7	0	3.4	**6.8**	2
Portugal	0	3.8	1.4	0	4.8	0	1.3	0	2.2	1.9
Romania	1.8	.95	0	0	5.5	1.3	0	.86	0	1
Slovakia	5.5	0	0	2.4	3.2	4.1	**5.4**	1.7	2.2	.98
Slovenia	3.7	1.9	1.4	2.4	.80	0	1.3	1.7	1.1	5
Spain	0	1.9	0	0	1.6	4.1	4.1	1.7	2.2	6
Sweden	5.5	**14.3**	0	2.4	.80	2.7	1.3	0	0	2.9
United Kingdom	**20.3**	**37.1**	**6.3**	**21.4**	6.4	**12.5**	**6.8**	**17.8**	**13.9**	**9.3**

Explanations: The three highest contestation scores in each EU policy are in bold

Source: Council (2020)

Several conclusions can be drawn from the above material distribution of Germany's success in the Council. First, the high level of contestation in the transport policy indicates that Germany has not been successful in pushing the interests of its automotive sector (e.g., *Volkswagen AG, BMW AG, Daimler AG* or *Adam Opel AG*) and transport services (e.g., *Deutsche Bahn*) at the EU level. Second, the low level of success in the area of the EU's internal mar-

ket shows that while Germany is its biggest beneficiary economically, at the same time it does not play a hegemonic role in shaping its legal framework. Third, the high level of contestation in the employment policy may indicate that Germany's preferences in this field, especially on the flow of workers and services, access to national labour markets or working conditions, are not acceptable to the other member states. Fourth, the low level of success in economic and monetary affairs challenges the widespread view, aired especially during the 2010-2015 eurozone reform (as indicated in the introduction), that Germany – by virtue of its economic power – has the greatest influence on the shape of legislation concerning the EU economy.

Linear regression

As Figure 1 shows, the differences between the success values of member states in the Council between 2009 and 2019 are not large. In fact, all countries – with the exception of the UK – have very similar levels of contestation ranging between 0% and 5% of legislation per year. It is therefore difficult to determine, based on descriptive statistics, which member states, especially Germany, are indeed more likely to win or lose votes in the Council. To resolve this issue, a linear regression analysis has been carried out to investigate the relationship between success in the Council (the dependent variable *Success in the Council*) and a given country (the independent variable *State*). Denmark has been selected as the reference (comparison) category in the independent variable *State*, since the mean number of legislative acts contested per year by this country (2.63%) was almost the same as the average for all states (2.6%). Since a member state's propensity for contestation can vary over time (e.g., due to a government change), two models of regression have been constructed. Model 1 has been estimated on the basis of normal standard errors; therefore it does not include the effect of time. By contrast, Model 2 has been created using robust standard errors clustered by the years 2009-2019 (the *Period* control variable) so it does take into account the temporal effect (*cluster S.E.*). Moreover, as the descriptive statistics showed, the United Kingdom is an outlier, which can distort the regression results. For this reason, two additional models 3 and 4 have been estimated, which replicate models 1 and 2, but without observations for this country.

Table 2

Results of linear regression

	Model 1 (*normal S.E.*)	Model 2 (*cluster S.E.*)	Model 3 (*normal S.E.*)	Model 4 (*cluster S.E.*)
Germany	**1.874****	**1.874****	**1.874****	**1.874****
	(0.832)	**(0.635)**	**(0.770)**	**(0.635)**
Austria	**2.799*****	**2.799****	**2.799*****	**2.799****
	(0.832)	**(0.976)**	**(0.770)**	**(0.976)**
Belgium	-0.332	-0.332	-0.332	-0.332
	(0.832)	(1.083)	(0.770)	(1.083)
Bulgaria	-0.783	-0.783	-0.783	-0.783
	(0.832)	(0.630)	(0.770)	(0.630)
Croatia	-0.839	-0.839	-0.839	-0.839
	(0.961)	(1.014)	(0.889)	(1.014)
Cyprus	**-1.666****	-1.666	**-1.666****	-1.666
	(0.832)	(0.979)	**(0.770)**	(0.979)
Czech Republic	0.149	0.149	0.149	0.149
	(0.832)	(0.740)	(0.770)	(0.740)
Denmark (ref. cat.)				
Estonia	-1.324	**-1.324***	**-1.324***	**-1.324***
	(0.832)	**(0.694)**	**(0.770)**	**(0.694)**
Finland	-1.318	-1.318	**-1.318***	-1.318
	(0.832)	(0.817)	**(0.770)**	(0.817)
France	**-2.417*****	**-2.417*****	**-2.417*****	**-2.417*****
	(0.832)	**(0.714)**	**(0.770)**	**(0.714)**
Greece	**-1.675****	**-1.675***	**-1.675****	**-1.675***
	(0.832)	**(0.810)**	**(0.770)**	**(0.810)**
Hungary	1.072	1.072	1.072	1.072
	(0.832)	(1.473)	(0.770)	(1.473)
Ireland	-1.228	**-1.228****	-1.228	**-1.228****
	(0.832)	**(0.517)**	(0.770)	**(0.517)**
Italy	-1.002	-1.002	-1.002	-1.002
	(0.832)	(0.771)	(0.770)	(0.771)
Latvia	-1.268	-1.268	-1.268	-1.268
	(0.832)	(1.034)	(0.770)	(1.034)
Lithuania	**-2.242*****	**-2.242****	**-2.242*****	**-2.242****
	(0.832)	**(0.822)**	**(0.770)**	**(0.822)**

Luxembourg	-1.093	-1.093	-1.093	-1.093
	(0.832)	(0.633)	(0.770)	(0.633)
Malta	-1.034	-1.034	-1.034	-1.034
	(0.832)	(0.710)	(0.770)	(0.710)
Netherlands	**1.921****	1.921	**1.921****	1.921
	(0.832)	(1.056)	**(0.770)**	(1.056)
Poland	**1.775****	1.775	**1.775****	1.775
	(0.832)	(1.518)	**(0.770)**	(1.518)
Portugal	-0.648	-0.648	-0.648	-0.648
	(0.832)	(1.160)	(0.770)	(1.160)
Romania	-1.134	-1.134	-1.134	-1.134
	(0.832)	(0.902)	(0.770)	(0.902)
Slovakia	-0.819	-0.819	-0.819	-0.819
	(0.832)	(0.881)	(0.770)	(0.881)
Slovenia	-0.991	-0.991	-0.991	-0.991
	(0.832)	(0.752)	(0.770)	(0.752)
Spain	-0.508	-0.508	-0.508	-0.508
	(0.832)	(0.924)	(0.770)	(0.924)
Sweden	-0.071	-0.071	-0.071	-0.071
	(0.832)	(0.820)	(0.770)	(0.820)
United Kingdom	**11.814*****	**11.814*****		
	(0.832)	**(1.851)**		
Constant	2.629***	2.629***	2.629***	2.629***
	(0.588)	(0.678)	(0.544)	(0.678)
R^2	0.689	0.689	0.386	0.386
BIC	1253.801	1147.014	1166.246	1065.743
N	276	276	266	266

Notes: * – $p < 0.1$, ** – $p < 0.05$, *** – $p < 0.01$. Standard errors are in parentheses. *BIC* – Bayesian Information Criterion. *N* – number of observations.

Table 2 shows the results of the linear regression. Starting with general conclusions, the R^2 value of the models indicates that as much as 69% of the success variance (a dependent variable), and thus contestation in the Council, is explained by a member state itself. In other words, knowing the member state makes it possible to determine whether it will often or rarely contest the Council's legislation, regardless of other factors. Furthermore, the regression results challenge the claim that there are no clear winners and losers in the

Council, which is supposed to be a product of a "consensus culture". This is supported by the statistically significant coefficients of 11 member states, reporting that they achieve significantly higher or lower levels of success than the reference category. Finally, the results of the models with and without the UK are, with the two exceptions of Estonia and Finland, identical. This means that this country's high propensity for contestation does not distort the results.

The results yield three conclusions about Germany's success. First, the coefficient of the *Germany* variable is positive, high and statistically significant in all of the models. This means that Germany is significantly more likely to contest legislation in the Council compared to the other member states. All other things being equal, this country contests on average about 1.87 percentage points more EU acts per year than the country defined as the reference category, i.e. Denmark. This result proves that, contrary to the claims of voting power theory, Germany is one of the biggest losers in the Council. Not only does it not win most of the votes in this institution, but its success level is significantly lower than that of the other member states. Hence, the likelihood that Germany will be the most frequently outvoted state in the Council is very high. Therefore, the hypothesis about Germany's dominance in the Council is not true.

Second, besides Germany, only two countries – the UK and Austria – have such positive and statistically significant coefficients in all models. This means that the success of these member states in the Council is significantly lower than that of the other countries, and this is regardless of the effect of time. It is worth noting that the coefficients of the other two member states with the highest level of contestation (see Figure 1), i.e. Poland and the Netherlands, are statistically significant in models 1 and 3, but lose this significance in models 2 and 4. This means that their propensity for contestation and thus their level of success in the Council are strongly correlated with time. A good case in point is Poland. The 2015 parliamentary elections brought a significant political change in this country, when the centre-right PO-PSL government was replaced by the more right-wing United Right coalition. Since then, there has been a noticeable increase in the percentage of legislation contested by Poland: from an average of 3% per year in the PO-PSL period (2009-2015) to 6.5% per year in the 2015-2019 period. Overall, the above results lead to the conclusion that Germany is in the narrow club of the Council's three biggest losers, which have clearly achieved the lowest level of satisfaction with the legislative compromises reached.

Third, the regression results also reveal three member states that achieve a significantly higher level of success in the Council than the others, namely France, Greece and Lithuania. Indeed, the coefficients of the variables corresponding to these countries are negative and statistically significant in all models. This means that they are by far the least likely to contest legislation in the Council, which in turn indicates their high negotiating and coalition-building capacity to achieve results in line with their preferences. However, while the presence of France in this group is not surprising, given the country's level of voting power, that of Lithuania or Greece is. Moreover, when the effect of time is taken into account (models 2 and 4), Estonia and Ireland, again surprisingly, join the ranks of the biggest winners in the Council. Cyprus, in turn, loses statistical significance, meaning that its success is strongly time-dependent. All in all, the above findings give the lie to the frequent view that it is the big countries that dictate the terms and outcomes of negotiations in the Council. At the same time, they confirm the results of earlier studies based on the spatial analysis of preferences in the EU legislative process, according to which small countries achieve better bargaining outcomes than those with high voting power (Golub 2012; Lundgren, Bailer, Dellmuth et al. 2019).

Multidimensional scaling

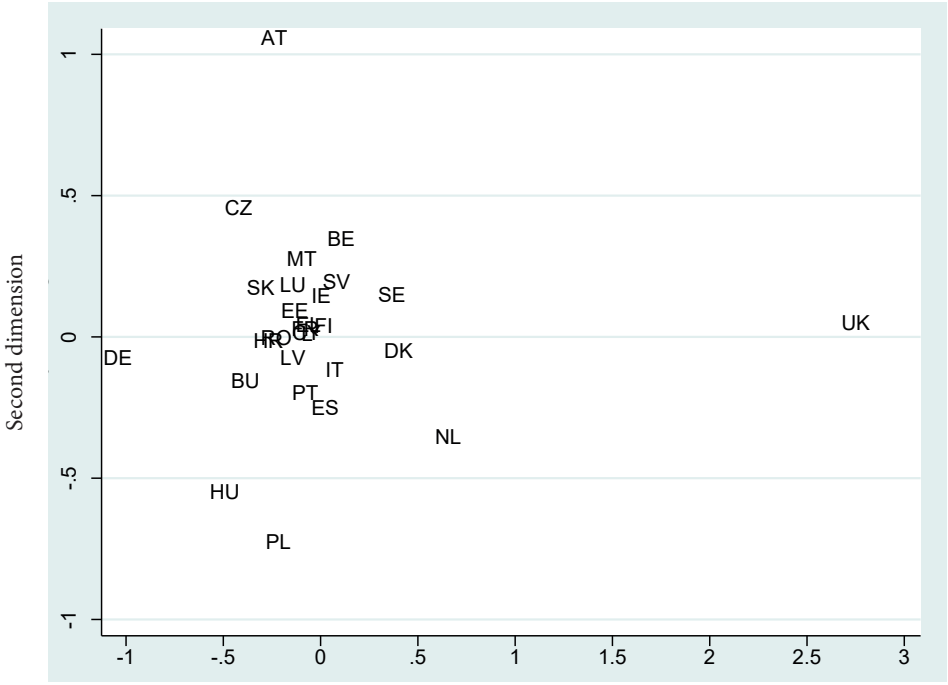
Finally, it is worth looking at Germany's coalition-forming activity. As has already been mentioned, decisions in this institution are, as a rule, made by qualified majority, which means that Germany and other member states need to construct appropriate winning or blocking coalitions if they want to force their preferences. To see with which countries Germany most frequently enters into coalitions, and how these coalitions translate into success, a multidimensional scaling analysis has been conducted. Its results are shown in Figure 3. As a reminder, countries that are close to each other are characterised by a high level of voting coherence in the Council (strong coalition capacity), while those more remote vote less consensually (low coalition capacity).

Figure 3 shows that most of the member states are very close to each other, being clustered around the (0,0) point, a sign of strong consensualism in the Council. Nevertheless, there are some noticeable exceptions. First of all, the figure confirms the already-mentioned isolationist position of the UK. This is indicated by its considerable distance from the other member states, especially in the first dimension. The other countries with the highest contestation, namely Austria, the Netherlands, Poland and Hungary, are also distant from the centre and isolated (with the exception of Poland and Hungary, which are

close to each other), with their peripherality, unlike the UK, in the second dimension, not the first one. Germany, too, is isolated and at a considerable distance from the remaining member states, especially in the first dimension. Two conclusions can be drawn here.

Figure 3

Results of multidimensional scaling



Acronyms: AT – Austria; BE – Belgium, BU – Bulgaria; CY – Cyprus, CZ – Czech Republic, DE – Germany, DK – Denmark, ES – Spain, EE – Estonia, EL – Greece, FI – Finland, FR – France, HR – Croatia, HU – Hungary, IE – Ireland, IT – Italy, LT – Lithuania, LU – Luxembourg, LV – Latvia, MT – Malta, NL – Netherlands, PL – Poland, PT – Portugal, RO – Romania, SE – Sweden, SK – Slovakia, SV – Slovenia, UK – United Kingdom

Source: Council (2020)

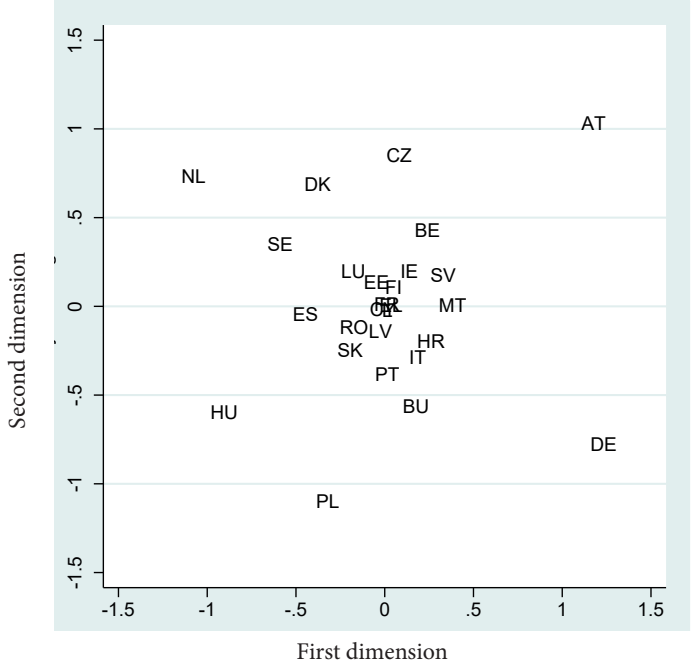
First, the isolated position indicates that Germany contests EU legislation on its own, without any coalition partners. Like the UK or Austria, this country is most frequently excluded from and isolated in negotiations; the vast majority of the other member states are able to work out satisfactory compromises on legislation, which, however, do not take Germany's preferences into account. Germany's peripheral position is somewhat surprising. In the light of voting

power theory, other member states should rather gravitate towards the EU's most populous country as its support and significant voting power give it a bigger chance to build a blocking minority, which in turn ensures concessions and increases bargaining success (Warntjen 2017). Meanwhile, the opposite is true.

Second, Germany's considerable remoteness and isolation also indicate that this country has serious difficulty in building winning coalitions and blocking minorities in the Council. There are no other countries around Germany with which it has high voting compatibility, and thus is able to build such coalitions. Also, the analysis does not show any permanent or geographic alliances (such as between Portugal and Spain or Poland and Hungary) involving Germany. Interestingly, however, recent research has found that of all the member states with the highest voting power (France, UK, Italy, Spain, Poland), only a coalition with Poland brings Germany a significantly higher level of bargaining success (Kirpsza 2020).

Figure 4

Results of multidimensional scaling (excluding the UK)



The key to the acronyms can be found under Figure 3.

Source: Council (2020)

What could be the reasons for such a peripheral position of Germany in the Council? Two factors seem to be of paramount importance, the first one being the radicalism of Germany's preferences. Research based on spatial analysis has shown that this country takes the most extreme positions on EU legislation (Kirpsza 2019: 69). As a result, Germany has difficulty in finding coalition partners with similar preferences, and it has to make far-reaching concessions to ensure that its position is at least minimally included in the final piece of legislation. At this point the second factor emerges: Germany's low propensity to make such concessions. Research has shown that, of all Council members, this country is, on the one hand, the least willing to make concessions, and, on the other hand, it most often demands them from the other member states (Naurin 2015: 737). This tactic, however, does not ensure a higher level of success as it deprives Germany of the possibility of using issue linkage, a practice that brings better bargaining results for countries that, like Germany, have preferences of varying intensity and high extremes (Kirpsza 2016, 2023).

Given that the United Kingdom is an outlier, which can distort the scaling results, it has been decided to remove this country from the analysis with a view to calculating the voting coherence among the Council members without the UK. Its exclusion has brought another advantage, namely it makes it possible to predict Germany's level of success after the UK leaves the EU. The results on the new sample are shown in Figure 4. Even though Germany has moved from the left to the right side of the figure, it is still at a significant distance from the other member states. This means that after the 2020 Brexit, Germany will remain isolated in the Council, having serious difficulty in finding coalition partners. As a result, Germany's success in this institution will continue to be at a relatively low level.

Conclusions

This paper aimed to empirically test the hypothesis, derived from voting power theory, that Germany is the hegemon in the Council, shaping bargaining outcomes in this institution to the greatest extent and being the most successful in attaining its preferences. This claim has been tested by analyzing the success of member states, including Germany, in the Council, as measured by the percentage of contestations (objections and abstentions) they submitted to EU legislation between 2009 and 2019. To this aim, three statistical techniques have been used: descriptive statistics, linear regression and multidimensional scaling.

Overall, the results obtained did not corroborate the hypothesis of German hegemony. Contrary to theoretical predictions and a common belief deeply rooted in public opinion and academic literature, Germany is not only far from being the most successful negotiator in the Council, but it also achieves one of the lowest levels of success in this institution. This conclusion stems from the following findings.

First, the descriptive statistics analysis showed that Germany is one of the member states that most often lose votes in the Council. Between 2009 and 2019, it ranked fourth in terms of the percentage of EU acts contested, with its propensity to raise objections being significantly higher in 2009-2014 than in 2014-2019. Importantly, Germany was among the top three most frequently outvoted member states in six of the ten EU policies under review, particularly in areas of vital importance to this country, such as: employment, internal market, transport, economic and monetary affairs, and home affairs.

Second, the linear regression analysis showed that Germany's success in the Council is statistically significantly lower than that of the other states. Despite having the greatest voting power, Germany is significantly more likely to oppose the Council's legislation than the average member state. This means that this country is very frequently the least satisfied with the final shape of the new legislation. As a result, Germany is – alongside the UK and Austria – in the narrow group of the three biggest losers in the Council. Significantly, the analysis also showed that the biggest winner of votes in this institution is Germany's most important partner in the EU, namely France.

Third, the multidimensional scaling analysis showed that Germany has serious difficulty in building winning coalitions and blocking minorities in the Council, which may be key to its low level of success. It has been demonstrated that Germany is well behind the other member states in terms of voting coherence. This results in Germany contesting EU legislation individually, being predominantly lone losers, and having no permanent or close coalition partner with similar preferences. The paper provides two key reasons for Germany's position in the Council being so peripheral: the radicalism of its preferences and its low willingness to make bargaining concessions. Based on the scaling results, the paper also predicts that after the 2020 Brexit, Germany will continue to be isolated in the Council and its success level will remain low.

In addition to negatively verifying the view of Germany's legislative dominance in the EU, the paper also enriches theoretical knowledge about decision-making in the Council. Indeed, the results obtained challenge voting power theory, according to which a country's success in this institution is a function of its voting power. This statement is contradicted not only by the registered high

percentage of objections raised by Germany, the UK or Poland, which are member states with high voting power, but also by the very low propensity for contestation of the smallest countries, such as Lithuania, Cyprus or Estonia. Other studies based on spatial analysis have also found that voting power has no impact on success in the Council (Arregui 2016). It seems that the main problem with voting power theory is that it does not take into account the nature of actors' preferences in the analysis. After all, a country's voting power can only matter if the country has the right preferences, that is when their proximity and intensity in the context of the positions of the other actors allow it to build blocking or winning coalitions. Therefore, determining a member state's influence in the EU solely by means of various abstract indicators is debatable. This is because – as the above analysis has shown – a state's high formal power does not automatically translate into that state's higher real bargaining success. Its influence is in fact determined by additional factors, such as the distribution of preferences.

Moreover, the article calls into question the "consensus culture" hypothesis, which says that negotiations in the Council do not generate clear losers and winners. This is because regression analysis has revealed at least six countries that achieve significantly higher or lower levels of success than the others.

Finally, an important limitation of the above analysis should be mentioned: measuring a member state's success in the Council by the percentage of contested EU legislation is not a perfect solution. As mentioned in the theoretical section, even if a government has lost negotiations on a particular proposal, it can still support it in a vote because, for example, it has gained concessions on another regulation, it wants to cover up its defeat or avoid being accused by the domestic opposition of doing a poor job of defending national interests. Hence, an accusation can be made that the results presented in the paper are distorted since they do not take into account the above cases. It is worth noting, however, that the observed poor-showing of Germany in the Council is fairly consistent with other, more general studies, notably those based on spatial preference analysis (see Golub 2012; Kirpsza 2019; Lundgren, Bailer, Dellmuth et al. 2019).

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Keywords: European Union, Germany in the European Union, Council of the European Union, legislative process in the EU, bargaining process in the EU, voting in the Council of the European Union

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to empirically test the hypothesis, derived from voting power theory, that Germany is the hegemon in the Council of the European Union (the Council), determining bargaining outcomes in this institution and being the most successful in attaining its preferences. This claim, deeply rooted in public opinion and academic literature, is tested by analysing the bargaining success of member states, including Germany, in the Council, as measured as the number of times they contested (voted against or abstained from voting) EU legislative acts in the years 2009-2019. To this aim, three statistical techniques are used: descriptive statistics, linear regression and multidimensional scaling.

Overall, the hypothesis of German hegemony has not been corroborated. On the contrary, this country was found to be among the least successful countries in the Council. This conclusion comes from the following findings. First, the analysis of descriptive statistics showed that Germany is one of the countries that most often contests legislation and loses votes in the Council. Second, the linear regression analysis demonstrated that Germany's success in the Council is statistically significantly lower than that of the other states. As a result, the country is in the narrow group of the three biggest losers in the institution. Third, the multidimensional scaling analysis revealed that Germany has serious difficulty in building winning coalitions and blocking minorities in the Council as it has essentially no permanent or close coalition partner. The paper argues that such a peripheral position for Germany in the Council is due to the radicalism of its preferences and its low propensity to grant concessions in negotiations. The article also predicts that after the UK leaves the EU, Germany will continue to be isolated in the Council and its voting success in this institution will remain low.

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The importance of free media for liberal democracy as demonstrated by selected European countries

An analysis of fundamental indexes of democracy

"Media pluralism and diversity of opinions
are what strong democracies welcome, not fight against."
Věra Jourová

Introduction

The words above, part of a post on the social media portal Twitter on 12 August 2021 by the Vice-President for Values and Transparency at the EU Commission directly and unambiguously point to the necessity of assuring media pluralism in member states of the European Union (EU). This is an indispensable condition for democracy to exist within their borders. Jourová, who directs the work of the Commission in the area of values and transparency, with the rule of law, openness and the defence of democratic systems from external interference (European Commission n.d.) as one of her tasks, in the same post, she also directly referred to the projected amendments to the Broadcasting Act in Poland. Using the hashtag #lexTVN she wrote: "The draft Polish broadcasting law sends a negative signal. We need #MediaFreedomAct in the whole EU to uphold media freedom and support the rule of law." (Jourová 2021).

It is worth recalling that the duties of this Commissioner include chairing the group of commissioners for "A New Push for European Democracy", coordinating the European Democracy and Action Plan and supporting work on counteracting disinformation and the propagation of false information (fake news), supporting activities that help ensure the preservation of freedom of

expression, press freedom and media pluralism, identifying threats to media pluralism and initiating cross-border projects to support independent and diverse journalism (European Commission n.d.).

The quoted words, although originally referring directly to a specific situation in Poland, take on a broader meaning when attention is paid to the clear crisis of liberal democracies across the world, including Europe. Its manifestations are visible in EU Member States (when talk turns to the situation in Poland, Hungary or Italy), but above all among its eastern and southern neighbours (as illustrated by events in Belarus, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine, and in particular Turkey). It is also worth noting that the situation is clearly deteriorating in some EU candidate countries such as Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey, which is particularly important for the EU, (European Union n.d.).

Aim and research problem

This article draws attention to an important research problem faced by contemporary media experts and political scientists. In recent years, clear and open attempts to limit media freedom by the governments of many democratic countries have become increasingly common. This has resulted in a crisis of liberal democracies, which is most often manifested in assessments of the functioning of governments, the scope of individual civil liberties, the level of corruption in the society, local government, the independence of the judiciary, the course of the electoral process as well as freedom and independence of media. The most visible and documented indicator of this crisis seems to be the results of research on the quality of democracy and media freedom (referred to as media freedom and democracy indexes), published by world-renowned organisations that assess the democratic character of political systems and the extent of media freedom in individual countries.

Publications dealing primarily with issues of the democratic (and undemocratic) nature of selected political systems are regularly published by such organisations as Freedom House, The Economist Intelligence Unit, Bertelsmann Stiftung, the V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy) Institute, as well as an organisation specialising in the issue of press freedom, Reporters Without Borders. The reports and analyses published by these institutions, including the most famous and widely distributed democracy indexes in the world, indicate the importance of media freedom in the assessment of the democratic character of the entire political system of a given country. Each study and the resulting

reports and country rankings are created based on specific criteria. Knowledge of these criteria makes it possible to assess the reliability of the analysis and explain the reasons for formulating conclusions. S. Rus-Mohl emphasises that many researchers (such as Lee Becker and Tudor Vlad from the University of Georgia) rated the press freedom rankings surprisingly well, pointing to the existence of significant correlations between the results of individual reports (such as those of Reporters Without Borders and Freedom House), evaluating them as highly reliable. He also points out that "these indicators are largely based on a very Western, even American, understanding of the concept of freedom of the press", recalling the opinions of researchers that "Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders pay attention primarily to the freedom and independence of the media in relation to government scrutiny, paying less attention to the influence of commercial and corporate interests" (Russ-Mohl 2013).

The aim of this article is to present (describe) the assessment of the state of democracy in selected European countries, based on the conclusions drawn from the most widely known indexes of democracy and freedom of the press (media), with particular emphasis on the assessment of the level of media freedom and the impact this has on the overall assessment of the political system. In this way, the author would like to prove the thesis, admittedly quite obvious but too often overlooked in public discourse, the that without legal guarantees of freedom of the press (media) and respect for these principles in practice by governments, not only can no state be counted as having a liberal-democratic political system, but countries where the government actions weaken the independence of the media, occupy more and more places in these rankings every year. The fact of EU membership, which in itself seems to guarantee the existence of media freedom in the Member States, is not enough, as evidenced by the situation and changes in public and non-public (commercial) media in Hungary and Poland.

Freedom of media

It is true that, as Jacek Sobczak stresses: "the system of the Council of Europe is of the greatest importance for defining the standards of press freedom, due to the instructive nature of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights" (Sobczak 2018: 141). But EU institutions also stand guard as the guarantor of this freedom, which is explicitly stated in Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, devoted to freedom of expression and information. According to point 1 of this article: "Everyone has the right

to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers". However, point 2 states that the freedom and pluralism of the media is to be respected (European Union 2012a).

Therefore, when writing about the guarantees of media freedom, it is also necessary to refer to the provisions of the treaties and the criteria for EU membership. It is worth recalling that, according to Protocol 29 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union concerning the system of public broadcasting in the Member States, this system is "directly related to the democratic, social and cultural needs of each society and the need to maintain media pluralism" (European Union 2012).

An extremely important aspect of research on media and the process of social communication is the issue of relations between the media and the political system, and especially the place and role of the media in a democratic political system. There is no doubt that in the democratic world today free media are an essential element of democracy, and the underlying "freedom of speech is considered today to be the basic principle of organising the life of a democratic society" (Wacławczyk 2009: 7). It is not without reason that among the procedural criteria of the "minimum" of democracy, there is an alternative source of information, or the right to alternative information (Antoszewski 1998: 14). In turn, according to R. Dahl, the system he called "polyarchic" democracy introduces six distinctive institutions, including freedom of speech (Tilly 2008: 21).

Freedom of speech is then regarded by theoreticians of democracy as one of several basic criteria that distinguish democratic and authoritarian regimes. W. Pisarek writes that "freedom of belief and freedom of speech, freedom of journalists and freedom of the media are different faces of freedom of information. All these slogans have been intertwined in different ways and with different levels of intensity in the socio-political discourse in both Europe and America since the eighteenth century" (Pisarek 2002: 9). J. Sobczak emphasises: "freedom of the press is a derivative of freedom of thought, which results in freedom of belief (...) freedom of the press is possible only when freedom of speech and expression is guaranteed" (Sobczak 2008: 31). He adds that "freedom of the press and freedom of expression are not only civil rights, but also human rights" (ibid.: 36).

Freedom of the press and the media as derived from freedom of speech are therefore rightly regarded as a *sine qua non* for the existence of democracy. At the theoretical and axiomatic level, everything seems relatively clear. Problems arise when it is necessary to descend to the level of empirical research and make a diagnosis regarding the functioning of the media in the actual political

system of a particular country. Thus, the key question is how to examine and draw conclusions regarding the impact of the state of the media system on the assessment of the democratic nature of a country's political system. In other words, how does the degree of media freedom translate into assessments of the state of democracy? Z. Oniszczuk points out that the media system affects the political system primarily through a process called the mediatisation of politics, and the political system affects the media system through the politicisation of the media. There are also symbiotic relations between both systems (Oniszczuk 2011: 13).

In empirical studies, these complicated mutual relations seem to be accurately reflected in reports and analyses published regularly by the world's leading organisations that examine the quality of democracy in modern countries. Reading them leaves no doubt that the assessment of the degree of freedom in the media system of a given state correlates with the assessment of the democratic nature of its political system. In order to prove the thesis, put forward at the beginning, it is necessary to obtain the results of empirical research, both quantitative and qualitative. Otherwise, there may be accusations of the journalistic (and even politically or ideologically motivated) nature of such "opinions". This is especially true since the research problem of the relationship between the media and democracy is very "political", so that any attempt to assess the impact of the functioning of the media on the quality of democracy, in particular criticism of the current state of affairs, is met with accusations of biased and unscientific approaches, based on the author's political views. Therefore, the key to defence against accusation of unscientific diagnoses of the state of the media system in a given country and its impact on the assessment of the functioning of democracy in that country is to find intersubjectively verifiable criteria that will make it possible to defend the scientific nature of these deliberations.

Reporters Without Borders (*Reporters sans frontières*)

When looking for data that show the close relationship between media freedom and the quality of democracy, it is worth looking at the organisation Reporters Without Borders (*Reporters sans frontières* – RSF), which publishes an annual report called the World Press Freedom Index. In the 2021 edition, the authors define journalism as the main "vaccine" against disinformation, which, as they point out, has been fully or partially blocked in 73% of the 180 countries assessed in the ranking. For the fifth year in a row, Norway is ranked

first and the Nordic countries are in the top four, demonstrating the highest level of press freedom. Europe continues to be the continent most favourable to press freedom, although there has also been a significant deterioration in the rate of abuse, and acts of violence against journalists have more than doubled, both in the EU and in the Balkans (Reporters Without Borders 2021).

The authors of the report stress that even if some EU Member States are world leaders in terms of respect for media freedom (in particular, the Scandinavian countries in places 1-4, and the Netherlands (5) while Portugal (9), Belgium (11), Germany (13) and Estonia (15) are also high in the ranking), the EU, compared to other European countries, is becoming more and more heterogeneous. The report emphasises that the challenges are illiberal democracies, the struggle against terrorism and the economic crisis, and this catastrophic situation prevails in the east and south of the continent (Reporters Without Borders 2021). In turn, the mechanisms established by the EU to protect fundamental freedoms did not lead to a change in Viktor Orbán's policy towards the Hungarian media, which created a model leading to the complete abandonment of press freedom. Neither did it stop similar processes from taking place in other Central European countries (Reporters Without Borders 2021a).

The report underlines that both in the east and in the west of the continent, regulations limiting the right to information introduced by national governments under the guise of the Covid-19 pandemic made it easier to arrest and detain journalists. In Serbia, ranked 93rd in the report, a reporter for a news site, Ana Lalić, was arrested in her home late at night after reporting on the measures taken in a hospital to fight Covid-19, and in Kosovo, which fell to 78th place, the editor of the KoSSev news site, Tatjana Lazarević, was arrested on the street while covering the effects of the pandemic (Reporters Without Borders 2021a).

The report no longer even mentions public media, but instead uses the term state media, which, according to the authors of the report, have become the principal victims of politics in many countries. As an example, they mention the situation of public media in Poland, which are directly described as having been turned into government propaganda agencies, such as TVP (Polish Television, a public broadcaster). It is worth recalling at this point that in 2021 Poland was ranked 64th (down by two places compared to the previous year). Poland is in fact the country with the largest drop in recent years, in 2015 Poland had its highest ranking in 18th place and a year later it had fallen to the 47th position. The reason for further decline was the "repolonisation" of the media, defined directly as censorship (Reporters Without Borders 2021b). It is emphasised that private media were coming increasingly under tax, commer-

cial and legislative pressure, the best example of which is the aforementioned "repolonisation" of the media. In this context, RSF writes on a proposed tax on advertising income, the acquisition of local media by a state-controlled company (the purchase of Polska Press by PKN Orlen) and a proposed regulation on social media (Reporters Without Borders 2021a). However, the RSF limits its interest to freedom of media, without evaluating the entire political system.

The trend, which is negative not only for Poland, has not changed in the latest report for 2022. Poland dropped by two places to 66th position, and fell by a total of seven places from 85 to 92. Interestingly, Estonia was in 4th place, registering an advancement from an already high 15th place a year earlier (Reporters Without Borders 2022). From the latest information about Poland, the reader learns that "the Polish ruling party resumes political and regulatory pressure on independent media." There we find sharp criticism of the so-called project. the "remote control law", which, among other things, obliges providers of pay TV decoders to reserve the first five channels for public television. Moreover, the authors of the publication emphasise the Polish government's reaction to the TVN station's report on John Paul II and paedophilia in the Church (Reporters Without Borders 2023).

Freedom House

In a broader context, however, the correlation between media freedom and the democratic nature of political systems is shown above all by the reports of Freedom House, which publishes three types of reports: *Freedom in the World* (the most important and best-known report of the organisation, published regularly since 1972), *Nations in Transit* (the most recent, since 1995) and the most important for considerations concerning the importance and role of the media in assessing the condition of democracy Freedom of the Press and *Freedom and the Media* (first issued in 1979). It is worth analysing selected reports from the last few years, which clearly confirm the tendency of an ongoing crisis of democracy in the world, including Europe.

As Wiktor Szewczak rightly points out: "one of the best-known and most frequently cited programs for measuring democracy is the annual report prepared by the American NGO Freedom House" (Szewczak 2011: 123). The reports of this organisation have been cited by, among others, Benjamin Barber, Charles Tilly, Ronald Inglehart and Samuel Huntington. Although the issue of media freedom is not the main subject of their analyses, the use of their data should be regarded as confirmation of the credibility of the reports published

by Freedom House and the appropriateness of the methodology used by this organisation (including the criteria used for their comparative analyses of political systems of different countries).

The Freedom in the World 2017 report, entitled *Populists and Autocrats: The Dual Threat to Global Democracy*, pointed out that after years of growth, the share of countries described as free among all countries had fallen from 47% in 2006 to 45% in 2016 (compared to 41% in 1996), and the percentage of countries described as not free has increased. According to the report, the country that registered the greatest fall in the assessment of the state of political rights and civil liberties in the index over the last year is Turkey (now described as partly free). Its rating declined by 15 points compared to the previous year. For comparison, Poland, which is still in the group of free countries, lost four points in this ranking. The authors of the report accused Poland, apart from neutralising the Constitutional Tribunal and introducing a law restricting the freedom of assembly, of politicising public media. In addition, Poland was listed among the ten countries that set negative trends in the world, and the government's influence on the media was cited as one of the reasons (Freedom House 2017). The above trends were confirmed in the next edition of the report, *Freedom in the World 2018*, under the telling subtitle *Democracy in Crisis*. Poland once more received attention, with a comparison of the changes taking place there to the situation in Hungary and clearly rating both quite negatively (Freedom House 2018: 6-17). Further, according to the report *Freedom in the World 2020*, the percentage of countries classified as free dropped again, this time to 42.6%. Emphasis was given to the negative situation in Poland and the takeover, by the ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party, of state media, which, although financed by taxpayers, openly supported PiS before the elections, using "partisan propaganda" (Freedom House 2020: 24).

The next report, (Freedom House 2021), lists Poland (with a loss of 11 points) as one of the countries alongside Hungary and Turkey that experienced the greatest regression over the last 10 years although it is still included in the group of free countries. It should be emphasised that in their recommendations regarding suggested policy changes aimed at strengthening liberal democracy, the authors of the report mention support for independent media and protecting access to information. It is difficult to disagree with the statement that providing the public with access to fact-based information about current events is one of the best ways to fight authoritarian power (ibid.: 28).

The second group consists of *Nations in Transit* reports. In the 2017 report (Freedom House 2017a), a decrease in the number of countries described as

consolidated democracies is indicated along with a significant increase in the number of countries classified as consolidated authoritarian regimes. At the same time, Poland was again negatively assessed (and compared to Hungary), due to, among other reasons, changes in the media (ibid.: 4). More attention was also paid to the media situation in Poland than in the previous report. Examples include a homophobic cover of the weekly *Do Rzeczy* and a photo of opposition deputies blocking the rostrum with the slogans "free media". It should be noted that these are the most visible illustrations in the entire report, which most likely intensified the already negative tone of the entire report for Poland. The report describes the situation of the media in Poland as a takeover of public media through the replacement of management and changes in editorial policy (ibid.: 9-10). It should be remembered that one of the seven criteria for evaluating the democracy of a given country in *Nations in Transit* includes independent media, which is primarily understood as the current state of press freedom, a lack of government harassment of journalists, guarantees of editorial independence and access to the Internet for private citizens. In this category, Poland also recorded a lowered score of 3.00 (in a system in which 1.00 is the freest and 7.00 the least free) in the category of independent media. This placed Poland between Lithuania (2.25) and Hungary (4.25), with 3.00 being a semi-consolidated democracy (ibid.: 22-24). The 2020 *Nations in transit* report (Freedom House 2020a) indicates a further regression in the evaluation of the democratic nature of the above-mentioned countries in the region. Poland fell to the group of partially consolidated democracies, and Hungary, Serbia and Montenegro were classified as hybrid regimes (ibid.: 9-10).

In a subsequent *Nations in Transit* report (Freedom House 2021a), eloquently entitled *The Antidemocratic Turn*, it is written that attacks on democratic institutions are spreading faster than ever in Europe and Eurasia, posing a challenge to democracy itself. The authors of the report even write about the establishment of anti-democratic norms in Central Europe. According to its ranking, two countries, Poland and Hungary, are distinguished, rather notoriously, by the greatest collapse of democracy in the last decade. Hungary underwent the most precipitous decline ever recorded for a country in transition, crossing two borders and ultimately transforming itself from a consolidated democracy into a transitional (hybrid) regime. Poland is still classified as a semi-consolidated democracy, but its collapse over the past five years has been more rapid than that of Hungary (ibid: 1-2).

The key importance of media freedom for the functioning of democracy is confirmed by the fact that Freedom House publishes separate reports

devoted entirely to issues of press and media freedom. Looking at the 2017 *Freedom of the Press* report (Freedom House 2017b) the title itself, *Press Freedom's Dark Horizon*, leaves no doubt as to the assessment of the changes that have been taking place in recent years. Poland lost six points in the ranking. The authors of the report note that the PiS government is imitating the strategy of Fidesz in undermining the credibility of media critical of the government, quoting Jarosław Kaczyński's own words "*Gazeta Wyborcza* is 'against the very notion of the nation'". It was also pointed out that the party, through the changes in the law, secured control over public media, and over 200 employees of these media had lost their jobs (ibid: 5-10). It should be emphasised that Poland for the first time was included in the group of partially free countries in terms of freedom of the press. The report also recalls the words of other European leaders that are testimony to their negative attitude towards free media. Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić said: "I don't think I should answer for something that someone says in private media." Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico spoke in a similar vein, assessing journalists as follows: "Some of you [journalists] are dirty, anti-Slovak prostitutes." It is therefore not surprising that according to the report, officials in some EU Member States prevented journalists from accessing elected representatives and the government. The Austrian chancellor stopped holding weekly press conferences, and the Polish and Hungarian authorities sought to ban reporters from parliament. When mentioning EU candidate countries, it is noted that officials in Montenegro prevented photographers and camera operators from showing discussions in parliament (ibid.: 22).

Moreover, when describing the situation in Poland, the report draws attention to the government's distaste regarding critical assessments, its excessive interference in public media and the way it presents Polish history, all of which contribute to an increase in self-censorship and polarisation (ibid.: 11, 23). Poland was ranked 66th in the world ranking of press freedom, and among European countries it was ranked 30th, between Italy and Romania (both also included in the group of partially free), with a clearly recorded downward trend in the ranking (ibid.: 27).

A later report on freedom of the media, entitled *A Downward Spiral* (Freedom House 2019), is a continuation of the above analyses. It points out that populist leaders present themselves as defenders of the disadvantaged majority against liberals, elites and ethnic minorities whose loyalty they question. The dominant argument here is that the interests of the nation, as they define them, should take precedence over democratic principles such as freedom of the press, transparency and open debate (ibid.: 2). It is emphasised that the

government of Viktor Orbán in Hungary and the administration of Aleksandar Vučić in Serbia have been very successful because their destruction of critical journalism has paved the way for populist forces elsewhere. In Hungary, it is noted that the ruling Fidesz party has consolidated its control over the media and has created a kind of alternative reality in which government messages and disinformation reinforce each other. In Serbia, the co-option process has not yet been fully successful, but there is an atmosphere of intimidation and harassment that hampers the daily work of journalists. Yet a free and independent media sector that can control and hold leaders accountable is as important to strong and sustainable democracy as are free and fair elections (ibid.: 16).

It is not possible to ignore the Freedom House report entirely devoted to the situation in the Polish media given the trenchant title *Pluralism Under Attack: The Assault on Press Freedom in Poland*. The author of the report, Annabelle Chapman, first draws attention to the similarities between the changes introduced by PiS in public media and the situation in Hungary, directly stating that the example of Hungary has been a guideline for Poland. According to the author, perhaps the most important message of the report (again it is worth emphasising that this is an official report of Freedom House, the oldest and an extremely prestigious institution publishing the oldest and best-known index of democracy since the 1970s and not the opinion a single independent author) is that, as she writes, the fight for press freedom in Poland is the same as the fight for Polish democracy (Chapman 2017). In her opinion, this fight has not been resolved, and in Poland, unlike countries where authoritarian institutions have taken root, the current political leaders have not yet succeeded in transforming the media landscape and introducing effective control over it. And, in her opinion, Poland still has time to change course, as the restriction of media freedom does not happen overnight, pointing out that for many years Hugo Chávez, Viktor Orbán and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan violated the independence of the media in Venezuela, Hungary and Turkey. According to Chapman, the fate of media freedom in Poland is a powerful message that is part of the current visible march of populist authoritarianism around the world, or the turn of this wave and a new period of democratic development (ibid.).

The latest report, (Freedom House 2023), clearly states that among the many rights under attack around the world over the past 17 years, Freedom House data show that freedom of expression, both for media and for individuals, has declined more than any other civil right, and the violation of freedom of speech is one of the greatest factors causing the global decline of democracy. According to the report's authors, democratic countries should increase efforts to support independent media (ibid.: 34). Moreover, the report lists specific

types of attacks on media freedom, which include the criminal prosecution and/or extrajudicial repression of journalists, the adoption of laws that limit media independence along with censorship and media blackouts of critical opinions (ibid.: 15).

The Economist Intelligence Unit

In the context of the influence of the media situation on the evaluation of the level of democracy in a given political system, it is worth mentioning the *Democracy Index* created by *The Economist Intelligence Unit*. The 2016 report (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2016) clearly stated that its authors' attention was drawn to the poor performance of Hungary and Poland, and in the case of Poland, the authors of the report emphasised the massive replacement of management in public media (ibid.: 38). It should be noted that Poland was ranked 52nd with a score of 6.83 points out of 167 countries, which was its worst result since the creation of this index, that is since 2006. Poland had its highest rating in 2014, obtaining 7.83 points (ibid.: 26). In the 2019 report, Poland was ranked 57th, its worst ever result although it is still counted as a flawed democracy (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2019). In it some Eastern and Southern European countries were classified as hybrid regimes, North Macedonia, Ukraine, Albania (77-79 positions), Moldova, Montenegro (83-84 positions) and Turkey (110 positions), which was only three places above the last group of countries, authoritarian regimes. In the report, a separate section was revealingly entitled "Flawed democracies: Poland slips behind Hungary". In fact, Poland for the first time fell below Hungary in the ranking, which its authors explain by the fact that the ruling conservative-nationalist party PiS continued its efforts to transform the country into an "illiberal democracy", clearly emphasising the desire to consolidate media ownership "in Polish hands" (ibid.: 31).

It is worth noting that The Economist Intelligence Unit, defining countries described as full democracies, emphasises that the media are independent and diverse. In flawed democracies, governments violate media freedom. In systems referred to as hybrid regimes, journalists are persecuted and pressured, and in authoritarian regimes, the media are usually either owned by the state or controlled by groups associated with the ruling regime. There are also repressions against criticism of the government and ubiquitous censorship (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2020: 57). As for the Eastern European region, there are still no full democracies there, only Albania has changed category,

moving up from a hybrid regime to a flawed democracy. Thirteen countries are currently classified as flawed democracies, including 11 EU Member States plus Serbia and Albania, while eight are classified as hybrid regimes, the rest of the Western Balkan countries plus Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia and the Kyrgyz Republic. The rest, including Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia, are "authoritarian regimes" (ibid.: 33-34).

V-Dem Institute and Die Bertelsmann Stiftung

In the context of this discussion, it is also worth looking at a report put out by the V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy) Institute – *Autocratization Turns Viral Democracy Report 2021*. The authors of the report, published since 2017 by the Department of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, emphasise that the process of transition from democracy to autocracy usually follows a similar pattern. Ruling parties first attack the media and civil society institutions, then polarise society by publicly disrespecting opponents and spreading false information in order to undermine the legitimacy of democratic institutions (Alizada, Cole, Gastaldi et al. 2021: 7). In addition, the report notes that the number of countries meeting the criteria of liberal democracies has decreased over the last decade from 41 countries to 32, with a population share of only 14%. Regression has been visible for at least the last 10 years. During this period, in Western and Eastern Europe, no country improved the state of its democracy. The greatest decline in the quality of democracy among European countries is visible in Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey. Considering the scale of changes, Poland has a dubious position of leader here, the country that has deteriorated the most over the last decade and has transformed from a liberal democracy into an electoral democracy. Such a position still puts Poland in a good light, given that according to these analyses both Hungary, Turkey and Serbia have all become electoral autocracies (ibid.: 18-19).

Finally, it is worth mentioning *The Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index*, which analyses and assesses the state of democracy in developing countries and those that have undergone a transformation towards democracy and a market economy. In assessing political participation, it is important to ensure fair and equal access to the media for all candidates and parties, as well as freedom of expression by the media. It is important for the media system to ensure the existence of a plurality of opinions and to guarantee free access to information by the media (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2020: 18).

Conclusions

All the examples cited above are much more than the unfavourable opinion of foreign media, journalists or politicians aimed at the governments of countries fighting for their national interests, which can be observed, for example, in the reactions of the Polish or Hungarian authorities. However, the opinions of politicians, journalists and columnists cannot be characterised as science. On the other hand, reports issued by Freedom House, The Economist Intelligence Unit and other organisations are based on well-designed and proven methodology, both in quantitative and qualitative research. These data clearly confirm that freedom of speech, the press and media are among the key criteria for ensuring the functioning of a democratic political order. When there are disturbing changes in the media system that limit these freedoms, the situation automatically translates into a general assessment of the entire political system of a given country. In these reports, the cases of Hungary, Poland, Turkey and Serbia turned out to be a perfect example of this trend. Therefore, it should be unequivocally stated that the more freedom in the media, the more democracy in the country. On the other hand, when media freedom is limited, democracy is automatically affected by a crisis, as confirmed by numerous studies, primarily democracy indexes, analysed above.

The conclusions presented above from analyses of democracy and media freedom rankings from recent years seem to prove the thesis that without legal guarantees of freedom of the press (media) and, perhaps more importantly, respect for these principles in practice by governments, no country can be included in the group of countries with a liberal-democratic political system. In addition, countries in which governmental actions weaken the independence of the media are taking up more and more places in these rankings every year.

The analysis of the reports shows that, first of all, there is a crisis of liberal democracy in the world, including in Europe. Secondly, the greatest regression is visible in European countries, which a decade ago were often either models of old, Western liberal democracies or young democracies born after the systemic transformations that took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the post-Soviet space. Thirdly, one of the main reasons for these negative assessments are various attempts by governments to limit media freedom in these countries by taking over public and commercial media or trying to subordinate them and use them as tools of government propaganda. Fourthly, according to the authors of these reports, these trends either already are meeting, or should meet in the future, with a strong reaction from EU institutions, which should

ensure media freedom among its members and prevent the integration into the EU of countries that openly violate this freedom and thusly break one of the fundamental values of a united, liberal-democratic Europe.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to present the state of democracy in selected European countries, both European Union member states and neighbours (including candidate countries). This is carried out on the basis of the best-known indexes of democracy and press (media) freedom, published by the organisations that have developed democracy indexes such as Freedom House (Freedom in the World, Nation in Transit, Freedom of the Press), The Economist Intelligence Unit (Democracy Index), Bertelsmann Stiftung (The Bertelsmann Transformation Index), V-Dem Institute (Democracy Report), and Reporters Without Borders (World Press Freedom Index), an organisation specialising in press freedom. The importance of assessing the level of media freedom in European countries is emphasised as is its impact on overall evaluations of their political systems. In this way, the author attempts to prove the thesis that without legal guarantees of press (media) freedom and governments respecting these principles in practice, no country can be classified as a democracy (much less as a liberal democracy).

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The contemporary dispute of "right-wing populism" and the liberal democratic consensus

Polarisation, conformism and asymmetry of debate

Introduction

The present paper addresses the contemporary dispute over "right-wing populism" considered in terms of the determinants of strong polarisation of opinions clashing within it and their cognitive credibility. It also deals with the issue of the Western debate viewed from a long-term perspective, especially in terms of the controversy that has been stirred up by its key concepts of democracy and liberal order as well as the authoritative nature of Whig historiography, i.e. a modernist approach to the origins of Western freedom.

This contribution will discuss the following points. The divergence of opinions on "right-wing populism" is significantly related to the lack of agreement on the concept of democracy and the status of the liberal doctrine in contemporary politics. The cognitive competence and the mode of argumentation used by supporters of "right-wing populism" seem more credible than that of its critics. The reason for the cognitive defects of the criticism of "right-wing populism" is its close link with the prevailing view in the contemporary debate, which is expressed in approval of the hegemonic aspirations of the liberal mind.

In contemporary thought, the terms democracy and liberal democracy (liberal order) occupy a position that is superior to their explanatory power. They are used as tools of persuasion and agitation rather than factual analysis. Criticism of the defects of democracy has a long and respectable tradition but there is little room for it in mainstream contemporary discussion. Almost the same goes for the historical consciousness of the average Europeans and Americans affected by serious arguments employed by opponents of the modernist concept of the origins of Western freedom; their social reach seems to be limited.

Liberalism, with its privileges in public debate, weakens rather than strengthens the political consensus. This is, in a way, reflected in the fact that the discussion around the contestation movements that criticised the liberal democratic consensus and brought to power Donald Trump in the US, Jarosław Kaczyński in Poland and Viktor Orbán in Hungary is marked by a terminological asymmetry. That is, the stigmatising terms describing this contestation, such as "right-wing/authoritarian populism" or "new nationalism" (Pierzchalski, Rydliński 2017) have been coined by only one of the parties to the dispute. Its opponents acknowledge their well-established position in the contemporary debate, yet without theoretical satisfaction.

