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Moral Panic About Refugees in Poland as a Manifestation of Cultural Transformation

Panika moralna wokół uchodźców w Polsce jako przejaw transformacji kulturowej

Streszczenie

Masowy exodus uchodźców z krajów Bliskiego Wschodu i Afryki Północnej w 2015 oraz obrazy migrantów szturmujących granice Unii Europejskiej stały się zapłonem paniki moralnej w wielu krajach europejskich, także w Polsce. Uchodźcy, szczególnie Arabowie i muzułmanie, postrzegani przez Polaków jako „obcy" etnicznie, kulturowo i religijnie zaczęli uosabiać zagrożenie dla bezpieczeństwa Europy i jej spójności społeczno-kulturowej. Klasyczna panika moralna (medialna) dotarła do Polski na jesieni 2015 roku, wpisała się w kampanię przedwyborczą i podzieliła Polaków na wrogie obozy: „obrońców wiary i ojczyzny" oraz „dobrych Samarytan". W tym momencie mieliśmy już do czynienia z transformacyjną paniką moralną tj. paniką wynikającą z rywalizacji dwóch wizji porządku społecznego, opartych na odmiennych systemach wartości. Społeczeństwu zamkniętemu i ksenofobicznemu przeciwstawiono społeczeństwo otwarte i tolerancyjne, narodowi etnicznemu naród obywatelski, solidarności wewnątrzgrupowej solidarność ogólnoludzką. Polska panika transformacyjna wokół uchodźców wpisuje się w szerszą wojnę kulturową w obrębie Zachodu – zderzenie tradycjonalizmu i modernizmu, konserwatyzmu i liberalizmu obyczajowego, fundamentalizmu i relatywizmu moralnego.

Słowa kluczowe: uchodźcy, kryzys migracyjny, panika moralna, panika transformacyjna, wojna kulturowa.

Abstract

The mass exodus of refugees from the Middle East and North African countries in 2015 as well as the pictures of migrants storming the European Union borders provoked moral panic in many European countries, not excluding Poland. Refugees, in particular Arabs and Muslims, perceived by the Poles as ethnically, culturally and religiously „alien", have become a symbol

of threat for the safety of Europe and its social and cultural homogeneity. The classical moral (media) panic reached Poland in autumn 2015. It immediately became an important issue in the electoral campaign, dividing Poles into two hostile camps, i.e. the „defenders of homeland and faith" and the "good Samaritans". At that point, we were faced with a transformational moral panic, i.e. a panic resulting from two competing visions of the social order, based on different values. A closed and xenophobic society was opposed to an open and tolerant community, an ethnic nation – to a civic nation, solidarity within one group – to general human solidarity. The Polish transformational panic about refugees is part of a broader culture war within the West – a clash of traditionalism and modernism, conservatism and liberalism of lifestyle, moral fundamentalism and relativism.

Keywords: refugees, migrant crisis, moral panic, transformational panic, culture war

European migrant crisis and increasing social concern

At the beginning of 2016, the participants of the World Economic Forum in Davos considered the increasing migrant movement as the greatest risk the world will face in the coming decade of global warming. In 2015, over 1.3 million asylum applications[1] were filed in the EU countries. In the post-war history of Europe it has been an un-precedented increase in the migrant movement. Another challenge was posed by the non-European origins of the migrants. Most of them are Muslims who come from the war-torn Middle East and North African countries. According to the UNHCR data, among the migrants who reached Europe in 2015 dominated groups of Syrians (29 per cent), Afgans (15 per cent) and Iraqis (10 per cent). However, it is worth noting that the war refugees on the Balkan trail were joined by economic migrants from the south of Europe – mostly from Kosovo (5 per cent) and Albania (5 per cent). Another factor important for the public opinion was the age and gender of the migrants. Syrians, Afgans and Iraqis fleeing their war-torn countries are mostly young people coming to one of the most quickly aging world regions (DeSilver 2015). According to Pew Research Center data, more than half (53 per cent) of the refugees, who came to Europe in 2015, are between 18–34 years of age, among whom three fourths (73 per cent) were male (Connor 2016). All in all, about four out of ten migrants who reached Europe in 2015 are young men aged 18–34.

