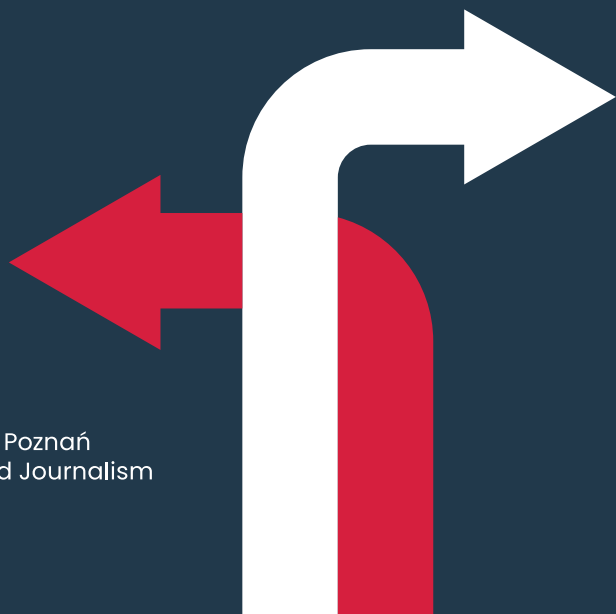


Populist Discourse in the Polish Media

Edited by
Agnieszka Stępińska



Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
Faculty of Political Science and Journalism
Poznań 2020

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1. Theoretical Background and Methods of the Study on Populist Discourse in the Media

Agnieszka Stepińska, Marta Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, and Jacek Wyszyński

Introduction

Populism as a socio-political phenomenon can be studied from many perspectives. Taking a political communication perspective, we can define populism as “a set of characteristics or elements of messages that have their roots in, or at least relate to, the aims, motivations and attitudes of political actors, the media or citizens” (Reinemann et al., 2017, p. 14). In this sense, populism is a *discourse practice* (Laclau, 2005), *communication style* (de Vreese et al., 2018), or “a communication frame that appeals to and identifies with the people and pretends to speak in their name” (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007, p. 322), and in particular “a communication framework which includes references to the people, identification with the people and aspirations to speak for the people” (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007, p. 322). A similar definition is proposed by M. Rooduijn (2014, p. 3), according to whom populism is “a characteristic of a specific message rather than a characteristic of an actor sending the message.”

Adoption of the political communication perspective in the research on populism allowed a scholar to focus not only on ideology (expressed in statements and through actions taken by political actors), but also on the role of the media in disseminating this ideology as well as the views, attitudes and expectations of voters (Reinemann et al., 2017, pp. 13–14). Moreover, it allowed the study to cover a wide range of subjects without primary determination of whether they are populist or not. This approach assumes that populist discourse can be used, to a greater or lesser extent, by all political actors, as well as by journalists and citizens (Akkerman, Mudde, and Zaslove, 2014; Rooduijn, 2014; Reinemann et al., 2017; de Vreese et al., 2018).

In order to characterize populist discourse, it is necessary to refer to other perspectives, especially those that define populism as a *thin ideology* (Freedon, 1996; Mudde, 2004) or a “mental map through which individuals analyze and comprehend political reality” (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013, pp. 498–499). The starting point is recognizing the characteristics of this ideology and the basic populist categories, such as the Manichean perception of society as divided into two completely separate, internally homogeneous groups and antagonistic camps: ‘the elite’ and ‘the people’ (Mudde, 2004). This dichotomous division valorizes the category ‘us’, i.e. the people, as positive, and the category ‘them’ (‘the elite’) as negative. In other words, the essence of populism is anti-elitism – an attitude of opposition to all those in power

(political parties, officials, but also supranational institutions and organizations). ‘The people’ can be a nation (right-wing populism), a class (left-wing populism), or a sovereign (in a specific vision of democracy based on a literal understanding of the power of the people).

Many researchers also mention other constitutive elements of populism, such as the exclusion of ‘out-groups’, charismatic leaders (Canovan, 1999), a narrative of crisis and threat (Moffit and Tormey, 2014; Taggart, 2004), or rhetoric using colloquialisms, emotional statements, predatory style in referring to political rivals, simplification, and directness (Canovan, 1999; Moffit and Tormey, 2014).

J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007), assuming that populism is a style of political communication, distinguished four types of populism: (1) *empty populism*, where references to ‘the people’ are the only element present, (2) *anti-elitist populism*, with references to ‘the people’ combined with attacks on ‘the elite’, (3) *excluding populism*, with references to ‘the people’ combined with the exclusion of ‘out-groups’, and (4) *complete populism*, which is a combination of the references to ‘the people’, attacks on ‘the elite’, and exclusion of the ‘out-groups’/‘the others’.

The J. Jagers and S. Walgrave’s (2007) concept is the theoretical basis for a number of international studies on populism conducted over the last few years, such as the project *The Appeal of Populist Ideas and Messages* (NCCRIII – Module 2, carried out by a team headed by F. Esser from the University of Zurich), COST IS 1308 *Populist Communication in Europe: Comprehending the Challenge of Mediated Political Populism for Democratic Politics*, implemented between 2014–2018 by researchers from more than 20 European countries (Aalberg et al., 2017), or *Election News in Europe: What is Covered and How?*, initiated and coordinated by S. Salgado from the University of Lisbon, covering 6 countries (Salgado, 2019).

In Poland, the phenomenon of populism has been analyzed mainly by political scientists and sociologists (the review of Polish literature on the subject includes, see among others, Marczewska-Rytko, 2005; Stępińska et al., 2017; Lipiński and Stępińska, 2018; 2019). Most Polish works on populism are theoretical reflections on the variants (types) of populism (Szacki, 2006; Tokarczyk, 2006; Franczak, 2004), its historical and systemic diversity, and the impact of populism on democracy, including the attitudes and behaviors of citizens (Dzwończyk, 1995; 2000; 2003; Kasińska-Metryka, 2006). Some analyses focused on select activities undertaken by political parties and their leaders, especially during electoral campaigns (Stępińska, 2003; 2004; Sasińska-Klas, 2006; Drelich, 2010; 2012; Czechowska-Derkacz, 2012; Jajecznik, 2006; Górka and Magierek, 2012; Kasińska-Metryka, 2006; Marks, 2003).

The problem of populism in Poland has also been tackled by linguists. Until recently, linguistic analyses have focused on description of the distinctive linguistic features of populism. However, the researchers themselves point out the incompleteness of their approach to the problem, limited to selected elements of this phenomenon (Bralczyk 1999, p. 86; Ożóg 2006, p. 209). It should be noted that the publications of those two authors were not based on the extensive corpus. Furthermore, most of the works are quite general and do not differentiate the research material according to political entities, the time of writing of the texts, or the medium through which they were addressed to the audience. In those works, populism is always addressed as *linguistic populism*. However, as J. Bralczyk argues, linguistic devices of this arbitrarily

defined *linguistic populism* are not specific only to populism itself, but are present in the broadly understood political communication (Bralczyk, 1999, pp. 83–84).

Moreover, although Polish linguists tend to prefer the term *linguistic populism* (Bralczyk, 1999; Burda, 2012) or *the language of populism* (Ożóg, 2006, p. 209), they differ in their categorizations of populism. J. Bralczyk (1999, p. 82) indicates that populism is sometimes understood as “political tactics, sociotechnical method, political movement, ideological current, relative of demagogy, doctrine of impatient people, collection of folk slogans, manipulation, tendency, primitive socialism, political mysticism, idea, social demagogy.” Most often, however, in linguistic works published before 2015, populism, defined as *political populism* or narrowly understood as a political phenomenon, is characterized as an ideology which manifests in language at the level of rhetoric building a characteristic vision of the world by means of a specific *populist rhetoric* (Ożóg, 2013; cf. Ożóg, 2006, p. 29). This definition of populism, narrowed down to rhetorical categories, is also visible in a publication on the language of contemporary politics, whose author, L. Polkowska (2015, p. 156), describes populism as one of the eristic fallacies – *argumentum ad populum*. In this understanding, populism contains a simplified vision of the world, a simplified form and content of communication, accompanied by a dichotomous structure of the presented world and a self-portrait of the sender which allows the receivers – here referred to as ‘the nation’ – to identify with the sender (Polkowska, 2015, p. 156). Such a broadly outlined eristic tool, going beyond the constitutive features of this rhetorical figure, shows that the phenomenon of populism goes far beyond the set of linguistic means, and therefore requires an extra-rhetorical categorization.

Political linguists M. Kołodziejczak and M. Wrześniewska-Pietrzak see the phenomenon of populism in much wider terms. They focus on the populist discourse defined by K. Ożóg (2006, p. 209), referring to the concepts of T. van Dijk (2006, p. 1021). In Poland, these concepts were expanded by J. Bartmiński and S. Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska, founders of Polish ethnolinguistics (2009, pp. 32–33). Here, the concept of discourse includes the text with its sender’s attitude and characteristic relations between the sender and receiver implicit in the statement. This discursive approach to populism highlights the relationship between the attitude of the populist senders and the language strategies they use to build a specific production-reception relationship, a populist relationship. These assumptions led M. Kołodziejczak and M. Wrześniewska-Pietrzak to define the following constitutive elements of populist discourse: (1) the mythically understood ‘people’ always takes the focal position in the constructed vision of the world, (2) ‘the people’ are always placed in opposition to those who are not members of this group (e.g. ‘the elite’ or ‘out-groups’), (3) the linguistic image of the social world is simplified, which is accompanied by a high degree of intelligibility of the message, aimed at the greatest possible number of recipients, and finally (4) there is always a leader, acting as a real or self-proclaimed *vox populi* (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2017a; 2017b; 2017c; Wrześniewska-Pietrzak and Kołodziejczak, 2017).

Polish researchers have also focused on analysis of the behaviours of political leaders and their leadership styles, including the issue of charismatic leadership (Marx, 2003; Stępińska, 2003; 2004; Sasińska-Klas, 2006), as well as the anti-systemic nature of political leaders (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2017a). Many ear-

lier studies conducted in Poland focused exclusively on such parties as Samoobrona Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej (*Self-Defense of the Republic of Poland*) and Liga Polskich Rodzin (*League of Polish Families*) (Jajecznik, 2006; Maj, 2006; Drelich, 2012; Ozóg, 2006; Burda, 2012), while in recent years there has been more focus on the political organization Kukiz'15 and its leader Paweł Kukiz (Kołodziejczak and Wrzeźniewska-Pietrzak, 2018; Lipiński and Stępińska, 2018; 2019).