In addition, a few disclaimers need to be made. The claim formulated here on the hegemony of liberalism or the liberal mind can – in the eyes of many a commentator – be regarded as controversial. Critics of "right-wing populism" probably hold views that are fundamentally opposite to those of its followers as to which direction the pendulum of public opinion is swinging. This applies not only to the contemporary debate but also to previous ideological disputes. It could be said that conservative traditionalist concerns, e.g., those of Leo Strauss or Alaisdair MacIntyre about the fate of the *last bastions* of "Great Heritage" entrenched by the prevailing forces of "progressivism" (MacIntyre 1996; Strauss 1998), have almost always been accompanied by liberal or leftist fears, e.g., those of Isaiah Berlin or Richard Rorty (Berlin 1994; Rorty 1996) caused by "the recidivism of the forces of the dark past" posing a likely threat to the last outposts of "freedom" or "good taste". This almost eternal and thus, it would seem, trivial pattern in no way, in the author's view, diminishes the significance of divergent opinions that divide the participants in this kind of controversy.

Similar remarks would probably apply to the claim made in this article about the radical polarisation or even dichotomisation of contemporary political discourse. Arguably, it also deserves to be called debatable; however, it has many supporters including a sizeable portion of the defenders and accusers of "right-wing populism" quoted here, predominantly renowned scholars. The claim does not seem to deserve to be regarded as an intellectual provocation.

"Right-wing populism" in the eyes of its critics

Donald Trump and other "right-wing populists", as their accusers admit, have gained power because they have effectively capitalised on a rising tide of "anxiety, frustration and entirely legitimate resentment". This discontent re-

sults from capitalist globalisation and its effects, which have been going on for several decade, in the form of economic degradation, cultural uprooting and axiological confusion of a multitude of people worldwide. This tendency has been confirmed by Brexit as well as the successes of the National Front in France and the Law and Justice (PiS) party in Poland (Sandel 2021). The same kind of mass disillusionment with the consequences of "neoliberal global capitalism" also paved the way to power for Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Narendra Modi in India or Shinzō Abe in Japan (Bieber 2018a).

In other words, "right-wing populism" has effectively managed to harness legitimate and justifiable public opposition to an unquestionable belief in a variety of neoliberal global capitalism that has shaped public culture, creating a semantic vacuum, and taking away a sense of meaning, belonging and identity (Sandel 2021). In Sandel's view, the main culprits for the current state of affairs are not only Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher but also their left-wing successors, such as Bill Clinton, Tony Blair or Gerhard Schröder. Even though the latter three made some adjustments, they failed to challenge the main components of their predecessors' legacy (ibid).

Critics of "right-wing populism", regardless of the objections directed at it, do not deny its representatives political competence, that is, for example, the effective use of justifiable (after all) social anger. Moreover, they do not challenge the fact that it is not only right-wing but also left-wing politicians who should be blamed for the causes of neoliberal globalist evil. However, despite all these mitigating circumstances or observable virtues and rationales behind "right-wing populism", they define it, above all, in the disqualifying categories of fanatism and backwardness.

Whether in its Putinist or PiS guise, the above categories manifest themselves in, among other things, social conservatism, that is, apologetics for traditional and religious values, considered the proper arbiter of issues such as family policy, gender and sexuality, or immigration. They also subsume resentment toward elites and nationalism, marked by a "Manichean worldview" and an obsession with enemies (Bieber 2018a; Yatsyk 2019). The proponents of such views have an irresistible tendency to "stoke paranoia around foreign groups and dehumanise them". In 2018, when addressing the nation, Victor Orbán sounded the alarm that Hungary was being "invaded" by newcomers from other continents. Soon afterwards, the Hungarian parliament imposed punitive sanctions on humanitarian organisations that attempted to provide aid to undocumented migrants. In 2015, Jaroslaw Kaczynski warned his compatriots that refugees reaching Poland could carry infectious diseases via "various parasites and protozoa". Meanwhile, Donald Trump, launching his cam-

paign in 2015, thundered that Mexicans crossing the US border "bring drugs", "bring crime", and "are rapists" (Jenne 2018).

The phenomenon of populism has been subjected to in-depth and meticulous analyses. One of them, conducted on a sample of 152 candidates who participated in 73 election campaigns worldwide, resulted in the following findings: populists are at odds with "agreeableness, emotional stability and conscientiousness"; they also tend to be more prone to "narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism" than others (Nai, Martínez and Coma 2019). However, enquiries into populism can also reveal the fact that the concept of populism can sometimes be a handy tool that is excessively used to discredit a political or ideological opponent. Some of these studies indicate that the use of this term is fraught with a high risk of arbitrariness, and requires gradation or inclusion of significant differences and shades (Lipiński 2020). Some critics of "right-wing populism" take into account such objections. For example, they duly note that besides the right-wing, there are also left-wing or centrist varieties of populism (Karwat 2017; Pierzchalski, Rydliński 2017). Accordingly, they suggest redefining conventional divisions. For example, they propose that the opposition of "enlightened elites" and "blinded people" should be replaced by the opposition of "winners and losers of neoliberal and global capitalism" (ibid). There are also those who argue that "the winners of globalisation resent the losers more than the other way round" (Helbling, Jungkunz 2019).

However, this does not change the fact that in many cases critics of "right-wing populism" do not seem particularly allergic to the aforementioned risk of arbitrary use of the word populism: they carelessly resort to the logic of exclusion where one should rather use the logic of gradation. Therefore they define "right-wing populism" in terms of nationalism, masculinism, xenophobia, sexism, racism and disregard for liberal democratic norms. They contrast it with left-wing and progressive populism, which, they argue, in opposition to that one, has the hopeful "the potential to address crises in a manner which secures the democratic project by deepening the legitimacy of real-existing democracies" and respect for civil rights as well as a "a stance open to immigration and refugees" (Gagnon et al. 2018).

Experts in the field argue that the methodological canon of the humanities and social sciences does not disqualify a research attitude because of its evaluative load or ideological commitment (von Beyme 2005; Grobler 2006; Heywood 2006). Apparently using such an assumption as his starting point, Michael Sandel, who, as noted above, can afford magnanimous gestures toward "right-wing populism," feels entitled to use overly explicit

phrasing when discrediting this ideology. It is in this style that he voices his conviction that democracy is threatened by: populism in the form of "racist, xenophobic reactions to immigrants and multiculturalism"; "the bigotry of populist protests"; "shallow, authoritarian, hyper-nationalist constructs of thought"; "shallow, intolerant, fundamentalist and nationalist alternatives" (Sandel 2021).

Like Michael Sandel, Miroslaw Karwat also makes no secret of his sincere personal antipathy to "right-wing populism." What is haunting democracy in Poland? Karwat claims that it is "authoritarian religiosity" or "religious-clerical populism" inspired by an "ultra-conservative, fundamentalist interpretation of traditions and patterns of religiosity." This "authoritarian religiosity" is characterised by the following description:

> It challenges worldview pluralism and worldview neutrality of the state [and also] appropriates public space in an aggressive manner by filling it with religious symbols (…), stigmatising 'unbelievers' and the godless. (…) (Karwat 2017). Even more blatantly authoritarian is 'jingoistic' populism, marked by a symbiosis and synthesis of sanctimonious, xenophobic and ultra-nationalist, if not chauvinistic accents. (…) The current rule of the Law and Justice party (...) is a laboratory of 'populist democracy' [in which] clerical-religious, jingoistic, nationalist, xenophobic and radical (because it settles accounts with the past, 'avenging') currents of populism interact (Karwat 2017).

The blunt style of depicting "right-wing populism" also applies to comparative measures; however, also in this case the attitude of analysts varies. For example, it is difficult to criticise the author, who – while considering the reasons for electoral successes of populist politicians – claims that a sense of exclusion brought Jarosław Kaczyński to power in Poland, or Viktor Orbán in Hungary, that it contributed to Narendra Modi's victory in India and Shinzō Abe's in Japan (Bieber 2018a). Even views of Edward Carr from "The Economist", who listed the regime of People's Republic of China alongside the current regimes of Poland, India, Japan, the United Kingdom, the USA or Germany, are not marked by excessive syncretism because they are justified by the context of the comparisons he made (Carr 2018).

However, there are sets of anti-liberal populist regimes that can be perplexing. After all, it is not clear how the following phrase from Bieber (2018b) should be interpreted: "the democratic backsliding around the world, from Hungary to Turkey, from Venezuela to the United States". Similar confusion can be caused by a set proposed by Michael Sandel, who in 2016 in one breath denounced the "authoritarianism" of the United States under Donald Trump, Poland led by Jarosław Kaczyński and China ruled by Xi Jinping (Sandel 2021).

Other analysts, in a similar fashion, had no objections to putting the "nationalism"-inspired, "populist" regime of Viktor Orbán, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin in the same basket (Jenne 2018; Yatsyk 2019).

"Right-wing populism" in the eyes of its supporters

In the second image of "right-wing populism," as in the first, the terms globalism and globalisation are one of the key elements characterising its causes. Here, it also refers to a doctrine, ideology, or fanaticism of globalisation or globalism (Cichocki 2018-2019; Manent 2018-2019; Millon-Delsol 2017).

However, this is where the similarity of these images ends. The second does not define the crisis of democracy in terms of the plague of "right-wing populism." Rather, the said crisis, as French scholar Pierre Manent notes, consists in discrediting the "populist" electorate, that is, the exclusion of a significant portion of voters from the democratic process. In addition, until now, the political scene has been traditionally divided into the right and the left. And now it is governed by a strange opposition between "populism" and what is described as values-based leadership (Manent 2018-2019).

In France, these strange criteria for ordering the political spectrum date back to 1974, when the French right, initiating an era of "liberalism and Europeanism", abandoned its voters. A few years later, the French left made a similar move, thus joining the ranks of the "parties of the centre that fanatically globalise reality" (ibid.). As a result, notions such as people, nation and class lost relevance in public debate. In turn, the new orthodoxy of democracy evidently undermines the principle of democratic legitimacy, setting itself a goal of a kind of "democracy without the people, without the nation; a non-national or post-national democracy" (ibid.).

The political marginalisation of "populist" France has also been analysed by Chantal Millon-Delsol. In her view, the attitude of the French elite is derived from the arrogance and dogmatism of the Enlightenment, which betrayed the intellectual and spiritual heritage of the ancient Hellenes. To the Greeks, truth and goodness presented themselves as the object of an eternal search doomed to endless disputes and the irremovable risk of error. The Enlightenment dogmatised them, turning them into a universalist and, at the same time, individualistic ideology, which, with a missionary concern that remains strong to this day, disqualifies impulses of opposition directed against it as a manifestation of compulsive ignorance and backwardness. Since, in the present day, the emancipation of the individual from the pressure of traditional social obligations,

according to the spirit of the Enlightenment ideology, is supposed to be in due harmony with the trends of Europeanisation and globalisation, it became critical of manifestations of solidarity not only towards family, but also towards nation (Millon-Delsol 2017).

In the eyes of modern French opinion, the "populist" electorate deserves to be condemned and stigmatised. Unlike the "savage" or the former peasant, who could often hope if not for sympathy, then at least for tolerance, because they were not guilty of their own immaturity, that electorate degenerated itself. It disregarded the chance of being offered full humanity:

> It has stepped outside the narrative of history, the only human history worked out as part of progress. Since in our country the dominant opinion considers European construction as an integral part of this inevitable history, those who voted in the referendum against deepening integration fell victim to insults (ibid).

The crisis, or at least the serious defects of democracy, in modern Germany is noted by Joseph Isensee. In his view, one of its manifestations is a clearly shaken political pluralism. The political system and public debate on the Rhine have been dominated by the party and media establishment, favouring the left side of the political-ideological spectrum, which, based on the left-liberal canon of political correctness, subjects public discussion to regular censorship on such topics as climate protection, gender equality, migration, Islam, European integration or issues of national identities. Anything that comes into collision with this left-liberal "catechism" is subjected to "exorcism" and derided as populism, which indisputably deserves to be condemned due to its alleged features, such as: racism, fascism, nationalism, sexism, etc. (Isensee 2017).

Referring to the AfD's political successes in the 2017 parliamentary elections, Josef Isensee notes with undisguised satisfaction that a grouping has emerged on the right side of the German political scene that is bringing formerly concealed topics back into public discussion. It is not surprising, then, that this kind of grouping encounters outright hostility from centrist and left-wing parties, just as it does in France, the Netherlands and Austria. However, despite all this adversity:

> Right-wing pariahs suddenly find confirmation of their views in the election of Trump as US president. Suppressed political beliefs are unexpectedly coming to the fore again. Some see this as a threat to democracy, while others see it as proof of its vitality, as it makes it possible to break petrified power structures, remove conceited opinion leaders, trample on political correctness, vent political anger and escape resignation by returning to the polls. (...) Tired of consensus, democracy is reviving again (ibid.).

Isensee's point of view is echoed by Marek Cichocki. He claims that the culture war, which has been shaking up the post-Cold War West, does not seem to result from the outbreak of nationalist and xenophobic sentiment. Rather, it is the result of a defect in current liberalism, which does not tolerate dissent. The political mobilisation of the "populist" voter clearly involves a contestation of the liberal democratic consensus, which, for almost three decades, has been patronised by the false idea of the end of history. It is thanks to this contestation that the future of the West has again become an area of conflict of ideas and liberalism is losing its privileged position as hegemon. The prospect of real conflicts and serious decisions is once again opening up before the political communities. What this means for them, among other things is that:

> they return to the language of democracy, and this language allows them to adequately and representatively describe their new situation of crisis, which occurs after rejecting the idea of the end of history. However, this does not need to entail either new forms of nihilism, chaos or a renewed escalation of violence in politics (Cichocki 2018-2019)."

Chantal Millon-Delsol also argues that the widespread rise of the "populist" wave does not pose a threat to the democratic order, but brings hope for overcoming its weaknesses. Stigmatised as populist, voters indeed contest "hidden agreements where an open exchange of views is expected." They are also opposed to "a de facto monopoly, hidden under the guise of a pluralistic discourse." They do not demand the abolition of representative institutions, but would like to find their representatives in them. They are thus genuine defenders of democracy, parliamentarism, pluralism and transparency (Millon-Delsol 2017).

Sympathy for contemporary "populism" is also expressed by Pierre Manent. He claims, not without concern, that nations that are "constantly discredited and punished" by the political establishment, both the structures of the EU and its Member States, for their independence and their adherence to more traditional and therefore genuine forms of political pluralism and democratic representation:

> will [eventually] succumb to a desperate and harmful nationalism. If [however] this happens, the demagogy of 'populisms' will bear far less responsibility for this state of affairs than the parties of the centre that are fanatically globalising the reality (Manent 2018-2019).

In short, Pierre Manent, Chantal Millon-Delsol, Joseph Isensee and Marek Cichocki, arguing with critics of "right-wing populism", claim that the real source of the crisis of democracy is not the contestation of the liberal consen-

sus, but the political marginalisation of a great number of full-fledged voters, who are stigmatised as fascists and extremists, the censoring of public debate with the axioms of political correctness and discrediting the family and the nation in the name of universalist claims of the ideologies of individualism, multiculturalism or globalism. In other words, the above authors do not share the view that modern democracy is threatened by an eruption of anti-liberal Manichaeism, fanaticism and xenophobia. Rather, it is threatened by the left-liberal cartel of the party and media establishment, which is determined to preserve its "de facto monopoly, disguised as pluralistic discourse" in order not to lose its "privileged position as a hegemon".

The concept of democracy

The two types of views on "right-wing populism" presented here are very remote from each other. However, differences of opinion among researchers, as well as between citizens, do not have to trigger confusion. On the contrary, the consequences can be useful and rewarding for the various parties to the dispute. In this case, however, the scale of incommensurability of opinions on one and the same topic should be thought-provoking. There is almost no dialogue, but rather almost two monologues. This does not bear witness to modern democracy and the debate taking place within it: not only the broad one, but also the narrow, learned one. The divergence of views presented here seems to demonstrate a crisis of democratic consensus. Trying to find out the reasons for this state of affairs, let us consider whether and to what extent it may be related to a possible disagreement concerning the very concept of democracy.

The confusion around this concept, prevailing both in the discussion of scholars and in the broad public debate, was probably caused by Friedrich and Brzezinski's typology (Friedrich, Brzeziński 1956). This concept consisted in distinguishing three types of regimes: democracy, authoritarianism and totalitarianism. A scale of values has also been linked to this distinction with democracy being the best of these regimes; authoritarianism, like totalitarianism, embodies systemic pathology, only to a relatively lesser extent.

While this typology made a staggering career, it also caused critical comments. In particular, doubts were raised by the opposition of democracy and authoritarianism, as well as democracy and totalitarianism.

The term authoritarianism, in the sense in which it was used in the well-known typology of American political scientists, had been borrowed by them from Benito Mussolini (Sartori 1994). That borrowing was justified because,

indeed, in the Italian dictator's propaganda, authoritarian rule was the polar opposite of parliamentary rule. Mussolini's idea, however, should not have been imitated, for strictly substantive reasons. *Il Duce*, driven by the ambition to refer to the venerable, state tradition of ancient *Roma*, falsified it. He missed the source of the political sense of *auctoritas*, which in the system of the Roman republic meant that particular kind of power that lay within the competence of the Senate, a body which enjoyed special reputation, but whose authority had no claim to overbearing, unconditional obedience. This kind of prerogative, i.e. *imperium*, the right to command, was held by magistrate offices, such as consul or praetor (Arendt 1994; Plessner 1988).

Friedrich and Brzezinski's opposition of democracy and authoritarianism does not seem to be the most fortunate solution for another reason. It suggests an understanding of political freedom in dangerously strong opposition to political authority. It has, in other words, anarchist implications and it justifies the doctrinaire sense of contesting political authority from the position of the apotheosis of political freedom.

There are more reasons to doubt the typology of American political scientists. Giovanni Sartori rightly argues that the correct opposite of democracy is not authoritarianism, but autocracy (Sartori 1994). Friedrich Hayek expressed far-reaching doubts about the concept of the polar opposition of democracy and totalitarianism. He challenged Friedrich and Brzezinski's concept, absolving authoritarianism, which he associated with the liberal order, i.e. the parliamentary, constitutional, law-abiding and pluralistic order. He attributed totalitarian tendencies to democracy (Hayek 1997). In the second element (claim) of his scandalous revelation, Hayek engaged with Jakob Talmon's treatise (1952) with understanding.

Arguably, it is probably a paradox of our time that democracy, which usually arouses enthusiasm or is the object of genuine desires and far-reaching expectations, is at the same time something against which it is necessary to defend things and values that are really precious, in the opinion of numerous commentators and analysts. One of them, Bernard Crick, out of scepticism about democratic enthusiasm, pointed out something that he thought was worth defending against democracy. That thing is politics (Crick 2004). His remarks seem valuable because for some reason the term politics for the general public now has connotations as negative as the term politicians. This has not always been the case. In the classical republican tradition, or in the First Polish Republic that drew upon that tradition, *political* meant polite, cultured, civilised, intelligent, regardless of the fact that the attitude of politicians from earlier historical periods probably aroused outrage or disgust, no less often than today.

Crick's reflections are also valuable as they remind us that what is at stake in the great (though frequently overwhelmed by mundaneness and discouragement) game of civil communities is not only freedom and authority or justice, but also politics. In other words, Crick reminds us (in keeping with the spirit and letter of classical republicanism) that the essential, most significant feature of a good regime is not so much its democratic but precisely its political nature (ibid.).

Crick does not completely deny the value of democracy. He admits that it can be compatible with politics. Moreover, he even claims that "it is impossible to imagine politics without democracy today." At the same time, however, he emphasises that it is only a part of modern Western political systems, and not the most important part. Therefore, he argues that "popular and vague democratic rhetoric must be contrasted with historical analysis. (...) If democracy wishes to be everything and not just one component of politics, it will destroy politics" (ibid.).

The idea to defend politics against democracy resulted in noteworthy terminological postulates. Crick, referring to a long tradition dating back to Aristotle, proposed that, without completely forgetting democracy, the word *politeja* should be used. In turn, Michael Oakeshott suggested that this most politically valuable thing, which is worth defending against falsehood and the excess of democratic expectations and promises, should most sensibly be called nomocracy (Oakeshott 2008).

With a more reserved and a less critical approach to the concept of democracy than Hayek, Crick or Oakeshott, Robert Dahl also proposed the concept of polyarchy, which is not so much a substitute but a more accurate term (Dahl 1995). However, other American analysts of modern democracy, such as Charles Tilly or John Rawls (Rawls 1998; Tilly 2008) did not have similar objections. The consistency with which these two authors respect that privilege of the idea of democracy may be puzzling. However, they can be justified because in fact they employ a broad, rather than a narrow, concept of democracy, that is, one that in a sense takes into account Crick's remarks that democracy is only a part of the political order of contemporary Western societies, and not the most important part, and that, therefore, the part should not be confused with the whole.

Yet another idea for an equivalent to the term democracy has been proposed by Eric von Kuehnelt-Leddihn. He argues that demarchy is a better cause than democracy, worthy of engaging the civic heart and mind. Its advantage over democracy is that it defines the power of the people (*demos*) contained in its concept in a less overbearing way, and therefore, less than democracy,

susceptible to totalitarian inclinations, against which Hayek and Talmon warn. The suffix *archy*, present in demarchy, is also found in such terms as polyarchy or monarchy mentioned here. *Arche* or *-archy* has the advantage of expressing the idea of popular rule in a milder way than *kratos* or *-cracy* (Kratos in Greek mythology was the god of strength, power and violence) (von Kuehnelt-Leddihn 2008).

The terminological proposals presented here are only a fraction of the tradition of political reflection, whose representatives assume that the idea of democracy is dangerous to the extent that it is susceptible to hasty interpretations, the effects of which should be protected from the systemic order of contemporary political communities. This is a respectable tradition and is still alive today even in the British debate, at least since Charles Gray's democratic electoral reform in 1832. Many apologists for the "undemocratic components of democracy" have shown considerable ingenuity in defending the British order, the balanced constitution, or the mixed regime, and in fear of the possible consequences of the overly radical claims of democratic reformers and activists (Hearnshaw 1967; Kedourie 1984; Maude 1969; Oakeshott 2008; Scruton 2002; Willets 1992).

These are warnings derived from different positions. One of the most important has been derived from the tradition of ancient (classical) republicanism, at which Aristotle excelled, as did Aristophanes, whose testimony was referred to, among others, by the British historian Nicholas G. L. Hammond. The Greek comedy writer commented on the democratic reforms of Ephialtes and Pericles, dismissing them with a phrase that expressed fear of the consequences of the dizzying promise of popular government: "Ephialtes [as Aristophanes noted] poured out for the citizens a full and unadulterated draught of freedom" (Hammond 1977).

It is worth noting, however, that this tradition of scepticism towards the faith placed in the democratisation process also found critics in the British Isles, who argued with zest that the democratisation of British parliamentarism made it not only fundamentally more socially just (less oligarchic, patrician), but also much more law-abiding (Eccleshall 1984; Leach 1996). They also argued that not only did this process not disintegrate the order of the system, but it proved to be a factor in its successful consolidation (Cowling 1971). There were also credible advocates of the same transformational pattern, but referring to other countries, such as the United States, France or Switzerland (Baszkiewicz 2002; Dahl 1995; Tilly 2008).

The search for terminological equivalents for the troublesome word democracy seems very interesting. So far, however, they have not been able to

weaken the privileged position that this word has enjoyed in Western debate for a hundred years. It invariably remains a source of serious problems. Democracy is a concept that lacks precision, which is largely a consequence of the fact that it has been built on misguided distinctions and not the most fortunate polemical points of reference (Sartori 1994). As a result, this concept is prone to hasty interpretations. In this sense, it also seems to be a tool of persuasion or agitation rather than a reliable analysis (Crick 2004). If this is the case, it would not be out of place, though undoubtedly against a convention strongly rooted in Western debate, to ask: why refer to the Western political order using the terms democratic or democracy?

The place of liberalism in democracy

The problem of the determinants of the far-reaching divergence of views on the contemporary crisis of political consensus seems to apply not only to the concept of democracy. An important point of reference for the parties to the dispute over "right-wing populism" is their attitude to liberalism and its proper place in the public debate and the institutional order of Western democracies. The way in which the protagonists of liberalism defend their beliefs in this dispute seems to be reflected in one of the statements of Andrzej Szahaj, who appeals not to hurry with undue haste:

> with criticism of (...) the liberal democratic consensus (...). What would replace it? How can one responsibly want to overthrow its hegemony? What to replace liberal democracy with? (...) [it] has been overthrown several times. The result, however, has always been the same: something much worse emerged. (...) After all these lessons, how can one want to overthrow the liberal democratic consensus? (...) It is easy (...) to delegitimise political liberalism, but it is more difficult to build something better on its ruins. (...) Western political culture, after centuries of painful learning process, has come to the conclusion that the liberal democratic system is the best of all known so far, and it is impossible to imagine a better one. I agree with Fukuyama (Szahaj 2011a) and (Shahai 2011c).

In other words, Andrzej Szahaj argues that there is no credible and responsible alternative to liberal democracy and the liberal democratic consensus today. Liberalism, linked to democracy, has reached the role of a systemic standard in the Western world that now lacks serious competition. This should not come as a surprise, given the historical experience of the past few hundred years of Western history. Liberalism did not come out of the blue. It is the result of a long and hard-won response to the challenges brought by, among other

things, religious wars and totalitarianism. It is not without reason that it turned out to be the general winner of the political battles that have been fought in Europe for at least 400 years (Szahaj 2011a; 2011b).

This and similar liberal opinions do not always find approval. Critical views are expressed by Chantal Millon-Delsol, Marek Cichocki, Pierre Manent and Josef Isensee, quoted above, but also by many other authors, such as Samuel Huntington (2004), John Gray (2001), Kenneth Minogue (2010) or Ryszard Legutko (2011a; 2011b).

The latter notes that to identify liberalism with freedom is an abuse because inherent in its nature the intention to dominate. As a fundamental condition for open debate and the unrestricted exchange of ideas, liberals declare themselves as zealous defenders of the right to free speech, for even the most controversial opinions, including those they do not share in any way. However, their solemn proclamations are of little value. By assuring that they are only concerned with creating a framework for free discussion and cooperation, they always put themselves in a higher position. They take on the "subservient" role of organisers, even towards those who do not want to be organised. Along with their declared intention to create only a framework comes an intention of self-restraint, but insincere. And those who cannot be accused of such hypocrisy lose excessive optimism. They excessively assume that in realising the ideal of liberal pluralism it is easy to separate the formal priority from the material one. Contrary to these hopes, in practice the two priorities are very often confused (Legutko 2011a).

It is noteworthy that the opposition to, as not only their critics but also their followers put it, hegemonic and universalist liberal aspirations, applies not only the present but also history. This is because, as can be seen in Andrzej Szahaj's statement, these aspirations have their historical justification, usually based on what Herbert Butterfield (1973) called the Whig interpretation of history (also called the Whig historical myth).

Entering into a dispute with this justification, the aforementioned Ryszard Legutko accuses liberals of their irresistible tendency to look at the past as a state of outrageous lack of freedom (Legutko 2011a). He claims that their idea of the origins of the political order of contemporary Western societies has little to do with the truth because the formation of political institutions in modern Europe and America is not the exclusive, or even a special work of liberalism. It had been influenced by other traditions, and:

> only in the liberal fable do we find the theory that for centuries peoples had lived in oppression and tyranny until finally the liberal vision shone through, which brought peace, prosperity and liberty. The claim that liberalism has become the 'standard' and a 'labori-

ously developed' response to conflict is a gross simplification that mystifies not only history but also thinking about politics and political institutions. People creating modern and contemporary state institutions were mostly not liberals (Legutko 2011b).

In sum, Ryszard Legutko and other critics of liberalism accuse its followers of overestimating the role of their own intellectual and political tradition, at the same time neglecting or underestimating the contribution of the non-liberal or pre-liberal legacy to the existence and shape of the contemporary order.

In other words, the question of the relevance and vitality of the pre-liberal political legacy in the context of considerations about the roots and accordingly the nature of the contemporary order is the subject of fundamental dispute.

At one end of the spectrum of positions on this subject, there are, among others, the opinions of Charles Tilly or John Rawls. The former represents a kind of consequentialist modernism. Contemporary democracy, in Tilly's opinion, has its pre-liberal precedents, but weak and only partial. Yes, ancient republicanism developed an impressive idea and practice of citizenship. It is true that there was medieval or early modern constitutionalism and parliamentarism, but it personified freedom and the rule of law in a very incipient and underdeveloped way. From the point of view of the political standards of modern democracy, it raises more doubts than satisfaction. Therefore, it must be clearly stated that there is no continuity between the present and the former. Our freedom and equality are, in their essence and origin, modern. They had no strong precedents in pre-modern times (Tilly 2008).

Jan Baszkiewicz is arguably less principled in this respect than Tilly but something analogous can be said about his attitude to the institutions of pre-liberal parliamentarism and constitutionalism. The touch of scepticism prevails here over the recognition of the importance of the fact that the journey towards the more mature political forms of later periods was undertaken at that time, and the first trails were blazed (Baszkiewicz 2002).

John Rawls' position is also different from that of Charles Tilly. His modernism, however, is similarly strong. Political liberalism, i.e. the ideological foundation of the modern order, owes little to the heritage of ancient republicanism or medieval Christianity. Ancient times, in particular, were not marked by the conflict between authoritative and expansionist salvation-based religions. Political liberalism grows out of the unprecedented experience of the modern era, that is, of the insurmountable and profound pluralism of "vast doctrines." It originated from the Reformation and its aftermath with its long disputes about religious tolerance in the 16th and 17th centuries" (Rawls 1998).

Robert Dahl, like Tilly and Rawls, a contemporary classic of American political science, is a modernist, who is more restrained than the others. His writings feature an important and clearly emphasised finding: contemporary macro-democracy is something unprecedented, but it seems to be a serious debtor to the tradition of mediaeval representative institutions (Dahl 1995).

It could be argued that Samuel Huntington is an opponent of modernism when he claims that in the essential spiritual and institutional sense of this word, the West, which in his opinion should be defended against liberal doctrinairism, acquired its identity before it became modern (Huntington 2004). A similar attitude is taken by Michael Oakeshott. He points out that nomocracy has numerous pre-modern, strong precedents, and the modern era abounds in numerous examples of the failures of nomocracy in its clash with the elements of teleocracy, which is its opposite (Oakeshott 2008).

One of the hardest formulas of anti-modernism has been provided by the British historian Jonathan C. D. Clark. His concept of the origins of modernity is marked by a deep approval of the typically mediaevalist idea of the "medieval roots of English individualism", or a thorough revision of the concept of the "great 18th century", which poses a real challenge to the dominant trend of "Whig" historiography. Also interesting and powerful is his defence of the political heritage of the German old order, blamed for its stubborn aversion to Enlightenment and liberal modern era that culminated in the 20th century catastrophe of expansionism and totalitarianism (Clark 1990; Clark 2004).

Finally, what can be said of Harold Berman's concept, which is no less revisionist than Clark's. This author, who has challenged the textbook canons of periodisation and the message of Renaissance humanists and philosophers of the Enlightenment, identifies the inauguration of the modern era with the political and civilisational transformations of the so-called papal revolution, which took place in the Middle Ages (Berman 1995).

A cursory review of positions on the authoritativeness, relevance or vitality of the pre-liberal and pre-modern political legacy in the realities (or mental and institutional structures) of the order of contemporary democracy indicates their far-reaching polarisation. Some believe that there is no alternative to the liberal consensus because there is no alternative to Western democracy and Western freedom, which are essentially the work of liberals and their intellectual and political traditions. Others, critical of the Whig historical myth, argue that challenging the liberal consensus is not the same as rejecting or undermining the Western political order. This order is neither as liberal in its nature nor as modern in its origins as the proponents of the liberal democratic consensus claim. Of course, the point is not, as the latter say, that the liberal concept of

the nature and origins of this order is fundamentally untrue, but rather that it is more debatable than its followers would like.

All of the above raises the question: why approve the claims of the Whig historical myth to authoritativeness in the Western debate if these claims are highly controversial? Moving further, it would be appropriate to ask (as in the previous section on the concept of democracy) the question: why call the modern Western order liberal? The rationale for these questions would also be essentially the same as in the case of investigations into the controversial role played by the concept of democracy in contemporary debate: the term liberal, in relation to the Western order, is a tool of persuasion or agitation rather than analysis.

Conclusion

The surprisingly large divergence of positions in the dispute over "right-wing populism" is, among other things, due to the fact that it also covers issues of democracy and liberalism. Democracy is important for both sides of these controversies since they accuse each other of violating democratic principles. However, the main reason for the divergence of their positions does not seem to *what* this democracy should be like, but *whose*. In other words, the reason why their views have become so polarised is their markedly different attitude towards liberalism, especially to its place in the contemporary democratic process and the related public debate.

Besides the reasons for the far-reaching difference of opinion in this dispute, the picture presented here also invites comments on the credibility of the research attitude of both sides. The competences of critics of "right-wing populism" come out worse in this confrontation. Yes, they do take into account important differences and shades, but often fail to do so. By resorting to rhetorical devices such as the *reductio ad Hitlerum,* they demonise the opinions of those who contest the liberal consensus, as well as the style of government inspired by them, e.g. Donald Trump, Jarosław Kaczyński or Viktor Orbán. In doing so, they ignore the substantial difference that separates them not only from evidently and essentially totalitarian regimes, but also from the Turkish, Russian or Iranian case of "democracy without liberalism".

Exaggeration was arguably not avoided by their opponents, such as Pierre Manent, Chantal Millon-Delsol or Joseph Isensee quoted here. However, supporters of "right-wing populism" speak in a more matter-of-fact and balanced way than its critics. To a much lesser extent than their opponents, they are said to conjure reality more than they describe it.

The clash of positions of both sides of the dispute over "right-wing populism" allows us to note something else. Perhaps it would be unfair to accuse the censors of this "populism", of a patronising attitude towards its supporters. However, they give the impression that they are making their accusations from the position of host, mentor or super-arbiter of democratic debate.

The evaluative load, as emphasised in the above analyses, does not undermine the credibility of the research attitude. In any case, it does not always have to have this type of consequences. Therefore, the defenders of the liberal consensus cannot be reproached for their attachment to the Whig historical myth. Supporters of "right-wing populism" could also be accused of cultivating their own comforting narratives, many of which deserve, from the point of view of honest historical research, no more than a reputation of a useful legend. However, adhering to the ambitions of a generous organiser and neutral supervisor of democratic debate, while at the same time being one of the parties to the dispute, brings with it more far-reaching and risky requirements than practicing the virtues of impartiality and objectivity by a commentator who does not want to renounce their axiological or doctrinal identity.

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses contemporary political debate regarding the dispute over "right-wing populism", the strong polarisation and cognitive credibility of the conflicting opinions, the controversial nature of its key concepts and intellectual conformism to the dominant climate of opinion. The key point of the entire text concerns the source of cognitive defects in contemporary criticism of "right-wing populism". It expresses the author's conviction that they result from the approval of the hegemonic aspirations of the liberal mind. The aim of the article has critical and apologetic aspects. The former refers to

the style of polemics used regarding dissenters against the liberal democratic consensus, which discredits it with the stigmatising epithet "populism". The latter applies to this tradition of understanding the origins and nature of Western freedom (present, for example, in the Tory traditionalists of the "Peterhouse School" also known as the "Salisbury Group"), which emphasises not only the importance but also the vitality of the premodern political legacy. The analyses contained in the article represent an interpretative theoretical approach. The article uses a comparative and historical method. The research procedure here includes, among others, the confrontation not only between different opinions, but also the clash of two historical perspectives, i.e. the contemporary discussion on "right-wing populism" and, in the longer term, debate on democracy and liberalism.

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The role of ideology in the Polish political debate over the 2015 migration crisis

Introduction

The goal of this article is to identify the impact of ideological assumptions on the political debate in Poland concerning the 2015 European migration crisis, which was the consequence of military conflicts and socio-economic destabilisation in countries of the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the search for better living conditions by, among others, citizens of the Balkan states. The apogee of the crisis in Europe took place in 2015, in which a total of 1,822,337 illegal border crossings of the EU took place, in comparison with 282, 962 in 2014 (Frontex 2016: 63). The number of those applying for the first time for international protection in EU member states as well as Norway and Switzerland in that year reached 1,324,215, compared to 595,530 in 2014 (European Asylum Support Office 2016: 128). During the ongoing situation in 2015, the EU decided to set in motion a mechanism of relocation and resettlement by European countries, with assigned numbers of people seeking international protection, which particular countries, including Poland, were obligated to accept. The Polish government, headed by Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz from the Civic Platform party (Platforma Obywatelska Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej, hereinafter PO) agreed to Polish participation in this process (which meant accepting a total of 7,082 individuals). However, in November 2015, after parliamentary elections, power was assumed by a new government headed by Prime Minister Beata Szydło from the Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, hereinafter PiS) which from the very beginning had been decidedly opposed to any Polish participation in the relocation and resettlement mechanism. The political line of this government was continued by the government of Mateusz Morawiecki (PiS), who became prime minister in December of 2017. On 13 October

2019 parliamentary elections took place, which were again won by PiS and the mission of creating a new government was entrusted once more to Mateusz Morawiecki. Although Poland did not accept a single person within the framework of the relocation and resettlement mechanism, this issue became the topic of a disagreement in Polish political debate lasting several years. The parliamentary debate on 16 September 2015 concerning the migration crisis had no precedent in the Polish Sejm. It was at that time that the main axis of the disagreement defining the political debate was clearly outlined for subsequent years.

In this article, it is assumed that within the statements made by all sides of the debate there were judgements that were either explicitly or implicitly conditioned by ideology. In the popular understanding, the concept of ideology seems relatively easy to understand. However, defining it in theoretical and methodological terms poses a certain intellectual challenge. As Andrew Heywood states, ideology is one of the most controversial concepts found in political science analysis (Heywood 2002: 52). Franciszek Ryszka, in turn, writes that the term 'ideology' appears in the social sciences with a few dozen different meanings (Ryszka 1984: 160). Undoubtedly, this concept needs to be more precisely conceptualised and operationalised. In the simplest sense, the concept of ideology can be understood as "an ordered set (system) of values and goals assigned to large communities, which justifies political actions, and which takes precedence over the individual views and attitudes of its followers" (ibidem: 189).

In the remainder of this article, a little more space is devoted to theoretical and methodological considerations related to this concept. Although many nuanced positions can be distinguished in disputes related to the migration crisis, this article adopts a dichotomous division (that is into supporters and opponents of Polish participation in the relocation mechanism proposed in 2015). The author was induced to such a simplification by the fact that the dispute over the Polish position on the EU policy regarding the migration crisis was part of a broader ideological polarisation of public debate in Poland. (cf. Piekot 2016: 68).

This analysis is intended to answer the following research questions:

1. what overt or covert ideological assumptions were present in statements made by politicians, both proponents and opponents of Polish participation in the implementation of the 2015 relocation and resettlement mechanism?
2. to what extent did the ideological beliefs manifested by participants in the dispute risk presenting a falsified (distorted) picture of reality?

3. in what ways did public participants in political discourse attempt to impose their ideological beliefs on public opinion and their political opponents?

The main method used in the study was qualitative discourse analysis based on the semiotic mediation (see below for details). The next part of the article attempts to conceptualise the category of "ideology". Then, the operationalisation of this concept is discussed, and the methodology and research procedures used are described in detail. The key element of the article is the presentation of the results of my own empirical research along with the interpretation of the messages presented. The material subjected to empirical analysis was the record of the aforementioned parliamentary debate of 16 September 2015. The article ends with conclusions, including a proposal for theoretical and practical applications resulting from the research conducted.

The conceptualisation of ideology in political debate

In the aforementioned definition of ideology formulated by F. Ryszka, particular attention should be paid to three elements that distinguish this concept from the idea of a worldview or a system of values. The first element is the fact that the concept of ideology applies to value systems shared by large communities. Developing the aforementioned thread in order to specify the meaning of the term "ideology", it can be concluded that ideologies are those systems of values and goals that are related to the sense of social identity of their supporters. In other words, supporters of a given ideology not only adopt a system of values, beliefs and goals that make up their individual identities, but also take into account their social functioning in this context. To apply the category of ideology, this system must be closely related to the sense of social identity, and sometimes also the cultural identity of its supporters. Hence, ideologies imply more or less polarised divisions into "us" and "them", and can also arouse strong emotions among both their supporters and opponents.

Another element of the definition of ideology is the fact that ideology provides a justification for political action. These goals and values are considered so important that they translate into the pursuit of power in the state and the implementation of ideological assumptions in political activities (through doctrines, programs, decision making and other political activities). In certain situations, political goals may take precedence over ideology, which does not change the fact that certain ideological assumptions are used in an instrumen-

tal way to justify these goals. Finally, ideologies take precedence over individual views and attitudes, that is the latter become secondary to a certain pre-imposed system of values and goals.

While further developing the above considerations, it should be noted that ideology also includes rules of conduct in the sphere of political relations (Antoszewski, Herbut 2002: 134), in which ideology refers not only to the moral, but also the "intellectual basis of collective political action" (ibid.). It is worth noting that various theorists have drawn attention to the dysfunctional impact of ideology on both the political process and society at large. For example, in the Marxist understanding of ideology, it inherently includes falsehood, misdirection and deception (ibid.). According to Karl Marx, ideology serves to camouflage the real intentions for maintaining inequality (Heywood 2008: 21). On the other hand, in the conservative perspective expressed by M. Oakeshott, ideologies are "abstract 'systems of thought': that is, […] sets of ideas that distort political reality" (Heywood 2002: 43). M. Oakeshott defines ideology as a complex set of related ideas (Oakeshott 1999: 64), a system of abstract ideas (ibid.: 70) or a set of related abstract principles (ibid.: 64) that are thought out in advance (ibid.). In this understanding of the term, the function of ideology is the provision of knowledge or a way of understanding the principle political issues, whereby this knowledge and understanding are primary to the empiricism they set in motion. M. Oakeshott, however, assumes that ideology is the result of reflection upon an existing form of politics or political activity, and in this sense, it does not precede the political process as such, that is some form of political activity precedes ideology. The author in question assumes that ideologies are hidden in experience, that is they result from experience, and then, on their basis, ideas or knowledge regarding future experiences are formulated in advance (ibid.: 64-69). In simple terms, future political experiences are interpreted through a prism of preconceived ideological assumptions, which in turn have emerged from previous political experiences. According to M. Oakeshott, political activity cannot begin with ideological activity (ibid.: 71). Robert A. Dahl and Bruce Stinebrickner recognise that among the reasons for the development of ideology by political leaders is the desire to endow their leadership with authority and legitimacy that enable the most economic form of influence in a regular and lasting manner (Dahl, Stinebrickner 2007: 101). This fact points to the aforementioned threat of the instrumental use of ideology by politicians who only appear to identify with it.

Ideologies have greater or lesser tendencies to impose specific views and ways of formulating them in the broader public space. Actions undertaken for

the dominance of a particular ideology in the public sphere may take the form of forcing a specific 'political correctness', prohibiting the expression of 'incorrect' views (cf. Heywood 2009: 15) or the selection of specific semantic means or topics of public debate (cf. Łotocki 2019: 77- 81). In addition, ideologies in larger communities function on the basis of specific "packages of beliefs", with such a package consciously or more or less thoughtlessly accepted *en bloc* by the supporters of a given ideology. Negating a single belief that makes up such a package could pose a threat to the social identity of a supporter of a particular ideology, including violating the order of division into "us" and "them". Since every ideology is burdened with a greater or lesser risk of simplifying and distorting the adherents' perception of reality, there is a negative perception of "ideologizing" in the public discourse, which stands in opposition to knowledge, science, or simply reliable and factual judgment.

In the context of the identity-based and collective nature of ideology, it is worth mentioning the concept of groupthink. This can occur in strongly cohesive groups, and such groups include communities based upon common ideological assumptions, especially those organised politically. This syndrome consists of the following mechanisms: a sense of infallibility, unanimity, inviolability and security, the stereotyping of opponents, the stigmatisation of deviants, a selective approach toward information, self-censorship of individuals, a greater tendency to ignore risk, the radicalisation of assessments, actions and decisions as well as the perception of group cohesion and good relationships within a group as being more important than the quality of situational assessments, actions or decisions (cf. Morreale, Spitzberg, Barge 2007: 447-450; Tyszka 2010: 282-284; Aronson, Wilson, Akert 1997: 379-386).

Ideological convictions affect the public dissemination of certain judgments, both in terms of content and formal structure. In political debate, they create a risk of politicians taking a "no holds barred" approach, which paves the way for manipulation and political Machiavellianism, as well as consciously or unconsciously reducing the complexity of the socio-political reality or distorting its perception. At the same time, ideological factors are an inherent and natural element of political life, including political debate. Political debate should be understood here as an organised public discussion in which various kinds of players participate and in which various positions are outlined and contrasted, influenced, among other factors, by ideology. This discussion is oriented towards making a political decision, even if no decision is ultimately made (cf. Golinowska, Morecka, Nieciuński et al. 2000: 228-229). The subjects of political debate are contentious issues that are important to the general public (cf. Kampka 2014: 11).

Research methodology

The main tool of political debate is the language used. A. Heywood even claimed that politics is ”conducted through the medium of language” (Heywood 2004: 3), and in this context language is not simply a means of communication, but is a political weapon (ibid.). F. Ryszka, in turn, maintains that politics is first expressed in words, and even that “the word ‘creates’ (…) politics, it is a way of doing politics” (Ryszka 1984: 38), and not merely a tool of communication (ibid.). The most appropriate method of identifying elements of ideology in the language used by politicians is discourse analysis (cf. Lisowska-Magdziarz 2009: 379; Mikołajczyk 2014: 409-410). This method is interpretive and focuses on extracting explicit and hidden mental models from linguistic messages (such as those of politicians) (cf. Mrozowski 2003: 188), as well as attempts to impose specific ideological assumptions. The most blatant indicator of ideologization in language use is phraseology. As J. Bralczyk writes, “through phraseology we recognise affiliation or the deliberate identification of people” (Bralczyk 2004: 78). Elsewhere, he states: “in order for an ideology to function fully, it must have a shaped variety of language, the specificity of which is most clearly revealed through phraseological phenomena” (Bralczyk 2003: 58). The subject of discourse analysis, apart from phraseology itself, may also be the denotations and connotations of the words used, but also, more broadly, the strategies utilised for naming people, objects and phenomena, making judgments about them and drawing conclusions (topoi), the intensification or suppression of specific content or “framing” (“perspectivisation”) or contextualisation) of the topics discussed (cf. Wodak 2001: 73). In the study presented here, the analysis of the main threads of the messages formulated by the two parties to the dispute and the phraseology used is aimed at identifying “mental models” that make up specific ideological assumptions. The interpretive nature of the method raises the risk of the researcher’s subjectivity having an excessive influence when interpreting the linguistic messages studied. A certain way of dealing with this problem is to refer to the approach referred to by Tomasz Piekot as “semiotic mediation” (Piekot 2016). In this approach, it is crucial to change the direction of the researcher’s involvement (point of view) when analysing the statements of discourse participants, depending on what ideology they identify with. As T. Piekot states, the concept of mediation is understood as “an action of a third party (here: a researcher) involved in facilitating mutual understanding and communication between the parties, without taking a position and supporting the selected party” (ibid.: 21).

In this article, this "mediation" is a look at each linguistic message analysed, both from the perspective of a supporter and an opponent of a particular judgement (message). Then, an attempt is made to interpret the message in order to identify the impact of potential ideological factors on its content and form. Interpretation is carried out simultaneously from different points of view. The ideological factors identified in this process had to be characterised by properties described in the conceptualisation of ideology discussed earlier. The analysed positions and messages are treated here as conflicting "discursively equal points of view" (ibid.: 23) conditioned, among other ways, ideologically. The point is to take the point of view of each side and try to identify the ideological factors in the most objective way possible. As T. Piekot states in relation to the described approach, "the discursive image of any phenomenon consists of various ideological variants (discursive profiles)" (ibid.: 25) and these "ideological variants" are the subject of the analysis performed here. It is worth noting that ideologies determine both the way messages are formulated and the way they are read (understood) (cf. ibid.: 32).

The subject of analysis was a transcript of the main parliamentary debate on the response of the Polish state to the migration crisis. The debate, which took place on 16 September 2015, has already been the subject of research in a broader context (see, for example, Adamczyk 2016; Bielecka-Prus 2016; Łotocki 2019). In contrast to already existing analyses, this study treats it as a source of linguistic messages that allow for the most objective extraction of the ideological assumptions that guided the main parties in the dispute over Polish participation in the implementation of the relocation mechanism.

The analysis was limited to three main themes around which the disagreement was centred. These are the humanitarian imperative, the security imperative and the imperative of European solidarity. The research procedure consisted of the following stages:

1. the identification and selection of messages related to the main threads;
2. the interpretation of selected messages from the perspective of the participants in the political debate who identify with a given position;
3. the interpretation of selected messages from the perspective of participants in the political debate opposing a given position;
4. the identification of where discursive contentiousness and commonalities occur (cf. Piekot 2016: 81);
5. an attempt to identify the nature of the beliefs behind the messages examined and their interpretations based on an analysis of the socio-political context;

6. an attempt to identify discursive behaviours indicating the justification (legitimisation) for taking specific political actions caused by beliefs manifested as well as their interpretations;
7. an attempt to identify mechanisms indicating the supremacy of the beliefs behind the messages examined as well as their interpretations regarding individual points of view and positions;
8. an attempt to identify discursive behaviours that distort and reduce the complexity of socio-political reality, distorting, to a greater or lesser extent, its actual image.

Discursive ideological profiles of two main positions in the dispute over the migration crisis Analysis of the results of the author's research

The humanitarian imperative

From the perspective of supporters of Polish participation in the relocation mechanism, the humanitarian imperative was an absolute priority. At the nominative-predicative level, they categorically stated that the 2015 migration crisis was one of the worst humanitarian crises in Europe, and even used more stylistically marked terms, calling it a great humanitarian disaster. This point, like the one concerning Poland's obligation to provide humanitarian aid in the present situation, was wholeheartedly accepted, often presupposed. Labels such as humanitarian problem or challenge were also used. Politicians mentioned the obligation to provide humanitarian aid, implement humanitarian policy, respect international humanitarian law and referred to the most important values, among which they mentioned humanitarianism. At the same time, statements were made that the challenge in question is not only humanitarian, but also political or economic, and in addition to fulfilling humanitarian duty, the crisis should be counteracted at its source. However, the humanitarian context was definitely in the foreground here.

As for the opponents of Polish participation in the relocation mechanism, they suggested that such a categorical reduction of the subject to a humanitarian context was naive and short-sighted. It was claimed that adults and healthy men predominated among the migrants, and that people who should be primarily targeted for humanitarian aid (such as women, children, and other vulnerable people) remained in their countries of origin. It was believed that the position represented by the supporters of Polish participation in the relocation

mechanism would lead to uncontrollable waves of fake refugees tempted by the promise of a better life. The legitimacy of humanitarian aid was not denied, but it was defined in a completely different way. It was recognised that this assistance should be provided in the migrants' countries of origin or in countries adjacent to these countries. At the same time, the humanitarian imperative was not as decisive as in the case of supporters, which was sometimes also manifested in the very order in which the arguments were presented. For example, helping refugees on the spot was presented both as more economically effective and, only later, more humane. Table 1 provides a detailed illustration of the discursive messages described.

As can be seen from the quotations cited, the humanitarian aspect of the crisis was important in declarations made by both sides, which can be treated as common ground where agreement could be sought. At the same time, the manner in which humanitarianism should be understood in that particular context was a discursive point of contention.

Reconstructing the ideological profile of supporters of Polish participation in implementing the relocation and resettlement mechanism, it can be concluded that in their view, humanitarianism should be the starting point and, at the same time, the determinant of all activities of the Polish state in this area. The importance of this factor, emphasised by numerous examples of hyperbole, was to justify political actions aimed at implementing the relocation mechanism. The suggested inclination of the other party to the dispute to disregard this aspect, and even that they were "scaring people with refugees and fuelling social fears along with selfish and nationalist attitudes" (P5) was supposed to delegitimise this party. Humanitarianism was presented here at the level of implicatures as a constitutive value defining the identity of the community not only by supporters of implementing the relocation mechanism by Poland, but it would seem, more broadly, of decent people who should help others. It was assumed to be the most important value along with empathy or readiness to share with those in need. It seems, therefore, that a certain perspective (framework) of humanitarianism was imposed here, which could simplify a more complex political analysis of participation by the Polish state in the implementation of the relocation mechanism and its international determinants and long-term political consequences. It could also hinder a broader view of the subject of the dispute, not only in terms of humanitarianism, but also in terms of legal, political, or international pragmatics. Relocation did not have to be the only possible humanitarian Polish response to the migration crisis. It can be recognised that it was a specific technical proposal to solve a humanitarian as well as a political problem, the results of which, both humanitarian

Table 1

The humanitarian imperative in the Polish political debate on the migration crisis (statements analysed)

Proponents (P)	Opponents (O)
Today, when we're talking about the greatest humanitarian crisis in Europe, perhaps since the creation of the European Union, this debate requires, above all, seriousness and competence (P1) the most accurate definition of this situation that has been given in the statements made so far, is contained in just three words, great humanitarian disaster (P2) what's most important is this humanitarian problem (P2) Today, there are over 300 million migrants in a world of 8 billion, Mr Żelichowski, not a world of 6 billion, and 10 times fewer refugees. And this is a huge challenge, on the one hand humanitarian and on the other political and this also touches on certain economic threads (P3) The Polish government has no clear plan about how to solve the crisis, which the Prime Minister rightly said was the greatest humanitarian crisis in modern Europe (P4) The greatest humanitarian crisis in modern Europe requires, and please understand this well, putting party politics to one side (P4) I also have no doubt that apart from humanitarian aid for refugees, Poland and the European Union must finally take urgent and decisive steps to eliminate the causes of the immigration crisis (P5) Instead of scaring people with refugees and fuelling social fears along with selfish and nationalist attitudes, the government should rather refer to the most important values upon which the Third Polish Republic is founded, to solidarity, which we are the cradle of, which we pride ourselves on abroad, to values such as humanitarianism, empathy and sharing with those in need (P5) do we comply with international humanitarian law, I'll go against the current here, since last year we've only granted 262 asylum permits? That is very little in relation to the number of those who have applied for it (P3)	It is one thing to help the mostly adult, healthy men who've come here, and another thing to help those who stayed behind. These are mostly women and children, who are much more at risk of rape, robbery, and torture. It would be much more economically efficient, much better from a humanitarian point of view, and at the same time it would reduce the influx of these people here (O1) It would be cheaper, much more humanitarian, and much more effective (O1) This huge wave of immigrants we are facing today was caused by an irresponsible statement by Chancellor Angela Merkel, who said nothing less than that the German government would accept all Syrians because they needed humanitarian aid. What happened after this statement? There has been a massive invasion across Europe's southern borders, and it turns out that all these people who are coming here, many hundreds of thousands of people, all of them say they are Syrians (O2)

Source: *Sprawozdanie…* 2015.

and political, were not at all obvious. Such a deterministic approach to the problem in terms of humanitarianism, disregarding the broader political context, undoubtedly hindered any more complex analysis and, paradoxically, even from the humanitarian point of view, it was not necessarily the most beneficial.