The migrant crisis in question arises from the fact that Europe proved practically incapable of coping with the challenge of an increasing migrant inflow. The factors generating the crisis include: lack of coherent EU migrant policy, lack of solidarity of the EU Member States with regard to migrant relocation and lack of control over the flow of such high numbers of migrants through the European countries, which provokes anti-immigration sentiments and growth of national egoism within Europe.

The symptom of increasing migrant crisis in Poland was a gradual change in the image of a migrant created by the media – from a compassionate into a negative and

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1   Source of data: a report by Phillip Connor, Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015 (Pew Research Center, August 2, 2016).

stereotypical one (Kropiński, Hansen 2016) – following the summer peak of the migrant movement and EU plans to aid Italy and Greece and relocate refugees. Approximately in mid-2015, the Polish media showed an average refugee as a young, aggressive Arab, suspected of some dealings with ISIS and inclination toward terrorism. The image promoted by the media was reinforced by „Dantean scenes" from the south of Europe, which showed frustrated, olive-skin men forcing the barbed-wire fence which was gradually being built (along the Hungarian-Serbian and Austrian-Slovenian borders), riots in makeshift refugee camps and immigrant ghettos which remained beyond the influence of European jurisdictions (the infamous „Jungle" in Calais).

The sense of social[2], cultural[3] and economic[4] threat, which was heightened and escalated, had an influence on growing social reluctance to migrants across Europe. Many right-wing extremist groups started to build their political capital on anti-immigrant or anti-Islamic slogans[5]. Terrorist attacks in Paris (13 November 2015) and in Brussels (22 March 2016) carried out by Islamic jihadists made the European public opinion even more radical towards refugees and migrants, especially after it was disclosed that among the terrorists were European ISIS recruits who returned to Europe together with the migrant wave. To make matters worse, the media coverage focused on sexual assaults on women[6] on New Year's Eve in German cities, of which men of "migrant origin" were accused.

The peak of migrant crisis was seen in September and October 2015, when Poland was going through an intensive campaign before general election. The issue of migrant relocation was then much politicised and used to mobilize the voters of the two main parties, i.e. Civic Platform and Law and Justice. In result of this political skirmish, the Polish society became highly polarized over migrant admission. On 12 October 2015, opponents and supporters of migrant admission to Poland took to the streets. Internet fora were filled with hate speech, which in turn made many culture institutions take part in „Refugee Solidarity Day" (15 October 2016). In the author's opinion, the accumulation of pro- and anti-refugee action (actions, debates, marches) taken in 2015, allows us to diagnose the phenomenon of moral panic in Poland.

In the next part of the article, the author will analyse to what extent the moral panic in reaction to refugees in Poland was a classical media panic and to what extent it was a transformational panic, i.e. the one which results from a clash of different values and visions of social order.

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2   Refugees from the Middle East and Muslim minorities in Europe who do not integrate as a source of terrorist threat.
3   Threat to women's rights and competition in religious dimension.
4   Competition on the labour and social welfare market.
5   International PEGIDA, UKIP in Great Britain, National Front in France, Freedom Party in the Netherlands, Alternative for Germany, Freedom Party of Austria, Golden Dawn in the Czech Republic, National Radical Camp in Poland.
6   On New Year's Eve 2015, in German cities there were 900 sexual assaults, of which over 1,200 women fell victim (including approx. 650 in Köln and approx. 400 in Hamburg). Out of 2,000 men who took part in these assaults on women, 120 suspects were identified. Half of them were foreigners who arrived in Germany a few months before.

Moral panic: media and transformational panic

Classical moral panic was defined by Stanley Cohen – author of pioneer research on media reaction to the conflict of two sub-cultures, i.e. the mods and rockers. In his book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The creation of the Mods and Rockers*, published in 1972, Stanley Cohen says:

> *Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible* (Cohen 2011: 1).