Little systematic empirical research has been devoted to analysis of populist political discourse in the statements of various political entities. One of the few such studies was the analysis of the content of electoral programs and parliamentary reports conducted by P. Przyłęcki (2012). In addition, in recent years more attention has been paid to social media content distributed by populist political actors (Kołodziejczak and Wrzeźniewska-Pietrzak, 2017a; Wrzeźniewska-Pietrzak and Kołodziejczak, 2017; Lipiński and Stępińska, 2018) and the elements of populist discourse in media messages during the 2015 election campaigns (Stępińska and Adamczewska, 2017; Adamczewska, 2017; Lipiński and Stępińska, 2018; Stępińska, Lipiński, and Adamczewska, 2019).

Furthermore, in populist studies to date, little attention has been paid to the fact that “the media, intentionally or not, may serve as powerful mobilization tools for populist causes.” (Mazzoleni, 2003, p. 2). Populist actors need the ‘oxygen of publicity’ to reach broad social groups with their visions of society and the state. Research in other European countries has shown that the media not only directly benefit populists, but also create favorable conditions for them by addressing specific topics such as crime, immigration, and economic problems, and can even be the source of populist expression (Mazzoleni, Stewart, and Horsfield, 2003; Stanyer, 2007; Ellins, 2010; Bos et al., 2010; Aalberg et al., 2017). Only recently that issue has been given more attention by scholars, including the international team conducting a research project under the aforementioned IS COST Action (Aalberg et al., 2017; de Vreese et al., 2018; Reinemann et al., 2019).

Research Project

Interdisciplinary Approach to Populist Discourse

This publication presents the results of research carried out by the team of the project entitled *Populist political discourse in the Polish public sphere* (funded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Poland as a part of the National Programme for the Development of the Humanities in 2016-2019; grant no. 0131/NPRH4/H2b/83/2016). The team consisted of researchers from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, representing two faculties: Faculty of Political Science and Journalism and Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology. Both the composition of the team and the research approach reflected an attempt to combine research methods across political, media, and linguistic sciences.

The need for collaboration between representatives of various disciplines stemmed directly from the subject of the research, i.e. political statements by two types of entities: (1) political actors and (2) journalists. Each researcher contributed to the research by using their own research perspective and new theoretical constructs and methods,

although the interpretation of research results developed across disciplines may pose a number of methodological (and often epistemological) difficulties. The impulse for such collaboration comes from linguists (Pisarek, 2007; Gruzca, 1983) as well as political scientists who either called for inter-disciplinary studies in a field of political communication or conducted them on their own (see for example: Kołodziejczak, 2012; 2014; Stępińska and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2006; 2011; Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2017a, 2017b; 2017c; 2018; Wrześniewska-Pietrzak and Kołodziejczak, 2017).

Following J. Fras (2005, p. 118), we define a political statement as “a relatively stable genre in terms of political content, composition (structure) and style, a type of statement shaped according to its function (main functions: informational, persuasive) and the situation of use (primarily official).” In this approach, a political statement may also be treated as a unit of the discursive political reality. Meanwhile, T. van Dijk (2006, p. 1021) proposes that discourse is “a communicative event or an instance of social interaction.” He also advocates “a broad multidisciplinary approach to discourse, which integrates a detailed and explicit study of structures of text and talk with an analysis of their social and cognitive contexts as a basis for problem-oriented critical discourse analysis. In such an approach, the study of relevant knowledge, ideologies and other socially shared beliefs is crucial in describing many of the properties and social functions of discourse. In the same way, both these cognitions and the discourses based on them need to be studied in relation to the relevant structures of institutions, groups, power and other aspects of society and culture.”

The main objective of this project was to analyze linguistic manifestations of populism in the public statements of Polish political actors and journalists. To this end, we used various research perspectives, taking into account the communication context of the analyzed texts, including pragmatic aspects of the statements of individual subjects. The subject matter was, therefore, the populist aspect of public statements. In this context, political expression is a manifestation of a socio-political phenomenon which cannot be directly observed, but manifests itself primarily in the language.

It should be stressed, however, that linguistic manifestations of populism may imply the occurrence of two phenomena: (1) an internally established political orientation, i.e. populist *ideology*, and (2) a pragmatic linguistic attitude, not reflected in the political orientation of the producer of the statement (sender), i.e. populist *style*. The results of the study of linguistic manifestations of populism allow analysis of populist communication strategies undertaken by actors located in two spheres: politics and media.

The main objectives of this study are (1) to determine characteristic, repeatable elements, forming a relatively permanent pattern of populist discourse (both in terms of content and language) in Poland, based on the existing Polish and foreign literature on populism; (2) to extract components (key words) of the populist narrative in the statements of select political actors and journalists in Poland (linguistic articulation of anti-elitism and topics articulated through populist communication); (3) to identify and comprehensively analyze differences in the functioning of populist content in the statements of particular political actors and journalists resulting from different political orientations, attitudes, and social and linguistic behaviors; and (4) to analyze the socio-political effects of political statements and linguistic interactions between political actors and journalists.

Research Material and Sampling

This research focused on the content of media messages: both the statements of political entities and statements constructed by journalists (reports, comments). The collected material included content from print media, television, and online media. These included dailies *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*, *Fakt*, and *Nasz Dziennik*, and weeklies *Polityka*, *Newsweek*, *Do Rzeczy* and *W sieci*. These titles were selected according to three criteria: circulation (in 2015), type (quality press and popular press/tabloids), and the political orientation of the media organization.

The study utilized print research material from the years 2015–2017, and therefore covered both the presidential and parliamentary election periods in Poland in 2015 and the post-election period (2016–2017). The materials selected for analysis were those published during the two weeks preceding the voting days in 2015 in the daily press and weekly newspapers, and in the period from February to April 2016 and 2017 in the case of weeklies. On the other hand, for the analysis of the content of print media published in 2016 and 2017, we used a ‘constructed week’ for each year, which consisted of 6 days, respectively: 22 February, 1 March, 9 March, 17 March, 25 March, and 2 April from 2016, and 20 February, 28 February, 8 March, 16 March, 24 March, and 1 April from 2017. The detailed characteristics of the selected media outlets are presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1. Characteristics of the media outlets under the study

	Frequency	Type	Average daily/weekly circulation*	Political orientation
<i>Gazeta Wyborcza</i>	Daily	Broadsheet	244,811	Center-left (liberal)
<i>Rzeczpospolita</i>	Daily	Broadsheet	64,414	Center-right
<i>Nasz Dziennik</i>	Daily	Broadsheet	Data not available	Right-wing (conservative)
<i>Fakt</i>	Daily	Tabloid	435,050	Center
<i>Polityka</i>	Weekly	Broadsheet	171,516	Center-left (liberal)
<i>Newsweek</i>	Weekly	Broadsheet	184,827	Center
<i>Do Rzeczy</i>	Weekly	Broadsheet	119,305	Right-wing
<i>W sieci</i>	Weekly	Broadsheet	149,677	Right-wing

Own elaboration.

Source: National Circulation Audit Office (2015).

Materials for the analysis were selected using keywords: names of political parties (the Polish names of: Law and Justice, Civic Platform, Kukiz’15, Together Party, Democratic Left Alliance, New Right Congress, National Movement, Your Movement, Direct Democracy, Real Policy Union, KORWIN) and names of political leaders (Grzegorz Braun, Andrzej Duda, Adam Jarubas, Bronisław Komorowski, Janusz Korwin-Mikke, Marian Kowalski, Paweł Kukiz, Magdalena Ogórek, Janusz Palikot, Paweł Tanajno, Jacek Wilk, Jarosław Kaczyński, Leszek Miller, Beata Szydło, Ewa Kopacz, Ryszard Petru, Barbara Nowacka, Janusz Piechociński, Adrian Zandberg). Additionally, the sample included articles containing the following keywords: populi*, naród*, narod*, elita*, elity*, suveren*, elitka*, obc*, Pola*, partiokrac*,

oligarchi* (allowing for the various forms of the Polish words for populism, nation, national, elite, aliens, Poles, oligarchs). Details of the print sample will be discussed in chapter 4.

Print materials were provided by a company Press Service – Media Monitoring. The access to a selected database of press articles was provided by the portal Inforia, owned by Press Service – Media Monitoring (uam.inforia-beta.net, 2018). One of this portal's main advantages is simultaneous access to the graphic and text versions of individual articles. Graphics provide the layout of content, illustrations, charts etc., while the text version improves the coding process and later analysis of the collected material thanks to the possibility of copying the extracted quote.

Research also included material from three television news programs: *Wiadomości* by TVP1, *Fakty* by TVN, and *Wydarzenia* by Polsat, as well as journalistic programs broadcast in public media (*Tomasz Lis live* on TVP2; *Salon dziennikarski* on TVP Info) and commercial media (*Kropka nad i* on TVN24 and *Loża prasowa* on TVN24). In the case of electronic media, the main selection criteria were the type of station (public or private), popularity of programs measured by the number of viewers, and the format (participation of politicians or journalists).

The content of TV news programs was recorded and archived with the use of CAST (Content Analysis System for Television), which is a system developed and implemented by the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism of the Adam Mickiewicz University. Its primary task is to record, store, and make television programs available. Since mid-2014, the system records 6 channels: TVP 1, TVP 2, Polsat, TVN, TVN24, and TVP Info continuously, 24 hours a day. For technical reasons, some programs could not be recorded, although this gap did not exceed 4% of the broadcast. The programs are stored in a database, described by metadata generated on the basis of EPG (Electronic Program Guide). Thanks to the advanced search engine, which supports logical operators, it was possible to construct complex queries, allowing for precise selection of materials for analysis.

Initially, the project also planned to include the content of party and election programs of Polish political parties, disseminated in the form of brochures, booklets, as well as messages posted on the party websites. However, due to the growing role of social media, in particular Facebook and Twitter, we decided to analyze only the social media content.

Research Methods and Tools

(a) Quantitative Analysis: Codebook and Coding

This study used methods of quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The quantitative approach was used to extract components of populist discourse in the statements of select political actors and journalists, as well as the topics discussed in their statements. It allowed the determination of the frequency of appearance of specific themes, issues, and persons mentioned in the texts, as well the number of TV appearances and the time devoted to their presentation.

For the purpose of quantitative research, a codebook was developed in two versions: (a) to encode printed press material and (b) adapted to television news program

material. The starting point for the development of the codebook was the research experience gained during participation in a project as part of the COST IS 1308 Action *Populist Political Communication in Europe: Comprehending Challenge of Mediated Political Populism for Democratic Politics* in the years 2014–2018 (see Stępińska, Piontek, and Jakubowski, 2017).

