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Discursive Shifts in Ethno-Nationalist Politics: On Politicization and Mediatization of the “Refugee Crisis” in Poland

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes politicization and mediatization of immigration in Poland in the context of the recent European “refugee crisis.” Although largely absent from Polish political discourse after 1989, anti-refugee and anti-immigration rhetoric has recently become extremely politically potent in Poland. The analysis shows that, soon taken over by other political groups, the new anti-immigration discourses have been enacted in Poland’s public sphere by the right-wing populist party PiS (Law and Justice). Its discourse in offline and online media has drawn on discursive patterns including Islamophobia, Euro-scepticism, anti-internationalism, and historical patterns and templates of discrimination such as anti-Semitism.

KEYWORDS

“Refugee crisis”; Poland; anti-immigration rhetoric; critical discourse studies; right-wing populism; politicization; mediatization

While in many European countries anti-immigration stance has long been at the core of political and public agendas (see e.g., Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2009; Ruzza, 2009; Rydgren & van der Meiden 2016; Wodak, 2015), Poland has long been a very notable exception of a country where immigration-related topics have not been politicized. They were also rarely, if at all, put into the focus of the wider public including mass media discourse (see, inter alia, Krzyżanowski, 2014).

However, as this paper critically shows, the second half of 2015 brought a significant change to the Polish political discourse. This change was characterized by a rapid move from practically the lack of any immigration-related debates to a strong and forceful anti-immigrant rhetoric of discrimination or even outright hate toward migrants and, in particular, asylum seekers arriving in Europe. As the analysis below highlights, such a significant shift in Polish political and the wider public discourse has been a matter of a pronounced political strategy. The latter has been undertaken by the Polish PiS (Law and Justice) party (by now Poland’s only government party) that since the early fall of 2015 has been using the ongoing

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European “refugee crisis,”¹ as the main point of reference for building its anti-immigration stance, and as a reason to incite discourses of hateful othering of immigrants and refugees.

As is shown below, PiS skillfully deployed various channels of political communication, including via online/social media, to politicize as well as to simultaneously mediate radical anti-immigration and anti-refugee rhetoric that the party enacted in an orchestrated move. In doing so, PiS soon also “championed” the hateful and Islamophobic political stance that was soon taken over by other Polish populist or even some of the mainstream political movements (Pędzwiatr, 2016).

The main focus of the study is hence in observing the actual “moment” when immigration was politicized by PiS in Poland and in showing that this process has to an important degree run along the crucial paths of (especially top-down) mediatization of politics. The analysis below focuses therefore on the key elements of PiS’s both online and offline political communication strategy and on the discourse thereby constructed and recontextualized across different modalities and in different media. The study argues that by relating discourses subsequently enacted across different modes and forms of mediation and self-mediation of PiS, one can trace the process of how different ideas and imaginaries were incepted into Polish public discourse and effectively recontextualized over time in different loci of the Polish public sphere. The main aim of the analysis is therefore to scrutinize the *discursive shifts* associated with politicization and mediatization of immigration by PiS in the context of the European “refugee crisis.”

The analysis conducted below looks at the culminating stage of the campaign prior to Polish national-parliamentary elections that would eventually take place on October 25, 2015, and put PiS back into power (after a decade as Poland’s main opposition party). The period of investigation of the study (see below) also coincides with the phase when the EU-wide response towards the then gradually peaking refugee crisis in Europe was being debated (see Triandafyllidou, this special issue). At that time, the EU member-states’ national quotas of refugees were being negotiated along with the key milestones of the changing national and European refugee-related policy. In the Polish case, the national quotas were negotiated and put under debate by the then outgoing liberal government led by PO (Civic Platform, in power 2007–2015), which, accused of a liberal approach to immigration, would come under extremely strong attacks by the then main opposition party i.e. PiS.

As the paper shows, from the various forms of *discursive shifts* that can be identified in contemporary mediated and mediatized politics (Krzyżanowski, 2013a, 2018), it is particularly vital to speak here of the so-called *strategic enactment* as the main observed process. As is shown, such enactment is a process of the discursively formed imaginaries² being purposefully created and strategically spread as part of an orchestrated move. The latter builds the simultaneity of politicization

and mediatization of anti-immigration rhetoric which thus very quickly becomes extremely politically potent and widespread despite the fact that it remains based largely on imagined fears (Poland still has very low figures of asylum applications and approvals compared to other EU countries, see below).

Discursive change, discursive shifts, politicization and mediatization

This paper departs from the critical-analytic notion of *discursive change* that is, “a significant shift in the social functioning of language, a shift reflected in the salience of language in the major social changes” (Fairclough 1992: 6). Drawing on the notion above, the paper proposes to treat *discursive change* as a macrolevel concept that denotes global or transnational framing of public discourse. The main challenge of analyzing discursive change is, however, the fact that, within specific spatiotemporal loci, there are traditionally various forms of discursive change. For example, one can currently observe the ongoing (and indeed interchangeable) prominence of discursive changes that constitute the key frames or resources for the wider, macrolevel imaginaries of sociopolitical, cultural, and politico-economic relations. These are related to, inter alia, neoliberalism and economization of social relations, to insecurity and threat, and to public (including, political and media) discourses of practices of othering or changes related to ideological politicization (see below) and to related political radicalization (see Krzyżanowski, 2016).