Let us note that, according to Cohen, the key factor which intensifies panic are the media, which initiate and spread it. Social panic is manifested by hysteria and overreaction to the images shown by the media. These use such instruments as overstatement, deformation, stereotypization and stylization, which strongly affect our emotions and imagination. The moral element of this type of panic consists in judgment – condemnation and disapproval of those who are to be blamed for violation of moral norms (*folk devils*).

Following Elżbieta Czykwin (2007), we suggest defining the classical moral panic as media panic. It will allow us to better define the other type of moral panic, which arises in the context of accelerated social and cultural change. Iwona Zielińska (2015) suggests differentiating the classical moral panic, which reinforces the social order based on traditional values (*nomos*) from transformational panic, which questions the current social order and proposes an its alternative vision. Inasmuch as in the former case we deal with a general consensus on defining *folk devils*, in the latter we are faced with a confrontation of two different systems of values, whose representatives see each other as *folk devils*.

An example of classical media panic is the one over the acts of Islamic terrorism in Paris and Brussels or panic spread after the sexual assaults in German cities. In this case, the *folk devils* identified by the media (Islamic terrorists or Arab migrants assaulting women) in the first place pose a threat to our safety and indirectly to our values (the idea of open, multi-cultural society, liberal lifestyle). The host society unanimously condemns the acts of *folk devils*. In the media message and in social awareness there is no fear of rivalry between the alien systems of values[7].

An example of transformational panic is the one over homosexuality and gender (liberalism vs. conservatism of lifestyle), but also the panic which arose over the so called veil affair in France (secularism vs. religious character of state institutions /

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[7] Nevertheless, in marginalised minority groups of migrant origin and among young people in the West undergoing an existential crisis, we may observe radical religion-based attitudes and a choice of a jihadist identity as attractive counterbalance to a lack of sense, purpose and dignity both in personal and social dimension (Cfr. Pasamonik 2016).

state)[8] or the panic over the Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdi in Great Britain (freedom of speech vs. respect for religious feelings)[9]. In this case, we are confronted with rivalry of two systems of values which make part of two visions of social order, based on different *nomoses*: religious and lay – deocentric and anthropocentric. Let us stress that for Peter Berger (1997) *nomos* stands for order, universal social order which regulates human experience, and makes the behaviour of individuals and groups coherent. Traditional *nomos* also included order of the universe and was therefore strongly rooted in religion. Since the 1970s and the ferment of counterculture and its evolution into an alternative culture, we have seen *nomos* separate from its religious foundations, and consequently – a change of its shape. A new, lay, anthropocentric *nomos* is being coined in the context of culture war (Cfr. Jawor 2014) between traditionalism and modernism, conservatism and liberalism of lifestyle, moral fundamentalism and relativism.

In the author's opinion, the current refugee crisis provokes media panics, which may transform into moral panics. In summer 2015, first the classical media panic arose, which could be labelled „a wave of refugees pouring into Europe". Refugees being turned into *folk devils* were perceived as a threat to the social, cultural and economic safety of the Poles. Then, in consequence of spreading hate speech, racist and xenophobic attitudes, the more liberal part of the Polish society started a transformational moral panic: an open, inclusive and tolerant society was opposed to the closed, exclusive and xenophobic community[10]. In this case, both parties to the dispute represented different systems of values, i.e. the ethnic nation was opposed to a civic nation, solidarity within a group to general human solidarity.

Both the media and transformational panic may disappear and return if provoked by some new initiating events. Such were undoubtedly the terrorist attacks in Paris (13 November 2015) and in Brussels (22 March 2016) and New Year's Eve sexual assaults (New Year's Eve 2015).

Transformational panic over refugees and moral crusade

Both in classical media panic and in transformational panic, the same stages of their development can be identified: defining social enemies; branding; sudden growth of anxiety; activisation of authorities (moral crusade) and reduction of social tension (Cohen 1972, Zielińska 2015). In the case of migration crisis, the starting point for both types of panic was the threat of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa,

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8   For the first time the dispute over Muslim headscarves worn in state schools broke out in 1989. Panic related to religious symbols being introduced to a lay space of public institutions resulted in the official ban on manifestation of religious symbols in schools (enforced in 2004).