The codebook consists of three main parts. The first contains information describing a given object of analysis (text in print media or news on TV). This section contains categories such as: media organization, date of publication, title of the material, author of the material, journalistic genre (in the case of print media), location of the text in the printed material, its ordinal number in the news program (on television), and subject matter.

The second section of the codebook contains categories of the key populist aspects identified in the material: references to ‘the people’, anti-elitism, and/or exclusion of ‘out-groups’. Appropriate codes were assigned to each type of these elements, i.e. type of ‘the people’ (political, economic, geographical, cultural, etc.), type of ‘the elite’ (general political elites, parties in general, specific parties, specific politicians, etc.), or type of ‘out-groups’ (political, economic, geographical, etc.). Furthermore, the main indicators of the populist discourse can be represented by the use of specific communication strategies (Blassnig et al., 2019). Thus, references to ‘the people’ can take the form of (1) approaching ‘the people’; (2) praising the virtues of ‘the people’ (positive qualities/attributes: hard-working, good, wise, honest, courageous, positive autostereotype of Poles, etc.) (3) praising ‘the people’s’ achievements (positive assessment of actions, activities, deeds, successes) (4) homogenizing ‘the people’ (common features, values, attitudes, experiences, plans) or (5) demanding popular sovereignty (the will of ‘the people’; appeals to the national wisdom of Poles, demands that power be given to ‘the people’ by enabling independent decision making in accordance with the principles of direct democracy).

Strategies for expressing anti-elitism include: (1) discrediting ‘the elite’ (attributing negative characteristics: corrupt, incompetent, lazy, stupid, etc.); (2) blaming ‘the elite’ (charging responsibility for negative actions, showing negative phenomena as the results of the elite’s actions, highlighting mistakes made by ‘the elite’ with dire consequences for ‘the people’); and (3) denying elite sovereignty. Finally, the strategies used to refer to ‘out-groups’ consist of (1) excluding (indicating those who do not belong to ‘the people’ or are the opposite of ‘the people’) through discrediting specific groups (attributing negative characteristics), or (2) blaming specific groups (attributing responsibility for negative actions, showing negative phenomena as the effects of the others’ actions) (Blassnig et al., 2019).

The main categories (‘the people’, ‘the elite’ and ‘out-groups’) and detailed strategies mentioned above are derived from the codebook compiled by a team led by prof. F. Esser at the University of Zurich for research purposes within the framework of the aforementioned COST Action.¹ Consequently, the results of research conducted by the Polish team are comparable to the findings of research conducted by other teams participating in the COST Action.

¹ Agnieszka Stępińska, Artur Lipiński, and Dorota Piontek participated in the project, including the process of developing and testing the codebook.

However, during the preparation of the codebook for the purposes of this study, some of the aforementioned categories were adjusted to the Polish context (e.g. among the elite types there were: Catholic church representatives, generals of army, police, other uniformed services, and judicial elites). Moreover, apart from the classical features of populist discourse, which were mentioned above, the codebook included elements specific to the Polish social, cultural, and political context.

Some of these elements come from the list presented by P. Przyłęcki (2012, pp. 119–122). In our study, the following categories are used (although in several cases modified – by merging or separating threads): (1) *Euroscpticism/anti-Europeanism* (negative information campaign against the EU, desire to contest all major decisions taken within the EU, aversion towards European integration); (2) *negative attitude towards Germany* (discourse of fear-mongering by appeals to the past and/or alleged German property claims); (3) *anti-communism* (negative opinion about left-wing groups with communist roots, about post-communist parties; allegations of the left's failure to settle accounts with the past, and transfer of negative patterns of behavior from the communist past, including corruption); (4) *social justice* (social differences presented as a result of unequal distribution of capital, unfair behaviors of groups that own the means of production, poor versus rich, calls for a new social order based on equal access to goods); (5) *social state* (calls for an increase in budget deficits to improve quality of life, especially among the poorest; promises to increase spending on social, educational, housing, and health purposes, etc.); (6) *reference to religion* (reference to Christian/Catholic values; references to persons important in the Catholic Church – including pope John Paul II); (7) *reference to tradition and history* (events, symbols, memory, historical policy); (8) *criticism of the Third Polish Republic* (critical statements concerning the period after 1989; the point of departure for building the Fourth Republic); (9) *the Fourth Polish Republic* (the idea of building a new social, political, and economic order, either in opposition to the Third Polish Republic or as an independent idea); (10) *critique of liberalism* (liberal democracy presented as an example of a state hostile to the poor and ruled by corrupt neoliberal political elites alienated from society); (11) *intervention in the free market* (negation of free market democratic institutions; critique of the free market; advocating an increase in the role of the state in the economy; market regulation). Thanks to the inclusion of the categories proposed by P. Przyłęcki (2012), it became possible to analyze changes and continuations in the discourse of individual Polish political actors between the years 2001–2009, the period covered by P. Przyłęcki (2012, pp. 7, 123) and 2015–2018, i.e. the period covered in our study.

Some additional categories were proposed by this research team: (1) *negative attitude towards Russia* (discourse consisting in arousing fear by referring to historic and current relations); (2) *negation of political correctness* (expressed directly or indirectly as a criticism of an attitude characterized by the avoidance of statements that could offend representatives of a particular social group, e.g. minorities); (3) *constructing a crisis perspective* (describing the *status quo* as a critical moment that will determine the future, or a negative state caused by certain political actors).

In addition, the codebook contains three categories focusing on the relationship between the subject (the source of populist discourse) and 'the people'. In all cases, the subject names him/herself as 'the voice of the people', but qualifies him/herself for the

role by different criteria. The first is *paternalism*, understood here as placing oneself hierarchically higher in relation to the people, describing/defining one's own role in relation to 'the people' as the person with a greater/better knowledge, being the only one who knows the truth, being the only solution, or showing the right way. *Servitude/serving the people* refers to the situation where the sender is hierarchically below 'the people', perceives and defines his/her own role as a listener obedient to 'the people', serving 'the people', following the instructions of 'the people', and fulfilling the expectations of 'the people', etc. On the other hand, the category of *resemblance to the people* describes a situation in which the sender is on equal footing with 'the people', perceives and describes/defines his/her own role in relation to 'the people' as normal, ordinary, thinking like Poles, belonging to 'the people', knowing the problems and needs of 'the people' because these are also their own problems and needs.

It should be emphasized that in the coding process each recognized element of populist discourse had to be provided with a relevant quote, which allowed the qualitative analysis of the populist statements presented in the media.

The third part of the codebook contained categories referring to the material's resonance (clearly negative tone, negative tone with positive elements, neutral or balanced style, positive tone with negative elements, clearly positive tone) and the journalists' attitudes towards populist statements from other subjects (neutral – coverage of statements, critical – negative assessment of statements, favorable – positive assessment of statements, or ambiguous assessment of various statements). These categories were intended to identify the attitudes of journalists towards the use of populist discourse by other entities, in particular political actors.

The decision-making scheme for coding (Krippendorf, 2004, pp. 135–136) was as follows: if a given material (i.e. an article in the press, news in a TV program, or a post on Facebook) contained a reference to Polish political entities, the first question was: "Does the material contain a populist statement?" The starting point for further coding was the recognition one of the three constitutive features of populism in at least one sentence: (1) reference to 'the people', (2) anti-elitism, or (3) the exclusion of 'out-groups'. Their absence resulted in a negative answer and thus ended the coding of a given material (article, news, post). In the case of a positive answer (recognition of one of the three components of populism in a statement), the coder moved on to the second part, which contained 164 fields to be filled in or selected.

It was important to identify and specify the actor (speaker) whose statement contained at least one element of populist discourse, and then to find and code the elements of the populist discourse in that statement (also when quoted or paraphrased by others). In each material, the coder recorded populist statements coming from not more than 5 speakers (i.e. when there were more speakers in a given material, they were skipped). The distinction between statements directly quoted in the material and those paraphrased by another person (e.g. a politician or a journalist) made it possible to indicate the role of the media in the dissemination of populist discourse, i.e. whether it consisted in merely reporting on populist statements or creating original populist content by journalists (more about this in chapter 3).

The last question in this part of the codebook was whether the identified speaker was the last in a given material whose speech contained populist elements. The positive answer transferred the coder to the third part of the codebook (discussed above),

after which the coder could move on to another TV material. The negative answer allowed encoding the statements of another speaker who appeared in the same material.

Thanks to the adopted research procedure, which consisted of encoding the indicators of populist discourse even when a given statement did not contain a constitutive element of populism, i.e. a reference to 'the people', it was possible to identify six different types of statements; those containing (1) only a reference to 'the people' (*empty populism*); (2) only a criticism of 'the elite' (anti-elitism); (3) only the exclusion of 'out-groups' (negative relation to others); (4) a reference to 'the people' and 'the elite' (*anti-elitist populism*); (5) a reference to 'the people' and excluding 'out-groups' (*excluding populism*); and (6) those containing all three indicators of populism (reference to 'the people', anti-elitism, and exclusion of 'out-groups') (*complete populism*).

The selection of the sample and the adopted decision-making scheme had several important consequences. Firstly, three categories of materials were included in the database: (1) those referring to Polish political actors, but not containing any populist statements, (2) those containing references to 'the elite' or 'out-groups' but not populist statements according to the aforementioned definition by J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007), (3) populist statements, i.e. those that included reference to 'the people' and other elements of the populist discourse (anti-elitism and/or exclusion of 'out-groups').

In order to distinguish the second category from the third, i.e. statements which do not qualify as populist (according to J. Jagers and S. Walgrave's [2007] concept) from those which characterize their proposed type of populism, we will use the phrase *statements containing at least one indicator of populist discourse* to address the broadest category of collected and coded statements, namely those which contained either a reference to 'the people', or a critical attitude towards the elites, or a negative attitude towards 'out-groups'. In turn, the term *populist statement* will be reserved for those statements that contain a reference to 'the people' and/or other elements of populist discourse (anti-elitism and /or the exclusion of 'out-groups'). This method of selection made it possible to distinguish statements containing criticism of individual parties or politicians, but without any reference to 'the people', i.e. those that cannot be defined as populist statements.

Our previous research indicated a clear domination of anti-elitist populism in Polish media messages during the parliamentary election campaign in 2015 (Stępińska and Adamczewska, 2017; Stępińska, Lipiński, and Adamczewska, 2019), and therefore, it seemed important to precisely define the category of the political elite and whether the criticism of 'the elite' was actually accompanied by references to 'the people'.