Since discursive change is, however, positioned at the macrolevel of framing of the public discourse, a need exists to propose concepts allowing for its mezzo- and microlevel operationalization and analysis of public discourse. As means of doing so, this paper argues for the notion of *discursive shift* (see also Krzyżanowski, 2013a) that denotes local, microlevel appropriations of discursive changes. Such appropriations are actor-specific responses toward social, political, and economic macro-level transformations (ibid.).

As is shown in the analyses provided below, a discursive shift may, on the one hand, denote dynamics, whereby, a certain empty space in the public discourse (e.g., the discourse about immigration and diversity that was largely inexistent in post-1989 Poland until mid/late 2015) is being filled with radically new patterns of talking about specific topics and issues (e.g., racist and discriminatory, anti-immigration discourses that started to dominate the debate in mid-September 2015). Such a type of discursive shift is called *strategic enactment* as it encompasses a strategy of de facto introducing or enacting new patterns of debating certain issues (in our case immigration and refugees) yet while often drawing extensively on recontextualization of discursive patterns from spatially and temporally different discourses.

On the other hand, a discursive shift may—and probably most commonly is—also realized in a different form of a *strategic gradation/perpetuation*. The latter encompasses the process whereby the previously existent discourses on certain issues/topics undergo gradual change toward new forms, yet with the strategic aim

to perpetuate previous ones. The analyses of, for example, discourses about the European refugee crisis in countries such as Sweden (see Krzyżanowski, this special issue) point to such tendency, whereby, previous discourses about immigration undergo a gradual but effectively significant discursive shift toward the currently dominating discourse of legitimizing tightened immigration and refugee control.

It is argued here that the notion of *discursive shift* allows viewing how/when public and political discourses change and become politicized and often simultaneously mediatized. Indeed, the often-highlighted negative aspects of politicization—especially the issue of ideologization or outright dogmatization of public debates (see the introduction to this special issue)—are particularly relevant with regard to immigration. The latter is, in the vast majority of cases, politicized in a highly negative and ideologized manner including on the back of economization—and securitization-driven discourses (see, inter alia, Bourbeau, 2013; Buonfino, 2004; Watson, 2009).

Analysing *discursive shifts* is also vital in the context of mediatization of politics—understood here as a process whereby politics becomes increasingly dependent on the media and profoundly changes the course and logic of its practices in line with media-driven demands (see, inter alia, Bennett & Entman, 1999; Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Esser & Strömbäck, 2014). There, a closer look is necessary with regard to changing/shifting communicative practices that allow for the quicker recontextualization and, as a result, social reception and accommodation of political ideologies and views. The analysis below specifically targets *discursive shifts* in mediatization of right-wing populist parties who spread the strongly ideologized messages about immigration under the guise of interactivity and familiarity of using social/online media (see also Calhoun 2016; Krzyżanowski & Tucker, 2017). They thereby create the image of dialogue with citizens and other strands of the public sphere and forge an artificial polyphony of voices that effectively serves sustaining populist and exclusionary visions and ideologies.

Discursive traditions of talking about “the other” in Poland

Poland can probably be most aptly described as a country of emigration rather than immigration. It is therefore not surprising that emigration from, rather than immigration into Poland, has often come to dominate and occupy the Polish public imagination. The same has usually applied to Polish media and journalism with Polish newsmakers until recently often blatantly mistaking emigration and immigration and obviously downplaying the importance or “newsworthiness” of immigration-related topics (see especially Krzyżanowski, 2014).

As several studies show, the discourse about immigration into Poland often did not increase on a par with the gradual increase in immigration into the country post-1989 (Igllicka, 2001; Weinar, 2006). However, it underwent a gradual negativization known from other especially western European countries. While still in early 1990s the Polish media showed largely a pro-

immigration stance by presenting immigrants as those contributing to the modernization and internationalization of Poland, by the late 1990s the mood had gradually changed. The change was marked by the ascent of anti-immigrant views ranging from arguments about “costs,” or at least no obvious benefits, of immigration to those on the need for stricter laws and for “controlling” immigration (see especially Grzymała-Kazłowska & Okólski, 2003). Studies on Polish media representations of immigration also show that while, in fact, until recently clearly standing out from other European countries in terms of the (low) volume of immigration-related discourses, Poland still followed some negative qualitative patterns in media representation. These included, inter alia, “victimization” of migrants (Bennett, ter Wal, Lipiński, Fabiszak, & Krzyżanowski, 2013), their non-agentic representation (Koss-Goryszewska, 2010) or the almost solely economic perception of migrant motivations to migrate to Poland (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2007).

Indeed, the gradually ever-more negative approach to immigrants in Polish public discourse—coined with increasingly negative though in most cases hardly experience-based public perceptions of immigration (Grzymała-Kazłowska & Okólski, 2003)—must be viewed within the context of a larger trend of what Starnawski (2003) has aptly viewed as ongoing solidification of the “anti-pluralist” stance in the Polish post-1989 public sphere. As several studies show (see e.g., Galasińska & Galasiński, 2010; Krzyżanowska, 2010, 2012), the Polish post-1989 public arena is characterized by a lack of pluralism of voices and is often outright dominated by social animosity, hate, and deep-seated, politicized ideological struggles. This has been the case in a wide range of issues including very prominently the rights of ethnic and national minorities (see especially, Gołębiowska, 2009; Jasińska-Kania & Łodziński, 2009). In fact, the negative discourse on minorities has often been projected onto the key cases of Polish anti-immigration discourse to date (e.g., in relation to Ukrainian migrants; see Grzymała-Kazłowska & Okólski, 2003; see also Iglicka & Weinar, 2008; Vermeersch, 2007).