9   In 1988 a British writer of Indian origin Salman Rushdi published a book called *The Satanic Verses*. Crowds of Muslims took to the street in protest against the „blasphemous" book. A year later Ayatollah Khomeini issued a *fatwa*, or religious edict which called on Muslims to the kill the author.

10   The culminating point of this panic was the „Refugee Solidarity Day" organized in Poland by the milieu of „Krytyka Polityczna" on 15 October 2015.

followed by labelling refugees as those who pose a threat to the European social order and growth of fear over the social, cultural and economic safety of the Europeans.

The difference between the classical media and transformational panic appears at the stage of activisation of authorities, which take part in the so called moral crusade. In the case of media panic, the authorities represent a big majority of society, which unanimously points at and condemns *folk devils*. In the case of transformational panic, the authorities represent two sides of the conflict over values.

A cyclical CBOS poll (poll report no. 153/2016) showed that the biggest increase in Polish reluctance to refugees took place in 2015, in the context of the increased media coverage focusing on the migration issue during the campaign before the general election (17% increase of reluctance between May and August 2015). Media broadcast „Dantean scenes" from the south of Europe, showing aggressive, olive-skin men who tried to force the quickly built fence (along the Hungarian-Serbian or Austrian-Slovenian borders) or started riots in makeshift camps. The „negativity bias" known in psychology makes negative information much more expressive; it attracts more attention and is better remembered than positive information. Therefore, it is negative news that dominates in the media and in our memory.

In September 2015 governments of EU Member States agreed and adopted a two-year refugee quota plan with regard to migrants from Syria, Iraq and Eritrea to be relocated in Member States. The Polish government represented by Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz, despite criticism of the Opposition, agreed to take in seven thousand migrants from transit camps in the south of Europe. At that time, the covers of right-wing magazines cried: „They are coming!", „Hell at the command of Berlin" („W Sieci"), „Invaders, not Refugees" („Do Rzeczy"), „90 thousand Arabs are about to deluge Poland" („Super Express").

A survey carried out by the Public Debate Observatory (*Obserwatorium Debaty Publicznej*) in September 2015 showed that the Polish media were then divided into two opposing camps over the issue of refugees, referring to two mythical visions: invasion of the barbarians or that of the great European family (cfr. Bertram, Jędrzejek 2015). The former, larger one, used the narration of clash of civilizations, spoke of an invasion of Muslims and Islamisation of Europe. The latter used the rhetoric of care of the Other and solidarity with those in need. Both narrations were based on powerful metaphors and images which were supposed to take control over the imagination and emotions of their addresses. Division into the narrations went along the line dividing the Polish right-wing and liberal left-wing media.

In the right-wing media – weeklies such as „Wprost", „wSieci" and „Do Rzeczy" and on fronda.pl and niezalezna.pl web portals – two images of refugees dominated:

» Metaphors of war – refugees pictured as „invaders", „colonizers", „conquerors", „civil army" or „Islamic battering ram" who „invaded", „stormed", "besieged" „conquered", „penetrated", „terrorized";

» metaphor of Oriental origin – refugees pictured as barbarians: savage, lascivious, repulsive, lazy.

The above metaphors come from a mythical tale of barbarian invasion (Muslim hordes), Muslim invasion („Poland, bulwark of Christianity") and self-destruction of Europe (left-wing ideology vs. cultural and demographic expansion of Islam). They

are completed by a narration about humiliation of Poland (Berlin's diktat) and „disguised" refugees (social Jihad) (Por. Bertram 2015).

Outside the mainstream were the left-wing, liberal media such as „Gazeta Wyborcza" daily, „Polityka" weekly, „Newsweek" weekly and „Krytyka Polityczna", which – with a sense of shame – criticized Polish politicians and compatriots for their „xenophobia" or „Islamophobia". The vision of barbarian invasion was opposed to the that of great European family, making reference to the values of „solidarity", „Christian mercy", „moral duty", „responsibility" and „empathy". In this narration the „Stranger" was always spelt with a capital letter.