Secondly, using this approach, it was possible to determine which topics were discussed in the materials on Polish political actors, how many materials concerning the Polish political scene from a given period contained any element of populist discourse, and which types of populism (*empty*, *anti-elitist*, *excluding*, or *complete*) were present in the statements of various actors.

Thirdly, it should be noted that the main emphasis was placed on the speakers: individuals who formulate statements containing elements of populist discourse. As a result, it was possible not only to identify the category of the speaker (political actor, journalist, expert, public administration official, representative of social organizations, non-governmental organizations, or citizen), but also to create a personal list of speakers (among political actors, journalists, and experts) who used populist discourse most

frequently in the media (or, in other words, the media most frequently reported their populist statements).

The biggest challenge during coding, both substantive and technical, was the second section of the codebook. Given the large number of categories (and fields to be filled), it was decided that in order to avoid common errors during coding, it was necessary to move away from the still-popular approach based on recording observations in a spreadsheet. It was therefore necessary to consider the choice of a tool that would better facilitate the work of researchers. We decided to use an external tool, that is a website containing a questionnaire that allows the selection of one or more answers. One of the advantages of such a solution was the possibility to use the same coding interface for different types of material (in this case print media and television programs). Moreover, this solution helped to minimize the number of errors, thanks to the ergonomics of the coders' workstations, the intuitive interface, the linear coding process (no need to return to already coded elements), and the ability to set the "no" answer for many more detailed categories. In practice, this meant that the coder had to fill in the field (change it from no to yes) only when a given category was present in the analyzed statement. Selecting the positive answer to the question about the presence of a given category had to be accompanied by an illustrative quote.

As mentioned previously, the structure of the codebook took into account the fact that quantitative analysis was to be followed by a qualitative analysis of the collected research material. Each identified case of reference to 'the people', anti-elitism, or 'out-groups' required not only clarification of the type of 'the people', 'the elite', or 'out-group', but also provision of the respective quotation with the element of populist discourse. The collected quotations were used in the verification of quantitative observations and simultaneously served as the subject matter of in-depth qualitative analysis.

The collected material was coded by 9 coders. In order to ensure inter-coder reliability we organized several seminars and coder training sessions prior to the coding process. We formally tested the inter-coder reliability based on material (20 items) taken from one of the analyzed newspapers (*Gazeta Wyborcza*). We followed K. de Swert (2012) who suggested that Krippendorff's alpha (KALPHA) could be the basic measure to apply for researchers conducting a content analysis. Sample size, multiple (more than 2) coders or missing data are not problematic for calculating KALPHA, and all measurement levels can be tested. For running KALPHA tests we used a macro developed by Hayes (2005) that makes KALPHA calculation possible in SPSS.² Overall scores are satisfactory, with an average of 0.86. For the group of variables on topic (main categories) the average was 0.91.

(b) Qualitative Analysis

Content analysis of media messages containing statements by political actors and journalists was performed mainly with Atlas.ti software, which allows for a multi-level

² KALPHA is calculated per variable. It provides information on the reliability of variables, not of coders (even if structural patterns of different coding by certain coders may become apparent from merely preparing the data for the SPSS file we were going to use to test the reliability). Therefore, for each variable we wanted to test for inter-coder reliability, we made a separate SPSS file to calculate KALPHA.

content analysis, particularly useful in dealing with very large databases. Atlas.ti allows for the performance of both textual and conceptual research. It is suitable for determination of the occurrence of words or categories, and includes the possibility of assigning categories and tags to sentences, paragraphs or texts that contain certain words. One may use this software to build relationships between categories, to create a structure of codes and relations between fragments of texts. The program also facilitates the preparation of material for interpretation. Another useful function is the ability to create visualizations of individual stages of research.

The identification and in-depth analysis of populist content was based on the tool of political-linguistics modified for the purposes of this study (Pisarek, 1986), which covers three levels of analysis: (a) descriptive, (b) normative/axiological, (c) pragmatic-linguistic (pre-suppositional and connotational).

These analyses were deepened by research into the types of linguistic means (especially lexical) used by speakers, which took into account the relation between the systemic, conventionalized meanings of individual units and their contextual (pragmatic) use. Semantic shifts within the lexis, as well as attempts to redefine terms (key words), also allowed identification of the discrepancies between illocutionary, locutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts, resulting not only from presuppositions of the sender, but also from semantically ambiguous (unequivocal, multivalent) lexemes functioning as key words, e.g. 'system' or 'particracy' in Paweł Kukiz's statements (see Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2018).

Moreover, this research analyzed the image of reality presented by populist leaders. As previous research has shown, the simplified picture of reality encountered in populist texts is mainly related to their black-and-white vision of the world, bipolarity of values, simplified axiological hierarchy, as well as the simplicity of proposed political solutions. Available papers in this area analyzed references to such values as dignity, truth, and lies (Burda, 2012; 2013). The references to truth in populist statements were found to be associated with the frequent use of certain linguistic devices with the intention to increase the credibility of populist message (see Bralczyk, 1999; Ożóg, 2006).

Furthermore, our analysis investigated the relations between the indicated keywords, showing the axiological hierarchy that depends on the ideology adopted by the subject. Determination of the hierarchy of values in the analyzed statements helped to establish which classes of values were most frequently referred to and how they were organized. The determination of individual axiological classes allowed us to indicate the most explored axiological fields, as well as those which constitute the common axiological profile of the senders.

The research conducted in this project revealed a simplification of the world of values, which is built on the basic antinomy 'us' *versus* 'them', a kind of structural skeleton of the axiological hierarchy. Based on the analysis of Paweł Kukiz's statements, one can see the construction of a field of negative values used to define a negative component of the antinomy in a greater detail – narrowing it to persons or groups that threaten 'the people' or are outside this group (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2018). The axiological hierarchy is functionalized in these statements. It serves to build a positive image of the populist leader and 'the people', whose actions are guided by higher, absolute, timeless values, while 'anti-values' are inseparable attributes of the alien 'out-groups' (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2018).

This simplified world, created by the populist sender to persuade or manipulate the public, is also associated with the high comprehensibility of the language used by populists to communicate with the audience. The communicativeness of the message goes hand in hand with the desire to reach the widest possible audience. This simplicity of language makes it possible to include comprehensibility³ within the constitutive features of populism.

Comprehensibility of language is essential in determining the effectiveness of populist statements. For this reason, the degree of complexity of the text of the message was also analyzed, taking into account the perception and cognitive capabilities of receivers, measured by Gunning FOG index, a tool developed in the 1950s by Robert Gunning. It was adapted to the study of statements in Polish by a team of researchers at the Laboratory of Plain Polish at the University of Wrocław, together with linguistic engineers from the Wrocław University of Technology (Broda et al., 2010).⁴ To date, this tool has not yet been used to study political statements. Using the version available free of charge at www.logios.pl, the tool was used to study the degree of intelligibility of populist leaders' statements and showed a link between the populist characteristics of a statement and its intelligibility – accessibility to the greatest number of receivers possible (Kołodziejczak and Wrzeźniewska-Pietrzak, 2018).

Our analysis also examined the degree of expressiveness of the statements, including the amount of emotive lexis, the incidence of colloquialisms, the incidence of emotional and axiological vocabulary, as well as the presence of proper nouns functioning in axiological or symbolic perspective (Kołodziejczak and Wrzeźniewska-Pietrzak, 2018). The use of these elements contributes to the construction of a dominant position of a populist leader with regard to receivers (Kołodziejczak and Wrzeźniewska-Pietrzak, 2018; Wrzeźniewska-Pietrzak and Kołodziejczak, 2017).

At the same time, our discourse analysis was based on the historical-discursive approach proposed by R. Wodak (2011), which allows for the inclusion of contextual relationships to a much greater extent than classical linguistic approaches. In this approach, discourse is perceived as a specific strategy, and the emphasis is placed on the role of the discursive context, necessary to understand the statements of the speaking subjects. Moreover, this approach emphasizes the need to explore discourse in many social fields, e.g. administration, election campaign, media, etc. This encourages establishment of interdiscursive and intertextual references, interrelationships between discourses, diffusion of particular discursive devices (e.g. some categories, themes, or argumentation schemes), and their decontextualization and contextualization. These tools have proven to be particularly useful in the study of the transfer of discursive contents and forms between the political and media spheres.

Within this approach, methods were also developed for examining allusive and ambivalent speech, which is particularly useful in the study of political discourse aimed at different types of audiences, oriented towards multiple goals (e.g. securing the support of the 'hard' electorate and simultaneous mobilization of moderates) and conveyed

³ Understandability is a feature of a text that is attributed to it by the receiver on the basis of subjective assessment depending on his or her competence.

⁴ This collaboration contributed to the creation and description of a new language standard, which in foreign research is referred to as *plain language*, in relation to Polish the authors called it *plain Polish*.

through media with different ideological profiles (e.g. interviews given by a politician X to *Gazeta Wyborcza* or *Nasz Dziennik*). R. Wodak (2011) proposes to study five discursive strategies: nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization, and mitigation. Each of these strategies uses their own means to achieve a persuasive goal, e.g. categorizations/lexis, metaphors, metonymies, synecdoches, mechanisms of attributing negative or positive features, presuppositions, argumentation schemes, topoi, rhetorical figures, means of strengthening or toning the illocutionary power of speech. R. Wodak's proposal was complemented by the concept of political argumentation research developed by N. Fairclough and I. Fairclough (2012), as well as analytical tools proposed by authors such as P. Chilton (2003), E. Richardson (2007), and J. Charteris-Black (2014).

Structure of the Publication

This publication contains ten chapters on a presence of populist discourse in the Polish media. The subsequent chapters present the results of quantitative or qualitative research conducted by the members of our team. For the purpose of that book, we selected a content analysis of materials from the print press (chapters 2, 3, 4, and 10), television (chapters 5 and 6), and social media (chapter 8). Chapters with the findings of the study are supplemented with two chapters (7 and 9) addressing theoretical and methodological challenges of the studies on populist discourse.