In reconstructing the ideological profile of opponents of Polish participation in the implementation of the relocation and resettlement mechanism, in this context the argument of humanitarianism was treated as one that distorted reality. Representatives of this side of the dispute were driven by a strong imperative to protect Poland's borders against waves of migration and defend it against threats to internal security (see below). Reducing the political problem of the migration crisis to the moral obligation to conduct humanitarian actions through relocation was treated as short-sighted, irresponsible and a threat to the aforementioned security. The obvious way out of the situation would be to provide humanitarian aid in the refugees' countries of origin. It was assumed that this would not only better protect the internal security of European countries, but also to be more humane (turning the tables; cf. Schopenhauer 1997: 86). However, it was the concern for security that was the main justification for the political action taken (see below). It seems that a certain perspective (framework) of "help on the ground" was imposed here, which could simplify more complex analyses of the humanitarian situation of refugees arriving in Europe. It was assumed in advance that the on-site assistance would be able to solve a complex problem although this was not necessary. The simplification of reality also consisted of generalisations that those migrating to Europe during the crisis were not those really in need of help. In this way, a psychological mechanism of rationalisation could be triggered, allowing for the elimination of cognitive dissonance that could arise in a situation where it was found that among the groups of migrants arriving there were also people really requiring assistance in European countries (even if they were not the majority). Even if, from a political point of view, the imperative to help on the ground and eliminate all factors attracting migrants was correct, there were already migrants and refugees in European countries who required immediate action from these countries and on-site assistance would not solve their problem. Hence, focusing solely on the imperative of "help on the spot", in accordance with the ideological assumptions adopted, could result in overlooking or, even without necessarily realising it, downplaying the tragedy of people who already found themselves in the incoming waves of migration.

The security imperative

The security imperative was an absolute priority for opponents of Polish participation in the relocation mechanism. They stated that participation by the Polish state in implementing this mechanism would have a negative impact on the country's internal security and therefore the government had no right to make such decisions against the will of the nation. In their view, the danger consisted in the assumed impossibility of distinguishing economic migrants from refugees, in the high probability of terrorists blending into the refugee community, as well as the initiation of a process that would result in the arrival of large groups posing a threat to Poland's legal, cultural, or moral order. In this context, the dangers associated with the mass influx of Muslims were particularly emphasised. Failure to take into account the threat to internal security understood in this way in the decision-making process was interpreted here as contrary to common sense. The assurances of the then Polish government that the security issue was under control were treated as completely unreliable.

As for the perspective of supporters of Polish participation in the implementation of the relocation mechanism, the dominant view was that fears in this regard were groundless. Assurances were made that security was an absolute priority for the government at the time, and that the state was able to cope with all the risks pointed out by its opponents. References were made to the previous experience of immigration to Poland, which was supposed to prove that the fears of political opponents were groundless. At the same time, these fears were described as fearmongering, that is intentionally stoking fears in society in order to achieve certain political goals. A detailed illustration of the described discursive messages is provided in Table 2.

As in the case of the humanitarian imperative, both sides in the debate agreed that security should be a key aspect of the country's policy regarding the migration crisis. The discursive place of contention was the probability of certain risks, as well as the country's readiness to counteract them.

When reconstructing the ideological profile of opponents of Polish participation in the implementation of the relocation and resettlement mechanism, the main threat was associated with the influx of large masses of people possessing different value systems (culturally distant, with the main threat here being Muslims), as well as (potential) terrorists. The main value was the defence of Polish society against specific threats, and the experience of other countries was given as proof of the existence of these threats. The protection of citizens was a sufficient reason for certain political actions and to indicate how dangerous the policy pursued by their political opponents was.

Table 2

The security imperative in the Polish political debate on the migration crisis (statements analysed)

Proponents (P)	Opponents (O)
Let's remember the 1990s. In the 90s, when Poland was a much poorer country than it is now, we accepted 86,000 Chechens. Have you found terrorists on every street corner? Have you noticed a sudden drop in employment? Have you noticed any situations that would threaten the security of the Polish nation? (P1) Today we do not have to set up walls and barbed wire on our borders. Today our borders are secure (P1) we have a sense of responsibility for the security of the Polish public (P1) It is the duty of every (Polish) government, above all, to ensure the security of citizens who live in our country, to ensure the security of our compatriots. And if that is so, our next condition is, among other tasks, that we will verify those who come to us, they will be verified by our (security) services (P1) Don't frighten the Polish public today. Don't say that one fine day, before the elections, we will be flooded by a mass of refugees who will take jobs or possibly be dangerous to Polish citizens (P1) I would like to point out that in everything we do, security is the number one priority. That is why it is so important to be able to check and refuse to admit any person who could pose any kind of threat (P1)	does the government have the right, under foreign pressure, external pressure, and without the express consent of the nation, to make decisions that, with a high degree of probability, may have a negative impact on our lives, on our everyday reality, on our public life, on our public spaces, on our real sphere of freedom, and finally, as was also raised here, our security (O3) there is a serious danger that a process will be launched which, in a nutshell, will look like this, first the number of foreigners increases rapidly, then they do not comply, do not want to comply, declare that they will not comply with our laws, our customs... (O6) We can help refugees, but I repeat, in a way that is safe for the Polish public (O3) The Prime Minister and representatives of the Polish government based their entire narrative today on the information that Poland is safe, that the Islamic State poses no threat to us, that state services and institutions guarantee us full security. In that case, I'd like to ask a question. Just check it out. Please look at the United States. The United States in its last position clearly indicates that there will also be representatives of the Islamic State among the refugees (O4) Poland should behave like a reasonable Polish woman. Our security, our country, our home, our children. This is what is most important. So, I ask you, Madame Prime Minister, where did you lose your sense, your instinct for self-preservation? Why don't you act like a sensible woman today? (O5) Iraq, which has a huge intelligence network in that part of the country, Saudi Arabia and other countries are firmly saying: we will not accept even one immigrant. Why do they do that? Because they care about their own interests. How do they justify this? For reasons of security. It seems the Iraqi (security) services are unable to distinguish between a potential refugee and a potential terrorist (O5)

	How will the Polish state, which was also criticised by one of the former ministers, separate emigrants from refugees and terrorists? Do we have anything to fear? We do have something to fear. Let us recall what has been happening in Europe and in the world over the last 15 years. I state that the Polish state is currently unable to ensure the security of its own citizens (O2)

Source: *Sprawozdanie*… 2015.

This policy was associated with succumbing to foreign pressure and going against the will of the nation. Colourful hyperboles, metaphors or comparisons were used (for example, "Poland should behave like a reasonable Polish woman. Our security, our country, our home, our children. This is what is most important" (O5)). The domination of the security context marginalised the humanitarian context. Generalisations concerning the incoming migrants imposed a specific way of treating the migration problem, that is as an influx of groups of dangerous people, and not as people who, at least in part, should be offered international protection. Politicians representing this ideological profile saw the problem of the need for humanitarian aid, but they subordinated their point of view to the dominant perspective of threats to security. Even assuming that the security argument was accurate, such determinative contextualisation risked oversimplifying and distorting the real picture of migrant groups arriving in Europe. It also facilitated the rationalisation of not admitting people fleeing potential persecution.

The ideological profile of the supporters of Polish participation in the relocation and resettlement mechanism was based on a preconceived belief that fears regarding security were unjustified. This was evidenced by historical analogies. The cultural distance separating the arriving groups from European societies was ignored. Equating the indication of security threats with fearmongering was part of a certain ideological paradigm of political correctness, which stigmatised the association of migration with the issue of security understood in the way represented by their political opponents. When referring to the arguments of political opponents, irony and absurdity were utilised ("Have you found terrorists on every street corner?" (P1)), thus trivialising this line of argumentation. At the same time, security guarantees were formulated in a manner that was very categorical, rhetorical and at the same time verging on redundancy. This allowed for the justification of the chosen political line, and was also in line with the ideological assumptions adopted. In practice, this could result in ignoring facts indicating real security risks.

The Imperative of European Solidarity

From the perspective of supporters of Polish participation in the relocation mechanism, the imperative of European solidarity was no less important than the humanitarian imperative. In the debate under review, this matter took up much space in the statements of representatives of this side of the dispute. Poland's obligation towards the EU or other European countries with regard to participation in the relocation mechanism was taken for granted. This participation was to be an expression of solidarity with the EU and its individual states resulting from European treaties. On the one hand, it was sometimes noticed that this solidarity should have limits, but on the other hand it was treated as a kind of moral and axiomatic political given, which also in the context of the relocation mechanism, should not be discussed. Moreover, the solidarity described was sometimes identified with responsibility. On the one hand, the obligation to participate in the relocation mechanism was presented as resulting from Poland's historical debt (that is the fact that in the past Poland was the beneficiary of assistance from other European countries), and on the other hand, it was to be a guarantee of reciprocity in the event of a potential crisis that might affect Poland in the future. Therefore, this issue was also perceived in terms of the potential national interest of Poland.

As far as the perspective of opponents of Polish participation in the relocation mechanism is concerned, the issue of European solidarity was mentioned much less frequently in the debate and when it was mentioned it was mainly in response to points made by their opponents. Reference was made to the Christian principle of *ordo caritatis* (the order of love), according to which the interests of the closest communities should be taken care of first. The imperative of European solidarity was not denied, but it was argued that this solidarity should be implemented through a proportionate transfer of funds. It was stated that real solidarity consisted in solving the problem in solidarity, and not in deepening it, with the latter option being associated with activities that could attract further groups of migrants. In the context of historical arguments, it was pointed out that Western European countries have no moral legitimacy to instruct the Polish state on the observance of the principles of solidarity, as evidenced by the fate of Poland after World War II. With regard to the present, the political hypocrisy of countries such as Germany was also remarked upon, which in other matters, such as the unfavourable agreement with Russia regarding the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, did not attach so much importance to the value of European solidarity. The issue of solidarity was perceived rather in the context of supporting countries that, according to

politicians representing this side of the dispute, proposed a constructive solution to the problem of the migration crisis, such as Hungary. A detailed illustration of the described discursive messages is provided in Table 3.

As can be seen from the cited quotations, the parties to the dispute attached completely different levels of importance to the issue of European solidarity, and also defined this solidarity differently. It seems that this issue was the most distinct axis of the ideological dispute.

When reconstructing the ideological profile of supporters of Polish participation in the relocation and resettlement mechanism, it should be noted that the political perspective of European solidarity (based on treaties) was often confused with the perspective of duty and morality. The use of such conceptual categories as historical debt or obligation added an ideological colour to the dispute, which essentially concerned the legitimacy of a certain technical political solution. Pathos was often utilised, in the form of numerous modal verbs with strong normative charges ("we must", "we should"), as well as markers of increased authoritativeness, such as "beyond doubt" (P8), etc. Ideals such as "the spirit of solidarity" or "the memory of solidarity", which the Polish nation had supposedly encountered, were associated with the idea that Europe now "expects" the same kind of solidarity from Poland. This expectation was at the same time an automatic obligation to participate in the relocation mechanism. The issue of participation, based on solidarity, in the implementation of relocation was equated with responsibility, from which, as could be concluded, some Polish politicians wanted to "escape" ("no one will escape responsibility" (P16)). Thus it was a kind of declaration of relocation as being the obvious or only appropriate solution. The need to share the social costs of mass waves of immigration to Europe was assumed *a priori*, ignoring the fact that one of the factors attracting immigrants was the long-term immigration policy of Western European countries, shaped by processes in which Poland did not participate. They spoke not only of the need to bear the social costs of immigration in solidarity, but also about the need to stand up in solidarity against the voices of those opposed, who were often identified with xenophobic attitudes. Referring to the argument, which in negotiation theory is called the "reward in paradise" tactic, that is indicating that in the future, on the basis of reciprocity, Poland may also expect beneficial behaviour from the EU based on solidarity, suggested a rather utilitarian perception of the category of European solidarity. The gaps related to this solidarity in the behaviour of other countries in relations with Poland were not noticed; nor was the fact that the problem of immigration concerns mainly the countries of Western, Southern and Northern Europe, and not Central and Eastern Europe, that is even in the situation of intensifying migration along the

Table 3

The imperative of European solidarity in the Polish political debate on the migration crisis (statements analysed)

Proponents (P)	Opponents (O)
This must be a path that, on the one hand, will combine responsibility and common sense, and on the other hand, despite everything, will remember the solidarity that the Polish nation met when it needed it from its partners in the European Union (P1) We Poles could find ourselves in a difficult position at any time due to the dynamic situation in eastern Europe and eastern Ukraine. We would then expect help and solidarity with Poland when we need it. I want to assure you that, as in life, solidarity in politics is a two-way street. Today it is Europe and our partners in Europe who expect this solidarity from us (P1) After all, at any moment we could be threatened by an immigration crisis from the Ukrainian side, if the situation in Donbas worsens. We always mention this in our conversations in the European Union. From the very beginning, we have been repeating in every possible forum in the European Union that when it comes to the immigration crisis, we must be guided by the principles that, as Poland, we are able to show solidarity in the matter of refugees, that we want to, but comprehensive and responsible measures are needed in this matter (P6) No one can escape responsibility. Turning aside or turning our backs on our partners, from countries that today are the destination of immigration, that welcome those people who are in them, is contrary to the spirit of solidarity, but it can cost us the loss of solidarity in those issues that we care about the most (P6) We cannot passively wait while border controls are being strengthened in more countries and wait for the Schengen area and other foundations of European solidarity to be shaken. We should, as the European Union, but also Poland, and perhaps above all as Poland, take bold, comprehensive, and forward-looking steps that result from our initiative and vision, but also good will (P6)	(…) *ordo caritatis*, the order of mercy, the order of love. Within this principle, those closest come first, the family, then the nation and only then others. Does this principle imply that we should not help? No, ladies and gentlemen, we should help, we are definitely in favour of helping, but in a safe way, that is financially. It was mentioned here that it costs 2.8 billion dollars or that amount is still needed in order to maintain the camps from which we have this great outflow of people to Europe at the moment. Let's take on the part of the commitment that we should take given our share in the European Union's GDP. It is not high, and it will not be a huge sum, although it will be a significant sum. This will be real solidarity, and this will be the way to solve this problem (O3) And additionally, the German state and representatives of this state want to teach us solidarity. They keep telling us about solidarity. In that case, I would like to ask: "Where were these states, where was the West when Prime Minister Putin harassed us, the Republic of Poland? Well, you know the answer to that question. The West signed Nord Stream II four days ago. And I'm not talking about the West's solidarity with us that we know from history. Well, Honourable Chamber, one doesn't have to look far, the September campaign, the Warsaw Uprising, Yalta. We remember it all. And the fact that now the West wants to teach us solidarity is the height of insolence (O4) No illegal immigrants. This is the first demand. The second demand is real, true solidarity at the moment that means primarily solidarity with Hungary. If we want to maintain a common Europe, that which is valuable in a common Europe, that is the free movement of capital, the free movement of people, we must protect the Schengen borders. And this protection of Schengen borders requires Poland's support armed, military

However, we are dealing with a different understanding of national interests, enlightened, as Tocqueville writes, by a well-understood national interest. If within a certain whole we are connected with others by certain relationships, relations and interdependencies, then sometimes it is good to restrain our excessive appetites and fears and respond positively to the rational claims, fears and demands of others, because the principle of reciprocity applies, *do ut des*, I give so that you give, the principle of transactional policy so criticised by you, Mister Chairman. *Do ut des*, I give so that you give, there is reciprocity in services, in solidarity, this is transactional policy (P10) After all, Art. 78 sec. 3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union says that we show solidarity not to refugees, refugees are the background, they are the circumstance, we show solidarity to other European Union countries that are flooded with refugees. On this matter, the Council, upon a request from the Commission, may take a decision and vote on it. There is no dictate here, no blackmail. We ratified the Lisbon Treaty and so we have it (P10) Well, it's like this, Madam Prime Minister, because they have their limitations, the ministers said: "Okay, and when will the wave of emigration from the East come?" It is true, but there are other areas of concern, the issue of extending sanctions against Russia, which is painful for some Visegrad Group countries or for Germany. Then we can hear: "Okay, but why should we take more of your trouble than our trouble, when in our hour of need you refused to show us solidarity?" How does President Duda, if the principle of solidarity is broken, want to implement the Newport Plus plan at the Warsaw summit, to increase NATO's presence in Poland? (P10)	and police support in every respect. If the Polish border with Ukraine were equally threatened, it would be obvious that other European countries would help protect it, just as it should be obvious now to help Hungary, for the brave Hungarian nation in this situation of invasion (O6)

Poland is ready, in a spirit of solidarity, to undertake and responsibly organise measures agreed to under international obligations (P7) Of course, solidarity is the most important thing, that is beyond doubt. The Polish government should show solidarity and already is showing solidarity. It is not about numbers, about three, six or nine thousand people, but above all it is about solidarity that is responsible and has a solid and credible basis (P8) The solidarity that we must show in this difficult moment for Europe will be rational and responsible solidarity and in line with our real capabilities (P8) Our European community must show solidarity on two levels. First, on the fundamental, most important level, that is, on the level of solidarity with refugees. Of course, both the principle of voluntary actions and the principle of a well-developed method for separating, distinguishing economic immigrants from real refugees, are important here. But the most important thing is this humanitarian problem. The second level of solidarity is intra-European solidarity, that is sharing both the responsibility and the costs of solving this problem together. Of course, I am not talking about financial costs here, but more about the social costs, because today we are witnessing, especially in the broadly understood public debate, very disturbing processes, an atmosphere of reluctance, unease and fear is growing, which we must also in solidarity oppose (P2) I travel a lot and wherever I am I talk about Poland. Poland is known for being a country of solidarity, a hospitable country. I even dare say that it is Poland's most recognisable brand. Poland has always been known for offering refuge to persecuted people. But I also want to say that it is very easy to destroy this through fear or through irresponsible behaviour. A lack of solidarity with other European countries today may mean lack of solidarity from them tomorrow. Therefore, it is in our interest to show solidarity (P9)	

Source: *Sprawozdanie…* 2015

Eastern European route, the problems of the destination countries of this migration would not change significantly enough to require action on their part. At the same time, these actions would not be an expression of European solidarity, but of the national interests of these countries. The debate also featured arguments which, from a political perspective, could be called demagogic. These consisted in recalling solidarity as a national value of Poland, or even suggesting a connection between the topic of the debate and the tradition of the "Solidarity" trade union. European solidarity in the statements of supporters of Polish participation in the relocation mechanism seemed to have the rank of an ideological dogma that did not allow for a more in-depth political analysis of the problem. Its broad, categorical, and obligatory definition made it very difficult for its supporters to notice the fact that other countries sometimes relativise this category, making its interpretation dependent on circumstances and interests. As Tomasz G. Grosse and Joanna Hetnarowicz wrote, at the European level, the idea of solidarity is "increasingly (...) treated as a rhetorical tool in the discourse (...) aimed at pursuing particular interests" (Grosse, Hetnarowicz 2017: 208). Such voices were overlooked here. However, a normative definition of the problem in terms of the imperative of European solidarity made it possible to justify Poland's consent to participate in the relocation mechanism expressed by the then government.

When reconstructing the ideological profile of opponents of Polish participation in the relocation mechanism, it can be noticed that the issue of European solidarity was not an important issue for them. Here, too, references were made to moral or even religious categories referring to the social teachings of the Catholic Church and the principle of *ordo caritatis*, which can be treated as a kind of ideological declaration. For the supporters of relocation "European solidarity" and for the opponents "the order of love" were among the highest values, respectively. The perception of the category of solidarity by political opponents was considered extremely naive, and claims by European countries to solidarity on the part of Poland were described as "insolence" (O4). The category of solidarity was also redefined here, focusing on solidarity with Hungary, whose policy towards the migration crisis was in line with the beliefs of the opponents to relocation in Poland. Making use of such terms as "illegal immigrants" or "invasion", it was suggested that European solidarity cannot consist of jointly consenting to an "invasion by illegal immigrants", but should rather focus on jointly and decisively opposing mass, uncontrolled migration.

Commentary

The above analysis indicates the important role played by ideologies in the political discourse on the migration crisis. The main parties to the dispute referred to values and norms that were fundamental to them, while making inappropriate simplifications of reality. They displayed a "package" adoption of predetermined axiological and practical assumptions, sometimes treating identification with a given position as a matter of not only political, but, more broadly, of social identity. With regard to humanitarianism, preconceived definitions of the situation excluded the point of view of opponents, and at times delegitimised the other side of the dispute. This was facilitated by the rhetorical means used. Similarly, in relation to security, one party to the dispute seemed to downplay the problem, providing assurances regarding security, while the other side to some extent demonised the subject of the debate. As far as European solidarity is concerned, the supporters of Polish participation in the relocation mechanism seemed to approach this issue almost dogmatically in the context analysed, while opponents flagrantly ignored it. This progressive polarisation meant that although there were some common areas in the ongoing dispute, both parties gradually moved away from agreement and fell into inappropriate extremes with distorted pictures of reality. A strong, sometimes a priori, attachment to certain values, solutions, and political identifications, as well as a focus on repelling attacks by political opponents, prevented a more thorough, more factual analysis of the situation, free of inappropriate simplifications. Meanwhile, if the parties had been focused on the possibility of reaching an agreement, there would have been space for substantive discussion, especially in relation to issues such as humanitarianism and security. Both sides emphasised the importance of these issues in their politics. However, there was definitely no openness to the other side's arguments, and the parties became entrenched in their positions.

It seems that in the case of both sides of the dispute, there were circumstances conducive to groupthink, and the participants of the debate were inclined to formulate more radical statements, declare impossible guarantees, or automatically rationalise actions that could give rise to moral dilemmas. The collective impact of certain political ideologies containing an identarian element resulted in a reductionist radicalisation of positions in the dispute, which at the individual level representatives of both positions would probably not allow themselves to such an extent.

Conclusion

Summarising the findings regarding the first research question formulated in the introduction to the article, that is the main ideological assumptions present in the statements of supporters and opponents of Polish participation in the relocation and resettlement mechanism in 2015, the following assumptions adopted *en bloc* by supporters of this solution can be noted:

- an attitude of social openness to migrants should be promoted, and manifestations of fear of immigration should be stigmatised and eliminated from political discourse;
- the reduction of the migration issue to concerns about security, threats and control is not justified and should be stigmatised and eliminated from political discourse;
- accepting migrants in European countries is associated with a moral obligation of richer societies towards poorer societies and the obligation to treat others in a humane manner;
- among migrants, refugees or, more broadly, those seeking international protection there is a group that absolutely requires support, so these groups should be treated with particular care;
- European integration is the central value of contemporary European states, and "selfishly" understood national interests should not overshadow this value; therefore, a policy should be pursued that strongly takes arrangements adopted at the supranational level into account;
- the immigration problems of other European countries are also becoming a problem for Poland (as a member of the EU) and therefore Poland is obliged to show solidarity with these countries through real actions, such as accepting migrants under the relocation mechanism.

Among the ideological assumptions adopted *en bloc* by opponents of this solution, the following can be mentioned:

- immigration is a neutral process, which means in certain circumstances it can be positive, and in others negative and can even pose a threat to the receiving country, and therefore in certain socio-political circumstances (such as the migration crisis), a morally and politically justified, and even a strong and openly declared defence against an influx of immigrants is necessary;
- mass migration is associated with specific threats of various types (social, cultural, criminal, etc.) for the host countries, which must be counteracted, and therefore migration should be perceived and analysed through the prism of domestic national security and should even be subordinated to it;

- national identity, national sovereignty and national interests are the central values of any country and society and they should not be overruled by any supranational arrangements or ideas of European solidarity since the state is obliged to treat its own defence as a priority;
- among migrants, the group that requires priority support consists of refugees, or more broadly people seeking international protection, so special care should be taken with these groups, but decisions in this regard should be conditioned by care for the domestic security of the accepting country;
- migration is not a remedy for global, regional, or local socio-political problems, including those that generate refugees; therefore, potential forced migrants should be helped, but not through support for migration, but through assistance provided in their countries of origin.

Referring to the second research question concerning the risk of falsifying (distorting) the image of reality by the ideological beliefs of the participants in the debate, it should be noted that the parties assumed the correctness of the solutions they proposed *a priori* and adopted unambiguous and categorical definitions of the situation. For example, it was assumed in advance that relocation could be the only humanitarian solution (proponents), or that only on-the-spot assistance could solve the migration crisis (opponents). On the one hand, security threats related to relocation were underestimated and, as it appears, guarantees without coverage for this security were formulated by proponents. On the other hand, the problem of threats was exaggerated by opponents, who used unsupported generalisations regarding the incoming groups. With regard to European solidarity, on the one hand, the political and moral perspectives were mixed, regardless of its broader political context and the fact that participation in the relocation mechanism by Poland does not have to be the only solution in line with the principle of solidarity (proponents). On the other hand, this idea was dismissed with an indication that relocation and resettlement were inadequate (opponents). Thus, the recipient of the debate received an extremely polarised picture of the problem and two extreme variants of perceiving reality, while the reality was more complex.

Referring to the third research question, both parties in the dispute used various rhetorical and eristic techniques to impose their ideological beliefs on public opinion and their political opponents. The categorical nature of the messages was reinforced by emphasising their "obviousness" and the use of colourful metaphors, comparisons, irony, and hyperbole. Many opinions were presented as presuppositionally uncontested, as illustrated by the quotes from the debate presented earlier. On the one hand, it was stated, in a way that did

not allow criticism, that the consent of the Polish government to participate in the relocation mechanism was a necessary consequence of the supreme imperative of humanitarianism or European solidarity as superior values. The other party claimed that Poland's consent to participate in the relocation mechanism was an action taken against the Polish nation, violating one of the highest values that the state should protect, that is security. Neither side wanted to see the weakness of their arguments. It seems that for the supporters of the relocation mechanism, the complexity of reality has been obscured by the superior imperatives of humanitarianism and European solidarity, while for the opponents of this mechanism reality was obscured by the imperative of security. It is difficult to say to what extent the ideological reference to these values was deeply axiologically based, and to what extent it was treated in an instrumental manner by politicians.

To summarise, it should be emphasised that every policy is ideological and the very idea of ideology as such should not be pejorative. However, it is necessary to be aware of the risks associated with the influence of ideology on political debate, so that it can be controlled at least to some extent. This article proposes a theoretical and methodological clarification of the category of ideology and presents a sample of research on public debate conducted using the mediation approach of discourse analysis. This method made it possible to minimise the impact of the researcher's involvement on the analysis (as is the case, for example, in critical discourse analysis) and made it possible, in an imperfect, but, it would seem, clear way to extract the main ideological assumptions present in the Polish debate on the migration crisis. One limitation of the study was, despite the research methodology applied, the inability to fully eliminate the subjectivity of the researcher when justifying the qualification of certain messages as being ideologically motivated. Despite attempts to specify the concept of ideology and the exact characteristics of the research procedure, the category of ideology has still not been fully grasped, which significantly hindered its operationalisation. These shortcomings are compensated to some extent by the transparency of the research methodology, including extensive reference to the source material and justification of the interpretations proposed. Ultimately, therefore, readers can compare the author's interpretations and classifications with their own perspectives to perceive the issues under consideration.

Despite the weaknesses described, usage of the semiotic mediation approach is to be recommended in analyses of political discourse, especially concerning such problems as the migration crisis. The ideologically charged disputes that appear in the sphere of Polish political debate since 2015 still indicate the relevance of the problem, and even testify to the increasing role of the Polish state

in managing social and political crises related to the influx of migrants in the perspective of the entire EU. The essential role of Poland in managing migration became particularly visible after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, as a result of which Poland became the main country receiving war refugees from Ukraine. However, this role has been very significant since at least 2021, when attempts were made to destabilise the socio-political situation of the EU through intentionally triggered migration waves on the Polish-Belarusian border. As a side note, it should be noted that, especially from the Polish perspective, these issues have completely different contexts and are different in nature than the dispute over the 2015 migration crisis, which is the subject of this article. The approach, the elements of which have been used here, allows for a more complete and, to some extent, controlled analysis of the issues raised from various points of view and with the preservation of the right of various parties to a political dispute to proclaim their own ideological beliefs. In addition, at the same time it can be used to identify threats related to the influence of ideology on the political debate.

Politicians quoted in the study	
P1	Ewa Kopacz, Prime Minister
P2	Rafał Grupiński, MP
P3	Tadeusz Iwiński, MP
P4	Andrzej Rozenek, MP
P5	Wanda Nowicka, MP
P6	Grzegorz Schetyna, Minister of Foreign Affairs
P7	Teresa Piotrowska, Minister of the Interior
P8	Rafał Trzaskowski, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
P9	John Abraham Godson, MP
P10	Ludwik Dorn, MP

O1	Łukasz Gibała, MP
O2	Marzena Dorota Wróbel, MP
O3	Jarosław Kaczyński, MP
O4	Patryk Jaki, MP
O5	Armand Kamil Ryfiński, MP
O6	Przemysław Wipler, MP

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to reconstruct the main ideological assumptions present in the Polish political debate about the migration crisis in Europe in 2015. The article also poses research questions about the extent to which the ideological beliefs manifested by the participants in the debate posed a risk of distorting reality, as well as questions about the ways in which specific ideological beliefs were imposed on the public and political opponents. The main method used in the article is a qualitative discourse analysis based on elements of the mediation approach proposed by Tomasz Piekot. The identification of the main ideological assumptions present in linguistic political messages was conducted taking into account the generalised division between supporters and opponents of Polish participation in the relocation and resettlement mechanism established in 2015 at the forum of the European Union. The analysis was based on theoretical considerations concerning the concept of ideology, as well as the relationships between politics, ideologies, language, and political debate. The analysis shows that in the case of both of the principal sides of the political dispute on the topic addressed, there were simplifications, generalisations, metaphors and examples of hyperbole distorting the picture of reality caused by ideological assumptions. Both supporters and opponents of relocation and resettlement utilised ideologically motivated instrumental linguistic behaviours in order to achieve their assumed political goal. The issue of Polish participation in the relocation mechanism was automatically and excessively simplified by attempts to identify it with such issues as humanitarianism, security, and European solidarity.

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The political twilight of the Burmese Nobel Prize laureate

Her father's daughter

In order to understand Aung San Suu Kyi[1], as well as the choices she has made in her personal and political lives, it is necessary to first present her father, Aung San, and to describe the relevant historical and political background.

Until the 1820s Burma[2] was a "hermit kingdom" (Tinker 1967: 388), ruled by patrimonial and despotic monarchs who based their rule on hierarchical and interdependent patronage networks and legitimised it through Buddhism (Liebermann 1984: 20-185; Thant Myint-U 2001: 12-79). Pre-colonial Burma (more specifically the Konbaung Dynasty, also known as the Third Burmese Empire) was destroyed by British colonial conquest over the course of three Anglo-Burmese wars (1824-1826, 1852, 1885), which ended in a triple victory for the British Empire (Góralczyk 2011: 104-129; Lubina 2014b: 63-109), Lubina 2014b: 63-109). In place of the pre-colonial Burmese version of "oriental despotism" (Wittfogel 2004), the British built a functional, modern state, although one without a legitimising element (Furnivall 1956: 23-185), which was treated by the Burmese as an occupying force (Aung-Thwin 1985: 245). The British were also accused of inciting hostilities, which

[1] Burmese names are entirely personal and have no family name element (Mi Mi Khaing 1958). Although written as separate syllables they are best understood as indivisible wholes. Therefore, the entire name is used for each reference.

[2] The official English name of the country previously known as Burma was changed to Myanmar in 1989 by the military government. This change has not been universally accepted outside the country. In this article the name Burma is used following the original version which used the Polish equivalent 'Birma' in accordance with the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland (*Protokół* 2012: 2). In addition, Burma is more commonly used by the subject of this article (*What's*… 2016).

are still ongoing, between the ethnic Burmese, Bamars (or Burmans) and the other ethnic groups and tribes living in the country (there are over 100; officially the total number of ethnic groups is 135 and relations between the Burmese centre and the non-Burmese periphery remain very complicated (Lubina 2014a: 37-101).

Opposition to the colonial government led the Burmese national liberation movement to attempt to combine pre-colonial political traditions with the fashionable European-isms arriving in Burma, such as nationalism, socialism, communism, and fascism among many others (von der Mehden 1963: 80; Webb 2007: 46). However, British colonialism collapsed in Burma as a result of external factors, such as the initial defeat (1942) in the Asian theatre of World War II (the severe defeat effectively undermined the image of an invincible Empire and even subsequent victory was unable to rebuild it), and above all, a post-war economic crisis in the United Kingdom and a new, unfavourable international situation for the British (the decolonisation of India). After the loss of India, the weakened British lost interest in Burma and agreed to its independence, which took place on 4 January 1948.

In Burma itself, the single person who contributed more than any other to independence was Aung San, a pre-war student activist and popular nationalist politician (Maung Maung 1962: 3-48). In his youth he first supported socialism then communism (he was a co-founder of the Communist Party of Burma) and then fascism (he collaborated with Japan at the beginning of the war; his armed bands supported the Japanese invasion in 1942). He spent most of World War II as a pro-Japanese collaborator (he built the modern Burmese army, the *Tatmadaw*, on Japanese models). Then, in the face of impending Japanese defeat in 1945, he and his army went over to the side of the British and helped them recapture Burma from Japanese hands. After the war, with important arguments in hand (loyal armed troops and the mass support of the population), he was no longer the Burmese Quisling to the British (Charney 2009: 68), but rather a serious partner for political talks. Taking advantage of the weakness of Great Britain and its waning desire to maintain colonial Burma, Aung San negotiated Burmese independence, which he did not live to see since he was assassinated on 19 July 1947 in an attack carried out by political opponents (Kin Oung 1993: 12-56). In Burma itself, he became a national hero and an undisputed role model. His premature death gave him a legendary, semi-mythical status and all subsequent disasters of post-colonial Burma were explained by the refrain that if Aung San had been alive, things would have been different (Thant Myint-U 2020: 40-41).

The pre-political life of Aung San Suu Kyi

Aung San died young (he was just 32 at the time of his death), leaving behind a wife and three children. His wife, Khin Kyi, as the widow of a national hero, was initially politically active (she was, for example, a minister in the government of U Nu, supported his election campaign in 1960, and then became ambassador to India). She retired from politics in the mid-1960s due to disagreements with the political course of General Ne Win's military junta (Lubina 2015: 109-110). The eldest son, Aung San Oo, did not follow in his father's political footsteps. He was educated in the United Kingdom, became an engineer, then settled in California and became an American citizen. The younger son, Aung San Lin, drowned in childhood (not long after Aung San's death). Only the daughter, Aung San Suu Kyi (born 19 June 1945), followed in her father's footsteps, but she did so spectacularly. She was strongly influenced by her father's legacy, and above all by the formative role of her mother (Kyaw Zwa Moe 2013; Zöllner, Ebbighausen 2018: 60-62). Aung San Suu Kyi's childhood and early youth were spent under the rule of Prime Minister U Nu (ruling, intermittently, in the years 1948-1958 and 1960-1962), attempting, in conditions of centrifugal movements (a communist rebellion and ethnic minority uprisings) to combine the Burmese-Buddhist tradition with the modernisation of the country (Tinker 1967: 67-140; Butwell 1969: 123-197). The flawed democracy of U Nu was ended, in instalments, by General Ne Win, who led two coups d'état (1958, 1962) and introduced a socialist-autarkic military dictatorship that brought Burma to ruin (Maung Maung Gyi 1983: 192-215). Aung San Suu Kyi was no longer in Burma at that time. In 1960, she had followed her mother to India, where she completed her secondary education. She then studied at the University of Oxford. After graduation, she worked in the administrative offices at the United Nations (headed then by the Burmese U Thant), and in 1972 she married the British Tibetologist Michael Aris with whom she had two sons. To the Burmese nationalist generals this was an unacceptable betrayal of Aung San's heritage (Pasternak Slater 1991/2010: 292-301; Lubina 2015: 125-126). She took care of her sons' upbringing and attempted to build an academic career herself (with mixed results). Then, in 1988, her mother suffered a stroke.

The second national liberation

Aung San Suu Kyi returned to her homeland to take care of her mother and ended up in the middle of a revolution. For over six months (March-Sep-

tember 1988) mass demonstrations against the military dictatorship had been taking place in Burma. Initially, these were partially successful (they did lead to the resignation of General Ne Win). Ultimately, however, they were bloodily suppressed (with over 3000 victims) by the new military junta (Lintner 1990: 87-147). Although unsuccessful, the "8888 revolution", as it is called in Burma, (as it peaked on August 8, 1988) propelled Aung San Suu Kyi onto the grand political stage.

Almost immediately, she became the strongest rival of the military, which wished to maintain power. In her second chronological appearance and public political debut, speaking, as did her father before her, in front of the Shwedagon Pagoda, one of Burma's most sacred site, she established the discourse by declaring that the protests were a fight for a "second national liberation" (with the first being her father's struggle against the colonialists, Aung San Suu Kyi 1991/2010: 192-199), which deprived the army of legitimacy. Until that point, the *Tatmadaw* presented itself as a continuation of Aung San's work, but then his daughter destroyed this legitimising foundation (Steinberg 2001: 75). In Burmese-Buddhist conditions of "karmic qualifications" (Harriden 2012: 210–211), legitimacy is personalised (Steinberg 2010: 39-51; Houtman 1999: 65-214; Maung Maung Gyi 1983: 174; Walton 2012: 103). This meant that Aung San Suu Kyi instantly became Aung San's rightful heir, which made the generals usurpers. Additionally, she offered an attractive reinterpretation of the old refrain that if her father had not died, everything would be fine, Burma would be a land of milk and honey and not a ruined country. The new interpretation was that she would finish his work and fix what had been broken by the usurpers from the military (Thant Myint-U 2020:40-41). This updated version caught on, and Aung San Suu Kyi immediately won the hearts and minds of the Burmese people (including a large number of ethnic minorities).

The army, however, seeing that it was losing the fight for Aung San's legacy, decided to erase him from history and public spaces, removing his portraits from offices, banknotes, newspapers, and history textbooks (Houtman 1999: 15-39). His place was taken by pre-colonial Burmese kings, most notably Anawrahta, Bayinnaung and Alaungpaya, the founders of the Three Burmese Empires, which had an additional undertone suggesting the military was continuing their legacy. The generals, nationalists to the core, would have gladly created a Fourth Burmese Empire, the best example of which was the change of the capital from post-colonial, post-British Rangoon (renamed in English Yangon in 1989) to Naypyidaw, built from scratch, whose name can be translated as "Royal Capital" (Preecharush 2009, 49-146). A conscious reference to mon-

archist models, however, remained a secondary means of legitimisation. The first was a simple and clear narrative addressed to their own ranks, above all, the army. The *Tatmadaw* created its own ideology, portraying itself as the protector of Burma and Buddhism, without which the country would fall apart, and religion would be endangered (Taylor 2009: 487-506). For the army, whose commanders dealt primarily with warfare, and only secondarily with politics (Callahan 2004: 190-229), the message was clear, and it accomplished its purpose. The loyalty of the cadres was maintained, and this was crucial for the continued exercise of dictatorial power.

Might is right

The politically weaker, although charismatic, Aung San Suu Kyi tried to balance the army's structural advantage with the help of two main factors. The first of these was popular support. Both Bamars and minority groups saw in her an opportunity to remove the hated military from power. Consistently calling for the replacement of the "praetorian" system (Egreteau, Jagan 2013: 21) with representative democracy, Aung San Suu Kyi became an existential threat to the entire military "new class", that is the ruling nomenklatura. This led to the military establishment resorting to brutal methods in their attempt to discredit her, from a smear campaign to three separate house arrests (1989-1995, 2000-2002, 2003-2010) and separation from her husband and sons. As her husband was dying of cancer in 1999, the junta refused his request for a visa to Burma, wanting to force her to leave the country and say goodbye to her political hopes. Aung San Suu Kyi faced a dilemma similar to those of ancient tragedies: family or politics. She chose the latter, which her husband understood (while her elder son did not). The brutal and ruthless actions of the generals not only failed to achieve their political goal, which was to disgrace Aung San Suu Kyi in the eyes of the nation, but had rather the opposite effect in that they brought her general social admiration. Massive popular support remained her trump card in the game against the generals. Aung San's daughter sought to remove the generals from power by imitating Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent actions. She called back to the idealistic vision of value-based politics, trying to combine it eclectically with native, Burmese-Buddhist elements (Walton 2017; Lubina 2018: 191-376). A clear sign of her actions was the slogan "right is might".

The generals believed the opposite, that might is right. In 1988, they violently suppressed demonstrations (Lintner 1990: 131-147), they then arrest-

ed Aung San Suu Kyi. They annulled the results of the elections they had lost in 1990 – whether these were general elections or elections to the constituent assembly, as the generals claimed, not without legal grounds (Tonkin 2007: 33-54) is secondary to the fact that their result was annulled by the military. They then applied intense repressive measures to society, which was forced to "live in silence" (Fink 2009: 46-226). The effect of this was over two decades of the "dark period" (Góralczyk 2011: 225-250), the further collapse of the state, the appropriation of public goods by the military nomenklatura and social stagnation resulting from the lack of hope for changing the country's disastrous situation.

Sanctions

A second card that Aung San Suu Kyi could play was support from abroad, specifically from the West. Having lived for almost thirty years outside Burma (mainly in the UK and the US), she had a deep understanding of Western cultural codes and was thus able to present her struggle in such a way as to gain support. This, combined with her tragic family history, had effects that exceeded even the wildest expectations of Aung San Suu Kyi herself, who from the very beginning wanted to include foreign countries in the political duel with the generals. It brought her immense popularity around the world and resulted in numerous awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize. In the West, Aung San Suu Kyi became an icon of the struggle for ideals, a "modern Joan of Arc", "another Gandhi" and even a part of pop culture (Zöllner 2012: 277-359; Lintner 2012: 73-103; Clements 2008: 15-25; Lubina 2020: 56-61). She won the hearts of the world when in 1989, during the election campaign, she walked alone in front of a platoon of soldiers aiming their weapons at her, as immortalised by the pop group U2 in the international hit "Walk on". This cult of celebrity surrounding Aung San Suu Kyi (Zöllner 2012: 195–229, 277–359; Brooten 2005: 134–156) translated into significant political support given by Western countries. It was through the prism of the Nobel Prize laureate that Burma was viewed, and it was Aung San Suu Kyi who monopolised the image of Burma in the West (Steinberg 2010: 35-59; Thant Myint-U 2009: 332-343). Personally, she benefited from this. If not for the support of the West, it would have been easier for the generals to attempt to marginalise her politically. However, her personal political interests did not always go hand in hand with the good of the majority of society, which is most evident in the issue of international sanctions that Western countries, following Aung San

Suu Kyi's suggestions (Clements 2008: 216-218), imposed on Burma under the generals.

Although the US led the way in sanctions, the EU was not far behind. In 1997, the EU suspended preferential trade with Burma. In the following years, the EU introduced an arms embargo, a visa ban for members of the establishment, their families and businessmen, and after 2007, all imports of minerals and precious stones, and new investments in Burma were banned (existing investments, including French ones in the energy sector which brought extreme profits for companies such as Total were not mentioned). Some member states at the time, including the United Kingdom, extended significant support to the opposition, which, it is worth noting, led to the withdrawal of Premier Oil from Burma in 2002. This was the first time that an important company in this industry withdrew from Burma as a result of pressure. Norway followed suit. By contrast, other countries, such as Germany, tried to get along with the regime, building a solid position over the years, which later paid off. In addition, the EU did not allow Burma to participate in EU-ASEAN meetings, which resulted in postponements and long bargaining over finding a diplomatic *modus vivendi*. The pressure from the US and the EU to suspend development programs for the region if Burma, in accordance with the principle of rotation, were to hold the presidency of ASEAN in 2006, caused Burma to resign from the presidency "at its own request".

Western sanctions were based on the belief that they would eventually force the regime to change. It remains debatable whether this was political idealism or a concession by Western decision-makers to a high-profile pro-democracy lobby (Taylor 2009: 425-433; Steinberg 2001: 302). The fact, however, is that the sanctions did not crush the regime. This happened both because of the hermetic nature of the junta, uninterested in contact with the outside world, and above all because of leaky sanctions, which were imposed only by Western countries and not by Burma's Asian neighbours. This made it impossible to force political concessions on the generals since without China, Thailand, Singapore, and India sanctions became ineffective (Thant Myint-U 2009: 340-342). The price was paid by an increasingly poorer society, weakening against the army (Fink, 2009: 46-226). The years 1988-2011 were marked by phases of cyclical arrests and releases of Aung San Suu Kyi, ineffective attempts at negotiations between the government and the opposition, alternations between liberalisation and intensifying social repression by the regime, condemnations from the West and the growing dominance of China (Góralczyk 2011: 225-250). The regime continued, supported by its Asian neighbours; Aung San Suu Kyi was under house arrest or isolated, the country stood still, and society was impoverished.

Unexpected reforms

It seemed that this situation would last indefinitely, but the military unexpectedly (from an external point of view) introduced political changes in 2010-2015. The groundwork for these was laid by the 2008 constitution, which is the world's most pro-military constitution since in no other country are there as many formally guaranteed privileges for the armed forces as in Burma, and even Uganda, which is second in this respect, is very far behind (Patel, Goodman, Snider 2014). It guaranteed the army the role of the guardian of the state and the arbiter of political disputes, which is how the *Tatmadaw* saw itself (Egreteau 2016: 3-26; Maung Aung Myoe 2014: 233-249; Jones 2014: 784). The second reason for the transformation was a generational change in the army itself, where younger, more reform-minded military personnel came to the fore, supported by reformers from the outside called the "Third Force" (Egreteau 2016: 3-13; Croissant, Kamerling 2013: 105-125; Ganesan 2013: 254; Bünthe 2014: 757-758; Ye Htut 2019: 20-64). This was combined with fears of the growing role of China and the desire to change Burma's status as an outcast in Southeast Asia. These factors, together with disappointment regarding the ineffectiveness of sanctions, created an opportunity to build bridges between the generals and the West (Egreteau 2016:3-26; Thant Myint-U 2020:162). Spectacular political reforms quickly helped Burma to pull itself out of isolation. The United States, the EU, Canada, Australia, and others suspended sanctions (2012), while Burma went from an isolated state to one of the most politically interesting countries in the world. The country was flooded with investments, grants, loans, and other support (Yueh 2013). This huge influx of foreign capital was compared to a "gold rush" (Osnos 2012), causing rapid economic growth and a developmental leap. As it turned out later, the decade 2011-2021 (especially the years 2011-2015) was overall the best since the 1950s, and economically the best for over a century. Burma made a spectacular comeback, quickly regaining lost time, connecting to a rapidly developing Asia and participating in the digital revolution.

But what was clearly good for the country was not so obvious for Aung San Suu Kyi. After being released from her third house arrest in November 2010, she faced the most difficult choice in her political life. She could continue her tough stance, demanding the reinstatement of the 1990 election results and rejecting the 2008 constitution, the foundation that gave her legendary status in Burma and the world (continuing to hold this position would perpetuate Aung San Suu Kyi's legend but would also lead to political marginalisation in the new, changed conditions). She could also accept a compromise on the ar-

my's terms, agreeing to the military constitution and participating in political life built on the rules enshrined therein (de facto agreeing to be co-opted into the military establishment). The Nobel laureate reluctantly chose the second option, hoping to change the system from within (Lubina 2015: 473-502). Initially, this worked well. Her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), won the 1 April 2012 by-election (taking 43 of the 44 available seats), and in November 2015, the NLD outclassed its rivals by winning the general election and taking an impressive 79% of the parliamentary seats available (elections in Burma are held for only 75% of the total parliamentary seats; 25% are reserved for the military). The *Tatmadaw* accepted the election results and handed over almost all power (except for the armed forces ministries, which belong to the army according to the constitution) to Aung San Suu Kyi, which was the first peaceful change of power in Burma in 55 years.

Above the president

The army, however, did not agree to everything. Despite Aung San Suu Kyi's intense domestic and international lobbying, the *Tatmadaw* did not allow the constitution to be changed (the basic law guarantees the army a minority that can block constitutional changes) in a way that would allow her to become president (Burma is formally a presidential republic). Article 59(f) blocks this possibility for the Aung San Suu Kyi because her children have foreign citizenship(Constitution, 2008). This provision was deliberately inserted into the act to exclude her candidacy. She attempted to force a change, but seeing the hard resistance of the army, she backed down and tried subterfuge, bypassing the constitutional restrictions through an ordinary law, creating for herself the office of State Counsellor, which reduced the importance of the president (appointed by Aung San Suu Kyi) to a representative role. During the election campaign, Aung San Suu Kyi already declared that she would be "above the president" (Mydans 2015) and she kept her word. Aung San Suu Kyi assumed as much power as she could, including the entire civil administration minus the three ministries of the armed forces, interior, defence and borderland, becoming, along with the "State Counsellor", the minister of foreign affairs and a minister in the president's office (originally she had two additional portfolios, energy and education, which she later gave up, Wai Moe, Paddock 2016). Aung San Suu Kyi did not become foreign minister out of any special interest in foreign policy issues (her term of office turned out to be very restrained in terms of international relations), but in order to become a member of the National

Defence and Security Council (NDSC), a body with the power to introduce a state of emergency, which was dominated by the army. Not trusting the military, she preferred to be careful. In addition, she chaired more than 30 different bodies, committees, commissions, and the like. She oversaw almost every case personally, a style of exercising power that has been referred to as micro-management (Selth 2017a: 1-21).

The first six months of Aung San Suu Kyi's government were marked by hopes associated with her in the US and Europe. On this wave of optimism, Barack Obama lifted the remaining American sanctions on Burma (Dunant, 2017) at her personal request. Thus, history came full circle, as Aung San Suu Kyi contributed to the introduction of the sanctions, and she also led to their cancellation. However, the enthusiasm of the Western world soon cooled. This was connected with a brutal crackdown by the army against the unrecognised Muslim Rohingya minority in Burma. Treated in a manner similar to Blacks in South Africa during apartheid (Amnesty International, 2017), the Rohingya had been persecuted since at least the late 1970s. The latest wave of repression against them began in 2012 (Lubina 2019: 19-73). It was intensified by the attacks of the newest Rohingya guerrilla organisation, ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army), which attempted to use terrorist methods (attacks on civilians) to force the army to stop its repression (Thant Myint-U, 2020). This action backfired: the *Tatmadaw* applied collective responsibility twice, expelling first 70,000 in October 2016, and then over 700,000 Rohingya Muslims to Bangladesh. This torpedoed the peace process under the auspices of former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, supported by Aung San Suu Kyi. Another ARSA attack took place a day after the publication of the Annan Commission's compromise report (Mratt Kyaw Thu, Slow 2017), and after the brutal crackdown by the Burmese army, the plan became political fiction. Modelled on the colonial methods of fighting guerrillas in British Malaya and French Algeria, the "four cuts" strategy, previously used by the Burmese army against other guerrillas and characterised by not distinguishing armed guerrillas and civilians (Smith 1999: 259-262), eliminated ARSA, but at the same time drove more than 700,000 people to Bangladesh. In the process, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and possibly even genocide were committed (the UN now recognises this as "ethnic cleansing with genocidal intent", UNHRC Report, 2018). In Burmese society, there was a revanchist mood worthy of the post-September 11, 2001 atmosphere in the US. The ruthless crackdown on the Rohingya was met with full public support, in extreme contrast to the reaction of the West and the Middle East, which expressed forceful condemnation (Thant Myint-U 2020: 241; Dunant 2017). From then until the 1 February 2021

coup d'état, the Rohingya issue became the most important topic in the world regarding Burma.

The attention of Western public opinion, however, focused not on the criminal generals, but on Aung San Suu Kyi, who headed the government, but did not control the army. This was mainly due to the recognition factor (individual Burmese generals were unknown to the public) and a media mechanism referred to as "man bites dog" (Zöllner 2012: 195–229; Zöllner, Ebbighausen 2018). When criminal generals murder minorities in a Global South country, they do not arouse particular interest, just as the public is not interested in the story of a man bitten by a dog. However, when a massacre takes place in a country formally governed by a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, who was also hailed as "the conscience of her country and a heroine for humanity" (Bercow 2012) and a "living symbol (...) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (*Iconic*... 2009), then that is a media topic. This is why international criticism was focused on Aung San Suu Kyi and not on the generals directly responsible. The West demanded that she stop the crimes or at least condemn them. The first task was one that she could not achieve, and she did not want to comply with the latter, because knowing the social mood, she would deprive herself of the most important weapon in the fight against the generals, that is social support. Aung San Suu Kyi, who had sacrificed her family and fifteen years of freedom to gain power and "finish her father's work", was not now going to expose herself to the generals waiting just for her to lose public support because she could then be removed from power by a coup or wait for elections that she would lose. Aung San Suu Kyi understood the game of the generals wanting to implicate her in the Rohingya crisis and chose first to remain silent and then to defend Burma's image on the international stage. This cold political calculation was completely misunderstood by Western activists who were now viciously attacking Aung San Suu Kyi. In their view, their erstwhile heroine became a traitor to the democratic cause and a fallen icon. Aung San Suu Kyi's spectacular fall from her pedestal in the West can only be matched by her previous political deification (Selth 2017b: 11-23). First, the West created an idealised image of Aung San Suu Kyi that had little to do with reality, and then this image was destroyed.