The strongest polarization of the society with regard to refugees admission could be seen in October 2015. On 12 October, in Warsaw, there was a nationalist demonstration „Poles against immigrants", in which supporters of the National Movement and football fan groups took part. The banners read „Poland for Poles", „Stop the Islamization of Poland", „Islam equals death", „Muslim refugee Trojan horse in Europe". One of the nationalist group leaders Robert Winnicki declared that the quota we can accept from the European Commission is zero since Poland will not pay for the wrong migration policy of the Western countries. At the same time, near the Warsaw monument to Copernicus at Krakowskie Przedmieście St. a few hundred people gathered to express their support for the admission of immigrants under a banner reading „Refugees are welcome".

On 15 October, ten days before the general election, many public institutions (cultural institutions, NGOs, media) participated in the „Refugee Solidarity Day". The initiators of this action published their manifesto (2 Oct 2015) reading:

> On this day we would like to say to those who flee their homeland because of war, chaos, hunger, conflagration and misery: „You are most welcome here!". Since Poland is known for its hospitality and solidarity. Since the fate of a refugee and émigré is part of our culture and history. Since we have always been able to offer help and show compassion. (…)
> We want to show that those who cause fear, hostility and reluctance to refugees, who use hate speech, do not voice the opinion of the whole society. Poland says "no" to racism. Poland says „no" to hatred against the weaker, the helpless and those in need (Krytyka Polityczna)[11].

The intensity of different actions, debates[12], pro- and anti-refugee marches in October 2015 in Poland allows the author to diagnose the phenomenon of transformational panic. The authorities quoted in the „moral crusade" – pope Francis and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán – stand for two different systems of values. The former supports the pro-refugee narration which I will call „humanitarian" while the latter the anti-refugee one, which I will call "nationalist".

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[11] See full text of the address on: http://krytykapolityczna.pl/kraj/15-pazdziernika-dzien-solidarnosci-z-uchodzcami/

[12] On 23 September Polish public TVP1 broadcast in prime time an expert debate called „Poland for immigrants?" Experts in different disciplines, as well as panellists who engaged in aid to refugees, presented arguments for and against admitting immigrants.

Table 1. Values present in pro- and anti-refugee narration

Pro-refugee narration (humanitarian)	Anti-refugee narration (nationalist)
Human solidarity » Cristian mercy, solidarity with those in need, moral duty to help the weaker and the poorer, » Compassion and moral responsibility for others regardless of their origin.	**Responsibility for the closest** » „Family and homeland comes first, then come the others", „we cannot afford ineffective mercy"; » Patriotic duty to protect homeland against the threat of refugee inflow.
Open society idea » Poland as an inclusive community (civic nation), » Multi-culturalism seen as resource, » Respect for the Other, » EU membership obliges, » Poles have always been immigrants (and owe a debt of gratitude), » Immigrants are in the Polish economic interest	**Defence of the Polish nation (clash of civilizations)** » Poland as an exclusive community – community of origin, faith and culture (ethnic nation); » Ethnic homogeneity perceived as value, » Patriotic duty to defend one's homeland (against the invasion of barbarians, against terrorists), » Protection of the national, cultural and religious community (Poland, bulwark of Christianity), » Protection of economic interest of the Poles, » Protection of Polish women, » Sovereignty of homeland – freedom from the European Union's diktat
Moral universalism: » Human solidarity and unselfish altruism	**Moral particularism**: » Responsibility for the closest, safety of the closest (rational national egoism)

Source: Own study

Humanitarian narration is based on a universal moral obligation – it promotes human solidarity and unselfish altruism. Nationalist narration is based on a particular moral obligation – it promotes responsibility for the closest (family and homeland). In these two narrations two different concepts of national community are opposed: an inclusive community (civic nation) against an exclusive community (ethnic nation). The former dominates due to historical considerations in Western Europe while the latter in central and Eastern Europe (Budyta-Budzyńska 2010).