At the same time, Polish anti-Semitism (see, inter alia, Judt, 2010; Michlic, 2007) to large extent remains one of the most powerful templates for contemporary patterns of “othering” (see analysis below). Studies have shown, for example, that anti-Semitic-like scapegoating political and discursive patterns are not only historical but are indeed widespread in contemporary Poland (Bilewicz & Krzemiński, 2010). At the same time, anti-Semitic forms of expression penetrate into different variants of hate speech including against ethnic and national minorities such as Roma, Ukrainians, and Muslims (Bilewicz, Marchlewski, Soral, & Wisniewski, 2014) or into the Polish widespread homophobic discourse (Krzyżanowska, 2010; Ostolski, 2007). It is hence hardly surprising that the particularly strong anti-Semitic-like patterns of discrimination (e.g., those related biological inferiority of migrants/refugees, see below) are also projected onto the most recent anti-immigrant and anti-refugee discourses, which thus clearly become similar to other

European right-wing populist groups widely drawing on an anti-Semitic repertoire of arguments (see Wodak, 2017).

Exploring the context

Poland: Immigration and refugees

After 1989, and especially in the later periods of the post-communist transition, immigration into Poland has been very limited. It mainly boiled down to migrants from neighboring countries, most notably, Ukraine and Belorussia, and hence to groups that also have a long history of presence in Poland as national minorities. At present, there are fewer than 220 thousand foreign citizens officially residing in Poland, which as such has in total about 38.5 million inhabitants (hence, the registered foreigners constitute only ca. 0.5% of the population). In fact, the data above already takes into account a significant increase of foreign population in Poland (by over 35 thousand foreigners), mainly as a result of influx of Ukrainian citizens who received various forms of official residence in Poland throughout 2015 (the last year with full available data; see European Migration Network, 2016). Third-country (i.e., non-EU) nationals constitute the bulk of foreigners residing in Poland (key nationalities including Ukraine, Belorussia, Russia, and Vietnam), followed by EU nationals from such countries as Italy or Germany.

During the European refugee crisis, the Polish national quota was initially set up at 2.6 thousand refugees eventually reaching just over 7 thousand. While indeed very low in a cross-EU comparison, this number to a large extent corresponds with Polish long-term trends in receiving refugees and asylum seekers in recent years: In 2015, only 12,325 applications for refugee status were submitted in Poland, while only 637 (i.e., about 5%) of those resulted in refugee status recognition including 348 along the rules of the Geneva Convention refugee protection (UDSC, 2016a). Interestingly, Russians (6,556 in total) constituted the main national group of applicants for protection status in Poland in 2015, followed by citizens of Ukraine (764), Tajikistan (498), and Georgia (348). This shows that, as such, the refugee status was sought in Poland mainly by citizens of the east European neighboring countries. However, as far as the actual granting of refugee status, the national groups that were numerous elsewhere in the EU in the context of the refugee crisis were also leading in the category of recipients of Geneva protection status in Poland. Among the aforementioned (and only) 348 persons who received refugee status in Poland in 2015, most were from Syria (203), Iraq (24), Russia (21), followed by stateless refugees (20), as well as citizens of Egypt (15) and Belorussia (14) (see UDSC, 2016b).

Polish PiS (Law and Justice) party

As a political (right-wing populist and nationalist) party, PiS officially came into being in 2001. In 2005, after success in the national parliamentary elections, it

formed a coalition government under Jarosław Kaczyński together with two other (radical left and right) Polish populist parties. Soon after PiS's success in the national parliamentary elections, the presidential vote held in Poland in October 2005 also turned out in favor of the party, with Lech Kaczyński (Jarosław's twin) becoming the country's president. However, despite holding several posts of power, the PiS government soon collapsed and in 2007 the party also lost snap parliamentary elections to its archrivals i.e. Donald Tusk's liberal Civic Platform (*Platforma Obywatelska*, PO). From then until 2015 PiS remained Poland's main opposition party despite various attempts to regain power in both parliamentary and presidential elections.

The first sign of PiS's recent return to power came with the Polish presidential elections in May 2015 won by PiS candidate Andrzej Duda. In the aftermath, PiS's fierce campaign, including on the issues of refugees and the "refugee crisis", analyzed below, continued until late October 2015 when PiS won the national parliamentary elections with 37.5% of voter support and an overall majority in the Polish parliament. Soon afterwards, the first ever PiS-only government was formed in November 2015.

PiS's current tenure in power—clearly under "backseat" control of Jarosław Kaczyński, who as PiS chairman effectively controls both the president and the government—has so far proved to be, mildly speaking, very controversial. It has resulted in many domestic political conflicts including, most notably, following PiS's attempts to first take over control over and later dismantle Poland's Constitutional Tribunal, or to radicalize many liberal (e.g., abortion) laws or take over the full control national public media. Many of those actions also brought a very radical change of Polish previously successful EU and international and defense policy by, inter alia, highlighting PiS's long-established Eurosceptic and, inter alia, anti-German sentiments and voicing these via many confrontational, isolationist, and often outright xenophobic views.