The European Union joined this political wave by sharply criticising Aung San Suu Kyi. At the same time, the EU remained torn between wanting to "bear witness" and knowing that the sanctions had already failed once, hurting the Burmese people more than helping them. Out of this split came the failure to remove Burma's Most Favoured Trade status. As a result, criticism of the EU remained almost exclusively rhetorical, not to say theatrical, the best example

of which was Aung San Suu Kyi's suspension from the "community of Sakharov Prize winners" in September 2020 (the prize itself was not withdrawn).

The massed criticism of Aung San Suu Kyi in the West led to backlash from Burmese society, which stood firmly behind its leader. Her mediocre rule was forgotten, the mechanism of rallying around the flag was activated and when the West raised its hand against "mother Suu", society resisted criticism from outsiders. A majority of Burmese society treats Aung San Suu Kyi as the political mother of the nation. Interestingly, this is a bottom-up and not a top-down cult of the kind usually found in autocracies. Aung San Suu Kyi naturally made clever use of it politically, including personally defending the country against charges of genocide at the International Court of Justice in The Hague in 2019, even though she did not have to do so as she could have simply sent lawyers there. Instead, she made the trial a political show. This support came in handy during the next elections, won by Aung San Suu Kyi in a landslide in November 2020, with her removal from the Sakharov community taking place during the election campaign, which contributed to her victory.

Nevertheless, the Rohingya crisis, while helping Aung San Suu Kyi internally, was a political failure for her. Up to that point, she held the two most important cards in her game with the generals: social support, and support from abroad. Now she only had the first. The crisis has also overshadowed any objective analysis of her rule. The Nobel laureate failed to end the civil war, did not remove the army from its privileges and did not make Burma a second Singapore. However, Burma continued modernisation, reintegration with the world and technological revolution, thanks to which its government, although average, did not spoil the fruits of the 2015-2020 reforms.

A coup and twilight

Carried by social optimism and a good, considering local conditions, fight against Covid-19, Aung San Suu Kyi won the general election again in 2020, with a better result than she had obtained five years earlier, winning 83% of the available seats in parliament. Unfortunately, this time she was unable to come to an understanding with the army, which, dissatisfied with the electoral result, carried out the fourth coup d'état in the country's history on 1 February 2021, once more putting Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest and leading the country to its most powerful crisis since 1988. The coup was followed by prolonged mass demonstrations, bloodily suppressed by the regime (at the time this article was being written, the death toll had exceeded 600). The US, EU and

UK have all reimposed sanctions on Burma. The EU sanctions were initially very limited, as they were imposed on 11 generals personally, which, given the general disinterest in international affairs by the Burmese generals, would not affect the political situation within the country. However, the EU has a major weapon in its hands, namely the EBA ("Everything But Arms") initiative, part of the Generalised System of Preferences, which means that the world's least developed countries, including Burma, can export their products (except arms) to the EU duty free. The removal of Burma from this initiative will hit the generals' regime (though not knock it down), but the consequences will also fall on the ordinary people. Therefore, there is an ongoing debate in the Union on how to impose only pointed sanctions on Burma that would weaken the generals without harming the citizens. Given the structure of the Burmese economy, dominated by military conglomerates and minor military-related companies, finding a satisfactory solution is extremely complicated.

Asian countries had no such dilemmas. Burma's closer and more distant neighbours took a wait-and-see position while the UN, due to Chinese and Russian vetoes, again failed to play a significant role in the dramatic events in Burma. In some respects, the situation returned to the starting point from before the Burmese reforms in 2011 whereas the bloody pacification of the protests was destroying the gains of the "golden decade" of 2011-2021. Burma is on the edge again, and the possible scenarios for the development of the situation are bad: either a successful pacification as in 1988 or a self-destructive civil war similar to the one in Syria. The only chance is the hope of a split in the ranks of the army along the lines of the Philippine revolution of 1986, but this is much less likely than the above-mentioned unfortunate scenarios.

Regardless of the outcome of the political confrontation, the coup is likely to mean Aung San Suu Kyi's political decline. The junta again placed her under house arrest, and also raised further absurd charges against her (including corruption), with the very clear goal of removing her from the political stage. If convicted, 78-year-old Aung San Suu Kyi will not be able to run in the next election under conditions dictated by the military electoral commission. Although originally set to take place by August 2023 they have been delayed indefinitely. She will most likely spend the rest of her life locked up or be released again when the political scene is taken over by army-approved parties. Only the victory of protests can restore Aung San Suu Kyi's hopes, but the chances of winning the "spring revolution" in Burma are not great.

The coup d'état will improve her record in the West. Many of the activists who vehemently criticised her will fall silent or change their tone. However, there is no chance for a fundamental reconstruction of her image: devastated

by the Rohingya crisis, it is now beyond repair. For the Western world, Aung San Suu Kyi will remain the person who had been "outsmarted after making a pact with the devil" (Beake 2021).

The perception in Burma is completely different. There, the legend of Aung San Suu Kyi continues to thrive and the coup will not change that, quite the contrary, it will strengthen it. The previous (extremely beneficial for her) narrative of herself as the selfless continuator of her father's work leading Burma to greatness (Mon Mon Myat 2019) has not been questioned, despite her five-year (rather average) term in office. However, now that the generals have placed Aung San Suu Kyi in custody again, the legend will be revived, fuelled by the widespread delusion that if only the military would let her rule, Burma would become a land of milk and honey. For the myth of Aung San Suu Kyi, the coup is actually beneficial.

For her, however, the coup d'état remains tragic. Aung San Suu Kyi has always been interested in power. She sacrificed her family, fifteen years of freedom and the fate of a million foreign Muslims for it, not for a myth. If Aung San Suu Kyi was interested in political myths, it was only to use them pragmatically in her political struggle. Now her chances of regaining power are slim. Only the myth will remain.

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What's in a name? Not much, according to Aung San Suu Kyi, who tells diplomats they can use Myanmar or Burma (2016), "South China Morning Post".23.04.2016, https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/1937886/whats-name-not-much-according-aung-san-suu-kyi-who-tells (accessed 17 August 2023).

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Key words: Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar, Burma, military junta, coup d'état

ABSTRACT

Against the background of the dramatic events unfolding in Myanmar/Burma where the military had been pacifying mass peaceful protests, the political career of Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, the political leader of Myanmar/Burma in 2016-2021 and previously one of the world's most famous political prisoners, is nearing its end. Once the darling of the Western world, then mercilessly criticised by former supporters, Aung San Suu Kyi remains an ambiguous figure who evokes strong emotions both domestically and internationally. As such Aung San Suu Kyi represents a fascinating case study in leadership studies. Using the agency-centred explanation in political studies, this article tries to answer the questions related to the political career of Aung San Suu Kyi. These include: What allowed her to take power and what factors contributed to her political fall? What caused her political decline? Why did Suu Kyi enjoy the Western support and why did she lose it? How can her governance be assessed?

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United States policy on the Oder-Neisse question in the 1960s as viewed by Zbigniew Brzezinski

This article examines the views of Zbigniew Brzezinski (1928–2017) on United States policy in the matter of Poland's western border. The timeframe is limited to the 1960s, the decade preceding the Polish–West German border treaty of 1970. The reason for this is Brzezinski's exceptional level of journalistic and political activity in this period in relation to the question of the Oder–Neisse Line, which was accompanied by revived interest from the administrations of presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson in issues concerning Central and Eastern Europe (Tyszkiewicz 2015: 185–211, 233–238). The correlation between American policy in Europe and Brzezinski's activities is also demonstrated by the latter's involvement in the work of the Policy Planning Council in the State Department in the years 1966–1968, shortly after Johnson's announcement of a policy of "bridge building" with the communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Mania 1996: 53). The end date of the period under consideration corresponds to a decline in interest in the border question – on the part of both American diplomacy and Brzezinski himself – following the Polish–West German treaty, which was concluded against the backdrop of US–Soviet détente and West Germany's parallel *Ostpolitik* (Jarząbek 2011: 252).

The author intends to show to what degree Brzezinski's position on the need for formal US recognition of the Oder–Neisse border corresponded with his vision of a breaking down of the Cold War division of Europe through a weakening of Soviet influence in Poland and resolution of the problem of disputed national borders. What is noteworthy is not only the American political scientist's influence on US policy in our part of Europe, being oriented towards deepening the divisions within the communist bloc, but also his wider view of the border problem in the context of Polish–German relations, Polish–Soviet relations, nationalism, and communist ideology. This study is thus not intend-

ed as a comprehensive analysis of US policy in the matter of Poland's western border, such as has already been presented in works on American foreign policy and the history of international relations. What deserves highlighting, however, is Brzezinski's proposal for the Oder–Neisse question to be resolved by the United States as an act serving to stabilise the whole of Europe, anticipating a decline in the importance of borders and the emergence of an interdependence of interests between the US, West Germany, Poland, and the USSR. It may be asked to what degree this supranational point of view on the Polish–German border question might have served to increase interest in Poland among Washington political circles, and to what degree it corresponded only to the administration's universalist view of contemporary European issues.

The materials left by Brzezinski and by US diplomatic sources shed light on the significance of the question of Poland's western border in the American vision of the European political order. The scope of the present research thus goes beyond the previously analysed diplomatic aspects of the Polish western border question, to include Brzezinski's internationalist ideas in relation to the political order in Europe. This work is therefore based primarily on Brzezinski's publications and archive material concerning the Oder–Neisse question, supplemented by documents from the State Department and other government institutions, found in the US federal archives.

In the Cold War era, Zbigniew Brzezinski's view that Washington should issue official confirmation of the permanence of the Polish–German border on the Oder and Neisse was divergent with respect to the official US policy since 1945, which was to avoid giving *de jure* recognition to the border as established in Potsdam (Allen 2003: 245–246). At the same time his position on the status of the Polish–German border corresponded to the viewpoint in American diplomacy that had favoured, since the Potsdam conference, the formation of strong economic links between the former German lands, including Silesian industry, and Western Europe (*Notatka delegacji polskiej…* 1945).[1] This was confirmed by a statement by Secretary of State George Marshall at a conference held in Moscow in 1947 to discuss the Polish–German borders, which regardless of their shape "do not create a continuing political problem and are not barriers to the accustomed and healthful flow of trade and commerce and human intercourse" (Marshall 1947). It is notable that the Americans attached less weight to the precise position of the border than to the establishment of

[1] This subject was addressed in Potsdam by, among others, the US ambassador in Moscow, Averell Harriman, who spoke of the need for exports of coal from Silesia "for the needs of other countries".

a "kind of a frontier" that would serve "Europe as a whole". Brzezinski's views on the question of the Oder–Neisse Line thus did not represent political revisionism with respect to the original US position, which was aimed at the permanent neutralisation of Central European border disputes. The change proposed by Brzezinski was to put an end to the temporary status of the Polish–German border in international law; this was to serve to increase political and economic interdependence between East and West.

In Brzezinski's view, the question of the Oder–Neisse border was a significant element of the United States' influence on the communist bloc as a whole, because it affected not only its relations with the West, but also the internal stability of the communist system. Hence, his position was greatly influenced by the changes that took place in Poland after 1956. He believed that they weakened the "communist orthodoxy" in favour of a reformist current, close to Western social democratic thinking (Brzezinski, Griffith 1961). By the same token, Poland and other communist bloc countries in Central and Eastern Europe had adopted a more diversified political face, opening an opportunity for the United States to create a neutral belt of countries that would no longer be subject to total Soviet control, although they would maintain friendly relations with the USSR (ibidem). In Brzezinski's view it was the Polish western border question that conditioned these sociopolitical transformations in Poland, affecting in turn that country's multifaceted relations with the West (ibidem). For this reason, from 1961 onwards Brzezinski expressed his belief that the United States' failure to recognise the line of Poland's western border above all undermined Washington's credibility in Central and Eastern Europe.[2]

Brzezinski's expression of such views appears to have coincided, not accidentally, with the start of the Kennedy administration, whose policy was oriented towards creating divisions in the communist bloc (Tyszkiewicz 2011: 18–21). Henry Kissinger, who in 1961 was a consultant for the National Security Council, then expressed the belief that only the recognition of the Oder–Neisse, rather than the Elbe, as the continent's dividing line would provide a chance for the stabilisation of Central Europe, which was "highly desired" by the US (Kissinger 1961). For the same reason, Brzezinski regarded formal American confirmation of the position of the Polish–German border as a path to Poland's loosening of its political dependence on the Soviet Union. In accordance with

[2] At the 1945 Potsdam conference, the United States, Britain and the USSR placed the formerly German lands east of the Oder and Neisse under "Polish administration", stipulating that the final shape of the border would be confirmed only at a future peace conference with Germany.

the policy of "flexible response", the United States aimed in this way to achieve a deconcentration of power in the communist countries through support for manifestations of their national sovereignty (Gaddis 2007: 290–291). Settlement of the border issue in Poland's favour, with the goal of extending Polish "internal autonomy", might thus lead to the opening up of the whole Eastern bloc to economic and political links with the West (Brzezinski 1961; Brzezinski, Griffith 1961). Brzezinski's belief that the Oder and Neisse should be seen as the actual line of the "Iron Curtain" dividing Europe, taking the place of the German question that had thus far held centre stage, therefore corresponded to the Kennedy administration's vision as outlined above.

The political weight of Brzezinski's position is confirmed by the fact that in February 1961, as a lecturer at Columbia University, he attended a meeting in Washington with Adam Schaff, considered the chief ideologist of the Polish communist party (PZPR), who had come to the US in the role of "special emissary" of the First Secretary of the PZPR Central Committee, Władysław Gomułka (Tyszkiewicz 2011: 20–22, 73–74). State Department materials show that the Oder–Neisse question was one of the main topics of discussion between American diplomats and Schaff, who, citing Gomułka's "firm position", promised the friendliness of Poland (towards the US) within the eastern bloc in exchange for American recognition of the border (*Discussion…* 1961). It is known from Schaff's report that he learnt of the views of a group of American diplomats and academics on the matter of Poland's western border (Schaff 1961), and that among them it was Brzezinski who expressed himself most eloquently, indicating that it was only the circumstances of the Berlin crisis that prevented the US government from giving its support to the present Polish–German border, since "it was not possible to brutally spurn the Germans in the present world conflict".

Brzezinski's assertion that the United States' support for West German policy was merely "simulated" undoubtedly made an impression on Schaff, who interpreted it as "*de facto* recognition of the [Polish western] border by the United States" (ibidem). Polish expectations in this matter were strengthened by a pre-election assurance supposedly given to the Polish UN delegation by Kennedy's associates in 1960 that, in case of his victory, the new president would recognize the Polish–German border as final (*Review…* 1961). It should be added, however, that Foy D. Kohler, assistant to the Secretary of State, dampened the hopes of the Polish party leadership when in April 1961 he confirmed to Schaff only the recognition of the "Polish administration in the Western Lands". In excluding the possibility of any practical change to the border, he added that the United States could not take formal steps in that matter, since it

would mean accepting the division of Germany. Schaff expressed understanding for the American position, which he explained in his report as a US bargaining chip "in the future settlement of matters of central Europe" (Schaff 1961). American intentions were indeed described in that same conversation by Kohler, who expressed a hope for an understanding between Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany in place of the "communist proposal" providing for a peace treaty with the two German states (*Discussion…* 1961). He suspected that behind Polish efforts to obtain American recognition of the Oder–Neisse line was a desire to achieve international legalisation of the division of Germany.

Paradoxically, it was the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 that allowed the Kennedy administration to divest itself of its obligations to West Germany in the matter of reunification, and at the same time stabilised the position of the GDR on the western side of the Oder–Neisse border (Allen 2003: 241–242). However, this process was not accompanied by any undertakings by the United States towards Poland or Germany with regard to the border. During the period of tension over Berlin, Kohler warned ambassador Edward Drożniak of the dangers posed to Poland by Khrushchev's policy, since legalisation of the division of Germany through US recognition of Poland's western border would be a "threat to peace" in the whole of Europe (*Berlin and Germany* 1961). After the 1961 Berlin crisis, American diplomacy created conditions that forced West Germany (but not the US itself) to recognise the territorial status quo in Central Europe, while encouraging Poland to enter into dialogue with Bonn in the face of the danger of an understanding between the Soviets and the two German states. Only these circumstances, related to the German question, can explain the sense of Brzezinski's engagement in solving the problem of the Oder–Neisse Line.

Irrespective of the weight of the problems raised during Schaff's visit to Washington, it is hard to find any significant consequences of his conversation with Brzezinski, other than a Polish–American academic conference, held in Jabłonna near Warsaw in May 1962, devoted to European international security, East–West relations, and the German question (Zyzak 2016: 128). Still little is known about the events and consequences of that meeting.[3] However, Polish official and press reaction to Brzezinski's political ideas was usually critical or polemic. In official reports, even then, Brzezinski

[3] Besides Brzezinski, the American side was represented by the political scientists and economists William Griffith and John Montias. The group of Polish experts included, among others, Oskar Lange, Józef Szczepański, Manfred Lachs, Hilary Minc, and Mieczysław Rakowski.

was accused of having links with American intelligence and the New York financial elites (Vaïsse 2013: 3–26). Indeed, these were not groundless suspicions.[4] Consequently, American promises to Poland of scientific and cultural exchange were described by Ryszard Strzelecki of the PZPR Central Committee's politburo, at the party congress in June 1964, as dangerous attempts to "soften up" the communist countries (Nowak-Jeziorański, Brzezinski 2014: 71). In turn, in the February 1967 edition of the Central Committee's monthly *Nowe Drogi*, Roman Werfel accused Brzezinski of attempting to restore the capitalist system in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and to propagate the American lifestyle (Werfel 1967: 99–111). On the other hand, Brzezinski's ideas were fully supported by Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, head of the Polish section of Radio Free Europe, who had conferred with Brzezinski on Polish political matters since the late 1950s. In a letter of April 1965, Nowak-Jeziorański accepted Brzezinski's thinking as the "only realistic formula corresponding to Polish national interests in the present political conditions" (Nowak-Jeziorański, Brzezinski 2014: 111).

A key political initiative of the United States that was aligned with Brzezinski's increasing activity in relation to Poland's western border was the programme of "bridge building" officially announced by President Lyndon B. Johnson in May 1964 (Tyszkiewicz 2015: 233–238). The goal, closely linked to the previous one of bringing about the fragmentation of the communist bloc, was to create conditions in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe for a greater national independence from the USSR, to increase the costs of Soviet control, to open up those countries to political, social, economic and cultural contacts with the West, and to cause their internal liberalisation (Thomasen 2017: 263–273). It is telling that in relation to Poland, American intelligence suggested to Johnson that he make an informal declaration "affirming the permanency of Poland's Oder–Neisse frontier", thus "implicitly raising the question of Poland's eastern frontier", and so complicating Soviet policy (*Bridges…* 1964). It should be added that the American initiative, aimed at extending the political and economic self-determination of the Soviet-dominated nations, was in no way intended to split them from the communist bloc, but to satisfy their need for security by normalising the relations of those countries between

[4] Brzezinski began his academic and political career in the US with study at prestigious Ivy League universities, which in time enabled him to join the elite New York-based Council on Foreign Relations. In the 1970s, together with David Rockefeller, chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank, Brzezinski founded the Trilateral Commission, which supported processes of "growing interdependence" between the United States, Western Europe and Japan.

East and West. A factor that favoured improvement in the sphere of Polish–American relations was the 1965 appointment as US ambassador in Warsaw of John Gronouski, an official of Polish descent, who enjoyed the trust of the Polish diplomatic service (Tyszkiewicz 2015: 254–257).

In the judgement of Secretary of State Dean Rusk, there existed favourable circumstances for reconciliatory actions towards the Soviet-dominated states, because the political leadership in Poland was aware that the new Polish–Soviet treaty of April 1965 did not guarantee the inviolability of any of Poland's borders (Rusk 1965). A feeling of insecurity in Warsaw might also have been aroused by the USSR–GDR treaty of June 1964, which gave an assurance of the permanence of the East German borders "without stating their exact position". In this context, Gomułka responded to Johnson's proposal with an appeal to the president, transmitted in a conversation with Averell Harriman, for an official announcement "that our borders on the Oder and Neisse established in Potsdam are final" (*Protokół…* 1965). However, the Americans assessed the border question from an internationalist perspective, foreseeing the possibility of its settlement only "in the course of the removal of barriers in Europe". The final aim of US policy towards Central and Eastern Europe was to be the dismantling of the Iron Curtain, which would mean the practical ending of the Cold War division of Europe, along with a decline in the importance of national borders.

It was only in the atmosphere of Johnson's "bridge building" that Brzezinski could become fully engaged in resolving the Oder–Neisse border question, as a general European problem that had an impact on the global position and credibility of the United States. He set out his position on this matter most extensively in his work *Europa bez podziału* ("Europe without division"), published not coincidentally in 1965, in which he evaluated the Oder–Neisse problem through the lens of the division of Europe, making it an issue in East–West relations, and not merely in Polish–German relations (Brzezinski 1966c: 159–162). In view of this European political significance of the Oder–Neisse line, an improvement of relations between Poland and West Germany would be only a first step on the road to ending the division of the whole continent, which was seen as the source of the Cold War (ibidem: 111–113). On the other hand, his proposal to end the political and economic division of Europe unquestionably assigned Germany a distinguished position in the process of East–West dialogue. A new "sense of purpose" in West German politics, consistent with the interests of the United States, was expected to build the trust of Poland, since it lessened the likelihood of a separate German–Soviet agreement, which would pose a danger both to the US and to Poland (Brzezinski 1966b).

Brzezinski's vision thus corresponded well with the *Ostpolitik* initiated by West Germany in 1966 (Jarząbek 2010: 318). In spite of the non-aggression declaration that West Germany then proposed to Poland, the government in Bonn continued to refuse final recognition of the decisions of the Potsdam conference, remaining faithful to the goal of a German state within the 1937 borders. The Johnson administration, in turn, was mistrustful of manifestations of independence in West German foreign policy (Costigliola 1994: 173–179). Nevertheless, the State Department offered sympathetic support to Bonn's initiative, because along with the exchange of letters between representatives of churches in Poland and Germany, it not only opened the way to "eventual reconciliation between the two peoples", but also served to "reduce East–West tensions" and to "isolate the GDR" (*FRG–Eastern European Relations* 1966). For this reason, Brzezinski assigned to West Germany's eastern policy the task of taking the "nationalist" argument out of the PZPR's hands through official acceptance of the "existing Polish borders" (Brzezinski 1966b).

Brzezinski was aware that Polish fears of German revisionism were not just a creation of communist propaganda, but arose from the painful historical experiences of the Polish nation. Here he saw the need to provide Poland with a feeling of security, because Poland could not exist as a nation on wheels, with ever-changing territory and borders (Brzezinski, Griffith 1961). However, Brzezinski perceived the obstacle on the road to normalisation of Polish–German relations not so much in the conditions of the Cold War as in historically grounded national prejudices, particularly on the Polish side. This enabled the Polish communist authorities to take political advantage of the fear of "German revisionism" that was rooted in the Poles' historical consciousness. For this reason, while appreciating the desired Europeanisation of West Germany, Brzezinski also bemoaned the persistent Polish mistrust of Germany, visible in the moods of "Polish settlers" (sic) in Lower Silesia and Pomerania (Brzezinski, Griffith 1961). In Brzezinski's political thinking, then, nationalism was one of the main obstacles on the way to breaking down political and economic borders in Europe. In his view, a state appealing to nationalist values was an anachronism that offered no prospects for development, whether in the West or in Central and Eastern Europe (Brzezinski 1966c: 19–24). The peculiar "national communism" found in Poland made it possible, in his opinion, for control within the communist party to be retained by headstrong types with anti-German and anti-Western tendencies. He foresaw that only the overcoming of these nationalistic fears by the Polish political class and the whole of society would open the way to "a different

kind of Europe", free of conflicts over "narrow national advantages at the expense of others" (Owen 1966).

The problem was that Brzezinski's idea of building a Europe free of political and economic borders was addressed not to Poland, but above all to Germany and to the Soviet Union. In his view, the "most important and decisive" objective of US policy in the matter of the Polish western border was not the security and sovereignty of Poland, but the breaking down of the Cold War division of Germany and Europe through support for the process of "Europeanisation of Russia" (Brzezinski 1966c: 164–166). On the other hand, it can be assumed that Brzezinski's universalist view of Poland and the Polish–German border question may have drawn the attention of the highest decision-makers in the US to the issue of Poland's independence, as a factor having an impact on the European and global order. The attractiveness of Brzezinski's perspective to the administration was indeed confirmed in his work at the State Department.

In October 1966 Brzezinski undertook an important journey to Poland, now as a member of the State Department's Policy Planning Council under the Johnson administration (Zyzak 2016: 130). He was accompanied by Henry Owen, chairman of that council, whose report is one of the most interesting sources of knowledge about the position of Brzezinski, and of American political circles more broadly, on the question of the Polish–German border, Polish national consciousness, and Poland's international situation (Owen 1966). It can be assumed that the observations contained in Owen's report concerning questions of territory, borders and ideology reflected Brzezinski's views and were compiled under his direction. However, the report devotes most attention to issues of national psychology, which was behind the Poles' perception of the importance of territory and borders. In this context, on the one hand, Owen justified the Polish "obsession" with security between Germany and Russia, resulting from the difficult historical experiences of Poles "living in a house that has collapsed about them" (ibidem). It seemed obvious to him that this "stubborn and heroic people" feared a "fifth partition" in case of a war between the countries of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. This also gave Brzezinski grounds to show understanding towards Polish proposals for arms limitations or the establishment of a European security organisation (Brzezinski 1966c: 108–109). However, he saw chances for an easing of tension between East and West not so much in the full independence of the Soviet-dominated nations, but rather in the maintenance of the two military blocks in Europe, which created the best conditions for dialogue between the communist countries and the United States (Zyzak 2016: 131). Building the absolute sovereignty of a nation state based on an anti-Soviet attitude, in Brzezinski's view, would risk releasing a "ti-

ger of nationalism"[5] that would generate new divisions and borders in Europe rather than remove them (Brzezinski 1966c: 54).

Brzezinski's critical attitude to the concept of a nation state led him to evaluate the Polish position on the Oder–Neisse question in terms of an "abstraction based on emotions" which roused the masses to a collective and irrational cult of territory, borders and state (Brzezinski 1970: 33). On this basis he further believed that for the nations of Central and Eastern Europe, divided by unnatural borders, Marxist ideology was up to a certain time a "creative stage in the maturing of a universal vision of man". He did not even conceal his regret over the failure of "communist internationalism" in Central and Eastern Europe, because "the period of Russian domination in no way led to a reduction of traditional conflicts", and the foundation of Comecon (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) occurred "too late" (Brzezinski 1966c: 29–34). Also in Poland, the old "communist internationalism" had been supplanted by "conservative bureaucrats" in the PZPR, appealing to "state nationalism as the principal emotional bond with the masses" (Brzezinski 1970: 38). Thus, he linked Gomułka's rhetoric over the security of the Polish–German border to the "basically parochial and conservative" character of the Polish "backwater" party leadership, which he saw as being in the "early stages of post-peasant political awakening" leading to the development of a form of "national communism" (Brzezinski 1967; Brzezinski 1966c: 170–171).

In line with Brzezinski's beliefs, Owen also stated that, contrary to this "conservative orthodoxy", the Poles' future ought to lie in the idea of a "European community" in which "wars for national territorial gain have become as unlikely as wars between feudal lords were after the decline of feudalism" (Owen 1966). For this reason, Poland's perception of territorial issues and the western border question as elements of national identity, based on historical arguments, seemed to Brzezinski to be a highly undesirable relic of the past. As regards the award to Poland of the former German lands of Silesia and Pomerania after 1945, he understood it – characteristically for American political thinking – as compensation for the eastern Polish lands that had been lost to the Soviets (Brzezinski, Griffith 1961). From the perspective of the interests of the "whole of Europe", the territories of the Polish–German and Polish–Soviet borderlands served, in his view, as a bargaining counter, where the past, tradition, and considerations of nationality were only an obstacle to supranational cooperation. What ultimately mattered was that Poland "without breaking

[5] He cited the example of Romania, where a weakening of Soviet control had brought not political and economic liberalisation, but a "technocratic–nationalist–communist" dictatorship.

from the Soviet Union, could pull it along with her in evolutionary processes" in the political and economic spheres (Brzezinski 1966c: 165).

Understanding of this new variant of internationalism in Poland now made it necessary to overcome Polish concerns over political borders, along with fear of Germany, and to eliminate "antisemitism"[6] (Brzezinski 1970: 48). In this last case, Owen attached importance to the revision of Polish attitudes to the experiences of the Second World War, in line with the assumption that in the face of the extermination of the Jews "no one of us is innocent". Here he meant to provoke reflection in Poland over the "moral weakness of man", which would reduce aversion and suspicion towards the Germans, seen as the only nation responsible for the aggression and war crimes. Only such a conversion of the consciousness of ordinary Poles, in his view, would make it possible to extinguish Polish "national prejudices" in the name of European cooperation.

A telling fact was that the summary report to the State Department on Brzezinski and Owen's trip to Poland contained no critical remarks on the nature of the communist regime in the Polish People's Republic or its dependence on Moscow. There was also no assessment of the attitudes of Polish society towards the authorities, particularly in the context of the heightened conflict between state and Church in 1966 (Brzezinski 1966c: 29). The reason for this omission may have been a conversation that took place in Warsaw between Brzezinski and the philosopher Leszek Kołakowski (Nowak-Jeziorański 2005: 544), who echoed his anti-nationalist vision, together with the view that ideological and religious belief systems in Poland were becoming exhausted. In this discussion, Kołakowski apparently shared his concern over the state of moral vacuum in Poland, which in turn opened the way to a national ideology represented by a generation of "nationalist technocrats" (Owen 1966). To prevent this, Brzezinski believed, Poland now needed a new (after Marxism) universalist philosophy, recognising the relativity of moral principles, nationality, borders and territory, which would undermine "irrational beliefs and […] institutions asserting a monopoly on the truth" (Brzezinski 1970: 37–38). He thus awaited a socially and materially more attractive alternative to the exhausted Soviet Marxism.

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[6] Brzezinski's cited example of political antisemitism in Poland was the presence of a "partisan" fraction in the PZPR that produced "nationalist" and "antisemitic" slogans, addressed to public opinion and also directed against left-wing intellectuals. He claimed that this group had an ideological link to the pre-war National Democracy movement and to "neofascist activists", not distinguishing the pre-war national right wing from political activists in communist Poland with a National Democracy pedigree.

It was not without reason that Brzezinski ascribed decisive importance for this "internationalist" transformation in Polish consciousness to the United States, rather than to the already compromised Soviet state. Washington's recognition of the Polish western border as demarcated in Potsdam would weaken the influence in Poland of ideological and political elites representing "national communism", in favour of managerial and bureaucratic elites (Brzezinski 1966b). Only then might the Polish communist authorities recognise their own interest in forging closer links with the West, which would protect Poland against possible German territorial claims. Brzezinski claimed that this process would "have a Europeanizing impact on the Communist elites", enabling them to enter into cooperation with the European Economic Community and the United States, while maintaining links with Moscow through the Warsaw Pact (Brzezinski 1967). He further assumed that a joint settlement of the status of the border by the US, Germany, Poland and the USSR would cause the emergence of a "European-minded technical and economic elite" whose political culture would somehow "naturally" evolve in a "more liberal" direction (ibidem).

This peculiar socioeconomic determinism, assuming certain political consequences of Poland's opening up to relations with the West, led Brzezinski to treat the Oder–Neisse border as a supranational European problem of a political, social and economic nature, which might revolutionise East–West relations. He thus believed that the United States' official recognition of Poland's western border would gradually made that border permeable to people and trade, thus raising Poles' social aspirations and forcing the country's authorities to take a "more flexible attitude" in the direction of "political tolerance" (Brzezinski 1966c: 199–202; Brzezinski 1967). He hoped that in this way a "European consciousness" could be instilled in the "minds of the communist top flight", which – thanks to joint economic and scientific projects with American participation – would turn into an "Eastern European cadre of European technocrats" (Brzezinski 1966c: 161, 198). This process was to begin with the United States' support for a regional confederation of countries in Central and Eastern Europe on the model of the European Economic Community, with the task of breaking down borders and the national divisions present in the region. American involvement was thus to be decisive for such regional cooperation, since the United States had "no [territorial] claims east of the Elbe", in contrast to Germany and the USSR.

It must be acknowledged that Brzezinski's position, questioning the meaningfulness of Polish–German border controversies, appeared justified in an era of global confrontation between nuclear powers, when Central European ter-

ritorial disputes took on international significance (Kennan 1973: 244–255). The potential benefits to Poland arising out of Brzezinski's vision might nevertheless be disputed. His proposals concerning American recognition for the permanence of the Oder–Neisse border had little to do with the principle of respecting Poland's right to "national self-determination" and autonomy from the USSR. It would also appear that he expected gradual democratisation in Poland, carried out by the hand of the communist class with Western support, and also with the approval of the Soviet authorities. He thus wished for a "peaceful transformation" of the communist states leading to their establishing economic and political ties with Europe as a whole, where borders would become permeable to people, trade, and ideas, thereby losing their political importance (Brzezinski, Griffith 1961).

Most important, however, was the fact that Brzezinski's proposal concerning the Polish–German border aligned with the American policy of bridge building and with the Johnson administration's new initiatives towards the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which might potentially be of benefit to Poland. A speech given by the US president to the National Conference of Editorial Writers in New York in October 1966 contained a mention of the need to "remove territorial and border disputes as a source of friction in Europe" (Johnson 1966). This applied in particular to the Polish–German border and to the partition of Germany, which was an "unnatural line" dividing Europe like a "wound" that "now cuts East from West". It should be noted that the president linked the need to "respect the integrity of a nation's boundary lines" with the simultaneous ending of all national territorial disputes through the liberalisation of trade and cultural exchange between the West and the countries of the communist bloc. Johnson's speech, which was clearly influenced by Brzezinski's views, thus launched an American vision of Europe as a space free of ideological or trade barriers (Brzezinski 1966a), and at the same time open to economic and political penetration by the United States. The latter thus expected that "inviolable" borders would "cease to be an important issue" in international relations, and would moreover weaken the significance of the German problem, namely the division on the Elbe.

A matter of no small importance in Johnson's "European speech" was the priority given to the reaching of understanding between the West and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, in place of a demand for the unification of Germany (Schwartz 2003: 134). As a result, the US embassy in Warsaw noted Gomułka's favourable impression caused by the speech (*Reactions…* 1966). Although Brzezinski himself called the GDR an "artificial creation", he conceded that the existence of the East German state gave Poland a feeling of

security that enabled the formation of closer links with the West (Brzezinski 1966c: 166–167). Therefore, in his German unification plans presented to the State Department in November 1967, Brzezinski expected the preliminary recognition of the inviolability of the Oder–Neisse border by both German states, which would be "especially important in overcoming Polish and Czechoslovak fears of any move towards closer all-German ties" (Brzezinski 1967). Certainly, he believed that the East German "security buffer" would lose its usefulness to Poland with the confirmation of the country's western border, but US recognition of that border would mean respecting not only the legality of the GDR, but also the Soviet system of control over the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In return for the unification of Germany, he proposed that the West should give the Soviets guarantees that the territory of the former GDR would not be incorporated into NATO structures, and that Soviet troops or UN forces would remain there (Brzezinski 1966c: 180–181). We should add that the head of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence, Thomas L. Hughes, drew attention to the then ongoing Polish–Soviet discussions concerning a new system of European security encompassing the East German state (Hughes 1967). At the same time, Polish diplomats in Washington, in discussions with State Department representatives, dismissively avoided the Oder–Neisse question while placing emphasis on recognition of the GDR (*Comments…* 1967; Jarząbek 2011: 79–82).

Discussions of collective security in Europe went hand in hand with Brzezinski's proposal to establish an undefined "cooperative community" encompassing the United States, Western Europe, and "some communist states" (Brzezinski 1966b; Brzezinski 1970: 113–114). Because he was concerned about the possible rebirth of a "Balkanised" Europe of nation states, he suggested including the USSR in the policy of bridge building between the West and the communist bloc, to prevent the "fragmentation of both Eastern and Western systems of alliance" (Brzezinski 1966b). In this system, the Warsaw Pact would remain an active "symbol of political interdependence" among the countries of the region, giving Moscow a "guarantee of minimal political loyalty" on the part of Poland and other member countries (Brzezinski 1967). Poland would receive in return "guarantees" of the security of all of its borders and its territorial integrity, from the Soviets, the Americans and the British. Brzezinski imagined in this way the realisation of his idea of a "stronger unification of all of us in order to make further waging of wars impossible" (Brzezinski 1966c: 204). In return for the promise of lasting peace, however, the nations of Central and Eastern Europe would have to sacrifice the goal of regaining full political sovereignty. The idea of the "Europeanization of Russia" would bring Poland to

the role of a "transmission belt to the Soviet Union for Western ideas and influence" (Brzezinski 1966b). US recognition of the Polish–German border would thus not only lead to political "evolution in the communist camp",[7] but would also secure "Soviet, Polish and Czech national interests" in Europe.

Unfortunately, Brzezinski did not explain what the basis would be for the proposed Central European community of interests of Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, given that, in the opinion of Polish diplomats in Washington, Prague's pro-Western course was opening the way to West German penetration in that country, generating a political threat to Poland and the USSR (*Luncheon…* 1968). Also unconvincing was his suggested "Europeanisation" of Poland, which assumed a compromise with Moscow and securing of the positions of the communist elites of government. It came down, in fact, to some kind of control exercised by the Western powers and the USSR over the nations of Central and Eastern Europe, with "Europeanised" communist circles acting as intermediaries (Brzezinski 1970: 71–72). The plan also did not take into account the significant economic disproportions and differences of interests between Eastern and Western Europe (ibidem 77–96). Finally, the State Department viewed with concern the decline of Poland's interest in the Oder–Neisse question, along with the increasing pressure from Polish diplomats for the recognition of East Germany. From the US perspective, such a policy on Warsaw's part carried a threat to Poland's security in a situation where East Germany might someday make claims to the lands beyond the Oder and Neisse (*Conversation…* 1968). It should be noted that foreign minister Stefan Jędrychowski, speaking to the US Secretary of State, cited the unregulated status of the borders in Central Europe as a justification for Poland's participation in the invasion of Czechoslovakia (*The Secretary's…* 1969).

It was following the aggression of Warsaw Pact troops against Czechoslovakia in 1968 that Zbigniew Brzezinski left the State Department, although he would return to top-level politics as National Security Advisor in the Carter administration (Brzezinski 1986). In spite of this, further developments in relation to Poland's western border confirmed Brzezinski's predictions insofar as, following the treaty of December 1970 between Poland and West Germany, the Oder–Neisse problem ceased to be an element of the international Cold War

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[7] He contrasted "national" communism with "pluralist communism", which was claimed to be capable of democratisation, on the model of Czechoslovakia under Alexander Dubček. In contrast to the "positive" example of Czechoslovakia, in Poland he perceived a danger of the development in the 1970s and 1980s of dictatorial forms of "social fascism" based on nationalist dogmas and military control.

dispute concerning the German question (Tyszkiewicz 2014: 121–137). In the view of US diplomacy, it was Poland's western border, rather than the Elbe, that represented the line of division of Europe.

Nevertheless, in spite of American support for the Polish–West German treaty, note should be taken of the United States' reluctance to give formal recognition to the Polish–German border, expressed in the desire to maintain the "responsibility of the four powers for Germany as a whole" (*CES*... 1970). On the one hand, in the period of détente in relations with the Soviet Union, the State Department favoured not opening up the question of the border in the future, but on the other hand, considered only the adoption by the four powers of a so-called Königsberg formula, presaging support for the position of the border at a future peace conference. A similar view was expressed by Henry Kissinger, National Security Advisor in the administration of President Richard M. Nixon, referring with unconcealed reserve to the *Ostpolitik* pursued by Chancellor Willy Brandt (Kissinger 1979: 409–412, 529–534). He viewed West Germany's eastern policy as merely a "new form of classic German nationalism" that would lead to German–Soviet rapprochement and "forever seal Germany's division". He noted that the Bonn government had first of all, in August 1970, concluded an agreement with the Soviet Union, in which the post-war territorial order in Europe had been recognised without the participation of the Western powers (Hanhimäki 2013: 62–68). The United States, on the other hand, linked the German problem to the status of Berlin, which was occupied by the four powers, a situation that entailed the joint responsibility of the US for "Germany as a whole" (*Current Issues*… 1970). It may thus be concluded that it was the signing of the Polish–West German treaty under the conditions of West Germany's *Ostpolitik* that forced the US administration to keep its distance in the matter of the legality of the Oder–Neisse Line. It should be added that Polish diplomats did not accept this American interpretation, seeing in it an attempt to extend the rights of the powers up to Poland's western border (Jarząbek 2011: 245–252).

Brzezinski's contribution to regulating the question of the Polish–German border, which had an impact on the development of Poland's relations with the West and its later political and constitutional evolution, nevertheless appears to be indisputable. His thinking, oriented towards ending the division of Europe through American dialogue with Poland and other communist states of Central and Eastern Europe, corresponded to the policy of bridge building and was an inspiration for President Johnson's "European speech" of 1966. Naturally, it is difficult to make a full assessment of Brzezinski's influence on American diplomacy over the Oder–Neisse question, because his proposals were normally in harmony with the direction that US policy was taking.

In spite of significant differences in diplomatic methods, the policy of détente, pursued by Kissinger from 1969 onwards, remained consistent with Brzezinski's ideas in terms of the general assumptions that East–West tensions could be reduced by resolving European territorial questions (Hanhimäki 2013: 71–74). The bridge building policy that Brzezinski supported, followed by US–Soviet détente, and finally the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe were based on the assumption that recognition of the territorial status quo would be given in exchange for the opening up of the communist bloc to Western political and economic influences (Kieninger 2017: 281–284). There also occurred a noticeable shift of American interest from Germany to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which contributed to the gradual disintegration of the communist system. It was Brzezinski who persuaded the US administration that the breaking down of the Iron Curtain in Europe ought to begin with democratisation in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and not with the unification of Germany.

Poland's greater openness to political and economic relations with the West after 1970 could not therefore have resulted exclusively from West Germany's *Ostpolitik*. A decisive factor for the transformation of Central and Eastern Europe was the change in the traditional understanding of security based on territory and defence potential, which was replaced by a security connected with universal human rights and the free movement of people, trade and ideas (Morgan 2018: 159–168). The transformation that Brzezinski foresaw in the mid-1960s was achieved primarily through the involvement of the United States in European politics. However, it was Brzezinski who succeeded in articulating especially clearly the need for an opening of "national" doors to international cooperation, closer economic ties, the free flow of ideas, and political liberalisation. In subsequent years this progressive transnational order, based on the flow of people and goods, appeared to permeate unstoppably above national and ideological borders (Aron 2009: 144–147).

American geopolitical interests, as manifested in Brzezinski's views, led him to question the Polish national and historical vision concerning relations with Germany and the western border. It was economic determinism, he believed, that made the disappearance of borders inevitable in the course of the integration of Central and Eastern European countries with the West. For this reason, even Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, in a letter of 1965, compared Brzezinski's theses to Leninist dogmas (Nowak-Jeziorański, Brzezinski 2014: 112). The resolution of the question of Poland's western border, in Brzezinski's eyes, served not so much the total elimination of Soviet influence from Poland, as the establishment of a "useful" political and economic dependence of the countries

of Central and Eastern Europe on the "whole of Europe". His involvement thus led to a certain loosening of Soviet domination over Poland, creating conditions for greater international interdependence and American interest in the Central and Eastern European region. This position was favourable to Poland to the extent that it prevented an understanding, directed against Polish interests, between Germany and the USSR. On the other hand, it was these very two countries that were the main addressees of American policy on the Oder–Neisse question, which reduced Poland to the role of a "transmission belt" between East and West. Hence the liberation of Poland from Soviet domination was to be at the same time the realisation of the "end of history" utopia in a multinational "universal state" free of territorial borders, a vision that exerted a certain influence on post-war American political thinking (Drury 1994: 41–45). Brzezinski's view of the issue of the Polish–German border thus corresponded to the universalist perspective on European territorial issues that was adopted by the US political and economic elites. The question remains open to what degree his conception was in line with Poland's authentic raison d'état and national interest.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the United States did not officially recognise Poland's western border until the "two plus four" conference in 1990, when by doing so it opened the door to German reunification and the final dismantling of the Iron Curtain (Allen 2003: 287–289). Raymond Aron seems to have been correct in his remark that the refusal by the US to recognise the division of Europe for so many years helped maintain that division, but that as soon as the West "solemnly acknowledged" the territorial division outlined at Yalta and Potsdam, the Cold War status quo was immediately upset (Aron 2007: 269–270). The United States' involvement in European international security policy meant that the main elements of that policy came to be people, societies, their political consciousness and an increasingly supranational economy, instead of borders and territory. In arguing for US recognition of the "controversial" border on the Oder and Neisse, Brzezinski understood the watershed significance of that transformation not only for Poland, but above all for "Europe as a whole". His internationalist perspective appeared at the time to be the only formula capable of arousing the interest of American political decision-makers in the international status of Poland. For this reason, Brzezinski's legacy in relation to the question of Poland's western border may serve as an interesting contribution to reflection on transatlantic relations and the position of Poland in Europe, including in the period after 1989.

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the political ideas of Zbigniew Brzezinski as they relate to his position on United States policy over the question of Poland's western border in the 1960s. The main goal is to show to what extent Brzezinski's advocacy of formal US recognition of the Oder–Neisse border was linked to his aim of overcoming the Cold War division of Europe and the problem of national borders. Brzezinski's position on the border issue is also examined in relation to his views on Polish–German and Polish–Soviet relations, as well as Polish nationalism and communist ideology. Accordingly, the question of the Oder–Neisse Line is addressed here with reference to Brzezinski's comments on US policies towards West Germany, the Soviet Union, and Europe as a whole. The main sources are Brzezinski's political commentaries, publications and archival material from the 1960s concerning Poland's western border. However

this study extends beyond the purely diplomatic history of the Polish border question, examining the relationship between Brzezinski's views on the Oder–Neisse Line and his internationalist concept of European political and economic relations.

It is demonstrated that Brzezinski's support for formal US recognition of the Oder–Neisse border in the 1960s developed within the framework of American political, geopolitical and economic designs for Germany, the Soviet Union and Europe as a whole, against the background of the Cold War. Although his arguments regarding Poland's western border contributed to a desirable increase in US political interest in Poland and Central and Eastern Europe, Brzezinski favoured a kind of European interdependence of states and the "Europeanisation" of Poland, rather than the restitution of its full sovereignty based on anti-Soviet nationalism. This distinctive universalist vision of Central and Eastern Europe, coupled with socio-economic determinism, appears to have profoundly affected Brzezinski's position on the Polish border question, which was based on the assumption that both the Cold War division of Europe and national borders would eventually diminish in political significance as a result of Western recognition.

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Images of the Western and Northern Territories in the Polish Film Chronicle in 1944-1948

Introduction

The media system that developed in post-war Poland, created by state decision-makers, served to promote ideological and political ideas with the intention of shaping the desired social attitudes among citizens. State institutions, such as the Ministry of Information and Propaganda, the Press Office, and the Film Commission of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), being responsible for the shape of a new model of state cinematography, were part of the newly emerging political system and, at the same time, components of its legitimisation (Sokół 1997: 145–147).

From 1944, one of the important propaganda tools used by the state authorities to legitimise their actions was the Polish Film Chronicle (*Polska Kronika Filmowa*, PKF) – a newsreel shown in Polish cinemas between 1944 and 1994. The PKF editorial board was established on 15 November 1944 as part of the Polish Army Film Studio located in Lublin. Its inauguration took place on 1 December 1944, and its first editors-in-chief were Jerzy Bossak and Ludwik Perski. Each episode was about 10 minutes long and covered from eight to ten topics, although there were also special editions which were longer. The new newsreel was released every week, and then twice a week between 1957 and 1980. It was shown in Polish cinemas before every single film show. The state authorities required the PKF editors to perform a propaganda role. Other important functions were to inform and entertain. In 1949, the PKF's audience was estimated to be five million viewers a week. The newsreel had a widely recognisable opening page and logo. Another of its hallmarks was the theme tune, composed by Władysław Szpilman.

The state monopoly on principles of ideology and propaganda resulted in the unification of the means and techniques of communication, as well as the

ideological content of the material shown. The PKF promoted a catalogue of communist values to which the recipients of political messages had to adhere. The newsreel became a place where social authority figures were created, desired images of political enemies and allies presented, stereotypes defined, and new political myths invented.

The purpose of this paper is to present the Polish Film Chronicle's propaganda film images of life in the Western and Northern Territories of post-war Poland. Issues relating to the PKF as an important channel for conveying propaganda messages have already been well researched. Such matters have been discussed in research studies carried out by political scientists, sociologists, historians and media experts (Cieśliński 2005, 2006, 2015, 2016; Jędrzejski 2015, 2017, 2020). However, the research results published so far seem not to include findings concerning the images of the Western and Northern Territories presented in the PKF. The timeframe adopted here to discuss propaganda images of the Western and Northern Territories conveyed by the PKF was based on the following dates: 1944 as the initial date associated with the appearance of the first issue of the newly created newsreel in mobile cinemas; and 1948 as the final date marking the end of propaganda activities linked to the development and population of the Western and Northern Territories. An important event that was part of the political strategies adopted by the communists was the Recovered Territories Exhibition (*Wystawa Ziem Odzyskanych*, WZO) held between 21 July and 31 October 1948 in the Four Dome Pavilion in Wrocław. The event was the culmination of a propaganda campaign conducted by the state authorities, which the party decision-makers decreed should end with the organisation of an exhibition.

The hypothesis adopted in this research was that in post-war Poland the PKF became an important component of the communication and propaganda activities undertaken by the state. Alongside the press and the radio, it was an important tool of political influence in the relationships between the state authorities and the public. The purpose of the study was to find answers to the following research questions: (1) What was the propaganda line adopted by the editors-in-chief of the PKF when creating images of the Western and Northern Territories? (2) How was the rebuilding of the urban centres in the Western and Northern Territories portrayed? (3) How was the settlement of the Western and Northern Territories shown? (4) What were the characteristics of an exemplary settler in the new lands as shown in the PKF? (5) How was the WZO portrayed in propaganda? These questions have significantly influenced the shape that this paper takes. Following the logic of the argument, the paper has a structure based on particular issues within the timeframe discussed above.

The sources on which it is based come from the Central Archives of Modern Records and the National Film Archive in Warsaw. Additionally, a number of monographs, group studies, press articles, and papers in scientific journals, dealing mainly with the Western and Northern Territories, were consulted.

Methodology

The nature of political science and administration as a scholarly discipline had an impact on the selection and use of tools in the study. The subject matter of the analysis was political messages containing information or promoting desirable social attitudes and providing opportunities to (1) influence individual people's lives, (2) introduce systemic solutions in the political and economic spheres, (3) perform duties or delegate responsibilities and uphold human and civil rights. The idiographic approach adopted has made it possible to reproduce a detailed picture of post-war political realities in Poland as shown in propaganda. Although the images of political communication included in the idiographic model of the cognition of social and political reality contained fragmented knowledge, it was of a functional nature, enabling the results of observation to be linked to the evaluation of political phenomena and processes occurring in Poland's Western and Northern Territories (Sokół, Żmigrodzki 2016: 481).

Before the research began, a list of thematic codes was made. The selection of appropriate keywords was partly based on pre-existing sets of categories used in political science and discussed in the subject literature. This list consists mainly of such codes as deportation, settlement, political mythology, and the development of the Western and Northern Territories. This procedure was essential for the initial analysis of the collected data and the subsequent interpretation of the documentation. It also proved beneficial for the final editing of the text, especially when checking the logical coherence and clarity of the content and when answering the research questions posed and verifying the formulated research hypotheses.

While preparing the article for publication, a method of systemic analysis proved useful. On this basis, the PKF was viewed as a political institution that was part of the state's propaganda system. The technique used in the text is termed media content analysis. This analysis referred to the propaganda content of political messages formulated by the PKF editorial team. Special attention was paid to the frequency of the key words appearing in the messages, which were components of a specific metalanguage used by the creators of the PKF's political communication. These key words usually referred to the

all-embracing ideology promoted by the state. They could also be seen as powerful propaganda slogans formulated by party decision-makers and referring to political, social and cultural life. The technique was used to identify specific idiolects in the PKF's political messages used to give a propaganda-filled description of social reality. The classification criterion for the analysis was the verbal messages used in the PKF. The media analysis of PKF content was conducted by examining verbal utterances in the newsreel (Pisarek 2007, 2008; Lisowska-Magdziarz 2016).

Visual propaganda relating to the Western and Northern Territories

In the post-war political reality, the main task of the Polish Army Film Studio "Czołówka", based in Lublin from 1944, was to define the spheres in which the newly established state authorities, supported by film-makers, could succeed in presenting an ideologised image of the world. In the early years of the newsreel, the editorial team was made up of film-makers who had graduated from the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography in Moscow. They successfully transposed to Poland a newsreel model developed by such renowned Soviet film-makers as Dziga Vertov.[1] Jerzy Toeplitz, a theoretician and expert on film issues, noted: "The Soviet Chronicle was always […] not only a reporter, but it sought to encourage the active involvement of the viewer as well" (Toeplitz 1964: 52).