Below, I will argue that the transformational panic around the admission of refugees in Poland and Europe is placed in a broader context of the culture war which has been seen in the West since 1970s, i.e. since the times of counterculture. As it was said before, lay, anthropocentric *nomos* is coined in the context of culture war between traditionalism and modernism, conservatism and liberalism of lifestyle, moral fundamentalism and relativism.

„Fortress Europe": fear of refugees as political capital of extreme right

Terrorist attacks in Paris (November 2015) and in Brussels (March 2016)[13] as well as New Year's Eve assaults on women created another wave of media panic and fuelled transformational panic. On 6 February 2016, in Warsaw and several other European cities, a series of anti-immigrant demonstrations "Against Islamization of Europe" took place. The Polish demonstrations were organized by the National Movement and the All-Polish Youth, cooperating under the "Fortress Europe" alliance. The organizers of the Warsaw demonstration read out the so called Prague declaration[14], which began as follows:

> *Aware of the fact that the millennium long history of Western civilization may soon come to an end because Europe will be conquered by Islam and because political elites will betray us, we, representatives of different European nations, hereby declare: we will not give Europe up to our enemies. We are ready to act and to counteract political Islam, extremist Islamic regimes and their European collaborators* (http://ruchnarodowy.net/ruch-narodowy-przylacza-sie-do-europejskiego-protestu-przeciwko-islamizacji-europy/).

Speeches of the leaders were interrupted with slogans such as "let every Arab remember that for us Poland is the holy thing", „England and France are crying; this is how tolerance comes to an end", "we will protect our homeland, we will not let immigrants in" or „the whole Poland proclaims her "no" to the Islamic savages". The leader of German PEGIDA, Tatjana Festerling took part in the demonstration in Warsaw. Demonstrations under the banner "Against Islamization of Europe" were also held in Prague, Amsterdam, Tallinn, Bratislava and Birmingham. They were usually accompanied by smaller counter demonstrations[15].

Since 2015 anti-refugee, anti-immigrant or anti-Islamic slogans have strengthened the political capital of extreme right groups all over Europe. Fear of refugees is used by: international PEGIDA, or Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West, United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in Great Britain, National Front in France, Freedom Party in the Netherlands, Alternative for Germany, Freedom Party of Austria, Golden Dawn in the Czech Republic and National Radical Camp in Poland. A survey carried out by Pew Research Center in European countries in spring 2016 show that people voting for right-wing parties consistently more often than those voting left-wing parties agree that the growing diversity of a society (racial, ethnic, national diversity) worsens the quality of life in a given state.

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13   When the terrorists from Belgium were identified, Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydło announced that Poland would not accept a single refugee allotted earlier by the EU because the border points (hot spots) do not perform their duties properly.

14   It is a document signed on 23 January 2016 at the international conference against the Islamization of Europe organized **in Prague (Czech Republic) by several national organizations** from all over Europe**.**

15   In Warsaw, the opponents of the nationalists organized themselves under the slogan „ANTI-PEGIDA – against the Nazification of Europe!". On the other hand, in Wrocław, „Razem" [Together] Party organized a counter demonstration under the banner „Together against hatred". Among the slogans the protesters chanted: „Not brown, not national but multi-cultural Poland", „Stop racist violence", „Solidarity is our weapon".

Tab. 2. Growing diversity within a society worsens quality of life in our country

Country	Left	Centre	Right	Difference between Left and Right
Germany	14	29	50	+36
Italy	36	51	62	+26
The Netherlands	20	32	46	+26
Greece	49	65	69	+20
France	15	21	34	+19
Sweden	15	20	33	+18
Great Britain	24	30	36	+12

Source: Global Attitudes Survey, Spring 2016; http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/07/11/europeans-not-convinced-growing-diversity-is-a-good-thing-divided-on-what-determines-national-identity/

At the same time, people voting for right-wing parties consistently more often than those voting left-wing parties agree that national traditions are very important for national identities.