Chapters 2–4 provide findings of quantitative content analysis of the Polish daily newspapers and magazines in order to provide answers to three main research questions: What is a frequency of populist discourse indicators in the Polish print media? Who is the main source of statements employing populist strategies? And what topics trigger the use of these strategies? Thus, chapter 2 provides answers to basic questions about the presence of elements of populist discourse in the Polish daily printed press and opinion weeklies. It illustrates the frequency of references to 'the people', criticism of 'the elite', and exclusion of 'out-groups'. In addition, it presents information on the occurrence of elements specific to Polish populist discourse. Chapter 3 concerns two types of agents: political actors whose statements are quoted or paraphrased in journalistic materials (in print media) and journalists themselves: employees or co-workers of press titles who use populist discourse in their statements. Finally, chapter 4 presents themes found in materials containing various elements of populism. Due to the selection procedure of analysis materials (names of Polish parties and politicians being the main keywords), the vast majority of the analyzed print publications referred to issues of Polish national politics, including elections and relations between particular political parties. It was additionally interesting to find other topics than just domestic politics that trigger the use of populist discourse in Poland.

The second part of the book focuses on television. Chapter 5, analyzes the content and role of the chyrons accompanying the materials presented in the news program *Wiadomości* on the public television channel, TVP1. This is the only chapter containing materials outside the project's timeframe: the analyzed material comes from 2018, i.e. the time when the news tickers resulted in a series of controversies. And because the results of quantitative research showed that journalists are the most com-

mon source of populist statements in print (chapter 3), special attention has been paid to this group – chapter 6 presents a qualitative analysis of journalists' statements on TV programs based on interviews with guests (including politicians) or discussions between journalists.

The third part of the book is devoted to the new space where populist discourse may be spread: the social media. While chapter 1 focused mainly on the presentation of the research procedure applied to traditional media (print and television), chapter 7 deals with the challenges of research into populist political communication in online media, particularly social media. Understanding the specificity of social media is indispensable for proper interpretation of the results presented in chapter 8, which explores the use of social media in populist political communication. In this chapter, the authors examine social media, which become a space for (populist) political communication for both political actors and citizens (potential voters). The analysis covered the contents of Paweł Kukiz's Facebook profile – a populist leader of the political organization Kukiz'15, which achieved spectacular success in the 2015 parliamentary elections (similarly to P. Kukiz himself in the 2015 presidential elections). Earlier analyses (Lipiński and Stępińska, 2018) have confirmed the important role of social media in this political actor's communication with his supporters. Therefore, this chapter contains an in-depth analysis of both the content of P. Kukiz's populist statements as well as the content of statements published by 'ordinary' Facebook users.

The final part of the book deals in a qualitative manner with a fundamental aspect of populism and populist discourse, that is a dichotomy between 'us' and 'them'. Chapter 9 discusses the 'us-them' antinomy from a linguistic perspective. Highlighting the importance of oppositions in populist discourse was necessary to show the specificity of the Polish language as a system, in which the 'us-them' correlation appears to be one of the most important methods of categorization. Furthermore, analysis of the use of this opposition revealed its ambiguity. Interdisciplinary (political and linguistic) reflections on this antinomy are crucial for research on populist discourse based on the dichotomies of 'the people' *versus* 'the elite', 'the people' *versus* 'out-groups', and 'native' *versus* 'foreign', because they show that these antinomies are not characteristic only of populist statements. However, their high popularity and functionalization, as well as their susceptibility to being imbued with various contents, show that they constitute a kind of starting point for the creation of a dichotomous vision of the world, also in the axiological sphere. The problem of the antinomy is not only a characteristic of populist statements, but also its high attendance and functionalization, and at the same time susceptibility to various content fillings (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2017a).

Chapter 10, in turn, analyzes the mechanisms of discursive representation of the immigrant 'other' as an important element of populist communication strategy, encompassing three constitutive entities: 'the people' – the in-group, 'the political elite', and the excluded 'others' – out-groups. The chapter will identify the ways of categorizing and characterizing the immigrant 'others' and of using the figure of 'the other' in the argumentation about the 'in-group'. It will also discuss the theme of political elites as a subject which, in right-wing populist discourse, is constructed in close relation to the immigrant 'others'.

This publication therefore combines several aspects of populist research. It shows a multitude of research perspectives that give a multifaceted view of Polish right-wing

populism in an attempt to capture its specificity. It is a continuation of theoretical and interpretative discussions present in both Polish and foreign literature. The correlation between Polish and foreign research is important, as it allows for comparison of the results obtained in different research contexts, as well as for further theoretical discussion on the methods of researching and describing the discussed phenomena.

Furthermore, this publication represents an interdisciplinary approach to populist research. The co-existence of different approaches, research methods, and tools allows us to capture the multiformity of populism, and thus to transcend the 'research boundaries' of particular disciplines.

Nevertheless, the authors are aware that the chapters presented here do not constitute a complete description of populist discourse. On the contrary, they rather open up new fields of research, continuing the current and lively scientific discussion on populist political discourse in Poland and abroad.

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PART I
Populism in Print Press

2. Who Covers Populism? Types of Populism in Print Media Outlets

Kinga Adamczewska and Agnieszka Stępińska

Introduction

While studying populism from the perspective of political communication, political statements need to be divided according to their sources: political actors, journalists, or citizens (Reinemann et al., 2017). In this classification, members of the media are perceived as channels for the dissemination of populist messages formulated by political actors, but also as active actors in their own right that independently create their own populist content.

In this chapter, we will focus on examples of the printed press reporting on – and therefore disseminating – statements containing characteristic elements of populist discourse, albeit without establishing the original source of these statements (an analysis of specific statements from various types of actors, including political actors and journalists, will be presented in chapters 3 and 6). Our analysis of journalistic materials will serve to demonstrate how often populist statements are published by the Polish press as a whole and by individual newspapers, as well as to examine which elements of populist discourse (and thus which types of populism as distinguished by J. Jagers and S. Walgrave [2007] – see chapter 1) are most common in Polish dailies and weeklies.

This analysis is a consequence of our previous findings on the factors that particularly favor the dissemination of populist statements by the media. These include: (1) politicization of a media outlet related to its ownership (the owner of the media outlet supports the views of certain political parties or is a political actor),¹ (2) economic factors, (3) type of the ownership of the media outlet (Mazzoleni, 2008; Mudde, 2004; Esser et al., 2017) and (4) media type (tabloid press/broadsheet), although in the latter respect the research results do not facilitate the formation of unambiguous conclusions.

Some studies on UK media content (see Stanyer, Archetti, and Sorensen, 2017) and individual studies in the Czech Republic (see Císař and Štětka, 2017) and Romania (see Corbu et al., 2017) found that certain tabloid media and popular press sources tend to employ a binary perspective characteristic of populists, while other studies found no significant differences between the serious/broadsheet and tabloid press in this respect (Akkerman, 2011; Esser et al., 2017). The greater presence of populist discourse in tabloids is thought to be enhanced by the similarity between tabloid journalism and features of the populist style (understood as a form of expression characterized by simplification, personalization,

¹ Some examples are Dan Diaconescu from the People's Party of Romania (Gherghina and Soare, 2013) and Andrej Babiš from the Czech Republic (Císař and Štětka, 2017).

polarization, confrontation, emotionalization, and dramatization), although not the ideology itself (Esser et al., 2017). At the same time, a populist perception of social reality based on the division of society into two antagonistic camps ('the people' and 'the elite'), and the discourse elements that reflect this vision, allow the media to use a framework of conflict or game when reporting on political events, in particular during electoral campaigns (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997; Strömbäck and Van Aelst, 2010; Aalberg et al., 2017).

Based on the aforementioned literature, we formulated an H1 hypothesis that statements containing elements of populist discourse will be published more frequently in the daily tabloid press than in daily broadsheet publications.

Previous research on populist political communication in Poland has revealed that in the context of elections (in 2015), media outlets (the printed press, television, and online media) tend to emphasize statements containing references to the antagonistic division of society into 'us' *versus* 'them' or 'people' *versus* 'elite' (*anti-elitist populism*) and statements that contain a negative image of 'the others' (*exclusionary populism*), i.e. elements referring to strategic interpretative framework (conflict framework, game framework) (Stępińska and Adamczewska, 2017; Stępińska et al., 2019). It is worth noting, however, that the aforementioned studies distinguished two categories: (a) critical relation to 'the elite' and (b) the "us' *versus* 'them'" construct. The "us' *versus* 'them'" construct was the most frequently represented in reports from all the surveyed media outlets: from 4% to 26% of materials from individual media outlets and 10% of materials from the entire sample (Stępińska and Adamczewska, 2017).

The results of the aforementioned research revealed the need to organize and clarify the categories pertaining to 'the elite' and to distinguish between the presence of actual *anti-elitist populism* (assuming reference to 'the people' as a constitutive feature of populism) and mere criticism of 'the elite', in particular of political actors (politicians and political parties), as mentioned previously in chapter 1. This is also encouraged by the specificity of Polish journalism, which is characterized, both in declarations (*role perception*) and in practice (*role performance*), by a strong presence of attitudes and behaviors characteristic of the watchdog model (Stępińska et al., 2016; Stępińska and Ossowski, 2012). Polish journalists not only believe that one of the main functions of the media is to monitor the activities of the government (Stępińska and Ossowski, 2012; Dobek-Ostrowska et al., 2013), but in their work they also devote significant attention to criticizing and questioning decisions and actions taken by 'the political elite' (Stępińska et al., 2016, pp. 43–46). This critical attitude toward specific political actors is enhanced by a high level of political parallelism in the Polish system (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011).

Consequently, a second hypothesis (H2) was formulated for the purposes of this study, that the Polish printed press is dominated by criticism of 'the elite', which is not accompanied by any reference to 'the people'. Therefore, we assumed that statements reported by the media would more often include a critical assessment of individual political actors than of 'the elite' *per se*, as those opposed to 'the people'.

Elements of Populist Discourse in the Press

As mentioned in chapter 1, the collected research material included articles published in four daily newspapers, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*, *Fakt*, *Gazeta*

Codzienna (in short: *Fakt*), and *Nasz Dziennik* and four weekly magazines: *Polityka*, *Newsweek Polska* (*Newsweek*), *Tygodnik do Rzeczy* (*Do Rzeczy*), and *W sieci*. The titles were selected according to three criteria: circulation (in 2015), the type of press (broadsheet, tabloid), and the political orientation of the media outlet. After selection based on keywords (see chapter 1), we analyzed a total of 2,081 articles referencing at least one Polish political actor, i.e. an individual politician or a political party. All articles meeting this initial criterion were systematically coded, including the following data: name of the media outlet, date of publication, title of the material, author of the material, journalistic genre, location of the text, and subject matter.

The decisive criterion for further coding was the presence of statements containing at least one of the following elements: reference to ‘the people’, anti-elitism, or the exclusion of out-groups. These elements, key indicators of populism, were completely absent in 28% of the articles, which were then excluded from the study (see Table 2.1).