What should be noted is the tendency for the political messages conveyed by the Polish Film Chronicle to be formulated in such a way as to make viewers feel socially involved in its content. This kind of social involvement was supposed to be encouraged by commentator's casual speech, access to information about the actions taken by the new state authorities, and the spread of knowledge about the functioning of the military, so that the message conveyed by the new state authorities would have the desired effect, namely a broad social involvement. The Ministry of Information and Propaganda issued a number

[1] Dziga Vertov – born David Abelevich Kaufman (his name was later russified to Denis Arkadievich Kaufman) in 1896, died 1954. He was a Soviet scriptwriter, film director, and creator of the idea of newsreels. He was one of the most outstanding documentary film makers in cinema history. As early as the 1920s, Vertov proposed many innovative solutions to film-making in both his theoretical works and films. Vertov's theoretical concepts were related to the search for new film-making techniques and a new way of presenting and interpreting film themes. Vertov advocated that reality in a documentary film should be presented in a natural way. He considered it important to free the message in the documentary from excessive intentionality and to show everyday life as it really was (Taptykov 2018).

of circulars containing control instructions on how ministry representatives should interpret public response to the newsreel footage shown in the PKF. In Circular no. 24, dated 9 August 1944, minister Stefan Matuszewski wrote of the need "to study attitudes towards the films shown, to monitor the behaviour of the audience and their response to the film […]. In the event of a negative response from viewers […] critical or ironic comments, the Ministry should be notified at once" (AAN…, ref. no. 856, microfiche 26881). The purpose of the activities undertaken by the ministry was to organise political action on a large scale and make the ministry representatives in the field socially active.

How to weave the propaganda messages into the images of the Western and Northern Territories became an issue discussed in film circles. A good example of such a debate was the First Convention of Newsreel Employees held in Lodz in 1946. There, the creator and first editor-in-chief of the PKF, Jerzy Bossak, described the means developed to convey evocatively in the PKF the propaganda images of the life of people in Poland's Western and Northern Territories:

> If the Recovered Territories are shown on screen with clear political implications and it is said that these lands must be populated by our peasants, workers and intelligentsia, and that the future of our country depends on the development of these areas – this is not a lie, but creative propaganda and an indication of what the most vital interests of the state are. […] Nor is it a false move, but a conscious extraction of the truth from the lie, from the glaringly obvious pretence. Nor can showing our exemplary public utilities, nurseries, kindergartens, medical clinics, etc. be considered a distortion of reality. For exemplary centres are not meant to advertisements, but signposts. That's what they are supposed to be and that's what we have to strive for. (Bossak 1946: n.p.)

In order to convey the atmosphere of the political transformations taking place in Poland, the editors of the PKF tried to make the commentators emphasise key words with unambiguously positive ideological connotations. Commentaries were full of language calques such as 'brotherly help', 'building the foundations of socialism', 'the indissolubility of the alliances of the fraternal states of people's democracy', 'Polish–Soviet friendship', 'Polish–Soviet alliance', 'the struggle for peace', or 'the struggle for social liberation'. According to Pisarek, such phrases were claimed to be a set of universal key words (Pisarek 2002: 10–11), but they could be also useful exclusively in Polish national culture. Michał Głowiński, on the other hand, regarded them as belonging to a group of words characteristic of three varieties of newspeak. He distinguished these types as persuasive-propagandistic, bureaucratic, and kitschy-ludic (Głowiński 1991: 28–30). The aforementioned universality resulted from the planned internationalisation of the propaganda message.

Minister of the Recovered Territories

The Minister of the Recovered Territories and Deputy Prime Minister, Władysław Gomułka, was usually shown in the PKF while visiting towns and villages in the Western and Northern Territories. While in this post, Gomułka was portrayed as an advocate of settlement of the issue of Poland's western border. Following US Secretary of State James Byrnes' speech given in Stuttgart on 6 September 1946, in which he condemned Stalinisation in Central Europe, the PKF editorial team showed coverage of a protest rally criticising the Secretary of State's speech. For many years this speech was a contentious issue in international relations between Poland and the West. Byrnes' questioning of the Polish borders on the Oder and Neisse and making their acceptance contingent on the holding of democratic elections aroused understandable opposition from the communists. In response, they organised a series of demonstrations in Polish cities. The video footage to be shown in the PKF was only three minutes long, of which two minutes were devoted to an excerpt from a speech by Gomułka, which was heard off-screen. Gomułka insisted that the communists would not discuss the shape of Poland's western border with the Western powers, and put forward arguments that Lower Silesia would form the westernmost area of the Slavic region (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 31/46, n.p.). To better illustrate the words of the Minister of Recovered Territories, during his speech, the PKF's editorial team reproduced a map with the Polish post-war borders and the area of Lower Silesia highlighted. The argument made by Gomułka that the Western and Northern Territories should be incorporated into Poland for good as the areas delineating the western border of the Slavic region was not well grounded. A more rational argument for leaving Lower Silesia as part of Poland was one made by Józef Cyrankiewicz in justifying the actual post-war geographical order.

As Minister of the Recovered Territories, Gomułka would visit western areas of Poland and participate in the demonstrations and festivities organised there. In 1946, both Bolesław Bierut and the minister were filmed during a traditional harvest festival in Opole. The newsreel showed them seated in the grandstand. The PKF commentator Andrzej Łapicki alluded to the speech made by the US Secretary of State: "This land belongs to Poland and will remain Polish forever. The Western Territories up to the Oder and Neisse are considered a condition for peace and the economic survival of Poland" (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 32/46, n.p.). As the minister for the region, Deputy Prime Minister Gomułka also participated in the celebrations of the Recovered Territories Week organised in 1947. The speech which was recorded then was given by Gomułka at the end of the ceremony. In the initial newsreel clips, the politician was filmed

from behind, and then viewers were shown his face in profile. The decision was made not to broadcast an excerpt of his speech off-screen. A commentator summarised the main ideas of the speech, placing special emphasis on Gomułka's strong response to all those who wanted to question Poland's right to the western borderlands. In his view, the industriousness of the settlers in the new lands was an element in determining the status of the new territories incorporated into Poland (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 18/47, n.p.).

Images of urban centres in the PKF's political communication

In 1946, the main social theme in the PKF's communications relating to the situation in the Western and Northern Territories was the displacement of the German population from those lands.

In the early post-war years the public were antagonised by references to the recent actions of the German occupiers in Poland. Portraying Germans as eternal enemies of the state was part of the general model of policy towards national minorities pursued by the new authorities.[2] As noted by Trembicka: "For Poland, the objectively essential task was to suppress any form of irredentism, so bearing this in mind the communist authorities accepted the provisions of the Potsdam conference on the expulsion of the German population from the Recovered Territories" (Trembicka 2014: 174). One of the fundamental goals set by the representatives of the state authorities was to create a new model of the state based on the most homogeneous nationality structure. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that the new state policy with regard to national minorities brought about various forms of repression.

The first topic commented on in PKF no. 10/46 was a report on German people leaving Wrocław. The footage was three minutes and five seconds long. The narrative used in documentaries was very aggressive, as evidenced by the use of the imperative mood. The following calls could be heard: "The Germans are leaving Poland! Let them take their belongings and go to their homeland

[2] As has been noted by Olejnik: "Germany appeared to be an enemy on all levels: national (as an anti-Polish agent, currently exterminating the nation), ideological (as an embodiment of the most reactionary anti-democratic and anti-humanitarian ideas) and economic (as an exploiter of the country's living and dead resources). The assessment of Germany was not only associated with Nazism. It was stressed that the moral degradation of the German people had already begun before the war or even before Hitler came to power. The communists saw Nazism as yet another manifestation of the German imperialism and expansionism that was for centuries directed eastwards" (Olejnik 2003: 73).

where they belong" (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 3/46). This quote clearly reveals an antagonistic attitude. The displacement of Germans from the Western Territories resembled what Poles had experienced when they had to leave the Eastern Borderlands. The huge bundles carried away by the German people were meant to symbolise the property that had been looted by them as they left Wrocław.

A communication technique used in the footage discussed above was the showing of archival shots of Polish people being deported to death camps. The viewers' attention was drawn to the humane treatment of the Germans by the Polish authorities. A politically unambiguous commentary was complemented by clips showing trains well-stocked with food and hygiene products, on which the Germans were to leave Poland. The images of political communication featured the use of a particular kind of contrast in the selection of clips to illustrate the scenes described above. A dominant feature of the footage was the bipolarity of the message. The shots taken in the death camps focused on showing the living conditions in those camps in winter. These vivid images featured poorly dressed people and the sadness and depression visible on their faces. In both cases the leitmotif was the mythical theme of the road, matching the political situation being discussed. The bipolarity of the message also manifested itself in the portrayal of Germans. Those shown were usually young people (attractive girls) with features of the Aryan type. The propagandistic manner of reporting indicates that for the PKF's film-makers, the most important aspect of the political message was the implementation of the guidelines relating to the resettlement action. In most cases, the PKF editorial team chose to present the resettlement scenes as idyllic images. The message of the newsreel was dominated by a fabricated image of generous Poles who let the Germans leave Poland in humane conditions (Dziurok, Madajczyk, Rosenbaum 2016: 38–381).

It should be mentioned that on 25 June 1945, Edward Ochab, the then chief representative for the Recovered Territories, set out guidelines regarding the displacement of the Germans from the Western and Northern Territories. The document was addressed to the governors administering the Silesian, Gdańsk and Pomeranian provinces. In the document, Ochab mentioned that the administration's efforts urging the Germans to leave were supposed to lead to 'voluntary departures'. The local administration subordinate to the agencies of the Ministry of Recovered Territories was eager to issue documents facilitating mass departures for the Germans. A common desire to leave the Western and Northern Territories resulted from the Germans' awareness that the already approved territorial changes had become irreversible and displacement inevitable (Mordawski 2015: 137–138).

Communication illustrating the displacement of Germans from the Western and Northern Territories was part of an ongoing propaganda campaign intended to highlight the organisational efficiency of the Polish administration on the one hand, and its resoluteness and consistency in implementing Joseph Stalin's decisions on the other. PKF no. 23/46 showed the deportation of Germans to the British occupation zone. Viewers could see well-stocked sanitary carriages in which German newborn babies were taken care of before being deported with the adults. As in the previous footage, the German population was shown well prepared for transport, all of the people wearing new, neat clothes (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 26/46, n.p.). The commentator Andrzej Łapicki read:

> The Germans are leaving the Western Territories, making room for the Polish settlers from the destroyed central areas and from the East. Despite the lies spread by German propaganda and its Western European friends, we are resettling them in accordance with international obligations, they are being given food and sanitary assistance for their onward journey. We are not driven by revenge, although this feeling would be more than justified given the wrongs we have suffered not only at the hands of the Gestapo, but also the German civilian population. (ibid.)

The displacement of Germans from the Western and Northern Territories as presented in the PKF was consistent with the principles of the displacement policy adopted by the Ministry of Recovered Territories. The head of the ministry, Władysław Gomułka, responsible for the displacement of Germans, appointed government representatives in individual counties. Important issues which were stressed in the document published at the same time included matters concerning the humane treatment of the Germans leaving Poland. Displacement could only take place in daylight and in the presence of the authorised officials representing the administrative authorities. Gomułka warned that any lack of discipline on the part of Poles towards Germans leaving Poland should be punished most severely (Mordawski 2015: 207–208).

The communicated messages fit the general model of ethnic policy modelled on Stalinist ideas. As pointed out by Eugeniusz Mironowicz:

> In 1945, the national rhetoric became an essential part of communist propaganda in Poland. A nationally homogeneous post-war Poland was supposed to stand in contrast to a multinational and torn by internal conflicts Second Republic of Poland. In this context, talking about national minorities in terms of current politics contradicted the doctrine of the national state […]. The displacement of the German population […] was quite widely approved of. (Mironowicz 2000: 32–33)

In 1946, the communication agenda of the Polish Film Chronicle included mentions of the cohabitation of new settlers and the native population of the Western and Northern Territories. The PKF cameramen filmed a 'spontaneous' rally in one of the villages on the Oder river. The footage was meant to stress the local people's attachment to their native language and intangible cultural artefacts. By way of illustration, they showed village women in folk costumes typical of the Oder region taking part in a demonstration (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 36/46). The cohabitation of people of different origins did not look the same in all parts of the Western Territories. In Upper Silesia, where there was a mix of Polish Silesians and Germans as well as people resettled from the Eastern Borderlands, everyone saw their future as equally uncertain, yet they lived together quite peacefully. The situation was quite similar in the areas adjacent to Wrocław where a very small German minority remained. On the other hand, in Western Pomerania, near Szczecin and especially on the coast, where resettlees arrived from central and north-eastern Poland, the cultural differences between them and the natives were so great that the dominant emotion of the early years was mutual distrust. The state authorities did their best to ensure normal living conditions in the areas acquired after the war. This was extremely difficult to achieve in the Western and Northern Territories. Beata Halicka is right to claim in one of her publications that the settlers from the Eastern Borderlands were characterised by a duality of attitudes towards the German population living along the Oder. The suffering experienced by Poles living in the Eastern Borderlands at the hand of the Soviets was far greater than that inflicted by the German occupiers. They were also expelled from their lands in the Borderlands. Therefore, they were more sympathetic towards the Germans who were forced to leave their homes. Those displaced to the Western and Northern Territories from the areas that had been incorporated into the Third Reich (the former General Government) took a completely different attitude. This was caused by the active involvement of the population of the General Government in actions against the Nazis, while others spent the period of occupation either as prisoners in death camps or as forced labourers. Such experiences resulted in a clearly negative attitude towards the German population. After the Second World War, Poles held to the belief and hope that Germany must atone for the acts committed by Nazi criminals. This belief made the new settlers in the Western and Northern Territories support the idea of the collective guilt of the German people (Halicka 2015: 206).

By controlling the propaganda images the state reaped concrete benefits, such as the remodelling of the mentality of society, which began to exhibit characteristics of a close-knit community living under coercion in conditions

of political terror. There was a progressive vassalisation of the individual, deprived of human and civil rights, left without protection against the oppression of the state machine and its functionaries (Marczewska-Rytko, Olszewski 2011: 408; Popper 1993: 17ff.).

As has already been mentioned, one of the important aspects shaping the myth of the Western and Northern Territories was the consistent rebuilding and resettling of the new areas incorporated into Poland. In the early post-war years, it was workers who played a significant role in the development of the newly incorporated areas, which was related to the territorial changes in Poland after 1945. In the newsreel, the workers were portrayed as those who had brought the cities back to life. The image of the workers that was created depicted them as the new administrators of the urban centres in the Recovered Territories. Janusz Jasiński pointed out that:

> After 1945, the term *Ziemie Odzyskane* (Recovered Territories) referred to those territories that had belonged to the Third Reich before 1939 and to the Free City of Danzig, and which were allocated to Poland as a result of the decisions made in Potsdam. Until 1989, no one considered this term disrespectful or let alone contemptuous. It was just used as a new, yet accurate name in a specific historical period. (Jasiński 2006: 15)

According to Osękowski:

> The incorporation of the eastern German territories into Poland meant that the Polish state had to face a new social and economic reality. The area which used to be part of Germany and an integral part of her economy for several hundred years was now part of Poland. The areas that had been taken over by Poland were now part of a state with different political and economic systems. In the post-war years, there were significant differences between the Recovered Territories and other parts of the country, concerning both economic matters and various social problems. This determined the specific nature of the areas incorporated into Poland and the new German–Polish borderland. Over the years, these differences blurred and a unified state organism began taking shape. (Osękowski 2006: 20–21)

Groups of workers in these areas were meant to play an important role by helping Polish people get used to the new territorial shape of the country. Workers rebuilding Wrocław as the new, unofficial capital of the new Western Territories were to reinforce in the public perception the belief that the loss of the Eastern Borderlands[3] should quickly be forgotten and the notion of the Re-

[3] As Eleonora Kirwiel, an expert on history and political and social life in the Eastern Borderlands, pointed out: "The area of the North-Eastern Borderlands of the Republic of Po-

covered Territories should work its way into the collective consciousness. This view of history was determined by both internal and external factors, namely the approval of the new shape of the frontier by Western states and the eradication of West German territorial revisionism (2006: 27–28).

A political memorandum referring to the shape of the new territory of Poland comprising areas in the basins of the Oder and the Vistula served as a means to legitimise the measures taken by the TRJN (the Provisional Government of National Unity). The history of Poland began to be associated with the motherland located on the Oder and Neisse rivers, which had been lost as a result of German rule. Attention was drawn to Poland's full rights to the Recovered Territories and to politics based on the idea of a Poland going back to the times of the Piast dynasty (*Postulaty Polski* 1970: 10). Commentaries and films shown in the PKF concerning the role of the "working class" in rebuilding Wrocław and restoring normal life in the Recovered Territories can be grouped as follows: 1) rebuilding of the historical part of Wrocław, 2) development of industry in Wrocław, and 3) the role of the 'working class' in the development of the Western Territories as shown at the Recovered Territories Exhibition.

PKF no. 12, shown in Polish cinemas as early as 1945, included footage showing Wrocław following its liberation by the Soviet army on 6 May 1945. There were shots taken just after the liberation of the city. That this was the case could be deduced from the fact that the towers of St. Mary Magdalene Church, which were blown up by the Soviet army soon after the liberation, were still completely intact. To reinforce the propaganda message, the footage included many panoramic shots showing a general, bird's eye perspective. Their purpose was to show the extent of the city's destruction. To legitimise Poland's new territorial gains and to point to the historical Polishness of Wrocław, the messages abounded with expressions referring to the history of Poland from the period of the Silesian Piast dynasty and the then undisputed Polishness of Wrocław: "Wrocław, the ancient capital of the Silesian Piast dynasty, the Polish Wrocław, the bosom of the fatherland, we will sweep away the traces of German rule, we will rebuild the Polish Wrocław" (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 12/45, n.p.).

In the early post-war years, there seemed to be a need to rewrite the history of Wrocław in such a way as to add a Polish touch, so that the foreign, post-German city would appear more familiar to the settlers. The newsreel

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land in the inter-war period consisted of the then Vilnius and Novgorod Voivodeships. These lands bordered the Białystok Voivodeship to the west, the Polesie Voivodeship to the south, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the east, and Lithuania and Latvia to the north" (Kirwiel 2011: 11).

producers contributed significantly to the creation of the myth of Polish Wrocław by building the Polish tradition of the city, and skilfully combining events from Polish history with the present of Wrocław. They were acting here as engineers of social collective memory, and the workers' activities shown in the PKF offered a kind of antidote to the sense of homelessness and loss of roots common among borderlanders. The image of Wrocław's past created for the needs of the PKF showed features of a city to which borderlanders could come back as Poles, to discover the nation's history and traditions and Polishness (Thum 2005: 257–258). Propaganda actions were justified on the basis of assumptions specific to the Polish Western school of thought which was popular in the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century. After the war, propaganda activities were based on assumptions originating from this school of thought, and identified with groups closely associated with National Democracy and its supporters (Maj 2010). The idea of incorporating the Western and Northern Territories into Poland was based mainly on the theoretical works of scholars in Poznań. Post-war propaganda activities targeting the Western and Northern Territories intensified after 1944, when the Eastern Borderlands of the Republic of Poland were completely lost. The new state authorities justified the incorporation of the Western and Northern Territories into Poland using an argument based on the national and class character of the proposed changes, including the development of numerous workers' centres in the new areas (Domke 2010: 47–48).

Just as in the case of the Polish capital, after the liberation of Wrocław, PKF viewers could see reconstruction works and clearing of rubble going on in various parts of the city. PKF no. 41/46 mentioned the reconstruction and raising of the suspension bridge over the Oder, which was called the Grunwald Bridge to emphasise the Polishness of the city and allude to the victory of Władysław Jagiełło over the forces of the Teutonic Order at the Battle of Grunwald on 15 July 1410. The film depicted the role of two social groups – the intelligentsia (engineers) and the working class – in the rebuilding of Wrocław (AFN…, KR, no. 41/36, n.p.). In addition to the rebuilding of the city's historic sites, one could see the reopening of factories that had been destroyed by the Germans. There were also shots showing the reconstruction of the rail coach factory and workers performing their tasks. The clips kept changing like kaleidoscopic images. To highlight the contribution of Polish workers to the construction of coal wagons, each of them was decorated with the national emblem of Poland. The reports showed the development of the factory and the willingness of the workers in the Recovered Territories, who were at the forefront of all others, to develop the national economy. Propagandistic purposes were served by the

use of vocabulary usually associated with actions on the war front: "victorious battle on the front of the economic recovery, the first success of the Three-Year Plan" (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 5/46, n.p.).

A newsreel film showing the development of the machine tool factory in Wrocław was made in much the same vein. The footage opens with photographs of the factory destroyed in 1946 followed by images of people at work in the newly rebuilt production halls. Then a profile of Eugeniusz Kołdra, a super-efficient worker, was presented. A newsreel commentator praised the worker's professional qualifications: "Foreman Eugeniusz Kołdra has been working in the profession for thirty years. Today, he holds a managerial position and does an excellent job. New Poland needs professionals and knows how to appreciate their work and merits" (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 44/46, n.p.). For the authors of PKF's political messages, the development of heavy and metallurgical industry was tied to the running of factories and other companies in the Western and Northern Territories. The PKF editorial team joined in a campaign to melt down scrap metal from war machines which were still lying on battlegrounds. The state authorities believed that such a way of acquiring metal would increase the efficiency of the metallurgical industry. A commentator read that the scale of heavy industry in Poland was contingent on the good development of the Western and Northern Territories: "Obviously, the basic condition for such development is the proper development of the Western Territories, where there are huge metallurgical factories" (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 40/46, n.p.).

A component that played an important role in the growth of industry in the Recovered Territories was inland shipping. The development of this area of the economy was closely tied to the proximity of the Oder, which was an important waterway for transporting goods. To provide a better understanding of the situation, newsreel viewers were shown technical innovations such as river locks used by workers to improve water transport. To make the argument about the development of the Recovered Territories more believable, newsreel commentaries included statistics proving the power of inland shipping: "Its reconstruction was completed in a record time of three months, during which six tugboats, seven barges, three dredgers, and three motorboats were also renovated. The shipyard employs only Poles" (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 43/46, n.p.).

Examples selected from the newsreels reporting on the situation in the Western and Northern Territories and the significant contribution made by workers prove that the early years after the end of the Second World War were difficult for the new authorities in terms of building a positive image of society. In Wrocław, the streets had to be cleaned up and social life had to be organised to a basic degree. It was necessary that people should approve of the new state

authorities, which was the first step in consolidating the position of the communist government in the new lands. In the government's political communication, Wrocław was to be shown as the most important urban centre of the Western and Northern Territories. With the active participation of citizens, it was to become the living image of victory in the war against Germany. Finally, it was to serve as an example of a proper model of urban development in these areas and become a symbol of the achievements of the communist authorities (Malicka 2012: 135). It should be noted that many Wrocław residents, especially those who had come from the Eastern Borderlands after the Second World War, emphasised the uniqueness of the thousand-year-old city on the Oder river. This sentimental attitude towards the city and priceless monuments that had survived the ravages of the war meant that Wrocław, not without reason, began to be called Little Lwów (Lviv), when the Lwów *Polonica* arrived there together with the repatriates (Kunicki, Ławecki 2015: 78).

Images of the settlers in the Western and Northern Territories

In the media coverage, there appeared to be two main threads concerning the peasantry in the Western and Northern Territories: (1) resettlement from the Eastern Borderlands to the Western and Northern Territories, and (2) harvest-time with the army's participation. What image of the Western and Northern Territories was presented in the media was determined by state agencies such as the Ministry of Information and Propaganda. The ministry took steps to carry out a propaganda campaign in the mass media of the time. In the surviving ministerial documents concerning this campaign we find much information about the attempts of the state authorities to influence the media that were subordinate to them. For instance, these documents show that there were calls to find new topics to discuss in the media. These included, but were not limited to: "(1) Providing assistance and care for repatriates, (2) Matters relevant to the Recovered Territories" (AAN, ref. no. 27/VIII/MIIP, microfiche 58, p. 73). The ministry recommended actions involving collaboration between representatives of the PKF and the State Repatriation Offices and the promotion of the actions of the Support Committees for repatriates from the USSR (ibid.).

The measures taken by the ministry were closely related to the political situation at the time and the uncertain status of the Western and Northern Territories. The state authorities planned a quick and complete replacement of the German population and the incorporation of the native population of the Western Territories – the autochthons – into the Polish population. On

starting the resettlement process, the post-war Polish authorities did not wait for international decisions regarding the status of the new lands. They chose to adopt a fait accompli policy. The presence of settlers coming from the Eastern Borderlands in the once German lands was supposed to testify to the Polishness of these lands and their incorporation into the territorial composition of post-war Poland (2019: 66).

PKF no. 18/45 included an account of the resettlement process. A camera team filmed the deserted villages near Olsztyn. Władysław Hańcza, a commentator, read:

> The Western Territories await the Polish settler. Wheat fields, fish farms, farmsteads, agricultural machinery. A free, yet still unoccupied country is waiting for a proprietor. More and more Poles who used to live across the Bug earn a living in the regained territories. These lands, torn away from the enemy, will be revived by a large stream of Polishness. (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 18/66)

The newsreel footage was made so as to create an image of a land abounding in good fertile soils and farmsteads, ready for immediate habitation and use, in the minds of peasants who were to be the future farmers in the newly acquired territories. The commentator listed the qualities that the Western and Northern Territories possessed. Because of their attachment to the land, peasants who were to populate the areas regained from the Germans were expected to impart an element of Polishness to them. Propaganda footage produced by the PKF team was dominated by the emptiness permeating the villages (deserted houses, barns, abandoned cartloads of potatoes). In the final shots, however, we can see the mass influx of newcomers from across the Bug, many of whom considered the Western and Northern Territories a new "promised land". A mass exodus, an atmosphere associated with reaching the promised land, which were the main topics of the PKF productions, resembled mythical and biblical stories based on the archetypal motif of journey, whose participants experienced various plagues and misfortunes and had to endure hardship and suffering (Odysseus' return home to Ithaca, the Israelites' journey to the Promised Land). The history of the Western and Northern Territories also fitted into the theme of wandering and the mythical pattern of cyclical repetitions: degradation, world destruction, and a new order of rebirth (Tumolska 2007: 60ff.). It should be noted that the changes and social migrations in the aftermath of the Second World War forced people coming from across the Bug to renounce completely the social ties that they had built over the years. Although the new residents of the Western and Northern Territories might set off on a journey with neighbours whom they knew very well or settle down in neighbouring farms, the divided and scattered social groups

were forced to change their ingrained understanding of such concepts as Poland and Polishness and reconstruct them on completely different and new foundations (Bock-Matuszyk, Kucharski 2017: 19).

Newsreel films featuring settlement in the Western and Northern Territories were dominated by a carefully constructed image of a typical settler, reinforced by evocative shots such as staged scenes showing everyday village life, men fencing off a new farm, families feeding livestock in clean, spacious and well-kept yards, an old woman churning butter, or fishermen repairing their nets after a (no doubt successful) catch. An image of everyday life returning to normal was expected to ensure stability and security (AFN…, KR, no. 20/47, n.p.). In the propaganda-driven footage, the people of Warmia and Mazury were portrayed as resourceful and hard-working farmers. The scheme adopted was part of the overall positive image of Warmia and Mazury, depicted as a region inhabited by people who were attached to the land and tradition, hardworking, honest, appreciative of peace and work, and above all guardians of the new, but not yet fully settled, borders of the Republic of Poland (Marczak 2012: 40).

The reality of those times was significantly different from the images shown in the propaganda films. The Poland of 1945 was said to be a country of the migration of peoples. Around 1.5 million people changed their place of residence. Trains full of repatriates left for the Western and Northern Territories. In the early days, the property that had been left by more than two million Germans abandoning towns and villages was taken over by around 800,000 Poles. The takeover of the properties that used to belong to Germans was far from perfect; it happened that flats and houses were taken without any official consent, which over time was sanctioned by the authorities. There was no shortage of looters, who took away the goods left behind by the Germans with impunity. In the 1940s, a quarter of Poles changed their place of residence.

Another piece of footage showed how resettlement was proceeding in Lower Silesia. The main scenes showed efficiently coordinated activities, or carts with the resettlees' possessions going one after another. Notable was a scene involving an official of the State Repatriation Office handing over the keys to former German farms to the settlers. There were many scenes depicting the settling of new homes, unpacking of the carts, caring for animals, and preparation of former German agricultural machines for use in harvesting. Władysław Hańcza read:

> Settlers are taken from assembly points to settlement sites of their own choice where local branches of the State Repatriation Office, or alternatively public administration offices, hand them over the keys to previously secured houses and workshops. Farms that had until recently been abandoned began to hum with activity again. New settlers easily get used to new types of agricultural machinery. (ibid.)

The images and film commentary were meant to testify to the administrative efficiency of the Polish authorities. The recorded images showed symbols of Polishness, of attachment to the land: fields of grain, or a wooden cross. A shot of the Oder and a Polish border pole crowned with the image of an eagle served as evidence of the Polishness of the western areas. The footage was taken with the intention of showing that the promises made to the nation by the state had been fulfilled: the Recovered Territories were to be safe, developing, friendly to settlers, and equipped with modern agricultural machinery (Drygalski, Kwaśniewski 1992: 260–261).

For small farmers from central Poland, a move to the Western and Northern Territories provided an opportunity for significant social advancement. From small farms and thatched cottages, they moved to well-maintained brick houses and took over farms of several dozen hectares. The price that they had to pay was the lack of security and stability. Years after the war ended, people living in the Western Territories still believed that the land taken over from the Germans would one day have to be returned. In practice, this also meant that the peasants did not care much about the buildings and machines they had taken over. A decision to move west carried a serious risk. Shortly after liberation, the Recovered Territories were swarming with looters plundering former German towns. To ensure a minimum level of security, the lands along the frontier were settled by former soldiers. In addition, the Youth Organisation of the Workers' University Association sent its activists to protect the border areas. The PKF reported:

> A symbolic mounting of the guard by activists of the Workers' University Association has taken place at a border station. Soldiers of the border protection force are reporting after having done their guard duty. As is well known, along the entire length of our western borders, border protection troops do guard duty to effectively protect the frontier and prevent the German element from penetrating the Recovered Territories. (AFN…, KR, no. 2/46, n.p.)

The state authorities knew all too well how difficult it was to promote a positive image of the Recovered Territories in the media. Therefore, the Ministry of Information and Propaganda prepared detailed guidelines encouraging settlement in the western regions of the country, and the official documents stated that "The keeping and developing of the Recovered Territories is a matter of paramount importance to the state. The settlement process comes to the forefront of the current problems. To ensure our programme is completed it is necessary that as many Poles as possible should settle in the Western Territories" (AAN, ref. no. 27/VIII/MIIP, microfiche 58, p. 76).

PKF's reports relating to the Western and Northern Territories also contained information about harvesting in those areas. In a film from 1945, it was reported that the first harvest in free Poland had begun. The footage showed peasants working in fertile and productive rye fields (AFN, KR, no. 21/45). A PKF commentator compared the first harvest and peasants' work to a secondary school graduation exam (*matura*): "The first harvest in reborn Poland is like a maturity exam for a nation that has taken power into its own hands and is building its homeland following the principles of democracy and social justice" (ibid.). Just as the graduation exam is a crucial stage in a young person's life, the harvest was considered a crucial stage in the functioning of the new state reborn after the Second World War. Peasants were compared to school graduates, on whose dedication the state's food and farming policy depended. The message communicated to the public also contained key words characteristic of the new political system and state, referring to the idea of universal people's democracy. Characteristic lexemes used to describe the reported social situation included: "reborn Poland, democracy, social justice, the great work of rebuilding the country" (ibid.).

Knowing that the Western Territories were largely uninhabited, the state authorities sent military units to help local peasants with the harvest. PKF no. 22/45 showed footage featuring soldiers doing harvesting work. The images captured by the PKF cameramen, using both long shots and close-ups, showed soldiers working in the field, reaping rye and operating modern agricultural machines. The commentator Władysław Hańcza read: "The Polish soldier is replacing his machine gun with a scythe and taking a driver's seat in an agricultural machine. A specially formed economic-agricultural division is harvesting crops in the most sparsely populated West Pomeranian counties" (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 22/45). The footage showing the harvest was dominated by long shots. Naturally, this propaganda film style was intended to show the vastness of arable lands. An interesting symbolic shot focused on hay sheaves and rifles placed next to them. Silesian mines loomed in the distance. The makers of a film titled *Military Ploughing and Sowing* contained in PKF no. 17/47 adopted a similar style. It showed soldiers turning fields into arable land for future settlers. "[…] In the military estates that will later be parcelled out between settlers, the time of ploughing and sowing has just begun. The settlers who are expected here in April and May will find the land cultivated and ready to welcome new farmers" (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 7/47). Additionally, emphasis was placed on measures to improve agricultural mechanisation in the Western and Northern Territories. PKF no. 12/46 features newly delivered tractors donated by UNRRA. In the commentary, the announcer described the task of

the tractor drivers operating the new machines in the Western and Northern Territories as "regaining the west" (AFN…, KR, no. 12/46, n.p.).

The footage shown exhibited elements of Christian Metz's theory of media syntagmatics. Metz viewed film as a set of consecutive segments. The shot was the basic unit, and a sequence comprised more complex units whose components were usually a set of shots forming a coherent narrative unit (Ollivier 2010: 81). In reports communicating images of agriculture in the Recovered Territories, we can find different narrative styles describing the model of agrarian culture in those regions. The state authorities supported the existence of large-scale farms. They paid attention to the proper economic development of the new lands. This can be confirmed by numerous shots of mechanised farms. Due to their dedication to the development of the Recovered Territories, the people living there were perceived, alongside the workers, as a social vanguard enabling the state's economic growth.

In its reports on military settlement, the newsreel showed images of life in villages inhabited solely by former military personnel. Life in the village of Platerowo, so named after the patroness of the Emilia Plater Independent Women's Battalion of the First Polish Army, was reported in the form of *michałki* (short stories about trivial events). The footage showed women farmers working in the fields, and the uniforms in which they performed the work signified their affiliation to the army. The way in which the shots were taken suggests that these were staged shots intended to show how life was returning to normal in the Recovered Territories. The jocular character of the footage was complemented by images of women pushing a hand plough and an irreverent comment from the narrator: "This village will forever remain a symbol of the most beautiful virtues of a Polish woman" (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 36/46, n.p.).

Newsreel footage clearly revealed the party decision-makers' desire to create a certain profile of a new settler in the Recovered Territories – that of a former soldier. This decision was driven by the political priorities of the government of the time (Sękowski 1993: 59–61). The soldiers who had been sent to settle in the Recovered Territories had specific political tasks to perform: they were to guard the borders and be ready to repel any attack from Germany. Special instructors were assigned to new settlers to help them adapt and settle in the new lands. Independently of the Citizens' Militia posts that had already been set up there, special civil guard units were established in local communities. The guards were often recruited from repatriated soldiers (ibid.). The state authorities wanted the Recovered Territories to be settled as quickly as possible. Therefore, General Karol Świerczewski issued an order to each army

unit requiring them to take measures to settle from a dozen to several tens of families (ibid.).

Summing up our discussion of the image of peasant farmers in the Recovered Territories, it should be said that state propaganda created consistent images of a mythical social mission. The peasants were not only supposed to form the vanguard and foundation of the new post-war society, but to be the "bastion of Polishness" as well. Everyday farm jobs as portrayed in political messages were elevated to the status of a social mission. Farm work and resettlement actions were compared to fighting, with the concept of "fighting on the reconstruction front" being juxtaposed with armed struggle. The commentaries heard in the PKF were characterised by bombastic rhetoric and the commentators' distinctive tone of voice. The phraseology used in the propaganda messages exhibited simplicity of style. Slogans were usually simple and politically unambiguous, intended to reinforce viewers' belief in the Polishness of the Recovered Territories and provide a sense of security and prosperity that would encourage newcomers from across the Bug river to settle in the new Polish territories (Tyszkiewicz 1995: 115).

The Recovered Territories Exibition

The state-organised Recovered Territories Exhibition was a culmination of the propaganda activities undertaken by politicians to encourage settlement in the Western and Northern Territories (Tyszkiewicz 1997: passim). The exhibition concepts were subject to change. In its initial stage, the project was titled "The Recovered Territories Two Years After the War". The importance of the exhibition was evidenced by the fact that it was an outcome of interdepartmental collaboration. The government, in particular the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Information and Propaganda, and the Ministry of Recovered Territories, was responsible for the content of the propaganda presented to the public. The opening of the exhibition was originally scheduled for 1947, but due to organisational delays it was postponed to 1948. As Berlin was being blockaded by Soviet troops, comments of an anti-imperialist nature appeared; however, the main focus of the exhibition was on the history of the Recovered Territories, the achievements of people's Poland associated with the development of the new lands, and the close connection of the new areas with the "motherland" (Domke: 2010: 65).

The PKF film reports on the WZO usually featured the industrial exhibition halls. The dominance of this type of footage was intended to confirm the

dynamic development of the new lands, which would not have taken place without the prominent participation of the workers. There were stands dedicated to the main industries, for example, a textile stand manned by seamstresses. Andrzej Łapicki read: "Seamstresses in the Textile Industry Pavilion are very popular. Everybody wants to see how clothing fabric is manufactured" (AFN…, ref. no. KR, no. 39/48, n.p.). The exhibition was impressive not only because of its size, but also because of the ludic nature of some of the displays. PKF no. 35/48 showed a model of a coal gangway whose purpose was to illustrate the operation of a Silesian mine. To make the image look more realistic, the stand was hosted by miners. The propaganda message was that the incorporated lands were inseparably bound to Poland and needed to remain within the borders of a post-war Polish state with its developing industry and natural resources. In sum, the main purpose of the Recovered Territories Exhibition was to reinforce the public belief that the Recovered Territories would remain Polish forever. It was an opportunity to showcase the current state of industrial reconstruction in the territories. It also served as a propaganda tool by showing Poland's growing dependency on the policy pursued by an external sovereign power, the USSR (Domke 2010: 166–167).

Conclusion

The political messages associated with images of the Western and Northern Territories shown in the PKF between 1944 and 1948 can be divided into several thematic subgroups determined by the political situation in those lands at the time. In the years 1944–1945, the main issue presented in the PKF was the displacement of the German population and problems related to the socialisation of the incoming population with the native inhabitants of the Western and Northern Territories. Between 1945 and 1946, the PKF consistently reported on the propaganda campaign involving clearing Wrocław of rubble and restoring the normal functioning of the city institutions. Further, a distinctive feature of the years 1946–1947 was a propaganda campaign to encourage people displaced from east of the Bug to settle in the new lands. The year 1948, chosen as the closing year of the present discussion, coincided with the end of the propaganda campaign focusing on the settlement of new lands. A culmination of the persistent propaganda campaign was the Recovered Territories Exhibition held at the Pavilion of the Four Domes in Wrocław.

Images used by the PKF for political communication created a certain media image of the Western and Northern Territories in Poland and contained

a whole set of meanings, values and principles relevant to media and political communication. The images of the Western and Northern Territories presented by the PKF editorial team were part of a political communication process whose final effect was to legitimise the post-war actions taken by the state authorities. The incorporation of new territories into the "Motherland" was meant to signify the cohesion of the nation and the state. The glorification of historical events related to the Western and Northern Territories and the recollection of them in the PKF, together with the construction of a new symbolic and cultural order, carried a whiff of political intentionality and trivial indoctrination. The constant reference to the myth of Piast Poland with regard to the Western and Northern Territories had a compensatory function after the loss of the Eastern Borderlands of the Republic of Poland. Themes exploited by the PKF to create the desired image of the Western and Northern Territories contained elements of the anti-war, anti-German, patriotic, national and popular propaganda so desired by the state authorities. The content of the PKF was conducive to the Polonisation of the memory of the end of the war and its consequences, and the magnification of the achievements of the glorious tradition of the Polish nation.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to present the images created for political communication by the editorial team of the Polish Film Chronicle (PKF), an important means of transmission of political content. The hypothesis adopted in the research was that in post-war Poland, the PKF became an important component of propaganda activities carried out by the state. Alongside the press and the radio, it was an important tool of political influence in relations between the state authorities and the public. The study uses the techniques of exegesis and media analysis, together with the systemic analysis method. It shows that the PKF's political communication contained a whole set of meanings, values and principles that played an important role in the media and political message concerning Poland's Western and Northern Territories and influenced the creation of their image. The pictures of the Western and Northern Territories presented by the PKF's editors were a component of the political communication process, whose final effect was to legitimise the actions of the post-war state authorities. The incorporation of new territories into the "Motherland" symbolised the cohesion of the nation and the state. The glory of historical events related to the Western and Northern Territories, referred to in the messages communicated by the PKF, and the construction of a new symbolic and cultural order were characterised by political intentionality and trivial indoctrination. The consistent reference to the myth of Piast Poland with regard to the Western and Northern Territories had a compensatory function after the loss of the Eastern Borderlands of the Republic of Poland. The themes of the films shown in the PKF shaped the image of the Western and Northern Territories and contained elements of the anti-war, anti-German, patriotic, national and popular propaganda so desired by the state authorities. The content of the PKF fostered the Polonisation of the memory concerning the end of the war and its consequences, and strove to magnify the achievements of the glorious tradition of the Polish nation in viewers' eyes.

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The Kosznajderia phenomenon On the complexity of the identity and heritage of the Pomeranian Region

Introduction

Kosznajderia, though one of the lesser known subregions of Pomerania, unquestionably exemplifies that region's cultural richness, as well as the unobvious and often difficult relations between ethnic and national groups. Significantly, Pomerania in the past, "being a borderland in both geographical and sociocultural senses, was subject to the influences of different political, cultural and economic centres that often competed and fought fiercely with each other", wherein the greatest significance attached to the conflict between Poland and Germany (Obracht-Prondzyński 2010: 9). The continuous rivalry between state organisms caused a situation where, among other things, "the culture of Pomerania is like a palimpsest, on which every successive century has written its own text, often erasing (…) what had been written before. But it sometimes also happened that what had been rejected and forgotten (…) with time was restored to memory. This process has been particularly visible in recent times" (ibidem: 10).

From today's perspective, it is interesting to examine Kosznajderia not only historically, but also in sociological and ethnological terms. In the latter case, the central points of interest to researchers are above all the heritage and identity of today's inhabitants of the area, and the place and significance of Kosznajderia and the Kosznajders in the shaping of social and cultural identification. This research perspective alludes to a label popularly attached to Kosznajderia in regional and local discourse, namely *fenomen tożsamości*, a "phenomenon of identity" (as in the 2013 work titled *Kosznajderia* –

fenomen tożsamości).[1] The purpose of this article is to examine what the essence of that phenomenon is in contemporary times, and how it is present in the subregion and in local communities.

The material presented here originates from field research carried out in the southern part of the Chojnice rural administrative district (gmina Chojnice). Most of the research work was done as part of the project "Tradition for development. In search of the potentials of Pomeranian regional cultures".[2] The studied area has strong links with the Kosznajderian heritage. Lying between Chojnice and Tuchola,[3] Kosznajderia was inhabited for more than 500 years by the ethnic group known as the Kosznajders. One of the most widely available and best-known information pamphlets about the subregion states that:

> Kosznajderia consists of barely twenty villages[4] concentrated in a small part of Pomerelia, lying south-east of Chojnice, inhabited from the late Middle Ages until the Second World War by a German population, distinguished from its neighbours linguistically and ethnically. The centre of this unique land for centuries was Ostrowite – the Kosznajderian "capital". (Szwoch 2007)

Research on the heritage and identity of the inhabitants of today's Kosznajderia was carried out in the years 2019–2020. It consisted of wide-ranging data analysis (based on sources such as local websites, information pamphlets, historical and popular science publications, and local authority documents, including from cultural institutions), detailed individual interviews (with formal and informal local leaders), freely structured interviews with residents, and observation of daily life and local events, combined with photographic documentation. The cycle of research activities ended with a meeting in Ostrowite at which preliminary findings were presented, attended by several dozen interested residents from the southern part of Chojnice rural district and its sur-

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[1] The inscription "Kosznajderia fenomen tożsamości" also appears on the village cultural centre building in Silno (this being related to a project carried out under the same name); see e.g. Barton-Piórkowska (2016).

[2] The project was carried out in 2018–2020 under a grant from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, in the component "Folk and traditional culture", awarded to the Baltic Sea Cultural Centre in Gdańsk, in partnership with the University of Gdańsk Pomeranian Centre of Culture Research and the Kashubian Institute in Gdańsk.

[3] Historians also list the towns of Sępólno and Kamień Krajeński.

[4] Different sources give various numbers of villages: from 19 to more than 20. From a historical perspective, determining the extent of Kosznajderia appears problematic. Researchers point out that the number of Kosznajderian villages (those with both a Kosznajderian and a general Pomeranian population) increased over time.

roundings. Statements made by those attending were also taken into account in the formulation of conclusions from the research.

Primarily in view of the initial data analysis, the chosen geographical starting point for the field studies was Ostrowite. The main villages (in Pomeranian voivodeship) that were selected for study were (in alphabetical order): Angowice, Ciechocin, Lichnowy, Nowe Ostrowite, Ogorzeliny, Ostrowite, Pawłowo, and Silno. Field research was conducted in Ciechocin, Lichnowy, Nowe Ostrowite, Silno, Ostrowite and Pawłowo, and also in Chojnice (cultural events and meetings at institutions, relating to Kosznajderia and the Kosznajders). These villages were chosen based on the data analysis and on interviews conducted at successive stages of the field research. Visits were made to villages that are identified contemporarily by local leaders as belonging to Kosznajderia or as places which are similar to each other and constitute a relatively cohesive whole within the administrative district. Account was also taken of cultural offerings and how they differed across the area of interest.

Publications relating to the area in question focus mainly on its past, with its links to the Kosznajder people. These works are primarily of historical and geographical value. Many of them are written by historians, often as a result of regional conferences. Other publications consist of memoirs of Kosznajders and their descendants (including information on daily life, family histories, and biographies of people of importance to the community). A significant portion of the written sources consists of pamphlets, maps, and brochures focusing on the material heritage of Kosznajderia (including descriptions of individual villages, historical buildings, cycling trails, etc.). It should be noted that an important and distinctive role in the popularisation of Kosznajderia's history and heritage is played by the Sandry Brdy Local Action Group Association (Lokalna Grupa Działania Sandry Brdy), led by Grażyna Wera-Malatyńska. In spite of numerous initiatives and publications, which began to be created to a considerable extent only at the start of the 21st century, both researchers and local leaders emphasise the need for further research, not only strictly historical, but interdisciplinary, also concerning social and cultural matters, including questions of the post-war destinies of the Kosznajders and Kosznajderia, and the contemporary situation. The research that has been carried out in recent years is slowly filling this gap.[5]

[5] The present-day inhabitants of Kosznajderia, particularly within today's Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship, were the subject of research by Tomasz Marcysiak (e.g. Marcysiak 2018, 2019). Recently that author has also made an analysis of the semantic fields of the notions of Kosznajderia and Kosznajder, based on Polish press articles from the periods of the Partitions and

The uniqueness of Kosznajderia – the historical context

Although in the modern language used to refer to this area the name Kosznajderia is dominant, it should be noted that in the past, a more common term was the name for the people living there: the Kosznajders. Historians indicate difficulties in establishing the etymology of these words. One frequently encountered proposal refers to the words *Koschenewen* or *Koschenewjen*, denoting the Catholic Germans who from the mid-fifteenth century inhabited villages between Chojnice, Tuchola, and Sępólno. These terms appeared in the literature in the early 1830s, and the somewhat later form *Coschneider* was also adopted permanently in Polish, as *Kosznajder*, plural *Kosznajdrzy* (Szwankowski 2013: 17). Fr. Paul Panske linked the word to the surname Kossnewsky, which appeared in a fifteenth-century document issued for the village of Piastoszyn (ibidem). Publications also contain suggestions linked to *kosa*, the Polish word for scythe, as a tool made common by the immigrant German settlers – hence *kosowi żniwiarze*, "scythe harvesters". A "less serious version" indicates that the Kosznajders "like the Kashubian peasants, took part in the Vienna campaign, where as exceptionally zealous Catholics they gained fame for beheading infidels, and thus acquired the name 'Kopfabschneider'" (ibidem). Further suggested derivations relate to a word for a castrator of cattle, or to *koszonosz* ("basket carrier"), referring to the making of earthworks by local peasants during the siege of Chojnice in the Thirteen Years' War (ibidem). There are also mentions in the literature of the German word *kouzen* ("to babble"), used in reference to those people by their High- and Middle-German-speaking neighbours (Wałdoch 2011: 144). The Kosznajders spoke a Low German dialect, and surnames specific to that dialect, today usually Polonised, are common in and around the counties of Chojnice and Tuchola (Szwankowski 2013: 18).

The Kosznajder community developed and sustained a relatively stable culture and social structure. However, because of their adjacency to other

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the Second Polish Republic, which he compared with the modern understanding of the terms among people living in the area (Marcysiak 2022). In 2022 there was published a collective monograph titled *Kosznajderia. Post-war Fates and Contemporary Identity Discourses* (Ciechorska-Kulesza and Obracht-Prondzyński eds. 2022), containing the results of historical research into selected policies of the communist authorities in Kosznajderia in 1945–1956 (Węsierski 2022) and questions of the identity of contemporary inhabitants of the region based on spoken history (Marcysiak 2022), as well as social activity shaping local identification and local culture (Ciechorska-Kulesza 2022). Research on the Kosznajders from a political science perspective has been proposed by, among others, Marcin Wałdoch (2011) and Jacek Knopek (2013).

communities and political changes, the Kosznajders often entered into various kinds of relations with others:

> For years they co-created the settlement picture of this part of Pomerania, neighbouring the Borowiaks and Krajniaks to the south and south-east, and native Pomeranian and Kashubian populations to the north and west. Through the following centuries of political heritage this subregion abounded in numerous contacts with the Polish and German states, a consequence of which was the fact that the land was permeated by people from Wielkopolska and Kuyavia on the one hand, and by Prussians and Germans on the other. (Knopek 2013: 5)

Polish publications on Kosznajderia and its people, appearing mainly in the past decade or two, reflect the historical transformations affecting the area and its community.[6] They refer, among other things, to the establishment and the history of German settlements or Kosznajder villages in the Middle Ages, up to 1466 (e.g. Zonenberg 2013, 2003). Researchers discuss such questions as settlement movements, including the circumstances of the settlement of people brought in by the Teutonic Order from 1309 onwards. Of particular importance were the migrations to this area, previously inhabited mainly by Slavs, of people from south-western Germany. In 1433, Polish–Hussite divisions invaded southern Pomerania, and this led to the siege of Chojnice and the destruction of nearby villages, particularly in the south. The Teutonic state suffered extensive losses, and to recultivate the land left unused following the war, it was decided to bring in settlers from the vicinity of Osnabrück (e.g. Wałdoch 2011).

Scholars studying this period also discuss the question of the existence of a Kosznajder community. For example, Sławomir Zonenberg explains:

> In our view, in the Middle Ages it is certainly not possible to speak of the existence of a Kosznajder community in the sense in which it existed in a later period. It is also not possible to consider the area at that time as some kind of separate territory, since it was subject to the same changes and influences as the adjacent areas. We presume, however, that in that period it will be possible to speak of the existence of certain factors, such as the ethnic origin of colonisers and the related customs and specific language, that enabled the formation over a long period (…) of a Kosznajder community. (Zonenberg 2013: 90)

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[6] In listing publications and studies relating to Kosznajderia and its people, attention should also be drawn to those that consider the "pre-Kosznajderian" heritage. This concerns primarily archaeological research relating to prehistoric times, especially in the village of Ostrowite and its vicinity (e.g. Sikora and Trzciński 2013).

In descriptions of Kosznajderia in the Nobles' Republic, questions taken up include those relating to settlement and the social structure, including the property ownership structure, which included the state or Crown, the noble class, and the Church (e.g. Groth 2013). Andrzej Groth points out:

> Certain common factors connected (…) the royal settlements (…). These included a common legal tradition resulting from foundations based on German town law, and a commonality of administration (as royal lands), language and religion. All residents of the villages in question were Catholics, and the impact of the Reformation there was marginal. In the longer term, these factors led to the formation of bonds among the inhabitants of these settlements, as a result of which in the nineteenth century they constituted the main core of Kosznajderia. (Groth 2013: 168).

Kosznajderia in the Prussian state (1772–1920) is described primarily in the context of demographic questions, social structure, the economy, authority, associations, and scholarship pointing to the development of Kosznajderia as a community (e.g. Szwankowski 2013). Researchers also highlight the emergence of ethnic nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century, and the fact that "Polish–German and Catholic–Protestant relations became the most important axis of social conflicts" (Knopek 2013: 5).

Kosznajderia in the years of the Second Polish Republic is quite richly described in the literature (e.g. Jastrzębski 2003, 2013). Historians have published research on, among other things, individual villages, their population structure, economy, daily life, and culture, especially material culture. The Kosznajders are also viewed as a German minority or an ethnic group that formed in that period a small enclave "retaining its cultural distinctiveness" (Szwoch 2007). As Włodzimierz Jastrzębski writes, "certainly this ethnic group differed in language and customs from the majority of citizens. However, analysing their behaviour, there was no sign here of anti-Polish or anti-state political activity" (Jastrzębski 2013: 281). The question of relations with and attitudes to the group's neighbours is also interpreted in somewhat different ways, for example: "in the interwar period the Kosznajders as an ethnic group did not adopt an unambiguous stance towards the Polish state" (Wałdoch 2011: 139).

There is no question, however, that the Catholic Church was a link between Kosznajders and Poles, as became particularly visible in the period of the quite difficult situation of Catholics in the Second Reich. The Kosznajders appreciated their freedom of religion in the Second Polish Republic (Wałdoch 2011). Nevertheless, the Church was also a field of conflicts, friction, and rivalry – for example, over numbers of Polish- and German-speaking priests, or the language of church services (ibidem). Researchers also point to the so-

cial cementing function performed by part of the organisation, primarily the "pragmatic" part, bringing local residents together in connection with shared needs and interests, as in the case of a Polish–German fire service or hunting associations (ibidem).