PiS and politicization/mediatization of European refugee crisis: Analysis

Design of the study and empirical data

The aforementioned process of *strategic enactment* of anti-immigration and anti-refugee discourse by PiS in Polish politics and the wider public sphere is examined here by means of tracking stages/contexts of the process of discursive recontextualization in the form originally introduced by Basil Bernstein (1990) and recently elaborated by Krzyżanowski (2016). Bernstein (1990, p. 193) distinguished between (a) three stages of recontextualization (production, recontextualization, and reproduction) and (b) three corresponding contexts of recontextualization (the primary one [the "source" context of production of discourse], the secondary one [the "target" context of reproduction of discourse], and the recontextualizing context [the intermediary context in between source production and target reproduction—the context through which the relocation and reordering of discourse takes place]. As

the analysis targets the moment of enactment and further diffusion of anti-immigration and anti-refugee discourse, the analysis will mainly focus on the first two areas—production and recontextualization—and on the related primary and recontextualizing contexts.

While following the paths of recontextualization highlighted above, the ensuing analysis will rely on the categories of critical discourse studies of right-wing populism and anti-immigration rhetoric (Krzyżanowski, 2012, 2013b; Wodak, 2015). The analysis will follow a multilevel pattern (see Krzyżanowski, 2010) that distinguishes between entry-level (thematic, content oriented) and in-depth (strategy oriented, especially argumentative) analysis. Within the former, the focus will be mainly on discourse topics that “conceptually, summarize the text, and specify its most important information” (van Dijk, 1991, p. 113). The in-depth analysis, on the other hand, will focus on key patterns of argumentation. It will therefore rely on the category of *topoi* (or argumentation schemes/headings; Krzyżanowski, 2010) especially in the forms known from public and political anti-immigration discourse and as part of wider sets of discursive strategies (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001).

At first, the analysis of topics encompasses close reading of each of the texts forming a respective discourse (e.g., speeches, tweets). The reading results in the production of a general list of themes for each of the texts and, in a cumulative manner, for the entire discourse, thus forming an overall map of its contents. The thematic analysis eventually also serves as the basis for later, argumentation-oriented (i.e., *topos*) analysis. There, the aim is to identify the key argumentative frames in the analyzed discourse as those that structured key arguments and expressions. The analysis, thereby, points to how the key themes (topics) were deployed in formation of different arguments. For example, the construction of the central argument headed by the *topos of threat* (encompassing the argument against threats/dangers of immigration) will rely on various topics including those on uncontrolled/mismanaged migration, great numbers of migrants, and so forth, as supporting the argument.

The analysis conducted in this study covers a period of one month between September 15 and October 15, 2015. The following data will be analyzed in the said period:

- parliamentary speech by J. Kaczyński on the refugee crisis and immigration in Polish Sejm (16/10; within debate on Polish response to the refugee crisis)
- PiS website (www.pis.org.pl) report/summary from the speech above (16/10)
- tweets from PiS’s official Twitter profile (@pisorgpl) in the period 15/09—15/10
- additional web material, for example, short web commentaries *Głos Polski* (The Polish Voice) by A. Macierewicz (PiS) posted on radical nationalist-Catholic www.radiomaryja.pl (especially on 24/09)
- speech/statement on immigration/refugees by J. Kaczyński at pre-election rally in Maków Mazowiecki (12/10)

The analysis focuses mainly on the “production” locus of the PiS official party discourse and on its strategic spread across different modes and channels of the party’s self-mediation. In fact, PiS Twitter discourse serves here as the main source

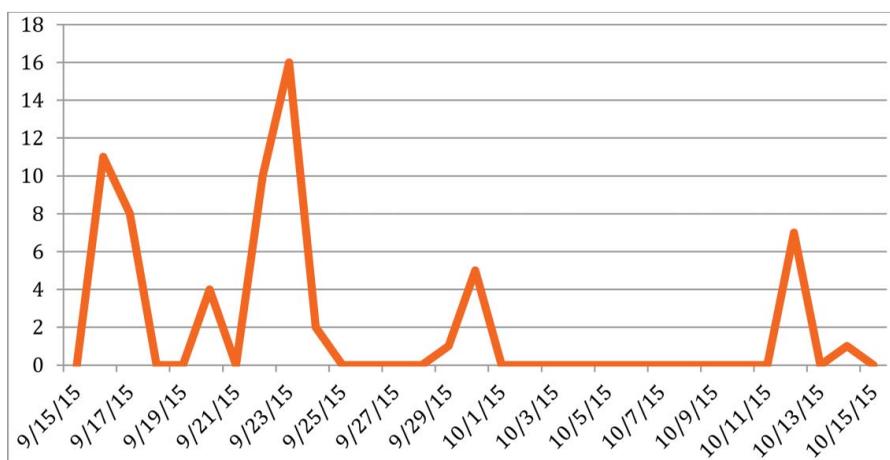


Figure 1. Twitter discourse on immigration/refugees @pisorgpl, September 15 - October 15, 2015.

for identification and selection of key stages (or moments) of politicization of immigration/refugees by PiS throughout the period of investigation. As far as the activity on PiS's official Twitter profile is concerned, this helped identify the "peak" moments when debates on immigration and the relevant discourse intensified (see Figure 1).

The intention below is to follow the key qualitative features of PiS discourses produced within three key identified peak moments (Figure 1) and in relation to relevant events taking place at the time. The analysis hence focuses in particular on September 16, 2015, (Jarosław Kaczyński's speech on immigration and the refugee crisis in the Polish parliament), September 23–24, 2015, (online video post on immigration/refugees by Antoni Macierewicz of PiS) and October 12, 2015, (Kaczyński's speech at the electoral rally in Maków Mazowiecki).