A total of 1,498 press articles were subjected to in-depth analysis. The largest percentage of articles containing at least one element of populist discourse were found in the conservative daily *Rzeczpospolita* (87%) and the right-wing *Nasz Dziennik* (82%), as well as in the liberal weekly *Newsweek* (80%). The proportion was slightly lower in the tabloid *Fakt* (79%) and in the centre-left weekly *Polityka* (77%). The fewest articles containing elements of populist discourse were found in the right-wing broadsheet weeklies, i.e. *Do Rzeczy* (59%) and *W sieci* (66%) and in the liberal daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* (66%).

As shown in Table 2.1, the materials published in the studied newspapers contained on average more than 1 statement with one of the aforementioned indicators of populist discourse (i.e. reference to ‘the people’, anti-elitism, or exclusion of ‘out-groups’). In total, 1,498 articles contained 2,258 statements referring to ‘the people’, criticizing ‘the elite’, expressing a negative attitude towards certain groups, or containing various combinations of these elements.

The unit of analysis in this chapter is a single statement. We especially focus on those statements that represent the types of populism defined by J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007).

Table 2.1. Populist discourse in the printed press: overview

	Number of articles mentioning at least one political actor	Articles with at least one political actor and at least one indicator of populist discourse		Number of statements including at least one indicator of populist discourse in articles with a political actor	Average number of statements including at least one indicator of populist discourse per article with a political actor
	N	n	%	N	M
1	2	3	4	5	6
Daily newspapers					
<i>Gazeta Wyborcza</i>	306	201	65.7	321	1.6
<i>Rzeczpospolita</i>	207	181	87.4	317	1.7
<i>Nasz Dziennik</i>	160	115	81.9	148	1.3
<i>Fakt</i>	121	96	79.3	151	1.6

1	2	3	4	5	6
Weekly magazines					
<i>Newsweek</i>	213	171	80.3	295	1.7
<i>Polityka</i>	362	279	77.1	452	1.6
<i>Do Rzeczy</i>	200	119	59.5	149	1.2
<i>W sieci</i>	512	336	65.7	425	1.3
TOTAL	2081	1498	72.0	2258	1.5

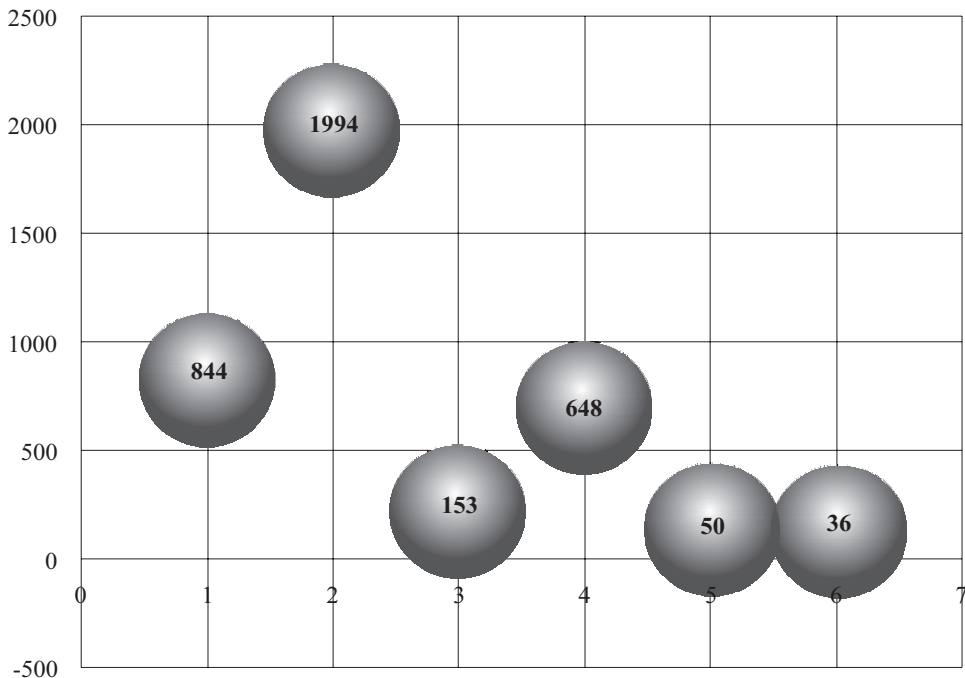
Source: Own elaboration.

The largest number of statements containing at least one element of populist discourse were found in two weeklies: *Polityka* (452 statements) and *W sieci* (425 statements). A high number of such statements were also found in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (321) and *Rzeczpospolita* (317).

The analyzed materials showed a clear predominance of anti-elitism, with a negative attitude towards ‘the elite’ visible in 88.3% of statements (1,994 times). References to ‘the people’ were present in 844 statements (37.4%), while the exclusion of ‘out-groups’ was the least frequent (6.8%, n=153). This trend, although with varying degrees of intensity, was characteristic for all of the analyzed media outlets, as shown in Figure 2.1.

The most frequent statements were those which contained only critique of ‘the elite’ without any reference to ‘the people’ (n=1,994). From the view of the theoretic-

Figure 2.1. Configurations of indicators of populist discourse



Legend: (1) reference to ‘the people’; (2) critique of ‘the elite’; (3) exclusion of ‘out-groups’; (4) reference to ‘the people’ and anti-elitism; (5) reference to ‘the people’ and exclusion of ‘out-groups’; (6) all three indicators of populism in one statement (reference to ‘the people’, anti-elitism, and exclusion of ‘out-groups’).

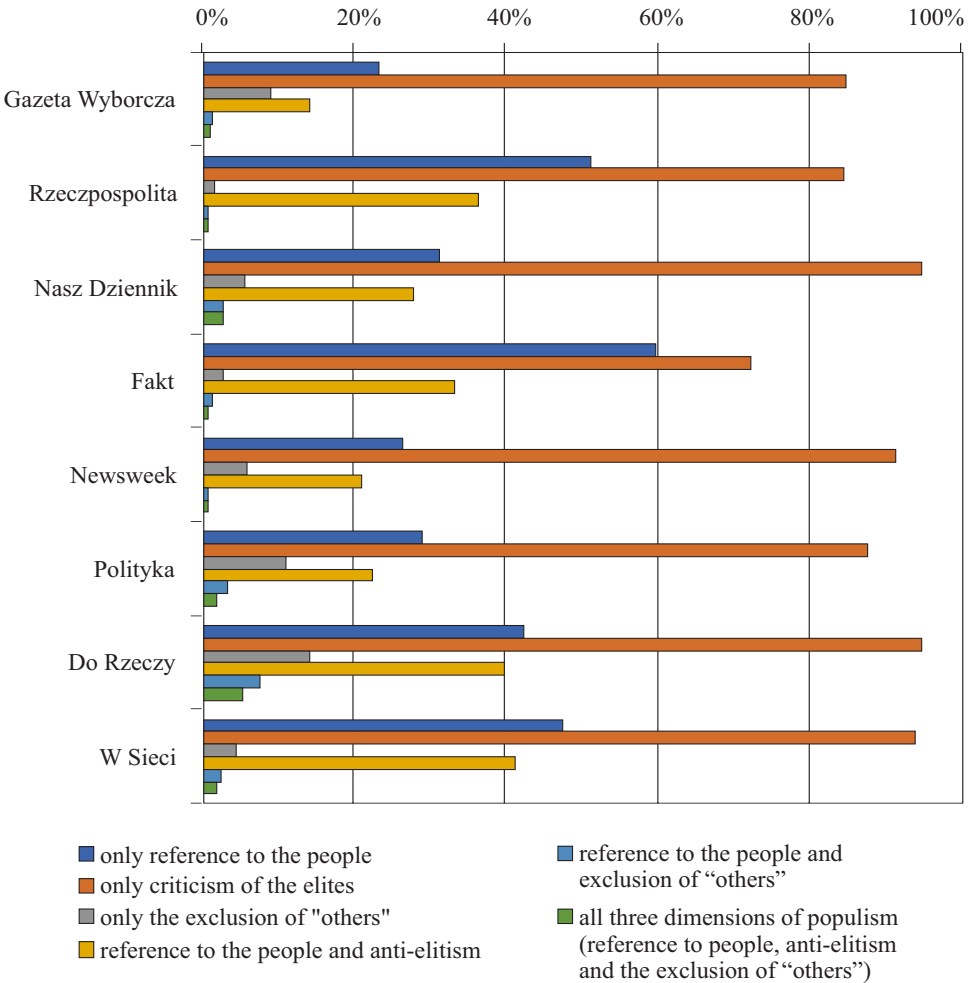
Source: Own elaboration.

cal concept adopted in this research, i.e. that presence of ‘the people’ is a constitutive feature of populism, these statements cannot formally be considered populist.

The same could also be observed when we analyzed individual newspapers. In the analyzed statements containing at least one indicator of populism, critique of ‘the elite’ without any references to ‘the people’ was most common (from 72% to 95%).

Empty populism (reference to ‘the people’ without any other indicators) was most frequent in the tabloid daily *Fakt* (59.6%). *Anti-elitist populism*, third in popularity, was most frequent in the right-wing weeklies *W sieci* (41.2%) and *Do Rzeczy* (39.6%), followed by centre-right daily *Rzeczpospolita* and tabloid daily *Fakt* (33.1%).

Figure 2.2. Configurations of the elements of the populist discourse per media outlet



Legend: (1) reference to ‘the people’; (2) critique of ‘the elite’; (3) exclusion of ‘out-groups’; (4) reference to ‘the people’ and anti-elitism; (5) reference to ‘the people’ and exclusion of ‘out-groups’; (6) all three indicators of populism in one statement (reference to ‘the people,’ anti-elitism, and exclusion of ‘out-groups’).
Source: Own elaboration.

The data in Figure 2.1 shows that among the four types of populism defined by J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007), the most common was *empty populism* (n=844). The second was *anti-elitist populism* (n=648), based on the antagonism of ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’. Complete populism, which combines reference to ‘the people’, criticism of ‘the elite’, and exclusion of ‘out-groups’, was present in only 36 statements. We also found a presence of indicators of *excluding populism* (50).

Comparing the analyzed media outlets, critical references to ‘the elite’ in the statements of various actors was seen most frequently in weeklies: right-wing *Do Rzeczy*, right-wing *W sieci*, and liberal *Newsweek*, as well as the right-wing daily *Nasz Dziennik*, where more than 90% of coded statements contained this element of populist discourse.