Of great significance – particularly in the interwar period – are those personalities who, through their actions and works, helped preserve a consciousness of the Kosznajders' cultural and ethnic identity. Primary among these were Father Joseph Rink, Father Paul Panske, and bishop Augustyn Rosentreter. Significantly, many texts published today in Poland about the history of Kosznajderia not only focus on the source materials of these and other Kosznajderian authors, but also describe the past situation of Kosznajderia through the discovery and popularisation of the biographies and works of these figures (e.g. Rosentreter 2003, Behrendt 2019, Szwankowski 2003).

Kosznajderia and the Kosznajders during the Second World War are described, in the short period after 1945, mainly in the context of military activity in the region, Polish–German relations, the Kosznajders' involvement in underground activity, particularly in the Polish Home Army (e.g. Jastrzębski 2016), the role of the Catholic Church, and migrations and expulsions (e.g. Jastrzębski 2013, Stankowski 2003).

The breach of historical, social and cultural continuity that occurred in 1945 is one of the main themes of today's regional and local discourse concerning Kosznajderia and the Kosznajders. Attention is often drawn to the lack of knowledge about the post-war period and the need to fill this gap. Both researchers and local leaders point to the absence of research relating to the Kosznajders who remained in the area after the war, as well as the new inhabitants who have formed a new social fabric. As was claimed at a conference titled "Diocesan and Monastic Clergy from Kosznajderia and Its Role in the Life of the Church" in 2019, "Kosznajderia ended in 1945, we are talking about the people from those times, although there were also some who did not flee, who remained" (male, 50–70, Ostrowite, 6 April 2019).[7] The period from the second half of the twentieth century up to modern times is perceived mainly in the context of research concerning the descendants of the Kosznajders and their post-war experiences. Sociological and ethnological research, including

[7] Quotations from respondents (obtained during the field research described in this article) are followed by information in parentheses: the respondent's sex and age or age range, and the place and date of the research. The results of the research are consistently presented in accordance with the methodological principles of the project under which the present research was carried out: descriptions of respondents are given, but their anonymity is preserved.

that focusing on contemporary transformations of sociocultural life in the area, appears in works on Kosznajderia only sporadically.

Historians in their publications, as well as regional and local leaders, underline the "newness" of knowledge about Kosznajderia and the Kosznajders in Poland. This results above all from the post-war policies of the Polish authorities:

> he negative image of the German nation that was created in Poland after the end of the Second World War did not serve the conduct of credible research into German ethnic groups living in the country's territory. (Szwankowski 2013: 9)

As the same author points out, even in the 1980s "information on the several hundred years' existence of a German population concentrated in the area in question, professing the Roman Catholic faith and to some extent Polonised, could not reach the public consciousness, even in the academic world" (Szwankowski 2013: 9). In the past, Kosznajderia's history was dealt with mainly by German researchers. Today's historical research, carried out largely by Polish authors, addresses a range of themes related to that community, attempting to "make up for" the years of Kosznajderia's absence from scholarly discourse. Nevertheless, Polish-language academic publications still leave an impression of incompleteness, due to the opening of new threads concerning the Kosznajders and Kosznajderia. The threads that were present in the pre-1945 German literature continue to dominate. One of the more important topics worthy of examination in more depth is that of Polish–German relations. As historians note, the Kosznajders' connections with Polishness "do not raise any doubts" (Jastrzębski 2003: 9). They lived, after all, in the Nobles' Republic for three centuries and in interwar Poland for two decades. Significantly, Kosznajders and Poles intermarried, which undoubtedly led to the mutual permeation of their cultures (ibidem). The same historian writes: "At present, when the situation favours Polish–German reconciliation, a question asked by many Poles and Germans becomes relevant – whether and to what degree they are descendants of the Kosznajders" (Jastrzębski 2003: 9). Authors believe that Polish–German relations and the identities of former Kosznajders require further research, which may, however, highlight the problematic nature of the area's history and, by the same token, contemporary processes relating to identity and collective memory:

> It seems today that, thanks to research being conducted and conferences devoted to Kosznajderia, the myth of the Kosznajder as "Volksdeutsch" has been disproved. At the same time, a myth has been created of the Kosznajder as Pole, or possibly as stateless. In-

> convenient aspects of the memory of historical local identity have been removed with the intent of "redeeming the memory" of the Kosznajders. (Wałdoch 2011: 136)

In the scholarly and popularising discourse related to Kosznajderia in the context of the lands' post-war history (which is much more seldom considered than questions of pre-war history) it is emphasised that the Kosznajderian heritage is continued by the new inhabitants and that a relative cultural continuity is maintained:

> In place of the previous residents, there came to this area a Polish population from several regions, not always characterised by homogeneity or common origin. In spite of these contradictions, the memory of the Kosznajders remains alive, and not only thanks to the several dozen families that did not leave Poland in the post-war conditions; that community is still attested to by the households, culture, cultivation of land and raising of livestock, vegetable and fruit growing. Some of these professions were and still are cultivated. (Knopek 2013: 14)

The above excerpt is one of many examples (based to some extent, it would seem, on intuition and wishful thinking) of descriptions of the contemporary sociocultural situation in the area in question. This subject, with regard to research in recent social history, and above all in sociology or ethnology, still requires much investigation.

Contemporary narratives concerning the post-war settlers who arrived in the area refer on the one hand to the "end of Kosznajderia", and on the other to the difficult Polish–German relations. According to one local leader:

> Those people who arrived here in these lands, let's assume from the Kielce region – I'm giving an example – they settled immediately in the homes of the Kosznajders, and… and really in all kindness we can't be surprised that they lived the whole time in the fear that that German, that Kosznajder, would come and take it from them. (…) After the war that name was associated with Germans. The name was used, it existed. There was even an insult, "you Kosznajder", just like "you German". (Female, 50–70, Chojnice, 6 March 2019)

To sum up, the contemporary work of historians and people with an interest in Kosznajderia, although it underlines the significance of recent history and the contemporary situation, involves above all discovering local histories based on written historical sources and the analysis of elements of material culture (mainly cemeteries, churches, houses and farms). This is connected with the focus on making up for the years of loss and on the need to preserve as much as possible of what still remains in the landscape. And this means above all "works of beauty: the monuments and churches of our predecessors –

the Kosznajders" (male, 50+, Ostrowite, 6 April 2019; speech at the conference "Diocesan and Monastic Clergy from Kosznajderia and Its Role in the Life of the Church"); or "(…) the architecture that we live with here. These are our riches: that church, those beautiful Kosznajderian houses" (female, 30–50, Ostrowite, 13 March 2019).

Kosznajderian ambivalences

Looking at Kosznajderia from a historical perspective, one may notice some ambivalences, also manifested explicitly in contemporary narratives concerning the area, its past, its heritage, and also the identity of the people living there. Kosznajderia and its inhabitants and neighbours illustrate the complex ethnic processes and relations in Pomerania. However, it seems that in many respects, in view of the complexity, and by the same token the obscurity and ambiguity of social, cultural, historical, religious, economic and political configurations, they constitute an exceptional case.

Beginning with recent history, attention must be paid to the period following the Second World War, whose consequences "did not leave untouched the local communities that, by way of colonisation or migrations, had arrived in the area of the Polish state since medieval times. The Kosznajders were one such community" (Stankowski 2003: 100). The shift of Poland's borders led to the migration, resettlement and expulsion of millions of inhabitants. This naturally also applied to the Kosznajders, who after the war were "treated as colonists" (Stankowski 2003: 101). In this sense, one can speak of the end of that community. Although today's regional and local discourse is strongly dominated by references to the area's Kosznajderian past, with very frequent uses of the term Kosznajderia or Kosznajderian villages, the contemporary perception of the area, especially of the new (mainly post-war) inhabitants, is marked by a separation of the present-day situation and population from the former, true Kosznajders. This is illustrated by the following statement made by one local leader:

> After the war there were few who remained out of those real Kosznajders. Names keep coming up, some of them, there are a few cases that they live in Germany and look for their families' roots. But new people have already arrived there… (Female, 30–50, Ciechocin, 1 August 2019)

The new post-war communities in Kosznajderia created societies with a post-migration character, as is also manifested in their identity (Marcysiak

2019). Significantly, however, the area of Kosznajderia had already been within Poland's borders before the Second World War, which distinguishes the new post-war society there from the populations that settled the so-called recovered territories. This area has been claimed to be exceptional in that, among other things, the new settlers to a large extent adopted customs from the former inhabitants. Many researchers confirm that, in spite of the change of populations, the "spirit of Kosznajderia" lived on after the war, at least in a certain sense. Processes of settlement and attitudes to the new place of residence were different here than in the "recovered" lands. One regional activist gives the following account:

> A feature of this area is that it is not part of the recovered territories. Even just on the border of Chojnice it's another world, because that used to be Germany. Here there was a mix (…) Pre-war inhabitants remained, and new ones arrived as well, who adopted the customs of the old ones. There were certain patterns, so they had to adapt somehow. It wasn't a case of destroying what wasn't ours. That can't be seen even in those villages, in those Kosznajderian villages where it was said that the new arrivals got into the old residents' beds while they were still warm (…) However (…) there was no destruction of the existing property, which I consider to be something fundamental here. Those who arrived here, even if they had less ability, they learned. Often they were from small farms, they didn't know what to do here. Next door there was some Pole, next door there was someone or other, so it wasn't that they were going to a completely foreign, German, land. (…) And that Kosznajderia also survived. But the area was always developing (…) Religion actually connects people. They met in that one church, perhaps that was a kind of bond. (Female, 50–70, Ostrowite, 16 March 2019)

In spite of the breach of social, cultural and economic continuity, it was primarily the Catholic religion and the material culture that connected the new inhabitants with the land and its heritage, and in a certain sense with the pre-war Kosznajders. The particular cultural distinction of the post-war settlers had a significant "base" in the new place of residence in the form of elements of culture related to Catholicism and the organisation of life around farming. When asked to describe the former inhabitants – whom the great majority regard as the "real" Kosznajders – locals usually emphasise the fact that they were Catholics, that "they were well-off farmers", and that "Kosznajderian farms were the models to follow" (female, 30–50, Chojnice, 13 March 2019). Respondents refer not only to Kosznajderia's favourable natural conditions for crop growing, which certainly were and still are an asset, but also to the knowledge, skill and industriousness of the former population.

This kind of idealisation of Kosznajderia's past, found in some of the accounts concerning its former inhabitants, also carries over to narratives on

Polish–German relations, in this case mainly those between Poles and Kosznajders. In today's regional and local discourse greater emphasis is seen to be placed on integration and on what connected the Kosznajders with their neighbours, rather than on animosity. Nevertheless, respondents also point out the problematic and multidimensional nature of this subject:

> Without conflicts, that is a good description. So they got on with life, the sides accepted each other (…) The Kosznajders maybe married Poles sometimes, but didn't marry Protestant Germans at all. They brought others in, they got together in that way, although it also happened between villages. They – that community – for five hundred years in that region formed some kind of community with the Poles. And from that, somehow, from their presence, we… as a community, as an area, and in terms of relations, in terms, in terms of… I don't know… spiritual matters, we profited a lot, but there's also the history and… and… as if, here, well… Nonetheless, the Germans here, I would say quite a lot… they had a lot of influence, and that caused animosities at some point. On the other hand it's also… like an irony of history, because it was like this – they weren't regarded as natives over there, and here by those actually – well, because just at the time when the Third Reich started… those animosities were cranked up. (Female, 30–50, Ostrowite, 7 April 2019)

The restoration of the memory of Kosznajderia, which began during the period of post-communist transformation, is part of the wider phenomenon of the strengthening of regionalism:

> The transformation and the associated change in the view of the past caused the "discovery" of a multicultural heritage of Pomerania. People began to take an interest in minorities, including the German one, and also in the Catholic Kosznajders who used a Low German dialect in everyday speech. (Klein-Wrońska and Kwaśniewska 2017: 180)

The restoration of the memory of Kosznajderian culture brought to light ambivalences concerning that land, its people and its history. Leaders active in the field of regional and local history and heritage refer largely with understanding to the passive attitude or negative reactions of residents to actions serving to rediscover Kosznajderia. They admit that they have encountered and sometimes still encounter such reactions:

> And really we at this time are still guests in this area, although the truth is that at the very beginning, on the first projects, we met with, for example – maybe not an accusation, that's too big a word – but there was indeed something like that, "oh, those Germans, will you stop… promoting them." (Female, 50+, Chojnice, 13 March 2019)

They also point out that knowledge about the area's history among residents is varied and often superficial, and comments of the "glorifying the Germans"

type are examples of misunderstanding of that history. However, they note that residents' attitudes are becoming more and more positive, and many of them are beginning to take an interest in the history of their villages, including in the context of Kosznajderia. For this reason among others, part of the activity of organisations, especially at regional or district level, is focused on popularising these matters among residents.

Findings from interviews and observations of residents, made in the course of the discussed research project, confirm the views of some leaders concerning locals' attitudes to and understanding of history. It even appears that the "gulf" between what the local leaders and elites say about Kosznajderia and the Kosznajders and what "ordinary residents" say is even greater than is described by those dealing with this subject matter whom we interviewed. Above all, residents are found to lack knowledge in the context of the discourse relating to Kosznajderia that has been developed since the late 1990s. Even elderly people who are interested in the area and its past at the local level, being local experts in the context of the post-war history of these lands, often have a poor grasp of pre-war history. The story of the Kosznajders seems to be reserved for the elites, those interested in the subject, familiar with the relevant publications. The following statement by an elderly female resident and informal local leader may serve as an example:

> My dear, it was named after the war with this word Kosznajderia (…) It was Kosznajderia because German and Polish farm workers lived here. And they called that trail Kosznajderia. But it was after the war, that word… I grew up, got old, and I'm only hearing that word now. For a few years. For a few years, I'm not saying just today (…). In this… In that (…) book… published here by that Morenka, there's that word Kosznajderia. And the Kosznajders were called that… I don't know now. Did it mean the Germans specifically or did it mean the Poles, you know. Who were here… But it rather meant the Germans. (Female, 70+, Ostrowite, 28 July 2019)

Residents are not surprised when researchers ask them about Kosznajderia and the Kosznajders; they certainly know these words. However, their knowledge appears superficial. Respondents are aware that "such people were here once". However, they rarely use the term Kosznajderia; they are more likely to speak of the Kosznajders. Most of them claim that the Kosznajderian heritage is a source of pride, something that distinguishes the area from others, but they are not able to say anything more on that subject. They usually suggest asking "specialists" such as local and regional leaders (including primarily clergy and associations) or enquiring at specific places, mainly the Kosznajder House in Silno, the church in Ostrowite, the Sandry Brdy Local Action Group, or the District Culture Centre.

Many local leaders from the studied villages (village chief officials, members of local church organisations and NGOs, including village women's clubs, and village club animators) underline the need to acquire knowledge about Kosznajderia, particularly in relation to the Kosznajders' daily life and culture (for example about crafts, such as embroidery and cuisine). Many consider such knowledge very important for their activities; for example, they use it in activation, animation and education, related both to festive activities (organisation of local celebrations and festivals) and everyday activity (the work of village clubs, women's clubs, etc.). It seems that the needs of local leaders in the fields of animation and activation concern not so much precise scholarly knowledge related to the reconstruction of history and events, but social history (everyday life) and discovery of the Kosznajderian culture, which might serve to expand the still fairly sparse semantic range of the "Kosznajderia phenomenon".

Explaining the Kosznajderia phenomenon

In the forefront of the contemporary perception of Kosznajderia and the Kosznajders are those features that both make them distinctive and connect them with the area's present-day inhabitants. Chief among these features are religious denomination – the Kosznajders were Catholics – and way of working – they were mainly farmers. These relationships are emphasised today by both residents and local leaders. Respondents refer to the strong faith of the former inhabitants of these lands, as well as the material heritage they left behind, especially their churches, farm buildings, and houses.

The foremost elements of material heritage present in residents' consciousness are the characteristic large houses built of red brick, and the farm buildings. One of the most recognisable such buildings is a still inhabited house in Ostrowite. Another "flagship" Kosznajderian element in the physical space is a thatched log cottage in Silno dating from the first half of the nineteenth century, which has been moved to the vicinity of the Culture Centre and now serves as a museum and educational site. Residents point out that this is the last building of its type reminding us of the presence of the Kosznajders in this region. The high standard of agriculture in "the Kosznajders' times"[8] is evidenced

[8] This is an expression often used by residents in their responses, and refers to an imprecisely defined period during which the area was inhabited by the Kosznajders. It is often used when referring to the place's distinction in terms of agriculture, infrastructure, the multiplicity of institutions and organisations, and the educated clergy.

by today's buildings and spatial planning. These also provide a reminder of the well-developed system of agricultural and food cooperatives – that is, a highly commodified agriculture – which was made possible by the relatively good rail transport links and the closeness of the towns of Chojnice and Tuchola.

The links between the Kosznajders and the modern community are attested to by numerous churches, which are also identified by residents as important elements of Kosznajderian heritage. They include the church of St. James in Ostrowite (Gothic, from 1402, rococo interior), the church of St. Martin in Ciechocin (17th-century, filial church of the parish in Ostrowite), the church of St. Jadwiga of Silesia in Lichnowy (neo-Gothic, the fourth church built on the site), and the church of the Elevation of the Cross in Ogorzeliny (from the mid-14th century), to name just a few. Notably, reported elements of the material heritage linked to the Kosznajders also include roadside shrines, and especially cemeteries, where the graves of pre-war residents can still be found. Most of these adjoin churches, but there are also other examples, such as the village cemetery in Angowice. The need to protect and conserve Kosznajderian gravestones is frequently raised during local discussions and meetings concerning Kosznajderia. For example, at the conference "Diocesan and Monastic Clergy from Kosznajderia and Its Role in the Life of the Church" on 6 April 2019 and at a meeting with local residents on 3 March 2020 (both taking place in Ostrowite), participants devoted much attention to the importance of cemeteries in the context of the protection and popularisation of the Kosznajderian heritage. Note was taken of the need for systemic solutions, including the provision of financial resources to enable gravestones to be left in place, renovated, and protected against removal in the future.

The question of cemeteries leads on to the phenomenon of people searching for German-sounding names (the most commonly mentioned being Warnke, Behrendt, Rhode, Panske, and Hoppe)[9] and rediscovering the stories of former inhabitants. In this context, locals refer to the efforts undertaken by descendants of the Kosznajders to discover their roots. This includes both visitors to the area from Germany and those who remained in Poland. Attention should also be paid to local spoken history concerning the Kosznajders, exemplified by the recollections passed from generation to generation, in some way connected with a particular village. For example, in Ciechocin there are accounts of the Warnke family (a mixed marriage), which ran a large farm, even after the Second World War – local residents who worked there generally had fond memories of those times and of the people. A well-remembered figure in Os-

[9] For names of Kosznajders in contemporary Polish studies, see for example Breza (2003).

trowite is Hans Janowitz, a Kosznajder who remained in the area after 1945. He is mentioned by older villagers, and also – based on their accounts – by their descendants and by new residents of the village. Other elements of Kosznajderian heritage that are still present today, although to a lesser extent than material remains, include words connected with the Kosznajderian past. However, respondents admit that it is hard to identify such words and expressions, since they come so naturally to locals and are used in everyday speech. They include terms such as *durszlak*, *framuga* and *szlauch* (German-derived words meaning "colander", "door-frame" and "hosepipe").

In the context of the non-material cultural heritage, an important topic is that of the Kosznajderian clergy, who were part of the Pomeranian Catholic intelligentsia. Figures recalled by local residents include, first and foremost, the priests Dr Joseph Rink and Dr Paul Panske. The first, from Moszczenica, is known as the author of histories, memoirs and accounts of daily life relating to the Kosznajders (e.g. Rink 1930, 1932, 1933). Paul Panske, a Kosznajder from Granowo, was a member of both German and Polish scholarly societies. He researched, among other things, Kosznajderia's history and Kosznajderian surnames (e.g. Panske 1910, 1933). Another frequently mentioned figure is Dr Jan Behrendt of Ogorzeliny, a scholar, a parish priest in Danzig (Gdańsk), and also a poet. A short volume of his poetry was published recently in Chojnice (Behrendt 2019). It is also interesting to note some women among the Kosznajderian intellectual class – for example, Maria Semrau gave a lecture at the university of Breslau (Wrocław) in 1915 (Semrau 1915).

Apart from the focus of local activity around the memory of significant figures in Kosznajderian communities, the exceptional character of the area is also based to a significant degree on values that refer to those communities. The popular phrase *fenomen tożsamości*, "phenomenon of identity", which appears in many places referring to the Kosznajderian heritage, is explained by one leader as follows:

> So the phenomenon of identity means that it is possible to preserve roots and identity by living somewhere. This is astonishingly important. You live in that society, you're in touch with the society, and at the same time… we are not a closed enclave, but to preserve the Catholic religion in the neighbourhood… Christianity after all, but… for hundreds of years. This is a remarkable phenomenon, especially in such a small area. So these people were so connected with the place, with each other, with principles, with religion, I mean everything that is essential and important for a person. So they cultivated all of this (…) It was quality after all. Hence our interest in a piece of that region. Speaking about the development of an area, you first need to make an inventory of it. What we had in that place and what we have now. What is of value. (Female, 50–70, Chojnice, 13 March 2019)

The importance of promoting the area with reference to the Kosznajderian heritage is spoken of mostly by local leaders. In arguing for this, they refer to the particular features of that community, and allude to the outstanding qualities of the lands that are now settled by new inhabitants in the former Kosznajderian villages. The memory of the Kosznajders is an important element of what makes this area unique. The characteristics of that community mean that its heritage is not bland, but is (or might be) a significant element in strengthening the position of this subregion:

> It is significant that there were such people in this area. Who stood out, contributed something to the area. Knowledge. They provided priests, clergy. Significant, very much so. (…) Things happened there. This is not some shallow history. It's a bit smarter (…) I believe that this tradition and history should be shown, every region has some history, there is no area that doesn't have. But this is cohesive, logical, positive, it brings value. So it's hard not to show off this area. (Female, 50–70, Chojnice, 13 March 2019)

The exceptional nature of today's Kosznajderia is said to lie above all in its uniqueness resulting from the configuration of social processes, including migration, and by the same token the creation of a specific cultural and social entity. This is evidenced by many statements made by residents:

> This area (…) is the only place where we can speak of Kosznajderia, where there are borders, where we can speak about the people, the tradition, the clergy. (Female, 50–70, Ostrowite, 28 July 2019)
>
> But this is certainly a phenomenon and it must be said that… Just that these people are really a kind of… a bit like a kind of Atlantis. The Pomeranian Atlantis, no? (Female, 30–50, Ciechocin, 1 August 2019)
>
> Well, there is nature everywhere. However, where we have got to together, what distinguishes us as a region, that's Kosznajderia. (Female, 30–50, Ostrowite, 28 July 2019)

The Kosznajderian "boom" that began in the 1990s and became – or at least, was desired to become – a distinguishing characteristic of the subregion is associated by respondents with broader sociocultural changes leading to strengthened regionalist movements, and also with emerging structural opportunities for supporting local development, above all in the form of opportunities to obtain outside funds (mainly from the European Union). The intensification of "work" on heritage and identity in relation to Kosznajderia reveals the potential of this subregion in the context of multifaceted local development. This is recognised both by many regional and local leaders, and by residents. Although the emphasis in local initiatives relating to Kosznajderia is often on strengthening identity or integrating the people of the area, the topic

is received largely in terms of image-building potential, rather directed towards the outside. On the other hand, undertakings focused on regional history enjoy great interest among residents, and the cultural activity of the subregion is largely based on such issues.

After analysing the whole of the empirical material collected in the course of this research, one can conclude that, despite noticing many barriers and problems the respondents – both leaders and residents – also see potential, above all in internal resources: the cultural heritage associated to a large extent with the Kosznajderian culture and the particular cultural mosaic of post-war settlement. The research has also shown that residents are highly interested and active in initiatives related to the regional and local cultural heritage, and that the communities have active leaders who concentrate a significant part of their activity on those questions. To a large degree, however, the cultural heritage of this area requires a filling out of content, on the one hand by way of historical research and publications and their popularisation, and on the other through a discussion concerning identity, in which local residents should be involved. After all, the process of describing, explaining and understanding the ambivalence relating to the Kosznajderian heritage is still under way and will certainly continue. It is necessary for the shaping of a regional or local identity, which has an impact on many areas of social and cultural life.

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Keywords: region, Kosznajderia, Kosznajder, Pomerania, identity, heritage

ABSTRACT

This article attempts to answer the question of the place of Kosznajderia and its former inhabitants in the contemporary heritage and identity of the part of Pomerania in which that German Catholic population lived. For more than a decade, the description of Kosznajderia as a "phenomenon of identity" has had a marked presence in the regional discourse. Based on material collected during field research (interviews, observations, and data analysis), it will be explained what is the state of this phenomenon today and how it is present in the subregion and in local communities. Kosznajderia and its former inhabitants are an important component of the nascent contemporary (sub)regional/local identity. The heritage of Kosznajderia is a significant element of the discourse on identity, in which the main emphasis is on the common features of former and current inhabitants, and the significance of material heritage. The agricultural character of these lands and the presence of Catholicism somehow link the past with the present. Because of the complex history of this area and its population, in particular the difficult Polish–German relations and the breach of historical, social and cultural continuity after the Second World War, contemporary processes related to identity are marked by certain ambivalences.

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"A refreshing history lesson?" On the Polish edition of Theodor Adorno's lecture

Theodor W. Adorno, *Nowy prawicowy radykalizm. Wykład o jego kilku aspektach* [English title: *Aspects of the New Right-Wing Extremism*], afterword by Volker Weiss, translated by Mikołaj Ratajczak, Wydawnictwo Znak, Krakow 2020, 112 pp.

Despite the fact that research on the subject of political radicalism and extremism and the problems that these phenomena pose for the condition of liberal democracy is one of the most dynamically developing fields of political science, it is not often that we come across new publications on these issues on the Polish publishing market. Research results are being increasingly published in academic papers, which are short and dwell upon selected aspects of the phenomena in question. English-language monographs, written in specialist language and offering a great amount of detail, are becoming more readily available; yet since they are aimed at a narrow audience, even the most seminal works on these issues are hardly ever translated into Polish. However, as the existence of extreme tendencies in politics cannot be denied and their intensification may cause concern, a 2020 Znak publication, *Nowy prawicowy radykalizm. Wykład o jego kilku aspektach* [English title: *Aspects of the New Right-Wing Extremism*] is likely to generate interest. The book, which is just 112 pages long, is authored by Theodor Adorno, "the greatest intellectual of post-modern Germany" (Moldenhauer 2019), and translated by Mikołaj Ratajczak.

It would be an overstatement to say that the present text is a review of Adorno's lecture, for at least two reasons. Firstly, the views of the German philosopher and sociologist have already been the subject of numerous studies. Secondly, it would be inappropriate to review a publication whose author (who died over 50 years ago) cannot address the comments raised in a review. Thus,

it should be emphasised that the present contribution is designed to critically refer to the 2020 edition of Adorno's lecture by the Znak publishing house, rather than to the German philosopher's views. It should be added that this is the first Polish edition of *Aspects of the New Right-Wing Extremism*, promoted as "a must-have of the engaged citizen" and a "frighteningly timely" and "refreshing history lesson". The focus will thus be on whether it is really possible and worthwhile to blindly apply Adorno's words to the surrounding reality, as the publisher's marketing message would suggest.

It should sadly be noted that the Znak publishing house chose not to publish an introduction or an afterword by any of the Polish researchers of radical thought and movements. The 2020 Polish edition of *Aspects of the New Right-Wing Extremism* ends with an afterword by Volker Weiss, as does the 2020 German edition of this lecture by Suhrkamp Verlag.[1] The community of Polish researchers of radicalism and extremism is not large; however, such scholars as Marek Maciejewski, Adam Hołub, Roman Bäcker, Aleksandra Moroska-Bonkiewicz or Olgierd Grott could potentially have provided some insight into Adorno's lecture to Polish readers.

With regard to the lack of introduction in *Aspects of the New Right-Wing Extremism*, it is worthwhile analysing the structure of this publication. It begins with the content of the lecture itself, which is then followed by an editor's note on page 51 informing the readers that Adorno delivered the lecture in question 1967 in Vienna at the invitation of the Socialist Students of Austria. What follows then is an afterword, a note about the authors and a glossary of terms (both personal, e.g., Joseph Goebbels or Max Horkheimer, and factual, e.g., Fordism, Landtag or Weimar Republic). To explain the paradox of this structure, let us view the content of the lecture. In it, Adorno emphasises at the outset that his speech is intended to present loose thoughts on right-wing radicalism, rather than a coherent theory of this phenomenon. He goes on to say that he will be striving to "add a little to what is generally thought and known about these matters" (p. 4)[2]. The fact that the reader of the Polish edition is deprived of an adequate introduction and that the editor's note is placed after the lecture, not before it, leads to two misunderstandings at the very begin-

[1] This was also the first edition of the lecture published in Germany. It was previously available only in the Austrian Mediatheque's resources in an audio form. The publication of *Aspekte des neuen Rechtsradikalismus. Ein Vortrag* has received a great deal of publicity in Germany (cf., e.g., Lux, Mettin 2019, Moldenhauer 2019, Rabe 2019, Schadt 2019, Husi n.d., Dietschreit 2020).

[2] Direct quotations from Adorno in this article are from the English language edition of the work.

ning of the lecture that affect further reception of the text. On the one hand, unacquainted with Adorno's biography and works, the reader is "thrown" into the lecture hall by the publisher, unaware that they are listening to a speech that was actually delivered over 50 years ago. On the other hand, by proposing this kind of structure, the publisher assumes that the reader already has some background knowledge of the issue and that "what is commonly believed about these issues" constitutes a pool of knowledge, staying the same for Adorno in 1967 and for a Polish reader in 2020.

This is the reality in which the German philosopher delivered his lecture that is central to a proper interpretation of the entire argument. That reality is distinctly different from the state of affairs present to the XXI century reader. While it is hard to deny that Adorno's assertions were valid and insightful, one should be aware of the historical factors that prevent the direct application of his arguments, conclusions and recommendations in the present day. Let us elaborate on these historical factors. The 1960s saw, on the one hand, significant changes on the West German political scene, and on the other hand, transformations in the way people reflected upon and spoke out on political radicalism *per se*. When Adorno delivered his lecture in Vienna, the National Democratic Party of Germany (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, *NPD*) had existed for only three years. Its presence on the political scene somewhat challenged the belief that Germans had got to grips with political radicalism, understood in the postwar years primarily as a manifestation of nostalgia for the Nazi regime.

Between the end of World War II and the NPD's political successes, activities by far-right organisations were sporadic rather than persistent and there was no follow-through. This was largely due to the strict regulations that were in force in all the occupation zones. The best-known exception to this rule was the activity of the Socialist Reich Party (*Sozialistische Reichspartei*, *SRP*) in 1949-1952.[3] This openly neo-Nazi and antisemitic party managed to win 11% of the vote in the Lower Saxony Landtag elections, and 7.7% of the vote in the elections to the city council of Bremen in October 1951. The *SRP* was outlawed pursuant to the first ruling in post-war Germany to ban a political party because the views it spread were deemed unconstitutional.[4]

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[3] Besides the SRP, there were other political far-right groups that were active in that period such as *Deutsche Konservative Partei – Deutsche Rechtspartei* (*DKP-DRP*) in the years 1946-1950, *Deutsche Gemeinschaft* (*DG*) in 1949-1965 or *Deutsche Reichspartei* (*DRP*) in 1950-1965.

[4] Only two parties have been banned nationwide. The other party to be outlawed was the far-left Communist Party of Germany (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands, KPD*). It should

From the perspective of reflections on political extremism, the Federal Constitutional Court ruling to dissolve the *SRP* was of paramount importance as it defined for the first time the concept of a free democratic constitutional order (*die freiheitliche demokratische Grundordnung*). The precise explanation of this term was key to the effective functioning of the legal system under which, to this day, all efforts that threaten or question this free democratic order are considered unconstitutional.[5] At the beginning of his lecture, Adorno states that he is referring his thoughts primarily to the situation in West Germany. It should thus be remembered that he had in mind a relatively young democracy – a country with the Basic Law in place for only 18 years and with a legal system, which – as the Constitutional Court ruling showed – still needed to clarify individual provisions.

Successive far-right organisations later in the 1950s did not come close to the *SRP*'s electoral results, which researchers quite unanimously attribute to the "integrating influence" of Konrad Adenauer's government on the German political scene (Pfahl-Traughber 2018: 309).[6] However, there were intellectual and cultural groups associated with extreme right-wing thought. It was not until the mid-1960s that a kind of deadlock on the "far-right" edge of the West German political scene was broken by the emergence of the *NPD*. The reasons for its successes can be attributed, among other things, to the party's break with strictly neo-Nazi rhetoric and its acceptance – at least at the declarative level – of the democratic rules of the game (Pfahl-Traughber 2001: 77). According to historians and political scientists researching this period, the new formation aimed to move beyond the role of a fundamentalist opposition party (cf., e.g., Botsch 2016:50). Its political successes also resulted from social uncertainties associated with the first major postwar economic downturn. The *NPD* rapidly increased the number of its activists and by the late 1960s, it had approximately 25,000 members (Braun 2007: 342), and – according to other sources – even 30,000 active members (Flemming 2003: 160).

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be remembered that bans on political parties and non-party organisations can also be issued at the state (*Land*) level. Such bans are imposed much more frequently.

[5] It is worth noting that proceedings leading to the ban of *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* were also an opportunity to further clarify the regulations and terminology. It was stipulated that in order for a party to be banned, it must not only undermine the principles of the free democratic order, but additionally demonstrate an actively militant and aggressive approach, as well as harm the functioning of this order in a planned manner.

[6] Naturally, there were other reasons, including the decreased appeal of radical demands or the impact of the trials of Nazi criminals on public opinion (cf., e.g., Stöss 1989: 96-176).

By the time Adorno delivered his lecture in April 1967, the *NPD* had already sent its delegates to the Landtag of Bavaria (having won 7.4% of the vote there in the November 1966 elections) and Hesse (7.9% of the vote also in November 1966). It was soon to bring its representatives to the state assemblies of Rhineland-Palatinate (6.9% of the vote in April 1967), Schleswig-Holstein (5.8% in April 1967), Lower Saxony (7% in June 1967) and Bremen (8.8% in October 1967). The following year, the party achieved its best result in municipal elections with 9.8% of the vote in Baden-Württemberg, and tried its hand at the Bundestag elections as early as 1969. However, it fell short by 0.7% of the vote and that electoral defeat contributed to a prolonged crisis within the party, which is nonetheless still active today. Given such rapid growth of the *NPD* in the latter 1960s, Adorno cannot be accused of exaggeration, when – referring to his 1959 lecture *The Meaning of Working through the Past* – he stated that right-wing radicalism "was not yet truly visible at the time" (p. 4). It may have been because of the analogy between the *NPD*'s unexpectedly large successes and the current Alternative for Germany (*AfD*) party that the publication of this lecture has been met with such an enthusiastic reception in Germany. A few years ago, the *AfD*'s presence in political life (the party was established in 2013), let alone in the *Bundestag* (the *AfD* has had parliamentary representation since 2017), seemed equally unlikely.

Besides the events on the political scene, the second element that influenced Adorno's method of argument is the state of knowledge of radical political views at the time. What needs to be indicated here are primarily terminological issues, which – unlike today[7] – did not pose so many problems. In his lecture, Adorno consistently uses the concept of "right-wing radicalism" (*Rechtsradikalismus*), which was at the time the predominant term to describe the phenomenon in question. Information on this topic is provided by a number of German publications on the history of and research on radical thought, including the work of Uwe Backes, in which the author traces the history of the concept of extremism from ancient times to the present day (Backes 2006). While before World War II, the term "extremism" was rarely used in the humanities and social sciences, it began to come to the fore in the 1950s, mainly through publications by American scholars, Edward Shils and Seymour Martin, which

[7] One of the most recent overviews of terms relating to the "far" right has been published by C-REX – Center for Research on Extremism, based at the University of Oslo (Jupskås, Leidig 2020). The terms are also systematised, among others, by Kai Arzheimer (c.f. Arzheimer 2018), who maintains an interactive and constantly updated bibliography of research on issues of the far right, which contains over 900 publications (*The Eclectic, Erratic Bibliography…* n.d.).

were also popular in Europe. Backes notes, however, that even though in 1960s Germany, the concept of extremism was gaining ground, the concept of radicalism still prevailed (Backes 1989: 63).

Apart from the prevalence of the term "radicalism" among commentators on the social and political life of the time, Adorno's choice of that term may have been further influenced by the practices of the security services and state administration at the time. In the early 1960s, they released, for the first time, documents that were the prototype of *Verfassungsschutzberichte*, i.e. annual reports published by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution on the state of the protection of democracy.[8] The 1962 report referred directly to "right-wing radicalism in the Federal Republic"; however, in both this and subsequent documents the terms "extremism" and "radicalism" were used interchangeably and inconsistently (Backes 2006: 193-196). A change did not occur until 1973. Since then, reports on the state of democracy protection – both at the federal level and at the level of individual German states – have referred only to "extremism". Thus, we will find in them the term *Rechtsextremismus* to describe right-wing extremism and *Linksextremismus* to describe left-wing extremism.

Hence, it was not until the 1970s that a fairly stable consensus emerged, under which the term *extremist* is attributed to those organisations in Germany whose activities run counter to the principles of the free democratic constitutional order (they are considered *verfassungswidrig* – unconstitutional or anti-constitutional). By contrast the term *radical* is used to refer to those organisations whose criticism of the constitutional order is still within the spectrum of the views and behaviours compatible with the constitution (they are considered *verfassungskritisch* – critical of the constitution, but at the same time *verfassungsgemäß* – in accordance with the constitution) (Virchow 2016: 14). This change in terminology was meant to emphasise the possibility of criticising the constitutional system as long as its principles are not being undermined (Backes 2006: 197-200). Such a "terminological consensus" exists in Germany to date although it is known that for the purposes of constitutional protection, it is followed much more rigorously than for the purposes of public and aca-

[8] The Office was established in 1950, but its activities were initially treated in strictly intelligence terms. The information acquired by the Office was primarily used to inform the authorities about potential threats to the democratic system. The reason for making the first report public in 1960 was a series of anti-Semitic incidents that occurred in the winter of late 1959 and early 1960 (the so-called *antisemitische Schmierwelle*). The first report, published in German and English, addressed precisely the issue of anti-Semitism (Backes 2006: 194).

demic debate.[9] However, these days there is no doubt that from an individual perspective or a perspective of a political group, the accusation being a right-wing extremist is far more serious that the accusation of being a right-wing radical. Extremism, as pointed out by Adam Hołub, goes much further at the level of ideas and goals. It is not just that it calls for substantial changes to the system, leaving it in its basic framework, but it seeks to change it completely for another. Radicalism postulates a considerable modification of the political system whereas extremism rejects it in its entirety (Hołub 2016: 28).

In the context of these subtle but important differences, it is worth emphasising that Adorno uses the term "right-wing radicalism" in his lecture as a standard term in his time. It is therefore important to note that the term has been meticulously rendered in the Polish translation (*nowy prawicowy radykalizm*), and emphasise that this is not a typical approach. In the English translation, for example, published in the American and British markets by Polity also in 2020, the title of the lecture is *Aspects of the New Right-Wing Extremism*, and so – erroneously – the key term that is employed throughout this edition is right-wing extremism.[10] For contemporary researchers of the "far" right, having at their disposal many terms ("far right", "right-wing extremism", "right-wing radicalism", "new right", "new populist right", "populist right", "neo-Nazi right", etc.), which are constantly being debated and revised (cf., Rydgren 2017, Arzheimer 2018), the choice of the term "right-wing radicalism" may be puzzling; nevertheless, it is worth remembering that Adorno did not in fact have such a large choice. It would also be a mistake to assume that his text refers to all of these forms as we know them today, or that we can substitute any term from the array of terms available to us today for the term right-wing radicalism that he used. As a matter of fact, the German far-right scene in the 1960s was not

[9] In the latest Verfassungsschutz report for 2019, available at the time of writing this review, the root "radikal" occurs only 29 times mainly in words such as "radicalisation" or "radicalise." Interestingly, it is never used as a synonym for the term "extremism." By comparison, the root "extrem" occurs more than 900 times (Bundesministerium des Innern… 2020).

[10] I disagree with the opinion expressed in a review of the English-language edition of Adorno's lecture by Harry F. Dahms, who claims that "we do not have to concern ourselves with the distinction between radicalism and extremism with regard to his lecture," because – allegedly – Adorno does not refer in it to groupings and views that are inconsistent with the constitution (*rechtsextremistisch* – extreme right-wing), but rather to those that still fall within the scope of tolerance (and are therefore *rechtsradikal* – radical right-wing) (Dahms 2020: 135-136). Since the official distinction between these terms occurred later, Adorno might have referred to forms of right-wing thinking that were opposed to the democratic system. As pointed out in this text, the terminological apparatus at that time was not as developed as it is now.

so diverse, not to mention that the new opportunities for spreading extreme thought, which were made available by the Internet only later, were not known at the time.

Another characteristic feature of the lecture, which should be attributed to the state of knowledge of political radicalism at the time, is the constant reference to fascism and the comparison of new forms of radicalism to that totalitarian ideology. The association of far-right views with fascism and Nazism was a feature of both journalistic and academic discourse until the 1980s, and was brought to an end in political science by the publication of Pierro Ignazi's *The silent counter-revolution. Hypotheses on the emergence of extreme right-wing parties in Europe* (1992). In this text, Ignazi proposed a distinction between older and newer types of far-right parties in Europe, distinguished by their attachment to Nazism or fascism (stronger in the case of the "old," weak or completely absent in the case of the "new"). We now know that in order to consider a view or behaviour radical right-wing, it does not have to be inspired by the Third Reich, Hitlerism or Italian fascism. It is also clear that while the terms "radicalism," "right-wing extremism" and "far right" are relatively close to each other, using the terms Nazism (and neo-Nazism) and fascism (and neo-fascism) as their synonyms is a serious factual error.[11]

Thus, once again, one would have to excuse Adorno at this point – in the absence of such a clear distinction during his lifetime, it is difficult to attribute to him a conscious error. When he traces elements of fascism in the radical right, and in its strengthening in the late 1960s the rationale for the resurgence of the fascist movement, he is rather giving expression to the still vivid memory of totalitarian crimes. In the case of the German philosopher, these associations are somehow natural, while what should be clear to us is what Marcin Król rightly noted, writing that "fascism existed in a specific country and at a specific time. Our task, however, is to name new phenomena that have a similar origin and shape, but are nevertheless different" (Król 2017). A related issue, which should be left for readers to decide for themselves, is how we should perceive the escalation of far-right tendencies 50 years later. Should we see in it the spectre of returning fascism/Nazism/totalitarianism and the inevitable end of democracy or should we recognise the existence of radical views as a permanent feature of pluralistic democratic systems. Adorno's position on this issue was clear in the lecture. He argued that the existence of right-wing radicalisms of varying degrees of intensity in individual democracies only proves that "in

[11] Another issue is whether fascism and Nazism can be placed at all on the political left-right axis (cf., e.g., Bartyzel 2010) and whether such a dichotomy still exists to date.

terms of […] its socio-economic content, democracy has not yet become truly and fully concrete anywhere" (p. 7).

Having made these disclaimers, let us now turn to the content of the lecture itself and to those elements of right-wing radicalism (in Poland, we should add, referred to as the far right, *skrajna prawica*) that have resisted the passage of time. The first one was to point to the "impoverishment […] of social strata" (p. 5) and "technological unemployment […] in the age of automation" (p. 6) as the reasons for the strengthening of radical views in societies. Although the progress in question was a far cry from the current developments in robotisation, digitisation and automation of work, Adorno rightly saw in it a cause of the degradation of some groups of people who, as a result, seek support in extremist groups. Thus, in the late 1960s, he was already anticipating the claims that laid foundations for future research on far-right tendencies.

It is worth recalling at this point that the study of the authoritarian personality, in which Adorno and other researchers were involved in the 1940s at UC Berkeley, was only one of several approaches to political radicalisation, which focused on the micro level – the level of the individual (Vichrow 2016: 22). The research in question centred on the impact of personality traits and individual attitudes on specific political decisions, notably the inclination to support fascist solutions. That research has contributed to the development of the concept of the authoritarian personality, as one of the personality types that has a particular tendency to adhere to radical political views. To a large extent, the development of this personality is influenced by family upbringing (Adorno 2010).

Studies on the influence of other factors on the development of extreme views, such as a delayed socialisation process, cultural or socioeconomic elements, were conducted later. The economic issues cited by Adorno, especially unemployment, point to factors relevant to the theory of modernisation losers (*Modernisierungsverlierer*), developed much later in the 1980s, to the concept of disintegration, but also to the theory of relative deprivation adapted to the needs of political science. What they have in common is the claim that social and economic changes lead some social groups to a state of actual or perceived deprivation or lack of something desirable and that individuals react to this deprivation with dissatisfaction (Rippl, Baier 2005: 645). Obviously, the issue here is not only a shortage of material goods, resulting from a poor economic situation, but also the associated deprivation of prestige or the abandonment of dreams of achieving a certain social status. Then dissatisfaction with this shortage gives rise to other observable phenomena, such as changing political views, disillusionment with the elite, increased preju-

dice (especially against those who do not experience this shortage), aggression or xenophobia.

In his lecture, Adorno thus pointed to something that in research on right-wing radicalism was relatively new and, at the time, understudied. In the context of today's discussions about the precarization of a large – especially young – part of society, his words resonate particularly strongly: "even the people who stand within the production process already feel potentially superfluous […] – they really feel potentially unemployed" (p. 5). What Adorno did not foresee and what he never mentioned in his lecture is the fact that right-wing radicalism can become appealing to the economically well-off, as has been shown in recent years, for example, by research on supporters of the Alternative for Germany party (Schwander, Manow 2017, Lengfeld, Dilger 2018). Indeed, the aforementioned sense of deprivation has begun to extend beyond strictly economic issues to include groups in a (still) economically comfortable position, but who feel politically powerless and culturally alienated or threatened by the overall socioeconomic competitive situation, despite high job security (Miliopoulus 2018: 228).

When it comes to such a broadly understood sense of deprivation and marginalisation, there are two things that became evident during the migration crisis: the co-occurrence of fear and aggression in radical groups when confronted with waves of immigrants (these fears relate only partially to the cultural otherness of the newcomers) and the treatment of immigrants with undisguised superiority. This is brilliantly summed up by Zygmunt Bauman, who states that for people living on the margins, thinking that they have reached the bottom, the discovery of the existence of another bottom below the one to which they have been pushed, is salutary because it allows them to regain their human dignity and the remnants of self-respect, and that nationalism provides them, and their withering or extinguished sense of self-esteem, with a dream life raft (Bauman 2016: 19-20).

Another finding concerning the way radical right-wing movements work, which is still valid, is indicating their catastrophism. Adorno notes that they tend to "feed off apocalyptic fantasies" (p. 8) and in some way they want some catastrophe to happen. Using the extremely subtle irony characteristic of the entire lecture, he also adds: "In this context it is also interesting […] that such structures, despite the disasters, have a peculiar constancy" (p. 10). On the one hand, the tendency to think in catastrophic terms results from the aforementioned fears and anxieties that characterise not only the supporters of far-right groups, but also their members or the 'theoreticians' who develop their ideological programmes. On the other hand, it proves to be an extremely effec-

tive element of political agitation and mobilisation. Referring to the already mentioned migration crisis, the catastrophism of extreme movements made itself known in the form of spreading the visions of being 'swamped' by foreign elements (*Überfremdung*), the inevitable and harmful Great Replacement (*Großer Austausch*) of races and cultures or the claim that multiculturalism means *de facto* the self-liquidation of the nation-state.[12] Other manifestation of catastrophism is the intensification of fears of what is unclear or unspecified: the 'dictate' of international organisations, 'gender ideology', the negative effects of globalisation or excessive political correctness that prevents discussion of burning issues.

At the same time, radical groups position themselves as capable of preventing all these difficulties. This feature is also indicated in Adorno's lecture when he argues that "these movements always act as if they have already had great successes and attract people through the pretence that they offer guarantees for the future and have all manner of backing" (p. 9). We do not have to look far for contemporary examples of relying on unquestionable authorities, e.g. own past successes, the Church or tradition. This tactic is a characteristic feature of Polish extremist groups and is best exemplified by the ideological declarations of the All-Polish Youth (*Młodzież Wszechpolska*) (cf. Tronina 2020) or the National Radical Camp (*Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny*) movements. We learn from them that the Polish radicals draw on "the best traditions of the National Camp, predominantly the political thought of Roman Dmowski and other creators of the national idea" (Młodzież Wszechpolska n.d.) or Catholicism being "a thousand-year-old culture-forming factor, a pillar of Polishness, and a mainstay of national identity" (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny … n.d.). The existence of this feature among all factions of radical thought is pointed out, among others, by Armin Pfahl-Traughberg, who calls it a "dogmatic claim to absoluteness" (*dogmatischer Absolutheitsanspruch*). It manifests itself in the radicals' claim that certain views or principles they have adopted are absolutely true, universally valid and indisputable. As such, they become somewhat "sacred" and immune to criticism because they are – seemingly – impossible to verify (Pfahl-Traughber 2010).

Adorno also points out an important error in the perception of radical groups, a problem with which we still seem to struggle today. In his lecture

[12] The terms used here have been derived from the glossary used by the German identitarian movement. It is worth noting, though, that such slogans are popular with almost all far-right groups and are familiar even to groups such as Alternative for Germany, which sits in the German Bundestag (Cf., e.g., Kałabunowska (2018).

he states: "One should not underestimate these movements on account of their low intellectual level and lack of theory. I think it would show a very weak political eye if one concluded from this that they are unsuccessful" (p. 9). A few pages later, however, Adorno himself falls victim to this error when he states that radical movements are "by no means based on any developed theory" (p. 13). It seems that the thesis about the alleged anti-intellectualism or, as Adorno writes, the 'atheoreticism' of the extreme right cannot be sustained, certainly not in relation to the entire spectrum of radical right circles, such as those associated with the New Right.

This finding brings us to another characteristic feature of right-wing radicals, i.e. clever use of all manipulation techniques. Adorno takes the position that in the case of the new right, the aforementioned intellectual layer is replaced by "an extraordinary perfection of certain methods" (p. 9), a "form of allusion that has been elevated to a sophisticated technique" (p. 14), which is meant to intrigue potential new supporters, and at the same time confuse the system of constitutional protection. "Openly anti-democratic aspects are removed" (p. 15), both in the case of the extreme right of the 1960s and of today.

Thus, the German philosopher believes that radicals' cunning propaganda is a cover for a lack of solid ideological foundations. This manifests itself in concretism, the use of large amounts of hard-to-verify and out-of-context data, formalism and "the trick of the official or the certified" (p. 19), which give the impression that we are dealing with a professional and rational partner in a political discussion. And while indeed most of these traits are still exhibited by radicals today, thanks to new technologies even more intensely, one wonders, however, about the legitimacy of calling this set of traits "pseudo-scientific pedantry" (p. 18).

Let us take as an example a strategy used by contemporary French or German identitarians, who, having abandoned typically far-right analogies, reached for ancient motifs. Their logo does not feature runic letters, Celtic symbols or a swastika, as we have come to expect from radical organisations so far, but the Greek letter lambda. By using it, the identitarians are attempting to allude to the heroic struggle of the Spartans at the Battle of Thermopylae. Only ostensibly, however, is it a praise of stubbornness and perseverance, as the identitarians themselves claim. Researchers have found another message in this mythology: a symbolic reference to the heroic struggle of the few – in history: Spartans, today: European Christians – in the face of a deluge of numerically larger and culturally alien forces, where the ancient Persians are embodied by modern Muslim immigrants (Hentges, Kökgiran, Nottbohm 2014; Bruns, Glösel, Strobl 2017). It is precisely such ideological references that are

very common for contemporary radical groups and the line between intellectualisation and the sublimation of propaganda techniques seems to be extremely thin here. However, I believe that accusing radicals of 'pseudo-science' and 'atheoreticism' somehow belittles their role as political opponents. It seems that this adversary is highly skilled in manipulating data and arguments, which makes them even more unpredictable and deaf to attempts to rationalise these data or arguments. Besides, would there be today entire research groups and projects aimed at deciphering the messages of the far right if we were dealing with simple and intellectually shallow structure?

Finally, it is also worth referring to the remedies proposed by Adorno, especially since this part of his lecture seems to be the most interesting and convincing in its simplicity. The German philosopher proposes several strategies for dealing with right-wing radicals in public space. One of them again recalls the heated debates surrounding the outbreak of the migration crisis, when some groups believed that appeals to morality and a sense of sharing a common destiny could help allay the fears voiced by nationalists. The suggestion is found on page 11: "One should not operate primarily with ethical appeals, with appeals to humanity, for the word 'humanity' itself, and everything associated with it, sends the people in question into a rage; they see it as fear and weakness". Adorno's position is that "one should appeal to the real interests instead of moralizing" (p. 21) because only such rational language can convince radicals, who cherish – as mentioned above – formalism and concretism. The author also adds that there are other helpful solutions, such as: warning "potential followers" (p. 11), "especially young people" of the possible consequences of falling into the sphere of influence of extremist groups, as well as referring "to the central interests of those who are targeted by propaganda" (p. 11). In other words, an effective strategy for coping with the new right-wing radicalism is not to prove the validity and moral superiority of arguments voiced by the radicals' opponents, but to indicate the shortcomings of these groups themselves, which is designed to discourage others from joining their ranks.