Analysis of the primary context

Approached here as the key moment in creating Polish post-1989 public discourse about immigration and refugees and as its source (or primary) context, Jarosław Kaczyński's speech on immigration and refugee crisis was delivered in the Polish parliament on September 16, 2015. The speech was an intervention in the Polish lower chamber of parliament (*Sejm*) during a debate preceding Polish decision on taking part in EU program for refugees coming into Europe (Poland eventually supported the program yet in a very limited way and while accepting a very low refugee quota). The speech was relatively short: 1,282 words delivered during 12:08 minutes.

Looking at the results of the entry-level analysis of the speech, its key topics included:

- a) government declarations/inability to act on immigration (and related need for government decisions taken "under external/foreign pressure")

- b) migrants (allegedly) coming in great numbers to Poland and Europe and taking over control
- c) examples of countries with unsolved migration problems (especially Sweden, France, Italy)
- d) different types of migration and different approaches as practiced in different countries
- e) Germany as responsible for economic migration into Europe and problems across the EU
- f) Polish emigration historically and recently
- g) EU pressures and reality “on the ground”

The topics above were generally framed within the wider theme of criticizing the government and its actions. However, as the list suggests, the enactment of the anti-immigration discourse drew extensively on arguments known from both Poland (especially PiS’s own discourse) as well as accommodated internationally. In the first case, the importance of themes related to Germany (theme “e”) or to government actions under external/foreign influence (“a”) draws extensively on PiS’s widely known anti-German arguments, which in this case are accommodated within a discourse on European immigration and refugees. These themes are further augmented by topics pertaining to EU (e.g., “g”), which also describe the government at that time as acting under external pressures and not in the interests of Poland. Elsewhere, the typical discourses about “different types of immigration” (“d”)—widely known from other countries and especially European right-wing populist discourses (Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2009)—are recontextualized while showing that the speech is a combination of both traditional “local” and recontextualized (or even “borrowed”) global frames.

A closer look at the in-depth features of the speech points in particular to the extensive use of the *topos of threat* traditionally deployed in right-wing populist, ethnonationalist discourses on immigration (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). As example 1 illustrates, the *topos* introduces framing in terms of security and allows arguing that the (here, still non-nominalized) immigration/refugees will have immense negative influence on several spheres of Polish public reality.

Example 1³

JK: In reality, the high house, one question is important: does the government have the right to—acting under foreign, external pressure and with no explicit agreement of the nation—to take decisions that can have negative influence on our lives, on our everyday reality, on our public life, on our public sphere, on our de facto sphere of freedom and lastly, what has been brought up before, on our security. (p. 1)

Moving on, the speaker eventually moves to nominate “foreigners” as the object of his speech (see example 2). He also explicitly points to the “dangers” of immigration mainly by arguing about migrants and refugees’ alleged unwillingness to obey local “rules” of social cohesion. On concluding his argument, Kaczyński also claims that

foreigners—as he generically calls them—eventually become “aggressive” and “violent” while simultaneously attempting to “impose” their customs on the local population:

Example 2

JK: It is not about taking in some number of foreigners, irrespective of what sort of foreigners those are. It is about the danger that one will start a process that will more or less look like this: first the number of foreigners suddenly increases, then they do not obey—do not want to obey, they declare they do not want to obey—our customs ...

(Voice from the floor: What are you talking about?)

JK: ... and then or even simultaneously they impose their sensitivity and their claims in the public space in different spheres of life, and they do so in a very aggressive and violent way. (p. 1)

In order to support his earlier claims especially on the dangers of immigration, the speaker moves on to introduce a classic argumentation structure—that is, a *topos of example*, which allows him to depict his ideas with (largely untrue) examples. The latter mainly boil down to referring to a number of European countries where, as Kaczyński argues, lack of control of immigration and refugees has led to deep social disorder and unrest. He first provides the example of Sweden where, he argues, sharia law governs entire city districts and any symbols of Christianity (such as the cross on the Swedish flag) are abandoned:

Example 3

JK: If somebody says all of this is not true then have a look around Europe, let's take Sweden. There are 45 zones there governed by Sharia law, there is no control of the state (Rep. Jerzy Fedorowicz: I was in Sweden recently)

JK: There are fears of hanging out Swedish flag at schools, since there is a custom like that over there, because there is a cross on the flag. (p. 1)

Kaczyński continues his Islamophobic tirade—marked, again, by several Islamophobic including sharia-related claims—while providing further examples of how the spread of Islam, according to him especially by the incoming migrants—has endangered Christianity and the wider European society. He claims that Muslim-related problems are practically universal across Europe (see example 4) and argues that countries such as Italy, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany have not been able to avoid the alleged Islam-related social tensions.

Example 4

JK: Or what is going on in Italy? Churches have been taken over and are often treated as toilets. What is going on in France? Non-stop arguments, Sharia introduced, even patrols which check if Sharia is observed. Same in London or even in the toughest in this case Germany, all of this is taking place. So do you all want that all of this becomes reality in Poland, that we stop feeling at home in our own country? Is that what you want? (p. 2)

After apparently exhausting his Islamophobic examples, Kaczyński eventually moves to the arguments built on the *topos of difference*, which follows from the “migrant ≠ migrant” claims (Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2009) marked already at the level of topics (see “d” above). As the speaker argues,

“economic migrants” should be clearly divided from war refugees (see example 5). He uses this argument to be able to re-introduce a classic PiS anti-German argumentation and by eventually claiming that, as such, economic migration into Europe has been caused by the politics of Germany. This, according to the speaker, now also creates the problem whereby “real” (refugees) cannot be distinguished from “bogus” (economic) migrants. Paradoxically, by introducing such difference-based distinction, Kaczyński creates the image that he wants to “help the refugees,” yet while still protecting the security of Polish people:

Example 5

JK: At the same time, if we look at the problem, that has been raised here, we have to divide firmly between refugees, who really are fleeing the war, from economic migrants. We have to differentiate between them. And who created the whole magnet here, the magnet of inducing all economic migrants? Germany. And it is their problem. Orban was right here, it is their problem, not ours. (Applause) We can help the refugees but, let me repeat, in a way that is safe and secure for the Polish people. (p. 2)

Analysis of the (main) recontextualizing context

As the first example of a context that effectively recontextualizes and mediates several of the arguments introduced in the primary context above, the analysis focuses on an online video post by Antoni Macierewicz, a known nationalist activist and deputy chairman of PiS (and, as of late 2015, also Polish minister of defense). The post in question was one of the series of regular Macierewicz videos entitled “The Voice from Poland” (*Głos z Polski*). The video took 7:08 minutes in total and was placed on 24/09/2015 on the Youtube channel *Radio Maryja/TV Trwam*—a known radical, conservative-Catholic media conglomerate and a long-term supporter of PiS.⁴

The thematic (entry-level) analysis reveals that the video, published just over a week after Kaczyński’s initial parliamentary speech, draws on the same general framing of the government critique. In fact, Macierewicz starts his statement by claiming that, while many EU governments were able to defend their national interests in the face of the refugee crisis and related EU-wide response, the Polish (liberal) government clearly failed to do so. This was the case, as the speaker claims, because the Polish government was not really a “national” government and certainly not the one acting in Poles’ interest. Following Kaczyński’s aforementioned framing, Macierewicz claims that the Polish government, when accepting EU decisions on the European “refugee crisis”, acted in the interest of the German (alleged) hegemonic rule in the European Union. Those topics, which are recontextualized from Kaczyński’s primary discourse (see above), are furthered by a number of others, including:

- Poland should help refugees mainly financially and proportionally to Poland’s wealth.
- Refugees should receive help in the points of departure, not of arrival.

- The refugee crisis is a problem caused by the UN, Turkey, and Ms. Merkel (Germany)—not by Poland.
- Refugee routes through Europe are pre-planned and strategic.

The arguments developed on the basis of the aforementioned topics to large extent also follow the earlier schemes of argumentation (see example 6). Among them, there is the *topos of threat* which is deployed by Macierewicz to argue that Poland is set to be “flooded” by migrants, who allegedly are openly against the Polish culture (which, in a nationalistic tone not unusual for PiS, is even called “Polish civilization”).

Example 6

The consequences of voting against the nation’s will and against the agreed position of the Visegrad countries and in favour of the position of Germany—because that is the real hegemonic power of the EU—are almost inconceivable as far as the future of Poland is concerned. This is vital in the context of flooding, of potential flooding, of Poland by people who openly say that they will be combating Polish civilization and culture and also the European security.

In fact, this argument is deepened further in the video (see example 7), when Macierewicz openly refers to Kaczyński’s speech in the parliament and thus legitimizes his own claims.

Example 7

This was discussed in his excellent intervention by the Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński when he presented last week the PiS position. He said PiS will never agree to the fact that immigrants are flooding our country.

The (overtly) established recontextualization chain allows using further arguments in which Macierewicz—under the guise of Christian-driven compassion and humanitarianism—argues that helping refugees must not mean welcoming them to Poland but should actually resort to a “financial support” received either in refugee camps or even in refugees’ points of departure—that is, in the countries they effectively fled (see example 8).

Example 8

Lets help them, for example, financially, for example by sharing with other countries of the EU, according to our financial means and our wealth, sums of money that will be paid on so that in refugee camps or ideally in their own places of living they could live with dignity so that they would not have to flee. That is the right position.

The *topos of finance/economy* allows the speaker to quickly turn toward another set of arguments that allegedly explore the ontology of the refugee crisis. These, as can be expected, are identified by Macierewicz in the politics of either international actors (especially the UN) and of Germany.

The re-introduction of the anti-German argument, and yet another installment of a government critique (note the labeling of then prime minister of Poland Ewa Kopacz as a “representative,” see example 7), leads, however, to a series of further

claims, including those that many refugees take routes that strategically lead to or through Poland (see example 9). This, as Macierewicz claims, is the proof that refugees are not fleeing the war or seeking help but that they in fact undertake an organized invasion.

Example 9

It is one of the curiosities, because it points to the mechanism which goes beyond the financial issues and maybe has political underpinnings, that two days before the scandalous voting of representative Kopacz who agreed to the German dictate, maps were presented that they (MK: refugees) should not be going through Austria but through Poland, not through Hungary or through Croatia but through Poland and from here to Germany and that thus a new route has been opened that should lead the refugee wave through Poland. This map was distributed in refugee camps to encourage them to go toward Poland. Mrs. Kopacz is to blame for this.

The issue of “maps”—which, in a military-like fashion also implies invasion—helps deepen the argument that the refugee crisis is, to a large extent, a purposeful activity that is targeting Poland. It thus allows the speaker to link several of his claims (anti-government, anti-Germany, etc.) under the overall threat topos and to do it with a bogus evidence of maps that he eventually presents (see Figures 2 and 3).