In the centre tabloid *Fakt*, reference to ‘the people’ was most frequent among the analyzed papers (59.6%), while criticism of ‘the elite’ was the least frequent (72.2%). A somewhat lower frequency of reference to ‘the people’ was found in the centre-right daily *Rzeczpospolita* (51.1%) and right-wing weeklies *W sieci* (47.3%) and *Do Rzeczy* (42.3%).

The exclusion of ‘out-groups’ was the least frequent, found in less than every tenth statement on average, with above-average percentages in weeklies *Do Rzeczy* (14.1%, n=21) and *Polityka* (11.1%, n=50) (see Figure 2.1 and Table 2.2).

Table 2.2. Statements containing indicators of populist discourse per media outlet

	Reference to ‘the people’		Anti-elitism		Exclusion of ‘out-groups’	
	n	%	N	%	n	%
Daily newspapers						
<i>Gazeta Wyborcza</i> (N=321)	74	23.1	272	84.7	29	9.0
<i>Rzeczpospolita</i> (N=317)	162	51.1	268	84.5	5	1.6
<i>Nasz Dziennik</i> (N=148)	46	31.1	140	94.6	8	5.4
<i>Fakt</i> (N=151)	90	59.6	109	72.2	4	2.6
Weekly magazines						
<i>Newsweek</i> (N=295)	78	26.4	269	91.2	17	5.8
<i>Polityka</i> (N=452)	130	28.8	396	87.6	50	11.1
<i>Do Rzeczy</i> (N=149)	63	42.3	141	94.6	21	14.1
<i>W Sieci</i> (N=425)	201	47.3	399	93.9	19	4.5
TOTAL (N=2258)	844	39.1	1994	88.3	198	8.7

Source: Own elaboration.

The next step was to identify and characterize more detailed strategies within the three indicators of populism. As explained in chapter 1, references to ‘the people’ could be expressed in: (1) *reference to the nation, people, Poles*, (2) *appreciation of the qualities of ‘the people’* (positive qualities and attributes: hard-working, good, wise, honest, courageous; the positive autostereotype of the Pole, etc.) (3) *appreciation of the achievements of ‘the people’* (positive evaluation of actions, activities, deeds; successes); (4) *presentation of ‘the people’ as homogeneous* (common features, values, attitudes, experiences, plans), or (5) *demanding the sovereignty of ‘the people’* (will of ‘the people’; appeal to the national wisdom of Poles, demanding that power be given to ‘the people’ by enabling independent decision-making in accordance with the principle of direct democracy) (Blassnig et al., 2019).

Strategies for expressing anti-elitism included: (1) *discrediting 'the elite'* (attributing negative attributes: corrupt, incompetent, lazy, stupid, etc.); (2) *blaming 'the elite'* (charging them with responsibility for negative actions; showing negative phenomena as the effects of 'the elites' actions; highlighting mistakes made by 'the elite' with consequences for 'the people'), and (3) *denying 'the elite' the right to represent 'the people'* (Blassnig et al., 2019).

Finally, the strategies referring to 'out-groups' consisted of: (1) *excluding these groups* (indicating those who do not belong to 'the people' or are the opposite of 'the people'), (2) *discrediting them* (attributing negative traits), or (3) *blaming them* (blaming them for negative actions; showing negative phenomena as the effects of 'the others' actions). In the next part of this chapter we will present an analysis of statements containing the aforementioned strategies (Blassnig et al., 2019).

It is worth remembering here that statements containing only the aforementioned strategies referencing 'the people' do represent a type of populism, i.e. *empty populism*, according to J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007). In line with this typology, we will use the term 'populist statement' only for those containing a (1) reference to 'the people' or (2) reference to 'the people' with simultaneous critique of 'the elite' or exclusion of 'out-groups'.

The People

Among the strategies relating to 'the people', the most frequently used was *approaching 'the people'* (the nation, Poles, citizens). Out of 2,258 statements containing at least indicator of populism, 742 included this linguistic device, which accounted for 33% of all analyzed statements. Other strategies appeared in no more than 6% of the statements published in the analyzed media outlets (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3. Strategies referring to 'the people' in populist statements per media outlet

	Approaching 'the people'		Praising 'the people's' virtues		Praising 'the people's' achievements		Homogenizing 'the people'		Demanding popular sovereignty	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Daily newspaper										
<i>Gazeta Wyborcza</i> (N=321)	11	3.4	10	3.1	4	1.2	42	13.1	12	3.7
<i>Rzeczpospolita</i> (N=317)	161	50.8	12	3.8	6	1.9	27	8.5	8	2.5
<i>Nasz Dziennik</i> (N=148)	27	18.2	0	0.0	5	3.4	18	12.2	5	3.4
<i>Fakt</i> (N=151)	90	59.6	1	0.7	1	0.7	8	5.3	9	6.0
Weekly magazines										
<i>Newsweek</i> (N=295)	71	24.1	6	2.0	4	1.4	10	3.4	3	1.0
<i>Polityka</i> (N=452)	128	28.3	11	2.4	7	1.5	13	2.9	4	0.9
<i>Do Rzeczy</i> (N=149)	63	42.3	7	4.7	3	2.0	9	6.0	7	4.7
<i>W sieci</i> (N=425)	191	44.9	12	2.8	8	1.9	16	3.8	4	0.9
TOTAL (N=2258)	742	32.9	59	2.6	38	1.7	143	6.3	52	2.3

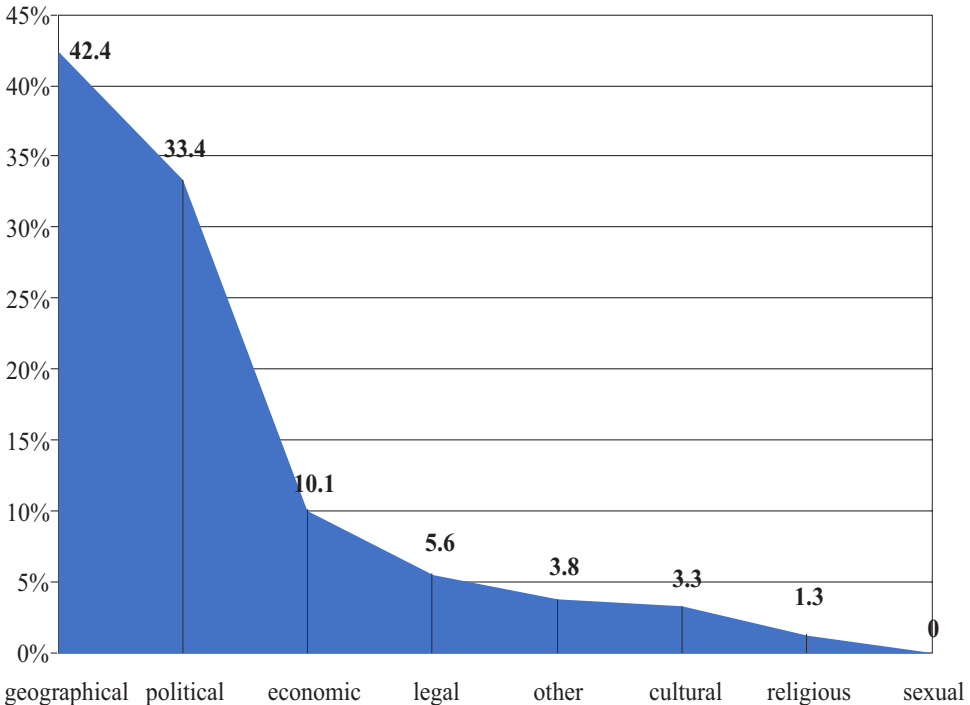
Source: Own elaboration.

Approaching ‘the people’ was most frequent in the tabloid daily *Fakt*, with 59.6% statements. Second was centre-right daily *Rzeczpospolita* (50.8%), followed by right-wing weeklies *Do Rzeczy* (42.3%) and *W sieci* (44.9%). The other strategies were considerably less frequent. Only the strategy of *homogenizing ‘the people’* exceeded 10% – in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (13.1%) and *Nasz Dziennik* (12.2%).

In accordance with the guidelines of the codebook, all cases of use of different categories of ‘the people’ were recorded, including: *political* (voters, persons having the opportunity to participate in public/political life, those deciding or influencing the course of public affairs), *economic* (hard working people, taxpayers, consumers), geographical (those living in Poland, population, nation), *legal* (the honest, the law-abiding, those with the right to live in the country, having citizenship), cultural (those sharing the same values), *religious* (Christianity, Catholicism), *sexual* (heterosexuality), or *other* (Blassnig et al., 2019).

As one statement could contain more than one type of ‘the people’, in 844 statements containing at least one reference to ‘the people’, the total number of mentions of this category amounted to 940. This number will be used to calculate the percentage of the individual types of ‘the people’ present in the populist statements (see Figure 2.3). The authors of populist statements understood ‘the people’ mainly in the geographical (42.4%) or political (33.4%) sense. Only in about 10% of populist statements, were ‘the people’ defined in economic terms, as hard-working people, taxpayers, or consumers.

Figure 2.3. Types of ‘the people’ in populist statements (% , N=940)



Source: Own elaboration.

The Elite

Another indicator of populism, critical attitude towards ‘the elite’, manifested in media statements most often in the context of blaming (58% of statements containing at least one indicator of populist discourse) and discrediting ‘the elite’ (47.8%). The first strategy dominated (over 80% of statements containing at least one indicator of that type of populist discourse) in weeklies *Do Rzeczy*, *Newsweek*, and *W sieci*, followed by *Polityka* (73.2%). Blaming was the least frequent in dailies *Fakt* and *Rzeczpospolita*, which at the same time demonstrated a high percentage of another anti-elitist strategy: discrediting ‘the elite’ (65.6% and 83.3% of statements with at least one indicator of that populist discourse, respectively). This strategy was also often represented in the publications of *Nasz Dziennik* (75.7%). The least frequently observed in the analyzed material was the use of the third strategy – denying ‘the elite’ the right to represent ‘the people’ – comprising only 3% of the entire sample.