Other methods, which, according to Adorno, would contribute to curbing the development of extremist tendencies, are deciphering and stigmatising the aforementioned tricks used by radicals in their propaganda activities. What, in turn, is unlikely to succeed is to pretend that the problem does not exist or to ostentatiously ignore the presence of radicals in public life. Adorno calls it "the 'hush hush' tactic" (p. 21). I think it can also include the tactic of isolating radical groups with parliamentary representation, which is familiar to many countries, including Germany (cf. Heinze 2020).

The Polish 2020 edition of *Aspects of the New Right-Wing Extremism* also features an afterword by Volker Weiss, a German historian, columnist and researcher of the conservative revolution. Although Weiss is not affiliated with any major German research centre investigating right-wing extremism,[13] his works on this topic have received a great deal of publicity, notably *Deutschlands Neue Rechte. Angriff der Eliten – Von Spengler bis Sarrazin* from 2011 and *Die autoritäre Revolte. Die Neue Rechte und der Untergang des Abendlandes* published in 2017, which should be categorised as popular science, if not journalistic. A great advantage of the afterword is a biographical sketch of Adorno, followed by a detailed description of the functions and significance of the Institute for Social Research, with which the philosopher was closely associated (pp. 26-28). Weiss emphasises that Adorno's attitude to the issues discussed in the lecture is a product not only of the historical reality of the time, but also of his private research and emigration experiences. He stresses that, as a result, "reading the speech thus requires that we distinguish between context-dependent and fundamental aspects" (p. 26). What Weiss considers fundamental in particular is Adorno's point about the rise of resentment among individuals who seem to be losing control of their lives. He goes on to argue that "The knowledge that one could be more, but is not, still drives people to acts of collective narcissism" (p. 30). Referring to today's aspects of radicalism – the existence of the so-called *Wütbürger* group, the *AfD* party, right-wing criticism of left-wing solutions, anti-EU or anti-Islamic tendencies – he calls for an expansion of the debate about "the current authoritarian revolt, which is not based solely on racism" (p. 32). He also highlights the turn of modern radicals towards anachronism, which is a constant trend despite the passage of 50 years since Adorno pointed it out. Weiss notes that "today the immense pull of misogynistic and homophobic agitation in times of equal rights or the revival of religious fundamentalism in the midst of a secular present show how deceptive a sense of security in the light of civilizational advances can be" (p. 33). This is one of those reflections that accompany the reader throughout the reading of the entire text.

The numerous references to contemporary events, especially to *AfD* activity, which can be found in both Weiss' afterword and reviews of the whole work, show how valid many of Adorno's points are, but at the same time cast doubt

[13] These major centres include the Hanna Arendt Institute for Totalitarianism Studies, the Göttingen Institute for Democracy Research, KomRex – the Centre for Research on Right-Wing Extremism at the University of Jena, or FORENA – the research unit for right-wing extremism and neo-Nazism at the Hochschule Düsseldorf.

on one of them. This applies to the statement that "there is even a risk that precisely this movement might remove Germany from world politics, from the tendency of world politics as such, and completely provincialize it" (p. 12). The presence of radical groups on the German political scene, more or less intense and invasive at various times in Germany's post-war history, has not led to a decline in the country's importance on the international stage. Likewise, the presence of extremist parties in parliaments and governments of other countries does not rapidly diminish their importance as long as these parties do not previously weaken the structures of their states.

In this context and seemingly contrary to Adorno's expectations, it needs to be said that the radical right has become a natural element in a number of contemporary party systems, with all of the characteristic features mentioned by him. This is too bad, as Weiss says in the afterword, "simply defending the status quo will fail as a defensive strategy without the realisation that the rightist renaissance is itself a result of that same status quo" (p. 35). Just as Adorno's lecture in 1967 should be regarded as a political intervention by the sociologist and philosopher in the social discussion taking place in the German-speaking area (Schadt 2019), the publication of this text in the late 2010s in Germany, and subsequently in other countries, can be considered a call to reflect on this state of affairs; a call to close ranks among those groups whose sets of values are markedly different. Hopefully, this analysis of the Polish edition of *Aspects of the New Right-Wing Extremism* has shown that while reflection on the issue of radicalism is necessary, it cannot be restricted to automatic historical analogies or the constant use of the same medications for "the scars of democracy" (p. 7).

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The Deutsche Volksliste in the Łódź region during the Second World War

The Łódź region, like other areas that were incorporated directly into the Third Reich during the Second World War, experienced suffering and pain brought about by ethnic segregation. Following a short period of uncertainty, Łódź was made part of the Wartheland (also called Warthegau), whose gauleiter was Arthur Greiser (Łuczak 1997; Epstein 2011). In April 1940 the city was renamed Litzmannstadt, in honour of General Karl Litzmann, victor at the Battle of Łódź (Brzeziny) during the First World War, who had become a Nazi politician in the 1930s, serving as an NSDAP deputy and honorary speaker of the Reichstag. The Jewish population was forced into ghettos, where many died of hunger and exhaustion from forced labour, and those remaining were gradually murdered in extermination camps, such as that at Kulmhof (Chełmno nad Nerem) (Alberti 2006; Löw 2012). The Polish elites were murdered in the first months of the war or expelled to the General Government, while male and female workers had to work to excessive requirements in factories, and were often assigned to forced labour outside Łódź (Cygański 1962; Bojanowski 1992).

Łódź had a special role to play in the Nazis' plans for Poland – it was in that city that the Central Immigration Office (*Einwandererzentralle, EWZ*) was established in 1940, coordinating the resettlement of Germans from occupied Eastern Europe to the Reich. The topic of the *Volksdeutsche* (in colloquial Polish, *folksdojcze*) – people who were entered into the German Volksliste during the Second World War – stirs up significant controversy in Poland even today. The term *Volksdeutsch* was applied to ethnic Germans during that war, having begun to be used extensively in Germany following the First World War (Olejnik 2006: 19–21). They were also sometimes known simply as Germans (Krzoska 2010: 69), but in the Łódź region they were rather called "*Niemieckojęzyczni*" ("German-speaking"), an appellation used by the German minority itself, for example in names of associations. After 1945 the term Volksdeutsche came to be replaced by the words *Flüchtlinge* and *Vertriebene* ("expellees"), and it no longer carries any connotations within German society (Kochanowski and Zwicker 2015: 629).

The word *volksdeutsch* has different semantic ranges in the documents of the German administration and in the post-war literature. The administrative apparatus and propaganda used *volksdeutsch* to refer to all groups of Germans living in occupied territories in Eastern Europe (usually excluding the Czech and Moravian lands), including for example those resettled from the Baltic countries and today's Ukraine and Romania (Schmitz-Berning 2007: 650–652). Polish historians restrict their use of the term to Germans who were Polish citizens and lived in Poland before 1939.

The most important works concerning the Volksliste in occupied Poland include monographs by Sylwia Bykowska (2012) and Krzysztof Stryjkowski (2004), and an article by Ryszard Kaczmarek (2004). Of works published in the communist period, the most significant are those of Zofia Boda-Krężel (1978) and a book by Zygmunt Izdebski (1946). The experiences of Volksdeutsche during the Second World War in the Łódź region have received relatively little attention from Polish and international researchers. Moreover, most studies focus only on the city of Łódź itself, overlooking materials that concern the larger Łódź administrative region.[1] The most important texts on the Volksliste in the occupied Łódź region include an article published in *Rocznik Łódzki* by Paweł Dzieciński (1988). Dzieciński concentrated on the documents of the German administration then available in the National Archives in Łódź and Poznań, and presented the Volksliste from an administrative perspective. The topic is discussed to some degree in a work by Tadeusz Bojanowski (1992) that describes aspects of the occupation in Łódź, including daily life. Recent works mentioning the Volksliste include some parts of a book by Winson Chu about the Łódź Germans (Chu 2012) – although the book's title indicates that it concerns the interwar period, it contains a short study of the Volksliste in the Łódź region. Another researcher who has recently taken up the subject of the Volksliste in Łódź, and partly also in the region, is Gerhard Wolf; however, his latest works mainly concern institutional disputes in 1940–1941 over the form and scope of the Volksliste in the Wartheland and in the Łódź government area (*Regierungsbezirk*). The most recent work by Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg on the history of Łódź discusses the wartime period and the Volksliste (Bömelburg 2022). The Volksliste gives rise to many questions, which are only partially addressed in Polish historiography. To what extent did the categorisation process enable an effective assessment of the Łódź Germans? How flexible were the categories, and how were they applied by the officials responsible for assigning

[1] There is no uniform definition of the "Łódź region" that would be accepted by a majority of researchers. For the purposes of this article I have restricted it to the city of Łódź and the counties of Łódź and Łask, within the boundaries drawn by the occupying authorities. "County" denotes the administrative unit known as *Kreis* in German and *powiat* in Polish.

Germans to them? What motivated the Germans who declined entry on the list and those who accepted it, or even tried to obtain a preferential racial category?

To be able to answer these questions, we must begin by introducing the Volksliste – the most important mechanism of Germanisation in the Polish lands in the times of the Second World War – which will be analysed in this article using the example of its implementation in the Łódź region.

Plans for a Volksliste and its scope

The German Volksliste was at its core an attempt to solve the problem of how to identify Germans in the newly conquered territories of the German Reich. At the heart of this ambiguity in identity was the fact that the wished for Germans outside the pre-1914 German boundaries were not marked by the possession of German citizenship. The practice that had developed in 1938–1939 (Olejnik 2006: 22–23) tended to suggest that citizenship would be extended to all Germans, without their being placed in a hierarchy of groups based on pre-war loyalty and degree of Germanisation (Neander 2008). However, the plans of the Wartheland ethnocrats provided for the introduction of a hierarchy of ethnic Germans for the purpose of re-Germanisation, and the criteria of hierarchisation exposed differences between the officials working on them in the Wartheland's central office (*Gauamt*) and in the government area (*Regierungsbezirk*) of Łódź. A plan by Egon Leuschner, an official responsible for matters of nationality in the office of the head of Łódź government area (*Regierungspräsident Lodsch*, later *Litzmannstadt*), which has been preserved in the collections relating to the Łódź Region Volksliste in the State Archive in Łódź, provided for the division of the Volksdeutsche in the Wartheland into groups denoted by the letters A to E. The most loyal, and therefore privileged, were assigned to group A, while group E was the least trusted, intended for those Łódź Germans who had been "actively and nationalistically Polonised". Also distrusted by the Nazis were those who were to be placed in group D: Germans who had been "passively and ethno-nationalistically (*völkisch*)[2] Polonised" (APŁ, NLN,[3] 53: 3–4).

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[2] The German word *völkisch* does not have an exact equivalent in English. As an adjective it may be translated as "folk", "national", "ethno-nationalist", etc., but these do not fully reflect its meaning. The term is closely tied to the Third Reich, although it dates from the 15th century and was used by writers and thinkers from the 19th. From the end of the 19th century it referred to a people in a racial sense. See "völkisch" in: Schmitz-Berning (2007: 645–646).

[3] Here and in further citations, "APŁ" or "APP" denotes the National Archive in Łódź or Poznań, and "NLN" denotes the archive files relating to the German Volksliste in the territory of Łódź province.

A different solution was proposed in a plan by Karl Albert Coulon, who became the official responsible for matters of nationality in the Wartheland. This provided for the existence only of the groups A and B (Wolf 2018: 138–139). Ultimately it was Leuschner's vision that was adopted for the Wartheland, and his plan for the Volksliste was implemented in the Łódź government area in early 1940.[4] The ideas behind this construction of the list had a significant impact on the Volksliste created by the Reich interior ministry and approved in March 1941. The largest change was the abolition of group E and the introduction of a numbering system for the groups: the highest group (A) became group 1, while group 4 replaced groups D and E. The ultimate aim was for all Volksdeutsche to be made equal to the Germans from the Reich (Bojanowski 1992: 202–203). The purpose of the hierarchy was to identify the Germans who could most quickly be re-Germanised and made part of the *Volksgemeinschaft* – a community united around national socialism, the so-called community of the German blood (race) and people (all social classes)[5] (Schmitz-Berning 2007: 654–659). The categorisation of local Germans was supposed to distinguish the groups that could potentially be Germanised and the groups that did not require re-Germanisation. Through such separation from the general population of occupied Poland, the Nazis wanted to break those groups' connections with Polish culture, society, etc. and to ensure their allegiance to the Third Reich.

Privileges and duties of the Volksdeutsche

Each group in the Volksliste (according to the decree of March 1941, but also earlier) was to contain a different category of Germans. Group 1 would include those Volksdeutsche who "before 1 September had actively struggled for Germanness". This struggle was taken to mean activity in German social, cultural or sporting organisations, but primarily in political organisations. Membership of religious organisations (Catholic or Protestant) was also considered a reason for assignment to group 1. Those admitted to this group were *de facto* most often activists of pre-war right-wing parties of the German minority

[4] Entry on the Volksliste began in Poznań in December 1939, and initially included only those assigned to groups A and B. It was gradually extended to other parts of Wielkopolska, reaching the Łódź–Kalisz government area in the first half of 1940.

[5] This term was also used by the Nazis in jurisprudence as a counterpoint to the rights of a citizen.

in Poland (IPN GK 62/15: 2). Group 2 was to include those Volksdeutsche who prior to 1939 "were not active in support of Germanness, but who can be proved to have remained German". Group 3 would consist of people of German descent who had "connections with Poland" but were considered by Volksliste officials certainly capable of "becoming full members of the German national community", as well as Polish partners of Germans (although it was stipulated that the German spouse must be "dominant") and members of ethnic groups that the Nazis considered to have German ties (Kashubians, Masurians, "Wasserpolen", Silesians). The lowest category, group 4, was intended for persons of German descent who had "politically gone over to the Polish side", that is, had been significantly Polonised (APŁ, NLN, 52: 16–25).

The Volksdeutsche of groups 1 and 2 automatically received German citizenship. In 1942 the granting of citizenship was extended to some of those in group 3; this was usually linked to their entrance into the Wehrmacht. Apart from the duty of military service (Kaczmarek 2010; Olejnik 2006: 40–41) and the requirement to submit to national socialism, the Volksliste provided many privileges to those whose names were entered into it. Some of these privileges were dependent on the group to which one was assigned, while others were given to all those on the list. All Volksdeutsche received the same ration coupons for food and clothes; they were also permitted to shop in the early morning hours (when goods were available in the stores).[6] There were many products that could not be sold to Poles or Jews, and Germans received significantly higher food rations (Bojanowski 1992: 209–210). Even after the introduction of a far-reaching system for the rationing of goods, Volksdeutsche were privileged over non-Germans (ibidem: 211–212). Germans had uniform rights to primary and secondary education,[7] although in reality access to such education and its quality were dependent on where one lived – in many villages in the Wartheland, particularly in the Łódź region, there existed only general schools offering the first few years of education, with teaching done by instructors who had not completed teacher training college. In the towns the availability of education and teachers' level of training were much higher, but access was conditional on knowledge of German and on the Volksliste group to which the child and its parents belonged (Hansen 1995: 53). All Volksdeutsche had identical

[6] These principles were not always upheld: internal correspondence of the area office indicates that in occupied Łódź until July 1941 Volksdeutsche in groups 3 and 4 were not always issued with German ration coupons for clothes (APP, Wartheland Gauleiter, 1132: 38).

[7] University education was available to Volksdeutsche in groups 3 and 4 only with the consent of the administrative authorities of their home county.

privileges with regard to the payment of old-age and disability pensions, and also had more or less uniform access to a high standard of health care, which Poles and Jews did not have. Ethnic Germans were allowed to keep their homes (Bojanowski 1992: 212–214) and places of employment.

Certain privileges were restricted to the Volksdeutsche in groups 1 and 2 (A, B and C before 1941). Some professions were available only to Germans from the two highest groups. Those from groups 3 and 4 could not be appointed to higher or managerial posts. Only those in group 1 could belong to the party; Volksdeutsche from the other groups were not allowed to apply for membership.[8] Possession of land, firms and workplaces, and the possibility of taking over Jewish and Polish property were restricted to the two highest Volksliste groups, and some Volksdeutsche from groups 3 and 4 had property confiscated (Rudawski 2018: 124–127). Poles and Jews were not permitted to own land, houses, flats, shops, workshops or factories (Łuczak 1979: 88–99); from the very first days of the occupation, German institutions took over ownership of such property or evicted the owners and handed the property over to Germans, including Volksdeutsche. According to Himmler's plans, the Volksdeutsche in group 4 were to be resettled in the "old Reich" (Olejnik 2006: 39).

Statistics

The entry of Volksdeutsche on the Volksliste in the Łódź government area took place in several distinct stages. The first lasted from March to September 1940, and covered most of the German population in Łódź, who mostly (in contrast to applicants in the subsequent stages) had a strong national identity and identified themselves as Germans. In many cases it can also be said that applications were submitted under social pressure or economic necessity. The second stage began in March 1941 with the decree of the Reich interior minister concerning the Volksliste. It is not clear exactly when this stage ended; in September 1944 the number of people obliged to submit a Volksliste questionnaire was significantly reduced – this concerns people who had previously applied but had not been granted Volksdeutsch status, as well as Wehrmacht personnel. In fact, the Gestapo was still taking action against people who were delaying entry on the Volksliste even in December 1944 (Dzieciński 1988: 284;

[8] For some time, the Wartheland authorities and the party's chancellery considered the possibility of allowing Volksdeutsche in group 2 to join the NSDAP, but these plans were never implemented (APP, NSDAP Wartheland, 643).

APŁ, Gestapo, 12: 15–17). In both stages, people perceived as being of German descent were forced to apply by the police or pressured by the Gestapo. In Łódź from 1943 onwards, pressure was put on the Polish partners of people of German descent to sign the Volksliste (Olejnik 2006: 35–36).

The majority of the German population of the Łódź region lived in Łódź itself. According to census data from 1931, there were 53,600 people living in Łódź who declared German as their mother tongue,[9] in addition to 28,500 in Łódź county and 10,500 in Łask county. These figures represent respectively 8.86%, 7.93% and 6.1% of the populations of those administrative units (Rzepkowski 2016: 282–284). There were also relatively high numbers of people declaring German as their mother tongue in the counties of Brzeziny (10,000) and Piotrków (8,800) (Marszał 2020: 187–188). The percentage of Germans in the region did not change significantly between then and the outbreak of the war, but changes were already visible by December 1939.

Table 1

Numbers of people declaring German nationality in the police census of 1939

	Number of persons
Łódź	86,351
Łódź county	27,469
Łask county	21,885
Total	135,675

Source: APP, Wartheland Gauleiter, 682.

Table 2

Number of Volksdeutsche in the Łódź region in 1940, by Volksliste category

	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Łódź	8,518	53,775	16,527	5,476	111	84,407
Łódź county	7,144	15,963	4,227	1,042	261	28,637
Łask county	1,689	15,152	3,561	519	28	20,949
Total	17,351	84,890	24,315	7,037	400	133,393

Source: APP, Wartheland Gauleiter, 1120: 48.

[9] The 1931 census asked about the language used at home, but not about nationality. Because the question in the previous 1921 census had concerned nationality, it is not possible to compare those data.

Table 3

Number of Volksdeutsche in the Łódź region in October 1944, by Volksliste category

	1	2	3	4	Total
Łódź	9,812	78,867	15,873	3,072	107,624
Łódź county	8,591	20,014	2,148	665	31,418
Łask county	10,466	10,257	3,058	285	24,066
Total	28,869	109,138	21,079	4,022	163,108

Source: IZ, Doc. 1-315.

The growth in the population of Volksdeutsche from 1939 onwards, as shown by the above statistics, was largely caused by the entry on the Volksliste of more and more groups of German people and those of German descent, rather than by external or internal migration in the Łódź region. From the three tables, which cover the period from the first attempts to compile a Volksliste in Poznań (December 1939), through statistics from the first version of the Volksliste, up to those from October 1944 (immediately before the possibility of registration as Volksdeutsche ended), it is clear that 20% of Volksdeutsche in the city of Łódź, 12% in Łódź county and 9% in Łask county, according to the October 1944 figures, had not identified themselves as German in 1939. Most (though not all) of these had probably declared Polish nationality.

Another interesting question is that of the reassignment of groups D and E to group 4. According to the guidelines issued by the central authorities, Volksdeutsche from these two groups should not for the most part have been classified and added to group 3. In fact, almost 45% of Volksdeutsche from groups D and E were promoted to group 3 (equivalent to C). Also notable is the large percentage of Volksdeutsche in Łask county who belonged to group 1, compared with the other parts of the region. Volksdeutsche made up the majority of the population of Germans in the Łódź region.

The data given in Table 4 indicate that local Volksdeutsche were more numerous than other groups of Germans who had arrived following the September campaign. It should also be remembered that in all counties of the Łódź region, the Volksdeutsche were in a minority relative to the non-German population.

The surviving documents of the Volksliste office in Łódź do not contain any demographic data relating to the Volksliste, and it is not clear whether any statistics were ever compiled from the official address registers, personal files of Volksdeutsche or other records of the Wartheland administration. The surviving demographic data refer to Germans as a whole, with no breakdown by

Volksliste group or German nationality status (Volksdeutsche, German from the Reich, or resettlee).

Table 4

Volksdeutsche as percentages of the German and total populations of counties in the Łódź region in October 1943

	Number of Volksdeutsche	Number of all Germans	Volksdeutsche as percentage of Germans	Germans as percentage of total population	Volksdeutsche as percentage of total population
Łódź	107,419	138,984	77.3%	24.4%	18.8%
Łódź county	31,371	34,199	91.1%	24.6%	22.5%
Łask county	23,912	37,170	64.3%	17.6%	11.3%

Source: Wróbel (1987: 258–259) and the author's own calculations.

The statistical differences between the Łódź government area and Upper Silesia or Pomerania were very large. In the Łódź area, most Volksdeutsche belonged to group 2, with relatively few in group 3 and especially group 4. In the Danzig–West Prussia and Upper Silesia provinces, almost three-quarters of local Volksdeutsche in 1942 belonged to group 3 (Kaczmarek 2007: 32). The reason for this was the different policies applied by the gauleiters with regard to entry on the list. Each gauleiter in occupied Poland had a great amount of freedom in determining the categorisation criteria and the criteria for identifying whether a person was to be counted as being of German descent and thus qualifying for entry on the list. Because of Greiser's rigorous policy, most of the population of the Wartheland was not placed on the list. The gauleiters took account of the specific features of their regions – in Danzig–West Prussia and Upper Silesia most of the population had lived there since birth, often remembered the times of the German Empire, had attended German schools, etc. This was not the case in the Łódź region. Moreover, in the case of Upper Silesia a significant factor was the province's economic importance – the coalmines, steelworks, and strategic heavy industrial plants all needed a labour force, and there could be no question of depriving them of workers by classifying the latter as Poles and expelling them from the region. The industry around Łódź was not generally of great significance for the Reich economy; during the occupation Łódź exported workers to the Old Reich and other occupied regions, and the textile factories – the most important in the region – were operating on significantly reduced time (Bojanowski 1973, 1976).

Structures and procedures

The organisation of the process of entry on the list was the task of the Volksliste offices that were established in 1939 and 1940. The highest authority was the Volksliste office at gauleiter level (*Zentralstelle*); below this were the offices at government area level (*Bezirksstelle*) and at lower levels of local administration (*Zweigstelle*). According to the Volksliste decree these offices were to be established at county offices (Cygański 1972), but in fact they were present in all large towns in the respective counties: Aleksandrów Łódzki, Konstantynów Łódzki, Brzeziny and Zgierz, and Pabianice in Łask county. The decree's entry into force in March 1941 did not lead to fundamental changes in the structure of the offices. Formally there also existed a Supreme Court for Questions of Ethnic Origin (*Oberste Prüfungshof für Volkszugehörigkeitsfragen*), which was to consider cases of disputed classification that were questioned by the Wartheland administration (Frackowiak 2013). These mainly concerned Polish aristocrats and persons of particular political and economic importance – owners of large firms and industrial plants (APP, Wartheland Gauleiter, 1108: 140). In view of the working-class character of the region before 1939 and the rapidly completed process of taking over Polish and Jewish property, it may be presumed that relatively few cases from Łódź and the Łódź region came before that court. Real power over the Volksliste rested in the hands of the gauleiter and the government area chiefs.

Every office at county level (or at the level of a city with county status) had a control department, a department for name changes, a statistical department, and two departments issuing Volksliste ID cards (one for groups 1 and 2, and another for groups 3 and 4). The control department was the most important – its staff issued and received Volksliste questionnaire forms and checked the accuracy of the data provided (APŁ, Łódź County Chief, 127: 40–41). This was probably also the largest department at every office; in March 1940 during the process of making entries on the Volksliste the control department for the city of Łódź consisted of 80 persons, in addition to three detectives (APP, Wartheland Gauleiter, 1109: 296). The committees decided whatever toward Volksdeutsche status. They were composed of representatives of the administration and of the NSDAP, as well as trusted local Germans.

There were no major differences in the procedure for Volksliste registration between the Wartheland and other regions of occupied Poland. If Germans wished (or were compelled) to apply for entry on the list, they would need to go to the appropriate office to collect an application and supplementary form, to be assessed by a committee or – more commonly – by single persons. Surviving Volksliste questionnaires reveal which sections applicants would skip without

providing additional information, and which were genuinely important to the assessors. Most Volksdeutsche (in the studied sample of questionnaires held in the State Archive in Łódź) did not provide any information on activity in German organisations or parties before the war. The reason for this may have been not only the lack of such activity, but also caution – the Volksdeutsche did not know the evaluation criteria for organisations but were aware that providing information on activity in Polish or socialist organisations would be poorly received or would cause them problems. The question on Jewish ancestry was usually omitted; only in some cases did applicants write that they had no Jewish ancestors to their knowledge. It was rare to find applicants who, like Walter Kindermann, a pre-war Łódź lawyer, admitted to Jewish roots or relationships with people of Jewish origin (Bömelburg 2021). Questions on language and religion, as well as the language of the applicant's partner and children, were answered on every application, from which we may deduce that the Volksliste officials made sure that this information was supplied.

It is also worthwhile to remember the importance of accompanying documents – many applications are supplemented with various certificates, diplomas and other documents serving to confirm the applicant's German origin or contribution to the German struggle before 1939. Sometimes we also find opinions collected by the Nazis from neighbours, or documents indicating the submission of an appeal or refusal to accept entry on the Volksliste.

Entry on the Volksliste was formally voluntary, but in fact those who refused to be entered or to collect their Volksliste book were subject to pressure and persecution. There were probably few people who had German origins or felt themselves to be German but did not obtain entry on the list. The best-known Germans in Łódź who refused to join the list included Emil Zerbe, leader of the pre-war German socialists (*Deutsche Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Polens*). At least 80 persons refusing to declare that they were Germans had their cases passed to the Gestapo (Bojanowski 1992: 203). Only one file has survived with several lists of persons refusing to join the Volksliste; it is located in the State Archive in Łódź (APŁ, NLN, 59). The documents that survived the occupation include a small number of Germans' declarations to the Gestapo refusing entry on the Volksliste. The merchant Edward Ramisch of Pabianice declared officially on 21 August 1942 that he would not sign the list, stating: "I feel myself to be a Pole and wish to remain a Pole."[10] He made this declaration despite being told by officials that he was of 75% German descent while his wife was of 100% German descent, and being informed of the possible repres-

[10] "Ich selbst fühle mich als Pole und will Pole bleiben."

sions. Other persons argued similarly: "I refuse admission because I think and feel Polish"; "I myself grew up as a Pole and feel myself to be a Pole"[11] (APŁ, NLN, 58: 6–8). All of these people were of 75% German ancestry (according to Reich criteria). One Gestapo file has survived concerning Poles of German origin who refused the Volksliste, but declarations of the reasons for refusal are absent (APŁ, Gestapo, 12).

Criteria for the listing and categorisation of Volksdeutsche

The criteria for entry on the Volksliste and for assignment to categories did not undergo significant alteration despite the legal changes of March 1941. The most important categories include the language used by the applicant and their family, religious denomination, engagement in sociopolitical life before the outbreak of war (understood as participation in German organisations, but also absence of activity in Polish organisations and parties), and degree of integration with Polish society. In Łódź, the question of the language declaration was not an obvious one – many people there were trilingual, and knew Polish and Russian as well as they knew German. Membership in German organisations was understood by the Volksliste officials to mean membership in German minority organisations that were not left-wing, anti-Fascist or pro-Polish. Some applications were rejected in spite of the fact that the candidates for volksdeutsch status could prove their affiliation to such organisations (Bömelburg and Klatt 2015: 280). "Degree of integration" was understood to encompass many minor but revealing factors, such as self-identification and public declaration thereof, Polonisation of one's forename and surname, national identification in documents (such as military service books and official address registers), names given to children, and choice of school for children. The criterion of non-participation in Polish sociopolitical life was very broadly interpreted, which led to conflicts – many Germans had been obliged to belong to Polish organisations. An example might be teachers: a significant proportion of pre-war teachers belonged to the Polish Teachers' Union (ZNP) or other organisations of Polish teachers. Membership of the ZNP was seen by the Volksliste officials as grounds for classification in a lower Volksliste group, although according to the author of a 1941 report it did not imply Polishness and could not be a reason to place someone in a lower category (APŁ, NLN, 52: 90–96).

[11] "Die Aufnahme lehne ich ab, da ich polnisch denke und fühle"; "Ich selbst bin als Pole aufgewachsen und fühle mich als Pole."

The mother tongue of the applicant and of their family, religion, and political loyalty were noted not only in the process of classifying Volksdeutsche, but also in the reports concerning them drawn up by the local authorities and party branches. Everyone entered on the Volksliste was the subject of a short description referring to their degree of Germanness and political loyalty, partly based on the criteria of language, religion, and self-identification. There were often also descriptions of character, indications of their political activity, and single-sentence assessments of their Germanness. The reports noted the Volksliste group to which the person belonged. Some of these reports from Łódź survived the war, and are now available in the State Archive in Łódź and in the Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance (APŁ, NLN, 92–98; AIPN, GK 778/123). Most of them were based on an interview conducted at the person's place of residence; the reports cover not only Germans, but also – for example – persons declaring Russian nationality.

A separate consideration is the question of the racial checks to which Volksdeutsche were to be subject during the process of entry on the Volksliste. Some of the Volksliste questionnaires contain stamps with an assessment in the form of a racial classification category (the so-called RuSHA group, this being the abbreviation of *Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt*, the SS Central Office for Race and Settlement). Most Volksdeutsche did not undergo such checks. They were applied mainly to people who had Polish ancestry, knew German inadequately or hardly at all, or were the Polish partners in mixed marriages with Germans (Heinemann 2014). There are differing claims in the literature concerning the number of racial checks carried out in the Łódź government area and the Wartheland, and the surviving documents from the area Volksliste office do not provide such data. Racial checks aroused many controversies among the Volksliste offices at the area and provincial levels, and involved Greiser himself (Wolf 2018: 153–157). Greiser resisted the expulsion of Volksdeutsche considered racially undesirable (Epstein 2011: 208).

According to the official criteria relating to language and religion, a candidate Volksdeutscher would be fluent in German and not use the Polish language. An ideal German would also not have maintained close social relations with Poles before the war. All of these criteria failed to stand up to reality, in spite of the fact that the Volksliste office staff in the Łódź government area were more favourable to applicants in their interpretation of the regulations.

The county-level offices in the Łódź government area, particularly in the city and county of Łódź, complained about the frequent use of Polish by many Volksdeutsche, including in public places. Furthermore, some of them spoke German poorly or not at all, a problem that was to be addressed by means of

language courses run by the counties. However, these courses accommodated no more than a few hundred people per county, and left out a large group of Volksdeutsche with weak knowledge of German (for Łódź county: IZ, Doc. 1-367: 67a; for Łódź: IZ, Doc. 1-362: 20–21). As some of the officials noted, the language problem affected not only Volksdeutsche from the "suspect" groups 3 and 4, but also Germans from group 2 and even group 1. According to Łódź county reports, Volksdeutsche would use Polish not only to communicate with Poles, but also amongst themselves (IZ, Doc. 1-356: 7). Reports from various institutions confirm the frequent use of Polish in public places – for example, the management of Łódź city zoo (from which Poles were barred) complained in March 1943 that many of its visitors were speaking Polish publicly (AIPN, GK 68/19: 68). It is clear that the language criterion could not operate in the reality of occupied Łódź – Volksdeutsche were not always fluent in German, and often preferred or were accustomed to speaking Polish. Some Nazis, like the deputy chief of Łódź government area, Walter Moser, noted that: "such a prohibition would mean that the principle of absolute separation from Polishness, constantly emphasised by the *Reichsstatthalter* [Greiser], would be completely illusory." This statement is only partially true – there was a certain group of Germans in the Łódź area who spoke broken German or did not know the language at all (Epstein 2011: 198).

The criterion of religion, whereby an ideal Volksdeutscher would have been raised in a Protestant culture, was problematic for several reasons. First, in the city of Łódź and in Pabianice lived groups of German Catholics (Budziarek 2001). Although they were not numerically dominant among the German minority, they were significant enough that the German occupying authorities took note of their existence (APP, Wartheland Gauleiter, 1106: 6). Secondly, not all Protestants were Germans – in the years before the outbreak of the Second World War a conflict had begun within the Łódź community of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, which led to a split into a German majority and a Polish minority. Protestant Poles, with the support of the city's authorities and elites, including many factory owners, had been strengthening their position within the Evangelical Church in Łódź and its region – as evidenced by the formation of an Organisation of Evangelical Poles in Łódź in September 1927 and by the work of pastor Karol Kotula as leader of that community (Kotula 1998: 137–161). Thirdly, the Wartheland authorities treated both the Protestant churches and the Catholic Church in a clearly hostile manner. The repression against the already strongly Germanised (and at least outwardly loyal) Evangelical Church culminated in the decree on church reorganisation in the Wartheland, which divided it into two

churches, based respectively in Poznań and Łódź. Both were available only to Germans; the Polish Evangelical organisation was outlawed and subjected to severe repressions. The Catholic Church could carry on service only for Germans (Epstein 2011: 222–223; Huener 2018). All of these measures caused severe dissatisfaction among the Volksdeutsche, who did not agree with the war against religion (Bojanowski 1992: 224–225; Epstein 2011: 225–227).

All of these three factors suggest that religious denomination was treated primarily as a tool for determining how much the individual belonged to the German community – German Protestants had a much greater chance of preserving their Germanness than German Catholics, who had had to attend Polish masses, and were also more frequently married to Poles. Greiser and the Wartheland leadership were hostile to religion, and this characterised their policies even in comparison with other parts of the Reich.

The criteria of language and religion so eagerly applied by the Nazis in occupied Łódź did not in the slightest degree reflect the truth about the Volksdeutsche. The use of these criteria, even if self-identification were also taken into account, would necessarily lead to the failure of the project as a whole. The Wartheland administration knew of these problems and attempted to adapt the criteria to the actual state of affairs in the eastern part of the province.

Several documents from the surviving records of the Łódź area Volksliste office and the Wartheland central office suggest that the procedure for categorising Volksdeutsche in the Łódź government area was less strict than in the case of their compatriots in the Poznań and Inowrocław areas. Also, different criteria were applied than in the case of Germans from Wielkopolska. The author of a memorandum concerning the Deutsche Volksliste in Poznań, Herbert Strickner, citing the existence of only Russian schools before 1914,[12] the mastery of three languages (German, Russian, and Polish) by many Germans in the Łódź region, and the poverty of the population, argued for the need to use criteria other than language – for example, religious denomination. He went on to state explicitly that the Łódź Germans had to be assessed more leniently (Pospieszalski 1949: 99–100). The procedure itself was also simplified, with many decisions taken at the discretion of a single official. According to an estimate made by the city Volksliste office in Łódź in May 1944, out of the 107,523 people in Łódź entered on the list, approximately 80,000 had been accepted (and categorised) as a result of a single official's decision (APP, Wartheland Gauleiter, 1113: 314). Gerhard Wolf estimates that close to 20% of Volksdeutsche in

[12] This is not accurate; Polish- and German-language schools existed in Łódź from the beginning of the twentieth century.

the Wartheland were entered on the Volksliste in contravention of official regulations and guidelines (Wolf 2018: 152).

Mixed marriages

Another question to be considered is that of marriages between Poles and Germans (*Mischehe*, or mixed marriage, is a term used in Nazi propaganda) (Röger 2020). The Nazis viewed Łódź as a place where there was a high degree of mixing between nations, understood to include ethnically mixed marriages. The introudction of the Volksliste often led to bitter divisions within families. The historian Lucjan Kieszczyński, who was a manual worker during the occupation, described the family of a female friend as follows: "Her father, a Pole, a fanatical patriot, when her mother accepted the Volksliste and when their son was later taken into the German military, could not take it and committed suicide by hanging. This was provoked by his being slapped in the face by a German, which he took as an affront to the honour of a Pole. He did not want to live with a German wife and a German soldier as a son" (Kieszczyński 1996: 185).

The Nazis attempted to assign families to a single ethnicity; differences between husband and wife could lead to a conflict of identity among their children. At least in the case of pre-existing marriages, it was seen as better to assign the Polish spouse to group 3 or 4 than to leave him or her outside the Volksliste. There was also a practical reason to make the same assessment for both spouses: it was feared that local Germans would feel dissatisfaction and would protest if their Polish spouses were left as "serfs" outside the legal system of the Third Reich.

According to the guidelines, all Volksliste offices were to enter the Polish partners in such families on the list. If Polish spouses in binational marriages had been treated worse than their German partners, significant problems might be expected to ensue. "There are differences of opinions within marriages, children grow up subject to a certain dissonance, and finally do not know to which nation they belong. In this way an intermediate layer is artificially created"[13] (Kundrus 2012: 119). It might also irritate local Volksdeutsche and weaken their loyalty to the German state. Hence it was better "to admit several

[13] "…die Kinder wachsen in einer ausgesprochenen Dissonanz auf und wissen letzten Ende nicht, welchem Volkstum sie angehören. Man schafft auf diese Art und Weise nur künstlich eine Zwischenschicht" (Pospieszalski 1949: 93).

thousand Poles with their German partners to the German nation, than to have them stand outside",[14] as the chief of the Łódź government area indicated in 1942 (ibidem). This led to uniform treatment of Polish partners and the settlement of disputed questions, for example the issuing of German food rations to Germans' Polish spouses (APP, Wartheland Gauleiter, 1129: 13). After submitting an application, Polish spouses in mixed marriages were usually assigned to Volksliste group 3 or 4. It was very rare for such spouses to be admitted to group 2, or not to be admitted to the Volksliste at all. If the German spouse was in group 3 or 4, their Polish partner would generally be assigned to group 4 (APP, Wartheland Gauleiter, 1124: 9–12). The non-German national identity of the Polish partner was always noted in the applications of both spouses. A mixed marriage was a serious "burden" on the German partner, and could – along with language used at home and children's first language – affect the Volksliste group to which that person was assigned. For officials and NSDAP members, the possibility of marriage to a person of non-German nationality was excluded (APP, Wartheland Gauleiter, 1124: 28). Poles in mixed marriages, like Volksdeutsche in groups 3 and 4, were quite often subjected to racial checks (Heinemann 2014: 233–235), particularly in cases where the relationship was legalised in the course of the war. Official approval of a Polish–German relationship and permission to marry depended on a decision of Greiser's chancellery and had to be well reasoned. Permission was difficult to obtain; it was not possible if the Polish partner had a negative assessment from the racial checks. Relatively few people attempted to legalise a relationship with a Pole; several files with requests and decisions have survived in the State Archive in Poznań (APP, Wartheland Gauleiter, 768–769),[15] and Volksliste files contain a number of requests addressed to the mayor of Łódź (Bömelburg and Klatt 2015: 241, 259–260; APŁ, City of Łódź Files, 28665, 28513) and appeals (Bömelburg and Klatt 2015: 246–249; APŁ, NLN, 87–88). Following approval of the marriage and entry on the Volksliste, the Polish partners remained under the observation of the occupying authorities. Their status was uncertain – some offices objected to them being treated like other Volksdeutsche, and this led to requests for guidance being made to the Wartheland Central Office. A particularly controversial question was the continued Volksliste status of Polish widows of men who had died serving in the Wehrmacht (Kundrus 2012: 120).

[14] "Es ist besser einige tausend Polen mit ihren deutschen Ehegatten in das deutsche Volk zu übernehmen, als diese außerhalb stehen zu lassen" (ibidem).

[15] Several files contain applications by Germans concerning relationships with non-Poles: Ukrainians, Belarusians, Russians, people from the Baltic countries, etc.

An example of categorisation problems: Oskar Ambroży Klikar

The clear dividing line between the privileged (within the already privileged minority of inhabitants of the Łódź region) groups 1 and 2 of Volksdeutsche and the "Polonised" groups 3 and 4 compelled some Germans to submit appeals against their assignment to a group that they considered too low. Much depended on that decision; for example, whether they would be able to continue to practise their profession or retain their property.

The files held at the State Archive in Łódź contain numerous appeals lodged with the Volksliste office at government area level.[16] Most of them are requests for reassignment from group 3 to group 2; a few indicate the desire to move from group 4 to group 1. This is partly a result of instructions issued to Volksliste officials in 1941 prohibiting the acceptance of appeals from group 2 Volksdeutsche requesting a higher categorisation (APŁ, Łódź Regierungsbezirk Chief, 387: 134). An interesting case whose records survive in the Volksliste files is that of Oskar Ambroży Klikar (also spelled Klikauer). It is an atypical example that all the same demonstrates the dilemmas of categorisation and the problems associated with the categories that the Nazis had adopted.

Klikar was born in Łódź on 7 November 1869. From the age of 22 he worked for various industrial firms in Łódź. From 1932 he was a director of the Widzewska Manufaktura factory (APŁ, NLN, 245174, p. 22). In 1929 he took a seat on the city council, representing Deutscher Volksverband, one of the most important German organisations in the Łódź region at that time (Cygański 1962: 28). Klikar submitted his Volksliste application in April 1940. The following comment was added to his questionnaire form: "Klikar presented himself as a Pole before the war. His wife is Polish. Klikar denies his Germanness, speaks disrespectfully about Germans, the Führer and Germany. In order to become a complete Pole, he was rechristened, associated with Poles and Polish priests, belonged to the Polish Military Organisation [POW]."[17]

Klikar appealed against the decision of an official who in 1940 had assigned him to group C, and subsequently to group 4. The appeal was considered twice:

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[16] An unknown number of appeals were finally considered by the Supreme Court of Examination of the *Reichskommissar für die Festigung des deutschen Volkstums* (Reich Commissar for the Consolidation of German Nationhood).

[17] "Klikar gab sich vor dem Krieg als Pole aus. Seine Frau ist Polin. Klikar ist ein Verleugner seines Deutschtums, äußert sich abfällig gegen Deutsche gegen den Deutschen, dem Führer und Deutschland. Um ein ganzer Pole zu sein ließ er sich umtaufen, verkehrte mit Polen und polnischen Pfarrern, gehörte zur Polnischen Militärorganisation."

first in 1942 (or earlier), and again in 1943 (APŁ, NLN, 89). His actions as director of Widzewska Manufaktura were assessed negatively by the Nazis – he was said to have forbidden employees to speak German, and to have been an enemy of Germans. The aforementioned accusation that he had insulted Germany and Hitler was described in more precise terms in subsequent opinions issued by the occupying authorities – he was reported to have said in the presence of his driver: "Hitler's whole damned pack need to be eradicated right back to the cradle"[18] (APŁ, NLN, 245174, p. 11). A second opinion confirms that Klikar belonged to the POW during the First World War and disarmed a general of the German army in Łódź (APŁ, NLN, 245174, p. 12). According to a third opinion annexed to the application, he was said to have funded a Jewish organisation. That opinion also contains the following assessment: "It can be added that Klikar was a typical Łódź businessman: he was a Pole to the Poles, a German to the Germans – if that would bring some advantage. Klikar recently claimed to be of French descent, with the original name Klikard!"[19] (APŁ, NLN, 245174, p. 13). The "charge" that he acted as papal chamberlain to Pope Pius XII in Poland is not supported by Klikar's personal files, but one opinion concerning him indicates that he was a member of the Papal Academy (without indicating a specific department). The German mayor of Rzgów stated in his first opinion: "Klikar was not known as a German, and if he wishes to claim otherwise today, that is sheer hypocrisy"[20] (APŁ, NLN, 245174, p. 11).

Claims repeated in works of literature (Izerski 1964: 211; Lesman 2017: 250–252, 344) that Klikar was a Nazi party chief have no support in the sources – no Volksdeutscher of group 4 was permitted even to belong to the NSDAP, let alone take on a leadership role at regional level.

Klikar's appeal over his Volksliste categorisation ultimately failed in August 1943, when the Volksliste office at Łódź government area level rejected it with the following reasoning: "Klikar had a hostile attitude to Germanness in the past, and in many cases acted against Germans" (APŁ, NLN, 89).

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[18] "Folgende Wörter wurden deutlich von dem Kraftwagenführer des Kilkars Oskar und seinem Bruder und anderen Dorfbewohner vernommen, das ganze verfluchte Hitlerpack müßte man bis zur Wiege ausschalten."

[19] "Bei Klikar kommt noch hinzu, dass er ein typischer Lodscher Geschäftsmann war: er war den Polen ein Pole, den Deutschen ein Deutscher – wenn er sich davon einen Vorteil versprach. Klikar gab sich in der letzten Zeit als französischer Abkömmling, der ursprünglich Klikard geheissen habe!"

[20] "Laut weiteren Aussagen des Bürgermeisters der Stadt Rzgow, war Klikar als Deutscher nicht bekannt und wenn er heute das Gegenteil behaupten will, so ist es eine blosse Heuchelei."

The files with appeals contain mostly only the decisions of the government area's Volksliste office, together with a few documents submitted by applicants to support their appeals. The reasons given for the committee's decision provide a certain insight into the arguments used in assigning someone to a privileged group or to one of the lower, "Polonised" groups (3 and 4).

Oskar Klikar lodged his appeal out of necessity, as Volksdeutsche in groups C, D and E, and later group 4 were subject to a number of restrictions that affected their economic position. It may be surprising that he sought promotion to group 1, as most of the surviving appeals are requests for reassignment to group 2 (from group 3). His fate during the occupation and after the liberation of the Łódź region is unknown. It is natural that in his case the decisive arguments mainly related to his position as director of Widzewska Manufaktura. Klikar, who can be counted among the elites of pre-war Łódź, found himself – if only from the need to maintain close contacts with the Polish state and Polish society, or due to his position as a city councillor – partly compelled and partly encouraged (for example, through the support of Polish governing circles for Polish industry) to maintain close contacts with Poles and to engage in anti-German initiatives. Other arguments that appear in the appeals of much less wealthy applicants, such as those concerning Catholic faith or knowledge of the German language, did not play a major role in Klikar's case, even though they appeared several times in the opinions of various officials. Klikar's case is representative only for a small number of well-situated Łódź Volksdeutsche: he had been a director of one of the city's largest factories, and also no doubt had very good contacts with the Polish elites.

Reasons for seeking entry on the Volksliste

Those seeking entry on the Volksliste were motivated by a wide variety of factors. A major consideration was that the German population and people of German descent (or their partners), if they delayed applying for the list, were subjected to coercion. A declaration of German nationality could help one to avoid a punishment or to have it significantly reduced. Some people accepted entry on the list to save family members from being sent to a concentration camp. In the case of many practising a profession, lack of entry on the Volksliste or assignment to too low a group would cause them to be prohibited from practising. The same applied to many civil servants, including teachers – assignment to a low group might result in dismissal (APP, Wartheland Gauleiter, 1129: 39–47). Owners of businesses and landowners

had to consider the possibility of confiscation. If parents failed to sign the Volksliste, their children could not attend school; entry on the list or assignment to a "privileged" group could provide access to education.[21] There was also significant pressure from below; many were forced or persuaded to apply by their partners, parents, other family members, or employers. In the case of many Polish–German couples, after the German partner had submitted a questionnaire, pressure was applied to register the Polish spouse and their children. There were also a certain number of opportunists who sought entry on the Volksliste because they expected the occupying regime to last, or else they believed in the Nazi ideology or identified as Germans. We should also remember a relatively small number of Volksdeutsche who signed the list on the instructions of the resistance movement or who joined an anti-Nazi underground movement after being entered on the list.

It is not always possible to determine to what extent individual Volksdeutsche felt themselves to be German, and to what extent Polish. Zygmunt Izdebski and later Volksliste researchers state that there exist a range of intermediate attitudes and a great variety of reasons for declaring German identity (Olejnik 2006: 29).

Perceptions of the administration and the Łódź Volksdeutsche about the Volksliste

Surviving sources from the time of the occupation contain relatively few opinions of residents of occupied Łódź and the Wartheland concerning the system used to categorise ethnic Germans. One description of the campaign of March 1940 that survives in the files of the German administration is a sentence from a report by the head of the Łódź–Kalisz government area: "Entries on the German National List have brought the Volksdeutsche significant peace of mind and a good mood" (APP, Wartheland Gauleiter, 1380: 13). A later Security Service (*SD*) report comes from the period after the implementation of the Volksliste in accordance with the decree of the Reich interior minister, namely after March 1941. Extension of the Volksliste registration campaign to the group of Polonised

[21] The "privileged groups" included Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Czechs, and people from the Baltic countries, living in occupied Poland and recorded on the appropriate national lists or in the official address register. There also existed primary education for Poles from around 1943; it was available to a very small group of Polish children and had a minimal teaching programme, not comparable to that of German schools.

Volksdeutsche or to Poles with German roots was, according to this report, criticised by the previously registered Volksdeutsche who had a more firmly grounded national consciousness (AIPN, Gestapo, Ld 1/280: 243). People submitting applications began to withdraw them following Germany's attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, as Strickner himself mentioned in his report (Pospieszalski 1949: 58–59). Also in April 1942 the SD confirmed that the Soviet–German war was having a negative impact on the Volksliste – the arrival of injured from the Eastern front weakened faith in and expectation of a German victory among Poles and Germans in the Wartheland (AIPN, Ld 1/280: 377).

Conclusion

The hopes placed by the Reich in the Volksliste in the Łódź region were not fulfilled. The liberation of Łódź in January 1945 and the fall of the Third Reich ended the essentially prototypical idea of the re-Germanisation of Germans, people of German descent, and Poles with ties to Germans. The criteria of religion, language, and self-identification were a clearly insufficient basis for a categorisation of most of the German population that would enable it to be separated from the non-German majority and re-Germanised: the Jewish and Polish elements had been dominant in Łódź before 1939, and the Nazis themselves considered almost all of the city's Germans (including those with a much stronger national identity) to be unreliable and insufficiently German. One may agree with Kundrus that the Volksliste system was flexible – the uniform treatment of Polish–German married couples indicates a certain dose of realism within the German administration. Another indication of a realistic approach may be the fact that the criteria were adapted to suit the reality, and that the Łódź Germans were assessed more leniently than their compatriots in Poznań. More detailed research is needed on the individual applications for entry on the Volksliste; in view of the fact that tens of thousands of Volksliste forms and accompanying documents have survived, this article provides only a partial account of the attitudes of people of the time. The case of Oskar Ambroży Klikar, director of the Widzewska Manufaktura factory prior to 1939, who attempted to change his classification from group 4 to group 1, is unusual for the Łódź Volksdeutsche. It is also unusual among industrialists in occupied Łódź, who strove by various other means to retain their property and position. Further research relating to this subgroup is also necessary.

One of the effects of the introduction of the Volksliste was the complete destruction of Polish–German relations in the Łódź region. These relations be-

gan to be revived only after 1989, although in entirely different circumstances than in 1939. Even today those relations remain overshadowed by the consequences of the Volksliste.

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Łódź Regierungsbezirk Chief, 387
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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the German National List (Deutsche Volksliste) compiled in the Łódź region during the Second World War. The Volksliste was part of the Nazis' plans to re-Germanise the Łódź Germans and to separate them from the influence of Polish culture and society. The main questions addressed are the categorisation of Volksdeutsche by the Volksliste offices, and the motivations of Germans who rejected the list or applied for admission to a higher category. It is hypothesised that the criteria used for categorisation were insufficient, and that the most frequently applied criteria – language and religion – did not enable an adequate categorisation of the Łódź Germans. People accepted the list for many different reasons (in some cases they were compelled to do so), the most important reasons being economic ones – a desire to preserve one's wealth, profession or social position. The article is based on various archival sources, including documents of the German administration from archives in Łódź, Poznań, and Warsaw, as well as documents submitted by applicants, as in the case of Oskar Ambroży Klikar, who appealed against his assignment to a low Volksliste category.

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The myth of Stepan Bandera

Before beginning to discuss the current public perception of Stepan Bandera and his activities, and analysing whether we are dealing with a kind of mythologisation of the historical hero and of the OUN-UPA, we must accept a certain limitation of the very concept of "myth", which is common to all social sciences and interpreted in various contexts, and constitutes "an inexhaustible pool of problems for the humanities" (Niżnik 1978: 163). According to Jerzy Topolski, a myth can be sacralised, diverge from science, and yet function within it. It can also be interpreted as "writing history in the spirit of progress set on a chronological axis", or "evaluating events and processes according to later standards" (Topolski 1999: 204–207). Consequently, it is quite difficult to provide a precise and universally accepted definition of the term, which for the purpose of this article will be narrowed down to one aspect of the definition given by the *Dictionary of the Polish Language*, according to which it is "a false opinion about someone or something accepted without proof" (Słownik 2023). It is not rare that people have a false image of a historical figure and their importance for a nation or a specific social group.