Analysis of the (further) recontextualizing contexts

Here, it is worth looking at a statement made by Kaczyński himself, as a brief example of the further recontextualizing discourse (and context), on 12/10 during a pre-election rally in Maków Mazowiecki (about 80 km north of Warsaw). There, during a speech that embraced many topics, Kaczyński mentioned the issue of



Figure 2. Map capture from *Głos z Polski* (The Voice from Poland) video, September 24, 2015. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_FqFXvqsa6A.

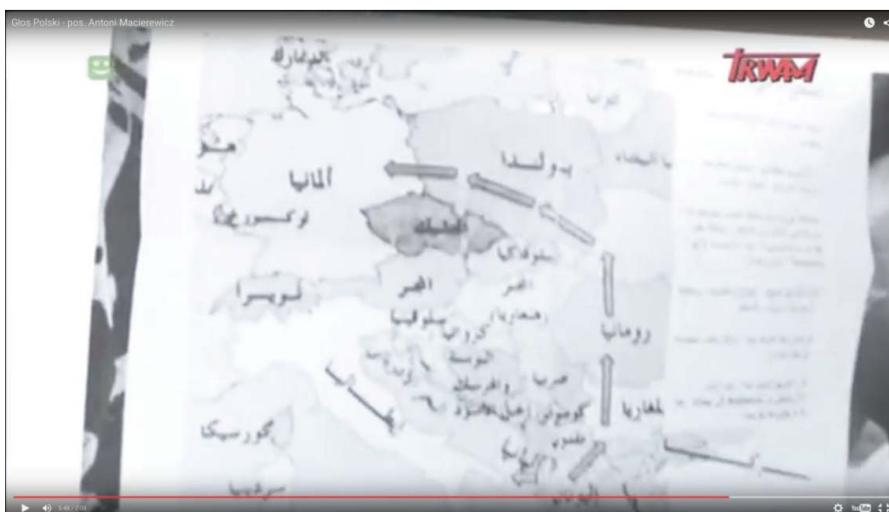


Figure 3. Map close-up from *Głos z Polski* (The Voice from Poland) video, 24/09/2015. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_FqFXvqa6A.

refugees and immigration when discussing, as usual, the allegedly numerous failures of the government (see example 10):

Example 10

That information about getting 100 thousand Muslims into Poland is that true? Well the Minister of Health should respond to that because all of this is related to various dangers in that area. We already have symptoms of very serious diseases, not seen in Europe for long: cholera on the Greek islands, dysentery in Vienna, various parasites and protozoans which are not dangerous in those people's organisms but can be dangerous here. I do not mean to discriminate but all this needs to be checked.

However, as the brief example shows, the anti-government framing is yet again just an excuse to eventually introduce harsh anti-immigration arguments under the *topos of threat*. Unlike previously, however, the threat is not portrayed by Kaczyński as the one related to culture, religion, and so forth, but is instead viewed in terms of diseases and of the alleged biological difference of immigrants(!). The former and the latter enable Kaczyński to rest his statement on a number of implied claims. For example, the mere chain of nominalizations mentioned in the statement—such as “Muslims” (line 1), “parasites and protozoans” (line 4–5), and “those people's organisms” (line 5)—implies that all of these are somehow related. This creates the image of biological difference and inferiority of refugees/migrants while, in fact, invoking deprecatory biologizing metaphors and metonymies (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001) such as “parasites”. These, to be sure, also constitute a very obvious recontextualization of historical discourses of hate known—for example, from Polish and other European anti-Semitic discourses of the 1930s—while being merged with the contemporary PiS anti-immigration and anti-refugee discourses analyzed above.

Date	Account name	Retweet from Acc	Tweet
16/09/15	pisorgpl		<p>Jarosław Kaczyński w Sejmie o przyjęciu imigrantów: PiS uważa, że rząd nie ma prawa do podejmowania takiej decyzji.</p> <p>Jarosław Kaczyński: Nie chodzi o przyjęcie tej czy innej liczby cudzoziemców. Chodzi o cały proces, do którego dojdzie.</p> <p>Jarosław Kaczyński: W Szwecji są strefy, gdzie obowiązuje szariat i nie ma kontroli państwa.</p> <p>Jarosław Kaczyński: Czy chcecie Państwo, żeby to pojawiło się także w Polsce? Żebyśmy przestali być gospodarzami we własnym kraju?</p> <p>Jarosław Kaczyński: Około 1 miliard ludzi cierpi z powodu głodu. Ich wszystkich przyjmą lepiej rozwinięte kraje?</p> <p>Jarosław Kaczyński: Jesteśmy za tym, żeby pomagać. Ale metodą bezpieczną, finansową.</p> <p>Jarosław Kaczyński: Weźmy na siebie część odpowiedzialności finansowej, zgodnie z naszym poziomem PKB.</p> <p>Jarosław Kaczyński: Imigracja ekonomiczna to nie nasz problem. To problem Niemiec.</p> <p>Jarosław Kaczyński: Podnosi się argument emigracji Polaków. Ale czy Polacy emigrując narzucali swoje reguły tam, gdzie się pojawiali? Nie.</p> <p>Jarosław Kaczyński: Jest podnoszony argument - UE nam płaci. Ale za co nam płaci? Za możliwości regulacyjne.</p> <p>Jarosław Kaczyński: Mamy prawo bronić się przed akcją dyfamacyjną prowadzoną przeciw Polsce.</p>

Figure 4. PiS tweets on immigration and refugees (@pisorgpl, 16/09/2015).