Tab. 3. National traditions are very important for national identities

Country	Left	Centre	Right	Difference between Left and Right
Great Britain	37	56	67	+30
France	31	42	60	+29
Poland	39	55	60	+21
Bulgaria	56	67	75	+19
Germany	17	29	36	+19
Greece	61	62	79	+17
Spain	34	44	49	+15
Sweden	16	24	30	+14

Source: Global Attitudes Survey, Spring 2016; http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/07/11/europeans-not-convinced-growing-diversity-is-a-good-thing-divided-on-what-determines-national-identity/

Let us remember that European moral panic about refugees focused on the social, cultural and economic safety issues (threat of terrorism, threat to cultural identity, threat of competition on labour market and on the "social welfare market"), which strongly correspond with the concern about quality of life in one's own country and desire for strong national identity which ensures a sense of stability. Evident reluctance to cultural diversity in general and to refugees in particular on the right side of the political scene allows us to conclude that panic about refugees activated a broader culture conflict between conservatism and liberalism.

Aversion towards the stranger and liberalism in the National Radical Camp

Leading slogans of the extreme right in Poland during the electoral campaign in autumn 2015 go in line with the general European trend to combine anti-refugee rhetoric with anti-liberal rhetoric. Analyses carried out by the Centre for Research on Prejudice (*Centrum badań nad Uprzedzeniami*) (2015) show that the National Radical Camp [ONR] was far ahead of all the other political groups in terms of xenophobic declarations.

Tab. 4. Percentage of extreme right slogans in Poland per political movement

Slogan	Kukiz'15	RN	ONR	KORWiN
Liberal economy and EU-like law	21.2	27.3	9.1	42.4
No to international institutions	23.3	23.3	36.7	16.7
Anti-liberal slogans	5.0	10.0	55.0	30.0
Anti-systemic slogans	11.8	23.5	35.3	29.4
Xenophobic slogans	7.1	25.0	60.7	7.1
Polish pride	35.0	35.0	20.0	10.0
Authoritarian law	16.7	37.5	25.0	20.8

Source: Background of right-wing electoral preference among young Poles (Centre for Research on Prejudice, 2015).

If we analyse the distribution of slogans (%) within the ONR narration, it appears that xenophobic slogans prevail, while criticism of liberalism of lifestyle and aversion towards international institution both come second (*ex equo*).

Tab. 5. Distribution of slogans within ONR narration

Slogan	ONR
Liberal economy and EU-like law	5.2
No to international institutions	19.0
Anti-liberal slogans	19.0
Anti-systemic slogans	10.3
Xenophobic slogans	29.3
Polish pride	6.9
Authoritarian law	10.3

Source: Background of right-wing electoral preference among young Poles (Centre for Research on Prejudice, 2015).

Co-existence of xenophobic and anti-liberal slogans supports the thesis of transformational moral panic. The National Radical Camp would make part of the culture

war between conservatism and liberalism within the Polish society. When we look more closely at the content of right-wing xenophobic slogans, it will turn out that the figure of the Stranger is interchangeable – it can be a Gypsy, Jew or a Muslim refugee, while the anti-liberal content remains invariable.

Tab. 6. Examples of xenophobic and anti-liberal slogans in right-wing narration

Xenophobic slogans	White power
	Gypsies are worse than Jews because they live in our cities
	Threat of immigration
	Multi-cultural model is dangerous and false
	"No" to the newcomers from other countries
	No mercy for enemies of Polishness
Anti-liberal slogans	A boy and a girl make a normal family
	Anti-liberalism in the area of lifestyle
	No way for gay
	In defence of political correctness
	Protection of family understood as marriage of man and woman and protection of life from conception

Source: Background of right-wing electoral preference among young Poles (Centre for Research on Prejudice, 2015).