An example of such dualism in assessment is provided undoubtedly by the attitudes held towards Stepan Bandera, whom Poles often consider to be respected by all Ukrainians, although Ukrainians themselves are more often than not of a different opinion. Merely typing the phrase "who is the hero of Ukraine?" in Polish (kto jest bohaterem Ukrainy?) and in Ukrainian (хто є героєм України?) into a popular Internet search engine yields interesting results. If in both cases we ignore the Wikipedia pages titled "Category: Heroes of Ukraine" and "Heroes of Ukraine" in the respective languages, which discuss the topic in general terms (but differ significantly from each other), then among the snippets of the first nine Polish-language search results, eight contain references to Bandera, the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) or the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). These words are not to be found in

the Ukrainian-language search results, although after reviewing the articles it appears that Bandera's name is among those who were, or are today, officially recognised as Ukraine's national heroes. This kind of search can hardly be regarded as meeting the criteria of a scholarly study, but at the same time it shows how important it is to consider whether we can say today that Stepan Bandera is a hero for Ukrainians, whether he is viewed as a charismatic leader who took the nation towards independence, or whether this way of perceiving him is perhaps a myth that has gained particular popularity outside Ukraine, especially in Poland, but also in Russia.

To address these questions, it is necessary to put forth and verify the following research hypotheses:

In the eyes of the Ukrainian general public, Stepan Bandera is not a leader or an outstanding historical hero, and opinions about him are regionally diverse.

Bandera is not a person who can gain popularity in a country supporting democratic standards, and Ukrainian politicians distance themselves from him.

Bandera's popularity is a myth that has become part of historical politics. His life and activities are used as a symbol of opposition to Russia that is becoming increasingly common in Ukraine.

In attempting to verify these hypotheses, the following research questions were asked: What is the attitude of Ukrainian citizens towards Stepan Bandera? Did significant political and social events in Ukraine, such as the Orange Revolution and the Revolution of Dignity, change the views of Ukrainians and make nationalist sentiments more radical? Is Stepan Bandera seen as a hero by Ukrainians, or was he made a hero by politicians? What are the present-day sympathies and antipathies of Poles and Ukrainians towards each other? Might the "Bandera cult" negatively influence Ukraine's image in the international arena, and if so, how?

In search of answers to these questions, the results of public opinion surveys in Ukraine and Poland were analysed using a comparative method. This enables us to outline how Bandera and nationalist circles are viewed by the citizens of both countries. Since current events are not without significance for such an analysis, selected events from recent history which significantly influenced Polish–Ukrainian relations have been taken into account.

The problem of the reception and interpretation of the Bandera myth is an extremely broad one, and it is impossible to discuss all of its aspects in a single scholarly article. Therefore, for the purpose of this discussion, the main focus is on the analysis of attitudes and opinions of Poles and Ukrainians in the twenty-first century, with a particular emphasis on the years following the Rev-

olution of Dignity, and in full awareness that this is only a part of this complex issue. At the same time, this is an area that is still insufficiently emphasised in academic, political, social and journalistic discourse.

Sympathies in percentages

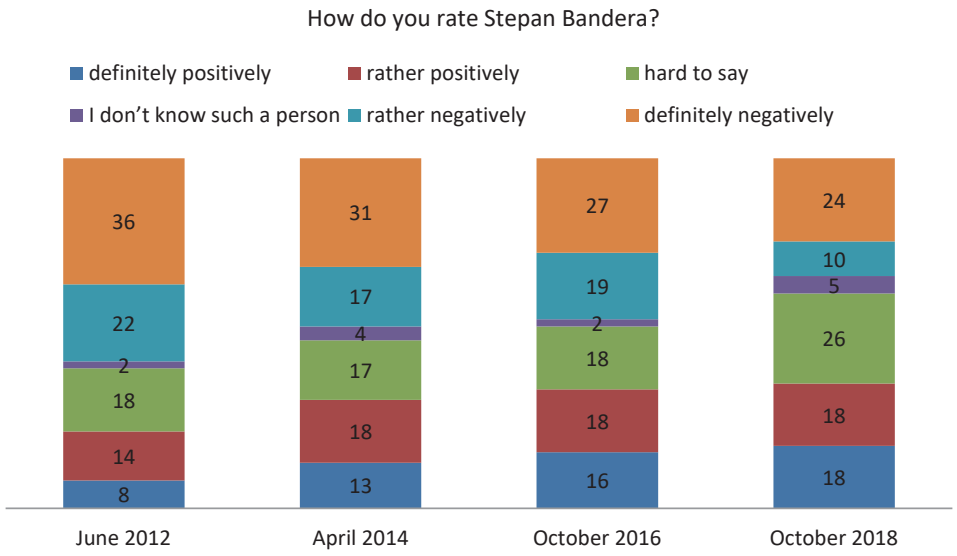
Over the years, issues related to historical politics have become one of the key components in Polish–Ukrainian relations. As Ukraine's European integration project, which Poland has been promoting in the international arena for many years, was relegated to the background, support for Ukraine's democratic development and building of a civil society has become less publicised. Instead, events dating back to the first half of the twentieth century have been recalled in political and media discourse. At the same time, it is impossible to agree on common views on historical issues, a phenomenon which Professor Oleksandr Zinchenko described as "asymmetry of memory" (Зінченко, 2017), a symbol of which is undoubtedly Stepan Bandera. However, we must ask the question whether in this case the asymmetry is as significant as it might seem. The results of public opinion polls indicate that the view of Bandera as a hero is not shared by everyone, and the opinions of some Ukrainians are decidedly negative. In 2016, attitudes towards Bandera among Donbas residents were as negative as those towards Stalin – in both cases, 22.5% of respondents expressed a negative opinion about the person in question. Interestingly enough, former presidents Viktor Yushchenko (21.8%) and Viktor Yanukovych (20.4%) received only slightly fewer negative votes. It should be noted that nationally, the latter was considered an "anti-hero" by 51% of those surveyed, 9 percentage points ahead of Stalin (42% negative votes) (Загальнонаціональна та регіональна ідентичність, p. 7), which was probably indicative of the still extremely emotional attitude towards the former president, overthrown during the protests at the turn of 2013 and 2014.

Between 2012 and 2018, the percentage of those who held a positive opinion of Bandera increased from 24% to 36%, but still represented a minority of Ukrainians. At the same time, the percentage of those who did not have a clear opinion increased from 18% to 26%, which may have resulted from a fear of taking sides in the public debate on the subject, which still aroused considerable controversy (see Figure 1). In general, rural residents (41% as opposed to 32% of urban residents) and young people aged 18–35 (41%) expressed positive views about Stepan Bandera, while 34% of respondents aged 36–50 and 31% of those over 51 rated him positively. It should be emphasised that after 2014,

citizens of Russian-occupied Crimea and parts of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, where the armed conflict was still ongoing, were excluded from the survey, which made it impossible to give an exact comparison of Ukrainians' views over the years. It cannot be ruled out that the national percentage of those hostile to Bandera may have increased due to the opinions of residents of the eastern regions or Crimea, who were already critical of this figure, as shown in earlier surveys (Соціологічна група "Рейтинг", 2018: 25).

Figure 1

After: *Соціологічна група «Рейтинг» (2018), Динаміка ставленнядо Голодомору 1932-33 рр., листопад 2018*



http://ratinggroup.ua/files/ratinggroup/reg_files/rg_golodomor_112018_press.pdf (accessed: 14 April 2021), p. 25.

The survey results should be compared with research on Ukrainians' opinions about "heroes of all time". Back in 1999 "during the presidential campaign, Kuchma and his people" created a calendar of Ukrainian heroes which presented a "historical pantheon", but Stepan Bandera was not among those chosen (Chruślińska, 2009: 289). In 2015, 8.25% of those surveyed considered Bandera one of the most important historical figures in Ukraine, giving him seventh place among the 100 people listed. The top three were Taras Shevchenko (62.9%), Bohdan Khmelnytsky (23.5%) and Lesia Ukrainka (19%). The first three places were held by the same people as in 2012, whereas Bandera's pop-

ularity had almost doubled in that time (from 4.3%), causing him to move up from ninth position (Соціологічна група «Рейтинг», 2015: 5–6; Соціологічна група «Рейтинг», 2012: 7).

Table 1

After: Соціологічна група «Рейтинг» (2015), Найвидатніші українці, травень 2015

Percentage of people regarding S. Bandera as one of the three most outstanding Ukrainians of all time, by region of residence in 2012 and 2015						
	West	Centre	North	South (in 2015 excluding Crimea)	East	Donbas
May 2012	16	1	1	1	2	2
May 2015	26	5	5	1	3	3

http://ratinggroup.ua/files/ratinggroup/reg_files/rg_top_ukry_052015.pdf (accessed 11 April 2021), p. 8; Соціологічна група «Рейтинг» (2012), *Народний ТОП, Видатні українці усіх часів, травень 2012*, http://ratinggroup.ua/files/ratinggroup/reg_files/rg_top_ukrainian_052012.pdf (accessed 11 April 2021), p. 7.

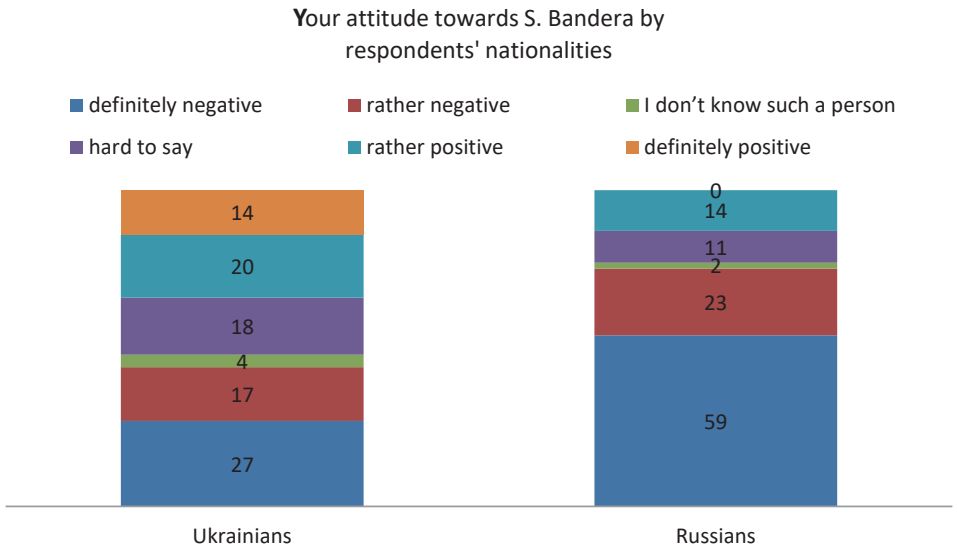
In the central regions and the north of the country, a small yet significant increase in sympathy can be noticed compared with the situation back in 2012, which may have been influenced by the Revolution of Dignity, after which some Ukrainians began to believe that being a "Banderite" was tantamount to a declaration of anti-Russianism. Such attitudes were far removed from any reflection on Bandera's place in historiography or assessment of his activity. They were a response to a threat to the state's security and territorial integrity, and a kind of rebellion against politicians associated with Viktor Yanukovych and the Party of Regions, who were still in power, and whose pro-Kremlin connections were known to everyone.

The results of the study conducted in May 2014 point to very similar views among Ukrainians. At that time, Bandera was viewed positively mostly by those Ukrainians who did not feel nostalgic for the Soviet Union – in that group 51% of responses were positive and 30% negative. The proportions were different among those who did feel nostalgic for the USSR – in this group Bandera was assessed positively by only 8% of respondents, and as many as 76% rated him clearly negatively. In the first group, only Stalin (87%) and Vladimir Putin (94%) had a higher number of negative opinions. At the same time, it is interesting to note that supporters of the Russian president were those who were most critical of Bandera (only 2% declared a positive attitude towards him), while those who rated him positively were the least fond of Putin (1%)

(Соціологічна група «Рейтинг», 2014: 9–10). We can surmise that, to some extent, these likes and dislikes were reflective of a broader trend, which is the identification of Russia with the Soviet Union by some citizens, and thus the equating of good relations with Russia with a return to the times of mythical Soviet prosperity. This echoes a certain nostalgia, but also shows a lack of understanding of the political, economic and social situation. Finally, it is also the result of propaganda creating a polarised vision of the world in which Ukraine is at one extreme and Russia at the other, where, for those who are pro-Russian, the former country is symbolised by the "evil" Bandera and the latter by the "good" Putin (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

After: Соціологічна група «Рейтинг» (2014), Ностальгія за СРСР та ставлення до окремих постатей



http://ratinggroup.ua/files/ratinggroup/reg_files/rg_historical_ua_052014.pdf (accessed 11 April 2021), pp. 9–10.

The results of the research conducted between 22 and 29 April 2021 by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Razumkov Centre point to similar percentages of respondents (32%) who said that they feel positively about Bandera and who feel negatively about him. Residents of Russian-occupied Crimea and parts of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions were not included in the survey, and taking this into account, it was concluded that the

negative attitude towards Bandera prevails in the southern and eastern regions (54% and 48%, respectively). At the same time, in both regions, Bandera is perceived as a positive figure by 11% of respondents. Ukrainians living in the western part of the country were much more sympathetic towards him (71%) (*День*, 2021). It can be clearly seen that as the years have passed it is still hard to talk about an unambiguous image of this historical figure, and Ukrainian citizens are divided on how he should be assessed. Consequently, neither important events in domestic politics, such as the change of president, nor Russian aggression, nor (as can be assumed) Ukrainian historical policy, had a significant impact on public opinions at that time.

Marek Wojnar emphasises that between 2014 and 2019, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UIPN) "pursued a policy of remembrance towards Stepan Bandera" consisting in organising conferences and exhibitions, preparing educational materials and providing recommendations for schools, but he also points out that among the conferences "organised by the UIPN, only one was related to Stepan Bandera: the symposium *Ukrainian liberation movement of the 1920s–1950s: the idea of statehood and its implementation* held on 29–30 June 2016". A "one-minute video" about Bandera was posted on YouTube, and although the Institute perpetuated "nationalist myths" using a board game and a book titled *War and Myth. The Unknown Second World War 1939–1945* (Wojnar 2020: 198–199), it seems that there were no large-scale projects promoting Bandera. The president of the UIPN, Volodymyr Viatrovych, himself said that "Bandera has become a specific indicator of Ukrainianness. If a politician is not ready to stand up for Bandera streets in Ukraine, then I'm sure that these are politicians who are not ready to defend Ukrainian national interests at a time when we will have to face major Russian attacks" (*Бандера перетворився*, 2019). At the same time, however, he objected to naming streets after Bandera as he considered this to be a reduplication of the "Soviet experience with Lenin" (*Володимир В'ятрович*). This inconsistency may reflect not so much an incoherent or uncritical approach to the historical figure, but rather a desire to preserve the right to one's own interpretation of history. "Not only do we have the right to heroes that our neighbours may not like, but undoubtedly also to judge our own ones as we like" Viatrovych said, adding that "there is something about Bandera that can be admired and something worthy of condemnation. However, this should be done on the basis of one's own opinion, and not because his biography irritates people in Russia, Poland, Israel or elsewhere" (*Володимир В'ятрович. Про рівень,* 2021).

On the other hand, in the report on the operations of the UIPN for 2020, signed by Anton Drobovych, Viatrovych's successor as the organisation's pres-

ident, there is only one mention of Bandera, referring to a public discussion about him organised by the Central Interregional Department of the Institute and the Vinnytsia Regional Youth Centre "Kvadrat" on 12 October (*Публічний*, 2020). Therefore, Bandera may appear not to have been a figure to whom special attention was paid, even by the UIPN, a fact which was reflected in public opinions about him.

The situation changed after 24 February 2022, when Russia started a full-scale war in Ukraine. On 5–12 August 2022, when Ukrainians were asked whether, in their opinion, Stepan Bandera's activity should be rated positively or rather negatively, as many as 49.6% of those asked selected the first answer. Only 11.1% of the Ukrainians surveyed were critical of him, while 19.4% felt that Bandera and his activity could be viewed as both positive and negative, 18.1% had no opinion on the matter, and only 1.8% of respondents had not heard of him. Therefore, compared with 2021, the share of respondents who held a favourable opinion about Bandera's activity had increased by 19%, while the share of respondents who assessed his activity negatively had decreased by 21%.

Consistently critical opinions prevailed among residents of the southern regions (the Odesa and Mykolaiv regions), where as many as 9% of those questioned did not even know who Stepan Bandera was. Supporters of the former USSR were also reluctant to think of him positively (32% of people in this group expressed a critical attitude). On the other hand, when respondents' language is considered, the number of Russian-speaking respondents having a positive attitude towards this historical figure (29%) was larger than the number being of the opposite opinion (20%) (*Як трансформується*, 2022).

In spite of Kremlin propaganda which persistently calls Ukrainians "Banderites", Bandera has become a symbol of the struggle against Russian aggression, and yet he still evokes negative associations not only in Russia, but also in Poland. Also in the latter, certain circles hostile to Ukraine and, above all, critical of the aid provided to war refugees overuse the term "Banderism", which for them encompasses not only all the harm done to Poles by Ukrainians, but also contemporary alleged threats, such as influencing the results of Polish elections, taking jobs, or obtaining priority treatment from the health service. Similar views are expressed in online discussions, characterised by a false sense of anonymity which, in turn, causes users to express less balanced opinions. The opinions voiced by Internet users largely result from disinformation spread by pro-Russian sources with a vested interest in fuelling the Polish–Ukrainian conflict and creating a negative image of the refugees.

In spite of what has just been said, but mainly due to having to face the Russian invader, Ukrainians better understood the meaning of the struggle

that the Ukrainian Insurgent Army had waged against Soviet troops, and their attitudes to Bandera became more favourable than had been the case before 2022. A figure who divided Ukrainian society is now more often appreciated as a personification of resistance, although the wartime heroes were primarily the soldiers and ordinary people who fought for freedom every day.

Bandera in the Maidan

The protests sparked by the Ukrainian government's rejection of the Association Agreement with the European Union, which took place at the turn of 2013 and 2014, were not only pro-European and anti-presidential, but also, to a large extent, anti-Russian. On the other hand, the pro-Russian media portrayed the Maidan and the overthrow of Viktor Yanukovych as a conspiracy of "Banderist" far-right circles. Their symbol was the Svoboda party (ВО Свобода), which was already criticised by the Polish side in 2019 for, among other things, organising demonstrations in front of Polish diplomatic missions in Ukraine, during which they protested against the "forced Polonisation of Ukrainians between the fifteenth and twentieth century" and glorified Bandera and the OUN-UPA (AMSZ2010a).

During the Maidan, this group was said to recognise Bandera as its icon, as evidenced by a torchlight procession of several thousand people organised on 1 January 2014 in Kyiv to commemorate the 105th anniversary of Bandera's birth. The march was led by Svoboda leader Oleh Tiahnybok and MPs Andriy Ilyenko and Ihor Miroshnychenko (alongside clergymen and a girl carrying a portrait of the "hero"). The following year, Miroshnychenko became head of Svoboda in the Sumy region. He also gained attention for taking Bandera's portrait to the headquarters of the International Association Football Federation (FIFA). Although the organisers of the Maidan shunned such actions (Ильенко и Мирошниченко 2013; Москвичова 2014; Тисячі людей 2014; Заяц 2014), they resulted in publications such as "Евромайдан имени Степана Бандеры. От демократии к диктатуре" (*Neonazis & Euromaidan: From Democracy to Dictatorship*) by Stanislav Byshok and Alexey Kochetkov[1] (Бышок, Кочетков,

[1] This publication was prepared by the Public Diplomacy foundation, which was "established in 2010 with the purpose of normalising and harmonising inter-ethnic, inter-religious and inter-state relations both within and beyond the post-Soviet space", and uses the ".su" Internet domain, designated for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The publication is available at: https://www.publicdiplomacy.su/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Stanislav-Byishok-Aleksey-Kochetkov-Evromaydan-imeni-Stepana-Banderyi.-Ot-demokratii-k-diktature-2014.pdf

2014), where links between the demonstrations and "Banderism" were alluded to in the original title.

Much as this kind of message reinforces the stereotype of a nationalist Ukraine, Ukrainians themselves did not express approval of Svoboda in the 2007 elections, when the party won only 0.76% of the vote (Центральна Виборча Комісія, 2008: 480), or in the 2019 elections (2.15% of the vote) (Центральна Виборча Комісія, 2020). Similarly, the party did not gain much support in the 2010 presidential election – Oleh Tiahnybok won 1.43% of votes (Центральна Виборча Комісія, 2010). Four years later, he received only 210,476 votes, 1.16% of the total (Центральна Виборча Комісія, 2016: 248, 299).

Importantly, it was pointed out in Ukraine that Svoboda, which was accused of extreme nationalism by Russians, was linked not only to the Kremlin, but also to the Party of Regions, against which the "nationalists" were protesting in the Maidan. Moscow was said to sponsor the group's activities through, among others, oligarchs such as Dmytro Firtash, years ago an active supporter of the Yanukovych regime (*"Свободу" фінансувала* 2014; Починок 2015; *"Свобода" фігурує* 2016; Давиденко 2017; *У США* 2020). Without verifying (as there is no reliable evidence) the validity of such claims, it should be noted that the increasing popularity of far-right groups or exaggeration of the importance of nationalist circles in Ukraine is undoubtedly in Russia's interest. Portraying Ukrainians as radicals, xenophobes or antisemites reduces public confidence in the state, affects its position in the international arena, and has a direct impact on bilateral relations.

Even if it is assumed that, when resorting to the black-and-red symbolism, Ukrainians are manifesting not so much nationalism understood as an ideology based on hatred of other nations, but rather an attachment to their own country which is closer to patriotism, the advertising of this phenomenon – combined with the lack of reliable commentary – reinforces the impression of Ukraine as a stronghold of radicalism. This fact has been eagerly picked up by the media, and the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine has been conducive to the presentation of such topics. One of these was the actions taken on the eastern front by the Azov regiment, which was presented, among others, by Polish right-wing websites as nationalist (Łuniewski 2019; Parafinowicz 2019). Given the sensational headlines carried by reports on the subject, publications describing Azov as a victim of Russia's "black PR" did not get much attention (Wyrwał 2020). Therefore, the struggle to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity, which has been continuing since 2014, is seen by some circles as a manifestation of Kyiv's aggressive policy, not worthy of the support of the international community.

Bandera – Ukraine's hero or Yushchenko's hero?

According to Wieslaw Romanowski, the Polish view of Stepan Bandera, especially in circles associated with eastern borderland organisations, is based on "the borderland model of this figure, (…) on the Volhynian narrative, on belief in the exceptionally vile Ukrainian national character", which, in the light of historical facts, does not withstand criticism, since "the Volhynian Massacre has its roots in Polish–Ukrainian history" (Romanowski 2016: 10). As has already been noted, the belief that attitudes towards Bandera can be analysed at the level of Ukraine as a whole is a far-fetched idea. The strong regionalisation of historical memory means that Bandera's popularity is greater in the western regions of Ukraine, and what is more, for many years the proximity of the border and more frequent contacts between Poles and Ukrainians of this region, combined with a lack of knowledge about the country as a whole, more often than not resulted in the belief that Bandera was approved of by all Ukrainians.

Additionally, actions undertaken by the authorities contributed to the development of such views; for example, the title "Hero of Ukraine" was awarded to Roman Shukhevych on 12 October 2007 and to Stepan Bandera on 22 January 2010 by Viktor Yushchenko (Указ № 965/2007; Указ № 46/2010). In a sense, this decision was taken to meet a demand made by deputies of the Lviv Regional Council, who had already appealed to the president on this issue on 22 September 2009, claiming that "all Ukrainians expected this title to be awarded on the centenary of Stepan Bandera, celebrated on 1 January 2009"[2] (*Степану Бандері* 2009). At the same time, a discussion ensued on the legitimacy of awarding such a title to controversial figures who are not approved of by the general public, and Timothy Snyder remarked that the practice itself, introduced by a decree of President Leonid Kuchma in 1998, dated back to Soviet times and, as such, should not be observed in an independent country (Снайдер 2010: 218; Указ № 944/98; Указ № 1114/2002).

The awarding of the title "Hero of Ukraine" to Stepan Bandera sparked a strong response on the Polish side, and, as Polish MP Sylwester Pawłowski wrote, "posthumous honours for Bandera" aroused "concerns on the Polish side of the border among people whose families suffered cruelty at the hands of Ukrainian nationalists during and immediately after the Second World War" (AMSZ2010). The Opole Voivodeship Assembly adopted a resolution con-

[2] The deputies also wanted OUN and UPA soldiers to be recognised as fighters for Ukraine's independence, wished Ukrainian Army Day to be celebrated as a public holiday on October 14, and voted for the foundation of the Order of Stepan Bandera.

demning the honouring of the perpetrators of genocide in the Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic by Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko. It also appealed to the Polish authorities to take action to have the Ukrainian decree annulled (AMSZ2010d). The Koszalin branch of the Society of Lovers of Lviv and South-Eastern Borderlands expressed its strong opposition to the decree, mentioning among the ideologues of the Volhynian Massacre not only Bandera and Shukhevych, but also Dmytro Dontsov and Klym Savura, to whose memory "President Yushchenko's Ukraine has erected monuments, built squares and streets". At the same time, the Polish authorities were criticised for "turning a blind eye" to these actions "in the name of strategic partnership", which was seen as an "approval of falsifying history" (AMSZ2010b). This is an extremely serious allegation, because it is not the first time that the Polish government has been accused of excessive leniency towards Ukraine, which might have influenced the shape of Poland's eastern policy, primarily by weakening it thanks to politicians who were guided in their decision-making more by the desire to please their electorate than by political pragmatism.

The position of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs was much more balanced, as it viewed this problem "in the spirit of the resolution of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland of 15 July 2009, in which the actions of the OUN/UPA were recognised as mass murders of the nature of ethnic cleansing and having genocidal features" (M.P. 2009 No. 47, item 684). In a note to the Ukrainian foreign ministry, which was a response to Ukraine's decision to give Bandera the controversial title and posthumously award him the Order of the State, it was emphasised that the so-called "sense of historical injustice" cannot be a justification for the murder of Polish people treated as a symbol of the nation to which the injustice was attributed. It was recalled that neither Poles nor a united Europe could support the construction of a national identity based on the nationalist traditions of the OUN and UPA, and a protest was expressed against Svoboda's pickets in front of Polish diplomatic and consular missions, whose participants glorified Bandera and nationalist organisations. Simultaneously, it was emphasised that these groups were not of significant importance. The award of the title to Bandera brought objections from Ukrainians themselves, and in November 2009, Minister Radosław Sikorski and his counterpart Petro Poroshenko set up the Polish–Ukrainian Partnership Forum, whose task was, among other things, to open a debate on the painful events in the common history of the two states. Dialogue was considered the only means that would lead to reconciliation between the two nations and the creation of "an objective picture of the tragedy that took place in Volhynia". Moreover, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs suspected that Yushchenko's decision might have

been part of his election campaign and a result of internal disputes in Ukraine (AMSZ2010c). This view seemed to be distant from the opinion expressed in 2008 that "President Yushchenko is pursuing a historical policy aimed at glorifying UPA units" (AMSZ2008), and one might get the impression that the ministry had significantly toned down its assessment of the situation in Ukraine.

It was not only Poles who took a critical stance on this controversial issue. The Simon Wiesenthal Centre (*Wiesenthal* 2010) also protested against the award of the title to Bandera. Yushchenko failed to unite his own people and received a mere 5.45% of the vote in the subsequent presidential election, despite choosing to hold it on Unity Day (Центральна Виборча Комісія, 2010). As early as January 2010, the Verkhovna Rada of Crimea put forward a motion to strip Bandera of the title of Hero of Ukraine (*Крим вимагає* 2010), and mentions of the possibility of such a move were already being made in March 2010. In 2011, the matter was finally resolved when the Supreme Administrative Court ruled that the award of the title of Hero of Ukraine to Stepan Bandera was unlawful, and moreover stated that he had never been a Ukrainian citizen. Pursuant to a presidential decree, the title was taken away from both Bandera and Shukhevych, which was perhaps one of the most pro-European moves made by Yanukovych (*Янукович заявив* 2010; *Януковичу Бандера* 2011; *Рішенням* 2011; *Суд залишив* 2011; *У Бандери Героя* 2011; *У Бандери забрали* 2011; *ВАСУ* 2011). This act was supported by 53% of citizens, while 28% opposed it and 19% had no opinion on the matter. The greatest percentage of enthusiasts of Bandera's "degradation" (83%) was found in Donbas, and throughout the country such enthusiasts were mainly supporters of the Party of Regions (28%), which sided with Russia, the Communist Party of Ukraine (24%) or the pro-Yanukovych Lytvyn Bloc (21%). In the western regions, the percentage of those supporting the court's decision amounted to only 15%, while as many as 73% of those surveyed were against it. There, however, only 3%, most of whom were voters of Our Ukraine (52%) and Svoboda (57%), were ready to demonstrate in opposition to such political actions (Соціологічна група «Рейтинг» 2010: 21–23).

It should be emphasised that Ukrainians also objected to certain Polish decisions, and the mere fact that they did not agree to heroise Bandera was not tantamount to recognising the Polish point of view on historical issues. A resolution of the Polish Sejm of 15 July 2009 on the tragic fate of Poles in the Eastern Borderlands (M.P. 2009 No. 47, item 684) was condemned by the Lviv Regional Council, and its deputies sent a statement on this matter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kyiv and the Ukrainian Embassy in Warsaw. They concluded that the statement regarding the Eastern Borderlands included in

the document was a manifestation of "territorial claims against Ukraine" and that the references to "mass murder and ethnic cleansing with signs of genocide" were untrue and should be changed. Ukrainians also responded to the Polish entry ban imposed on a bicycle rally "in the footsteps of Bandera", which began on 1 August 2009 and was supposed to lead through Poland and end in Munich (*Депутати Львівщини звернулись* 2009; Poland has a claim 2009). The idea of this project was viewed negatively in Poland, while for Ukrainians it was a way to honour the memory of the man identified with the struggle for a free, non-Soviet Ukraine. It was difficult to find a common platform for discussion of the matter, but it was also impossible to assume that Poles would unanimously accept the image of Bandera as a fighter for a free Ukraine, working with the US and British intelligence services after the war, a victim of the KGB. Even if no one denied these facts, they did not counterbalance the belief that this nationalist was personally responsible for the crimes committed against Poles.

At that time, the Polish side watched with growing concern "the increase in nationalist sentiments, which led to the glorification of extreme organisations such as the OUN and UPA and their leaders, and the often groundless accusations against the Polish authorities of a negative attitude towards Ukrainians". Admittedly, it was acknowledged that each country has the right to its own historical memory; however, this should be as objective and rational as possible, taking into account "the sensitivity of other nations, especially those adopting a friendly stance". It was emphasised that Poles perceived the OUN and UPA as having fascist tendencies, and the parliament's resolution was intended "solely to preserve the objective historical truth about the Volhynian events" and not to worsen mutual relations, as "Polish–Ukrainian animosities only benefit third parties". Poles and Ukrainians had already taken steps towards reconciliation across historical divisions, as evidenced, among others, by Aleksander Kwaśniewski's and Leonid Kuchma's statement "On reconciliation on the 60th anniversary of the tragic events in Volhynia", joint ceremonies in Pavlivka (formerly Poryck) and Pawłokoma, and commemorations in Huta Pieniacka, but as the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted, these reconciliatory gestures were not always widely known among the public (AMSZ2009).

The choice of heroes and unique events in a country's history is a right that every nation has at its disposal. However, what we sometimes fail to realise is that the Ukrainian assessment of events in their own history of the twentieth century and of the struggle for independence is similar to what the Poles have been through. The Red Army and Soviet partisans are now a dubious point of reference in Ukraine; similarly, in Poland, it would be difficult to imagine a cult

of the People's Army or Berling's army. In contrast, in 2019, the remembrance of the Home Army was recognised as a source of pride by 42% of Poles – down 3% compared with 2014 (CBOS, 2019: 9). If we consider Poles' attitudes towards Polish armed groups fighting against the communist authorities, these are also not unanimously positive. In 2017, 49% of respondents believed that the armed attacks against civilians carried out by these groups meant that they could not be called heroes, while 31% of those questioned in the same survey were of the opposite opinion. However, the respondents were quite equally split in their opinions on the impact of the armed underground struggle on the stabilisation of the post-war situation and the reconstruction of the country – 41% believed that it hindered these processes, and the same number held the opposite view (CBOS 2017: 9, 11).

In an ideal world, citizens would probably have access to detailed and objective information and, on that basis, form their own opinion about the past. In the current reality, however, national myths, in which there is usually no room to show the darker sides of certain heroes, prevail in the public space. This is the reason why Ukrainians are often reluctant to stress those threads in Bandera's biography that are important for Poles, nor do they feel obliged to acknowledge a direct link between him and the events in Volhynia. From the Polish perspective, this is viewed as distorting or whitewashing history, which is reflected in an inability to develop a good understanding of these issues and may perpetuate stereotypes shaping opinions about the neighbouring country, although in this case the past seems to be playing an ever declining role in the perception of this neighbouring country and nation.

In 2017, 10% of Ukrainians considered Poland to be an unfriendly country, while 81% expressed the opposite sentiment, and 9% had no opinion on the subject. At the same time, as many as 42% of those questioned believed that mutual relations had improved, compared with only 14% who said that they had deteriorated (Stryjek, Konieczna-Sałamatin, Zacharuk, 2017: 64). A year later, 29% of Poles assessed the relations between the two countries as good and 44% as neutral, while 13% described them as bad, of whom 47% blamed the Ukrainians for that state of affairs, 7% blamed their own country, and 40% said both sides were equally to blame. Whilst 60% of all respondents were convinced that the common past divided the two nations, 23% believed that, on the contrary, it united them. However, 64% of Poles believed in a chance of reconciliation between Poles and Ukrainians, compared with 21% who did not (ibid. 2–3).

Poles have shown a greater readiness for reconciliation since the Orange Revolution of 2004, when their knowledge about Ukraine increased thanks

to, among others, the involvement of Polish politicians in the Maidan events in Kyiv and extensive media coverage. However, a similar increase in positive sentiment has not been observed after Euromaidan and the Russian aggression against Ukraine, when one might have expected them to spark a wave of solidarity with a neighbouring nation whose security was threatened by Moscow, or to change the perception of Ukrainians, who would be seen through the prism of their aspirations to join the European Union. Nevertheless, between 2013 and 2018, the percentage of people expressing the view that it was possible to overcome the divisions did not change, which may give us some hope for the future (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

After: CBOS (2018), Wołyń 1943 – pamięć przywracana, Report on survey, no. 84/2018, June 2018

https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2018/K_084_18.PDF (accessed 12 April 2021), p. 4.

The results of public opinion polls in Poland show that our positive attitude towards Ukrainians reached an unusually high level (43%) in 2021. The percentage of negative responses was low (26%), and compared with the record year of 1994 was down by 40 percentage points (CBOS 2021: 4–5). Bearing in mind that it is hard to talk about a positive breakthrough in bilateral cooperation or more active Polish eastern policy, such a change in attitude may have been influenced by the pandemic and a sense of shared tragedy, or a grow-

ing sense of solidarity in the face of Russian aggression. The role of Ukrainian economic migration cannot be neglected either, as it means that we now have a growing opportunity to establish personal relations with Ukrainians and no longer look at them as "Banderites", but see them as neighbours, co-workers, or parents of our children's friends.

The attitude of Poles towards Ukrainians has changed drastically since 24 February 2022. According to a study published in the *Nauka* quarterly, nearly six months after the start of this phase of the war, 94% of Poles would not mind having a Ukrainian person as a co-worker. A Ukrainian neighbour would be welcomed by 95% of respondents, and a similar percentage (92%) would accept them as a family member. Moreover, 54% of those asked considered Ukrainians similar to Poles, 23% very similar, and 4% identical. Only 17% thought of them as "different" (*Поляки…* 2022).

Ukrainians were also asked similar questions in September 2022 and, according to the answers provided, 73% of respondents had "begun to think better of Poles", while 23% had not changed their opinion. Only 1% of those questioned had begun to think worse of them. These views were undoubtedly influenced by the aid and support provided to Ukraine by Poland. More than half of the survey participants (58%) were in favour of a rapprochement between the two nations (Маджумдар, 2022). Both surveys yielded extremely optimistic results, on the basis of which we can assume that there are grounds for building an understanding and partnership between the nations not so much on a political level as in terms of interpersonal relations. Moreover, when asked which of the neighbouring nations was the closest to them, 72% of Ukrainians indicated the Poles. The proportion of such responses was higher in those areas where relations between the two nations were affected by their common past – in Galicia, 91% of respondents considered Poles to be the closest to them, and, interestingly enough, in Kyiv and Podolia, but also Volhynia, as many as 81% of respondents were of the same opinion (Адамський, 2022). This clearly indicates that difficult historical relations do not influence the way Ukrainians view their neighbour today, and reveals a potential that the governments of both countries should exploit.

In 2003, Viktor Yushchenko wrote in a letter to Adam Michnik: "I am aware that without dealing with this terrible legacy, it is not possible to establish good neighbourly relations between our peoples and states. They must be underpinned by truth and reconciliation built on this truth. We must approach this process with a pure heart, be open to the opinion of the other side. Before you

start talking about the guilt of others, you have to confess your own. For me, the greatest burden is what my compatriots did to Poles – and they often did it in the name of patriotism" (Yushchenko 2003). When writing these words, the president may have overestimated the importance of the past and underestimated interpersonal relationships.

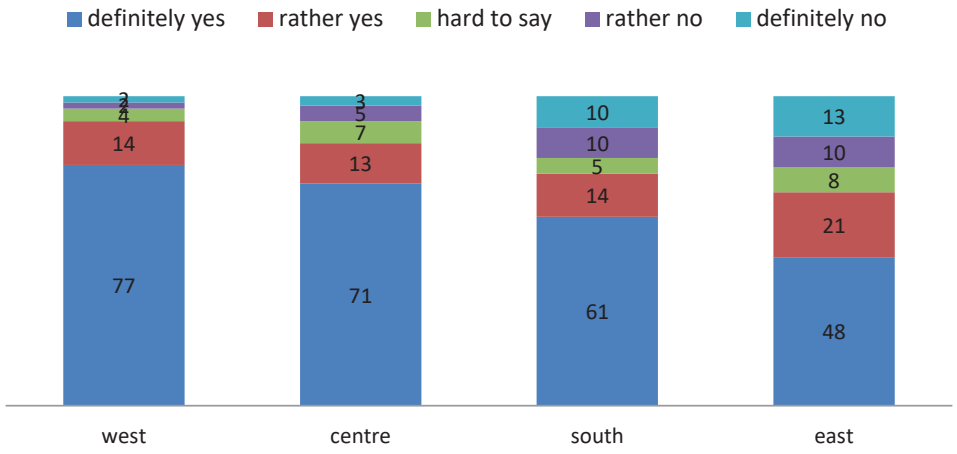
Patriotism

In 2008, 88% of Poles considered themselves patriots (CBOS, 2021: 6), which was close to what Ukrainians thought about themselves. Between 2010 and 2019, the proportion of those Ukrainians who viewed themselves as patriots increased from 76% to 83%, with only a small difference between the west of the country, traditionally considered nationalist, and the east (86% to 80%). The figure was 85% for Ukrainians in the centre of the country, and 78% in the south. Considering the criterion of language, 87% of Ukrainian-speaking citizens saw themselves as patriots, compared with 84% of those who spoke both Ukrainian and Russian on a daily basis, and 73% of Russian-speaking citizens (Соціологічна група «Рейтинг», 2019: 9). From Kyiv's point of view, these are undoubtedly promising results, proving that in Ukraine a sense of community and ties with the homeland are not dependent on issues such as linguistic identification, which are perceived abroad as weakening the Ukrainian nation. On the other hand, there are significant differences when it comes to the question of whether respondents favoured Ukraine's independence. Positive answers prevailed in the western regions of Ukraine. In the whole country, 67% of respondents definitely favoured independence, while 15% answered "rather yes" (see Figure 4).

The war that has been continuing since February 2022 changed the views of Ukrainians on this issue. If a referendum on Ukraine's independence had been held in August 2022, 87.5% of respondents would have voted in favour of independence, 3.2% would have been opposed, and 5.5% would not have participated; 3.9% did not state their opinion. At the same time, the years of the independent state were assessed positively by only 37.2% of those questioned, who believed that there were more positives than negatives during this time. In turn, 15.1% of Ukrainians assessed those years negatively, and 40.5% of respondents believed that good and bad experiences balanced each other out. Clearly, then, the desire to live in an independent country does not mean being uncritical of one's country's history and present-day situation (*День*, 2022).

Figure 4

Would you favour Ukraine's independence today (August 2019)?



http://ratinggroup.ua/files/ratinggroup/reg_files/rg_patriotyzm_082019.pdf (accessed 11 April 2021), p. 9.

In contrast, over the years 2010–2019, the proportion of Ukrainians who would describe themselves as nationalists fell from 24% to 16% (see Figure 5). In 2019, 20% of residents in the west of the country declared themselves to be nationalists, while only 7% of those living in the south and 18% in the centre and in the east of Ukraine saw themselves as such (Соціологічна група «Рейтинг», 2019, p. 16).

The full-scale war unleashed by Russia has had an impact on Ukrainians' views on nationalism. When asked whether they would agree with the statement that Ukraine "needs healthy nationalism", the majority of citizens answered that they would, with 51% of Russian-speaking respondents agreeing with the statement and 21% being of the opposite opinion. These figures can be compared with the answers given by Ukrainian-speaking citizens, for whom the results were 74% and 7%, respectively. A total of 67% of respondents agreed with the statement nationally. Interestingly, between 1991 and 2006, 48% of Ukrainians opted for "healthy nationalism", and later the number began to increase. The Orange Revolution, the Revolution of Dignity, and then the occupation of Crimea and the armed conflict undoubtedly caused Ukrainians to re-evaluate their views in this matter (*Як трансформується* 2022).

In the name of patriotism, some Ukrainians pay attention to selected episodes from Bandera's biography. Some politicians and ideologists of right-wing groups see him as a powerful symbol of the struggle for Ukraine's independence, but even before 24 February 2022, most citizens did not accept this narra-

tive. Volodymyr Viatrovych noted that this often stemmed from the belief that it is hard to call a national hero a man who "did not directly participate in the liberation struggle"; the reason was that he was imprisoned by the Poles, then spent some time in a German camp, and after the Second World War remained in exile and could not influence the situation in Ukraine (В'ятрович). However, this seems to be a great oversimplification, as confirmed by the previously discussed sceptical attitude of Ukrainians towards nationalism, and therefore towards people identified with it.

Figure 5

After: Соціологічна група «Рейтинг» (2019), Динаміка патріотичних настроїв українців, Серпень 2019

http://ratinggroup.ua/files/ratinggroup/reg_files/rg_patriotyzm_082019.pdf (accessed 11 April 2021), p. 15.

In turn, in Stanislav Bezushko's view, since 2014 the definition of a patriot has become more important for Ukrainians than someone's professional and personal qualities, but at the same time it has been devalued. "If you are a *patriot* it does not matter if you are a corrupt person, a cheat, or even a criminal." For these people, the main task became the unreflective "protection of Bandera" and the national idea (Безушко, 2021), which would support the aim of building a new post-Maidan patriotism, based on myths and anti-Russian in its expression. This was manifested in undertakings such as the decision of the Lviv Regional Council, taken by a majority of votes on 15 March 2021, expressing support for the appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine to change the name of the Arena Lviv stadium to Stepan Bandera Arena Lviv. The reasoning stated that "naming the stadium after Stepan Bandera will be of key importance to shaping the national consciousness and will contribute to the patriotic education of young people".

However, in Maksym Kozytskyi's opinion, it was an act of "banal provincialism" (Козицький, 2021).

Such a blurring of the message, which needs to be unambiguously positively associated with a historical hero so that it can fill a specific role, is undoubtedly welcomed by Ukraine's enemies, as it diminishes the power of the propaganda accompanying such a figure. At the same time, Bandera's growing "presence" in the public space means that Ukraine is critically assessed in the international arena. Suffice it to mention the outrage caused by naming the stadium in Ternopil after Roman Shukhevych, which led to the intervention of the Israeli and Polish ambassadors. Also, on 23 December 2020, the Ternopil Regional Council appealed to President Volodymyr Zelensky to return the title of Hero of Ukraine to Roman Shukhevych and Stepan Bandera. Justifying their request, the council urged Zelensky not to repeat the "mistakes of former Ukrainian presidents" and pointed to the "indomitable spirit in the service of the national idea, heroism and sacrifice in the struggle for an independent Ukrainian state" of both controversial figures (*Тернопільська облрада* 2020). On 17 February 2021, the Lviv Regional Council (*Депутати Львівщини закликали* 2021) also made such a request, which was negatively received by the Polish side. However, what from Warsaw's perspective is interpreted as an escalation of nationalist or far-right sentiments can also be seen as a kind of sabotage, resulting in the weakening of Ukraine's position.

Jarosław Hrycak believes that for Russia, making Bandera a hero is "a gift for its ideological war with Ukraine", and for Poles it is an argument to stop thinking of Kyiv as a strategic partner (Грицак 2010: 344). Vasyl Rasevych, on the other hand, emphasises the "long-standing experience" of Russian propaganda in portraying heroes as "collective embodiment", along with the creation of anti-heroes as representatives of the whole nation. In this case, Bandera, a controversial figure for Ukrainians as well, becomes their personification, and he is viewed as such by other countries, including Poland (Расевич, 2021). Bandera conjures up negative connotations that have an impact not only on the perception of Ukraine as such, but also on the assessment of the need to establish good mutual relations between Kyiv and Warsaw. Poles have on more than one occasion, especially in discussions held in the virtual space, expressed their indignation at the steps taken by Polish governments, which are pursuing, or have pursued, a policy aimed at the implementation of strategic partnership, and have supported Ukraine not only on its road to closer cooperation with the European Union and NATO, but also in challenging times for our neighbour. One of the measures criticised was the transfer of 303,500,000 zlotys to Ukraine in 2016 for development

cooperation (Zalas-Kamińska, Chmiel, 2020: 7). Citizens have responded to such reports by claiming that the government is stealing from them and investing the money to support hostile forces, while resentment is directed at the beneficiaries of aid. This discontent, especially in the case of politicians driven by populism rather than pragmatism, may bring a chill in relations between the two countries or cause them to be marginalised.

By conferring on someone the honourable title of national hero, a country takes on the burden of responsibility for everything that is associated with that figure, including the defending of their image. Diplomatic conflicts, scandals, and the tarnished reputation of a country considered to uphold nationalist values is the high price that Ukraine has to pay for the "Bandera cult". At the same time, it is a price that benefits countries whose interest is to weaken Ukraine, such as Russia.

Bandera's assassination by the KGB made him a victim of the Soviet Union and the communist regime. The fact that it was done in exile made him a martyr of the diaspora. Over the following years, his myth became so popular that Bandera's political opponents joined the "Banderites" camp, and whether one knew his biography became a secondary, if not irrelevant, matter. Today, few people expect to find out what the truth about his life is, because Bandera is not so much a historical figure as a symbol: on the one hand, cementing certain Ukrainian circles, and on the other, perhaps more important, shaping Ukraine's image in the world.

It is invariably in Poland's interest to have a strong state as its neighbour to the east that might be a partner in restraining Russian imperial ambitions. In contrast, Moscow has consistently sought to destabilise the situation in Ukraine and to weaken it economically and politically. A strong Ukraine could definitively break free from Russian influence, and deny the legitimacy of Russia's concepts of the near abroad or the *russkij mir* (Russian world), which are among the pillars of its foreign policy. The emancipation of the Orthodox Church was already a powerful failure for the Kremlin (Sawicz 2020: 151–186); the further step of building a strong democracy on the Dnieper, integrated with Western states, would be a disaster. Therefore, Bandera was and may still be viewed by Russians as a real blessing. Even if his cult is just a media product and has little to do with the opinion of Ukrainians at large, it effectively prevents certain political circles from engaging in rapprochement with a country that is considered a stronghold of aggressive nationalism.

The real myth, or a few words of summary

Wiesław Romanowski says that after the Second World War, the Bandera myth in Russia was very regularly "dusted off" during Russian–Ukrainian tensions, whereas in Poland it resurfaced "on the margins of the Volhynia dispute – on the margins, because it was not in the mainstream of academic and public debate" until Bandera was posthumously awarded the title of hero (Romanowski 2016: 223). Also Jarosław Hrycak refers to this concept when talking about the Bandera monument in Lviv and calling it a monument to a myth (Грицак, 2008).

There is no doubt that historical memory in Ukraine is regionalised and it is impossible to recognise Bandera as a hero across the country, even if President Yushchenko tried to impose this. The current head of state, President Volodymyr Zelenski, avoids talking about Bandera. Even as a presidential candidate, he emphasised that Stepan Bandera is important only for a certain percentage of Ukrainians (Зеленський: Бандера 2019). Today, he believes that all those who have defended Ukraine are its heroes, adding that there is a thin line between a hero and an enemy (*Зеленський не відповів,* 2020; *Зеленський розповів,* 2020; *Зеленського запитали*, 2020).

His restrained attitude was most likely in line with the expectations of a large part of the population. In 2018, in the western regions of Ukraine, 52% of respondents felt that the central authorities paid too much attention to the past and not enough to current problems. In the eastern regions, 71% of those questioned were of the same opinion (Stryjek, Konieczna-Sałamatin, Otrishchenko 2018: 26). School (68%) was cited as a primary source of knowledge, with the reservation that trust in sources of knowledge in this field was limited – only one in four respondents declared that they trusted the publications of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (ibid. pp. 29–30). Also, 24% of the public had never visited any place of importance for the history of the state or region, and 38% had done so more than a year ago (ibid. p. 35) Oleksandr Zinchenko points out that between 2014 and 2016 no reference was made to Bandera in either presidential decrees or resolutions of the Verkhovna Rada, although at the same time 3.5% of all parliamentary documents referred to dates relevant to the OUN or the UPA. There are also no commemorative postage stamps or coins with Bandera's image (Зінченко, 2017). In the face of these facts, it is somehow difficult to believe that a figure who often comes up in Polish debates on Ukrainian affairs is important to Ukrainians, or as important as Poles often believe him to be. It seems that the belief that Bandera is a cherished figure throughout the country points to a lack of sufficient knowledge of

Ukraine and Ukrainians, and Jarosław Kaczyński's words "you will not enter Europe with Bandera" were exaggerated (Donajski, 2017). In 2021, more than half of Ukrainians (58.8%) said that they would like to join the European Union (*Ставлення* 2021), but this does not mean that they will try to take Bandera with them. All the more so after becoming an EU candidate state, when 84% of citizens expressed their full support for the European Union, this being the highest rate of declared sympathy for international institutions.

According to Pavlo Podobyed, "Even when Ukraine regained independence, neither Petliura nor Bandera and Shukhevych became important symbols of national memory in our country [Ukraine]" (Подобєд, 2016). His opinion may indicate that Kyiv will search for other areas of memory that will unite the nation, as is the case today with the Great Famine. The official UIPN website, in the "Current Topics" category, provides information about the war with Russia currently taking place in eastern Ukraine (Російсько, 2019) and the 1917–1921 Ukrainian revolution (Українська революція, 2018), but neither of the publications is a recent one – they date from 2019 and 2018, respectively. This may indicate that reference to Bandera has not become a cornerstone of historical politics, although it is undoubtedly present in broadly defined discourse. To what extent, if at all, this situation will change after the war is difficult to predict today, but undoubtedly the policy of national remembrance has gained prominence in the eyes of Ukrainians. In December 2022, 80.2% of citizens considered it very important and only 11.2% said it was of minor importance (*Засудження*, 2022).

Dmytro Korchynsky says that "Being a nationalist in Lviv is ridiculous." Exaggerating and ridiculing today's version of the UPA myth, he recalls that its veterans, who, contrary to logic and nature, are growing in number year after year, say that they respected other nationalities, did not kill anyone and argue that the Ukrainian Insurgent Army cared about "the ecology of the Carpathians and fed the animals in the forest, while the Bolsheviks disturbed us". At the same time, Korchynsky does not deny the need for the existence of nationalism, but it cannot be xenophobic or aggressive, and must be aware of the diminishing role of states in the modern world. This is the reason why he believes that "You have to be an anarchist in Lviv." You have to be a Ukrainian bourgeois nationalist in Crimea, Donbas, Tyraspol, Moscow and Astana – any place where you can fight for an independent state and not support now outdated and undesirable ideas (Корчинський, 2008: 164–165). It can be assumed that this is an attitude close to many Ukrainian citizens, for whom the most important issue is the defence of their country's independence and territorial integrity, rather than a historical debate.

It seems necessary today to analyse the approach discussed above in order to understand what nationalism in Ukraine means and whether we are really dealing with such an extreme concept or rather with a "process of forming an official canon of Ukrainian history", having all the characteristics of a "nationalisation of history", which aims at "carrying out the tasks of belated creation of a nation and a nation state", as Professor Leonid Zaszkilniak believes (Zaszkilniak, 2008: 34). This opinion seems to be one that accurately diagnoses the situation in Ukraine, and its recognition today is the key to developing an effective eastern policy and good Polish–Ukrainian relations, and to forming mutual relations that will be based not on myths, but on knowledge of who one's neighbour is.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the article is to discuss the mythologisation of Stepan Bandera so as to make it known to a wider readership. Bandera is not a popular figure among Ukrainians nowadays, but he is used in shaping historical politics, which has a direct impact on Ukraine's foreign policy and relations with other countries. Applying the comparative method and the method of critical analysis, the following research hypotheses were examined: Stepan Bandera is not a leader or an outstanding historical hero in the eyes of all Ukrainians, and how he is assessed varies regionally; Bandera is not a figure who would gain popularity in a democratic state, and contemporary Ukrainian leaders distance themselves from him. Bandera's popularity is a myth that has shaped both Polish historical and foreign policy, but is also part of the interpretation of patriotism, understood as resistance to Russia, that is becoming increasingly common in Ukraine. The conclusion of the study is that historical memory in Ukraine is regionalised and Bandera cannot be considered a hero of the whole country, and the Ukrainian perception of nationalism diverges from the Polish view. As a specific symbol, he certainly does not play a major role in the social or political life of Ukraine, but rather serves to unite the nation around a common cause.

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