Recontextualization and the ambivalent role of the PiS' Twitter twitter discourse

As it is vital in the process of mediating and effectively mediatizing PiS political discourse on the refugee crisis and immigration, a brief look should be taken on the rather ambivalent role of PiS Twitter discourse. While the latter was generally used in the top-down political communication mode mentioned above, it clearly served two different functions.

On the one hand (see Figure 4), Twitter was used to very plainly spread the themes and arguments expressed and developed in other contexts. Such was especially the case during Kaczyński's speech of 16/09, analyzed above, (in the "primary" context) when tweets were deployed almost solely to communicate the key ideas of Kaczyński's parliamentary intervention. Twitter was used here in a very non-interactive way (note lack of any retweets in relevant column above) with a very plain remit—and effectively recontextualize—the key aspects of Kaczyński's message. This was achieved mainly by means of short quotes of catchy statements (which were thus taken out of context of their production). As the month-long analysis of PiS Twitter reveals, such was almost overwhelmingly the function of PiS social media in the period of investigation—that is, to live-tweet during the speeches and media appearances of key PiS members yet not to allow for any debate or exchange of even related views.

On the other hand, isolated instances showed that Twitter was also sporadically used by PiS to not only communicate the contents of speeches/interventions/debates as/when they happened but also to significantly change the tone of the communicated views, in most cases postfactually and in a mitigating manner. Such was the case with, for example, the short statement by Kaczyński above which, soon after it was delivered (on September 12), met with the widespread outcry of media and various politicians against using, such historically-laden language of racism, discrimination, and hate. Interestingly, the statement above, which was not live-tweeted instantly, did not have any mediated presence until 2 days later, when, on September 14, just one tweet related to the statement that was posted (see example 11).

Example 11

Jarosław Kaczyński pointed to the fact that warnings against epidemiological dangers caused by immigrants have been included in Polish government documents (@pisorgpl, 14/09/2015)

As the example shows, the tweet is used to largely misinterpret what Kaczyński effectively said about (Muslim) refugees in Maków Mazowiecki (see above). Its aim is hence to mitigate Kaczyński's ideas, which became widely criticized immediately after his speech. Interestingly, even in such a short statement, PiS automatically turns toward the anti-government framing which, as shown above, is otherwise omnipresent and serves as default in the analyzed PiS discourse on immigration.

Conclusions

As this paper shows, a significant discursive shift has occurred in Polish political discourse that, although until recently escaping anti-immigration rhetoric, can now, mainly due to PiS politics and rhetoric, be characterized as strongly anti-immigrant, Islamophobic, and at times even racist. The analysis above shows that the accommodation of debates about the refugee crisis in Europe in 2015 has been central in the process of politicization of immigration in Poland, whereby, heated political debates gave rise to discriminatory opinions about immigrants and especially asylum seekers and refugees. The former and the latter, as has been shown, have largely been framed in the analyzed texts as a “threat” to Polish culture, religion, and nationhood, and while constructing immigrants as profoundly different from the Polish “native” population. Such a marking of difference spanned a wide range of arguments, starting from cultural/religious incompatibility and ending in radical and blatantly racist statements on biological inferiority that recontextualized elements of Polish historical anti-Semitic arguments.

Thus, although largely missing from Polish political debates before mid-2015, immigration now entered the public discourse and has become strongly politicized in Poland, mainly as a token of right-wing populism and political opportunism. This process was, as highlighted above, systematically and strategically driven by the right-wing populist PiS. It resulted in what was defined above as the *strategic enactment* variant of discursive shift, in which discourses were not only introduced into the public domain but also further recontextualized and, thereby, disseminated and perpetuated. As the analysis shows, starting from the primary through the further recontextualizing contexts, many arguments were systematically repeated and often further particularized—for example, by means of quasi-facts and untrue examples—in order to sustain their rhetorical efficiency and political potency.

As the analysis also indicates, the strategic nature of the discursive construction of immigration by PiS in Poland has run parallel to online-mediated practices

whose aim was to support politicization as a strategy. In line with the considerations presented above, the mediatization of politics is a crucial factor when looking at the politicization of immigration analyzed in this paper. As the analysis shows, political and especially politicization strategies are increasingly conceived of in a way that assumes a crucial role for their “vehicle” i.e. mediated practices. The latter are deployed to reinforce and disseminate political argumentation including by means of creating a polyphonic political discourse that suggests that the expressed opinions are not solitary but part of a wider, and widely shared, set of views. The role of social/online media is thereby also to, if need be, modify political communication’s message/tone in situations of political controversy or whenever strategic and discursive boundary testing reaches and overstretches the limits of accepted political language on immigration.

Notes

1. Despite its by now widespread presence in public and academic discourse, the notion of a “refugee crisis” is approached critically in this article. It is viewed as an ideologically charged notion developed in media and political discourse and as a recontextualization of earlier (negativized) descriptions of large-scale developments related to immigration and asylum seeking (e.g., in the context of wars in former Yugoslavia in early 1990s).
2. From the variety of available conceptions of social imaginaries (see e.g., Taylor 2004), this study follows a top-down conceptualization, which sees them as “sets of cultural elements common to a given social group (or groups) that shape the ‘lived experience’ and help reproduce social relations” (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p. 439).
3. All translations of examples from Polish into English are mine. Original versions of examples are available from the author upon request. The full speech in original is available at <http://sejm.gov.pl/Sejm7.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=100&dzien=1&wyp=7&view=1>.
4. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_FqFXvqsa6Aa.

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