If left-liberal milieus for years have been defending different „minorities" and social „varieties" (sexual, ethnic, religious etc.) – earlier – Jews and Gypsies, today – refugees – then acting against refugees equals a new „war" with liberals and "extreme leftists". Let us quote again a passage from the Prague declaration read out during the anti-immigrant demonstration „Against Islamization of Europe" (6.02.2016): *We are prepared to act and counteract political Islam, extremist regimes and their **European collaborators**. If there are so few refugees in Poland[16], emotional aversion towards asylum seekers is de facto addressed to the „collaborators" i.e. political opponents – the liberal left. Let us note that in this culture dispute, presence or absence of real refugees in Poland is of secondary importance.*

In order to support the thesis of culture conflict permeating the dispute over refugees, it is worth reading the study by Justyna Kajta (2016) on the identity of members of the Polish nationalist movement[17]. The author was trying to answer the following questions: who are contemporary nationalists and what do they protest against? Kajta diagnosed a non-class character of the nationalist movement and community building

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[16] Since 1992 the refugee status was awarded to over 4 thousand people, mostly Russian nationals: over 2 thousand Russians, 426 Syrians, 390 nationals of Bosnia and Hercegovina, 248 Belarussians and 232 Somalians (Pawłowska 2017). After the terrorist attacks in Brussels, Polish government led by Beata Szydło withdrew its declaration to admit 7 thousand refugees in Poland under the relocation policy.

[17] Kajta carried out 30 biographical, narrative interviews with members of All-Polish Youth, National radical Camp, National rebirth of Poland between 2011 and 2015. Additionally, the author analysed texts published on the websites of these organizations.

based on the identity and cultural issue. Polish nationalists protest against the social and political situation in Poland – they criticise „fake" political transformation, hypocrisy of the world of media and politics, and finally see a threat to the family (e.g. by promoting aberrance and gender ideology by liberal circles, feminists, EU policies) and the threat to the national identity by uprooting Polish history and tradition in favour of atheist, multi-cultural society. Polish national movement is therefore building a protest identity which is anti-systemic and anti-liberal.

Transformational panic as a manifestation of culture war

The phenomenon of moral panic, described by Cohen in 1970s, has not become outdated. To the contrary, the development of global media and new form of global risk have led to a continued presence of media and transformational panic in the old and new media and in public space. Beck (2012) was right to point out a new element in a risk society, namely staging risk and using it for political purposes. Constructionist potential of panic allows us to create alternative narrations about the world, exaggerate real threat, manipulate facts and figures, and in consequence effectively manage the „risk society".

Each risk, and even more a great, transnational risk is wanted news and a starting point for the Ulrich Bertram media panic. The latter guarantees high viewership of the media which promote it. Variety of different forms of risk and media panic is a way to maintain a sense of potential threat in a society (Beck 2012), which in turn is in the interest of those who build their political capital on social fear. Lack of sense of safety which manifests itself by a chronic economic, political and social-cultural uncertainty paves the way for transformational panic. People who are uncertain about tomorrow seek support in traditional values and communities and turn their backs to liberal ideology which offers dangerous excess of freedom. Over four decades after the explosion of counterculture, after its ideas were absorbed by mainstream culture – proportions have been reversed. Today we can talk of a dynamic change of forces: it is traditional, conservative, fundamental culture which is being reborn as a new counterculture in the world of relative, nihilist, liquid modernity (Pasamonik 2015). In consequence, it is the left-liberal culture which defends today their bulwarks: freedom of custom and minority rights. Transformational moral panic is a new opening of the old culture.

After the political transformation in 1989, Poland rapidly followed the trajectory of Western culture. Political and economic transformation entailed secularization, liberalization and relativity of culture as well as growing individualism and social consumerism. On the other hand, increasing social inequality, economic crisis of 2008, progressing precarization of middle class and the present migration crisis destroyed the young social, political and economic stability. In these conditions, in Poland a local movement of conservative and nationalist counterculture (anti-liberal and anti-left) is being born. In the eyes of the radical right wingers, reluctant to refugees, multi-culturalism is unwanted as it has a similar power to that of gender – to make traditional culture relative. Therefore, panic about refugees is yet another face of the same culture

war between fundamentalism and relativism, which was earlier hailed by transformational panic around homosexuality (2005) and gender (2013).

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