Table 2.4. Strategies referring to ‘the elite’ in populist statements per media outlet

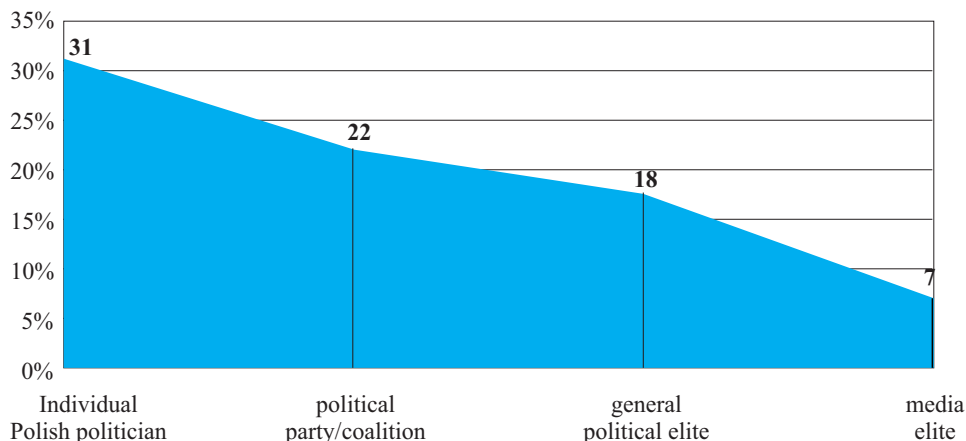
	Discrediting ‘the elite’		Blaming ‘the elite’		Denying ‘elite’ sovereignty	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Daily newspapers						
<i>Gazeta Wyborcza</i> (N=321)	186	57.9	123	38.3	2	0.6
<i>Rzeczpospolita</i> (N=317)	264	83.3	52	16.4	3	0.9
<i>Nasz Dziennik</i> (N=148)	112	75.7	56	37.8	2	1.4
<i>Fakt</i> (N=151)	99	65.6	21	13.9	2	1.3
Weekly magazines						
<i>Newsweek</i> (N=295)	85	28.8	243	82.4	5	1.7
<i>Polityka</i> (N=452)	143	31.6	331	73.2	23	5.1
<i>Do Rzeczy</i> (N=149)	69	46.3	127	85.2	7	4.7
<i>W Sieci</i> (N=425)	122	28.7	357	84.0	18	4.2
TOTAL (N=2258)	1080	47.8	1310	58.0	62	2.7

Source: Own elaboration.

In statements employing the aforementioned strategies, ‘the elite’ could be understood in general terms – as the *political elite*, *ruling elite*, *ruling camp*, or *all politicians*, or more specifically: as a political party (party monopoly, party apparatus, party oligarchy), a specific political party identified by name, an individual Polish politician, an economic elite, a specific economic entity, a media elite, international institutions (the European Union, Brussels), ‘the elite’ of other countries, an individual foreign politician, an intellectual elite (experts), church representatives, or the elite of the uniformed services (military, police, and other uniformed services).

As one statement could contain more than one type of ‘the elite’, the total number of occurrences of various expressions denoting ‘the elite’ in all anti-elitist statements (N=1,994) was 4,196. This number will be used to calculate the percentage of the individual types of ‘the elite’ presented in statements containing at least one indicator of populist discourse (see Figure 2.4 and Table 2.4). Most often criticism was directed towards an individual politician and a specific political party. Relatively less frequent were references to ‘the elite’ in general.

Figure 2.4. Types of ‘the elite’ in statements containing at least one indicator of the populist discourse (% , N=4,196)



Source: Own elaboration.

The largest number of statements critical towards ‘the elite’ across all the aforementioned categories were published in the right-wing weekly *W sieci*, with a total of 756 references, accounting for 17.6% of the total sample (N=4,196). Second was the *Polityka* weekly (14.6%), and *Newsweek* third (11.3%). Criticism of the political elite was published least frequently in the daily tabloid *Fakt* (3.2%). Interestingly, in the case of that publication, the media elite were never the subject of criticism in the statements of various speakers.

In individual newspapers, in relation to the number of anti-elitist statements published in their pages, the largest percentage of criticism of individual Polish politicians was identified in *Newsweek* and *Gazeta Wyborcza* (40% of references). In *Fakt* – a tabloid daily – most every third statement criticized the political elite in a broad sense. In turn, this title, in terms of publication of critical opinions concerning ‘media elite’ (no statements), contrasts most strongly with the conservative right-wing periodicals: *W sieci*, *Do Rzeczy*, and *Nasz Dziennik*, in which every tenth statement of various speakers contained criticism aimed at ‘the media elite’.

The Others/Out-groups

The last examined indicator of populism – reference to certain ‘out-groups’ (or ‘the others’) – was rarely represented in the media statements of various speakers. In the entire research sample, the following three strategies related to ‘out-groups’ were used: exclusion (4% of all analyzed statements), discrediting (2%), and blaming (2%). Looking at the specific newspapers, it should be noted that this element was most frequently present in the right-wing weekly *Do Rzeczy*. One in ten statements from any actor in this newspaper mentioned exclusion of certain groups, 6.7% included blaming ‘out-groups’, and 4.7% discredited ‘out-groups’. The lowest percentages (less than 1%) of each of three strategies were recorded in *Rzeczpospolita*.

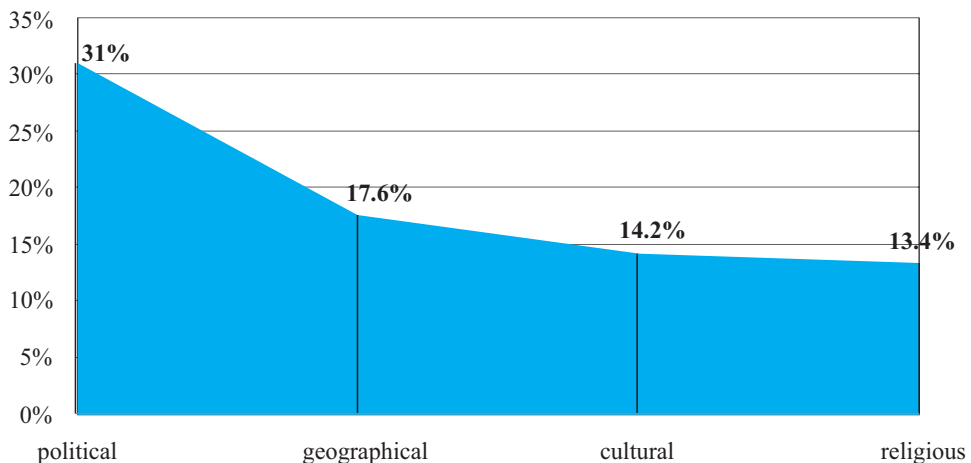
Table 2.5. Strategies referring to ‘out-groups’ in populist statements per media outlet

	Excluding specific groups		Discrediting ‘out-groups’		Blaming ‘out-groups’	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Daily newspapers						
<i>Gazeta Wyborcza</i>	5	1.6	7	2.2	17	5.3
<i>Rzeczpospolita</i>	2	0.6	3	0.9	0	0.0
<i>Nasz Dziennik</i>	4	2.7	3	2.0	1	0.7
<i>Fakt</i>	3	2.0	0	0.0	1	0.7
Weekly magazines						
<i>Newsweek</i>	14	4.7	2	0.7	0	0.0
<i>Polityka</i>	30	6.6	17	3.8	19	4.2
<i>Do Rzeczy</i>	15	10.1	7	4.7	10	6.7
<i>W sieci</i>	12	2.8	7	1.6	4	0.9
TOTAL (N=2258)	85	3.8	46	2.0	52	2.3

Source: Own elaboration.

Our codebook made it possible to distinguish various categories of ‘out-groups’, defined in political terms (*immigrants* or *refugees*), in an economic context (‘freeloaders’, beneficiaries of the social system), in a legal context (people who do not respect the law, those that disregard moral principles), in a geographical context (foreigners, international community, the West), in a cultural context (people from other cultural, ethnic, or world-view circles), in a religious context (e.g. Muslims), and in a sexual context (sexual minorities).

As one statement could contain more than one type of ‘out-groups’, 198 statements contained 261 references to ‘out-groups’. This number was used to calculate the percentage of the individual types of ‘out-groups’ in statements containing at least one indicator of populist discourse (see Figure 2.5 and Table 2.7). Out of 261 references to

Figure 2.5. Types of ‘out-groups’ in statements containing at least one indicator of populism (% , N=261)

Source: Own elaboration.

‘out-groups’, almost one in three pertained to the exclusion of political groups. Almost every fifth referred to ‘out-groups’ in geographical terms. In 14% statements the exclusion of groups was due to their cultural characteristics, and in 13% due to religious affiliation.

In the weekly *W sieci* every third statement containing at least one indicator of populist discourse referred to religious groups (34.1%, n=14), while the weekly *Do Rzeczy* with a similar frequency accentuated geographically distinct groups (28.3%, n=13). In turn, *Polityka* contained as many 103 statements excluding ‘the others’ based on geography (24.3%, n=25) and culture (20.4%, n=21).

Specific Indicators of the Polish Populist Discourse

We also took into account 14 additional populist strategies, mentioned in chapter 1 as specifically Polish (Przyłęcki, 2012), which could also indicate the use of populist discourse in a given statement. Such statements were coded only when they also contained at least one universal indicator of populist discourse, i.e. reference to ‘the people’, critique of ‘the elite’, or exclusion of ‘out-groups’. As shown by the data in Table 2.6, these strategies were relatively rare in the analyzed newspapers.

The exception was the right-wing weekly *Do Rzeczy*, which published a relatively large number of statements containing a negative attitude towards the EU (18% of all statements containing at least one indicator of populist discourse in this newspaper) and Germany (nearly 15%), as well as a negative opinion about left-wing groups with communist roots (post-communist parties) or allegations of failure to settle accounts with the past and the transfer of negative behaviors from the times of the communist regime (16%). Equally often, that weekly contained statements critical towards the period after 1989 (so-called ‘Third Republic’) and references to tradition and history (events, symbols, memory, historical politics). These results clearly confirm the conservative and right-wing orientation of that weekly.

Table 2.6. Specific strategies of the Polish populist discourse (% of statements containing at least one element of populist discourse per media outlet)

	Daily newspapers				Weekly magazines				
	Gazeta Wyborcza (N=321)	Rzeczpospolita (N=317)	Nasz Dziennik (N=148)	Fakt (N=151)	Newsweek (N=295)	Polityka (N=452)	W sieci (N=425)	Do Rzeczy (N=149)	TOTAL (N=2258)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Euroskepticism/anti-EU	0.9	2.5	5.4	0.0	1.7	3.8	6.1	18.1	4.2
Negative attitude toward Germany	1.2	0.0	2.7	0.0	1.7	6.2	4.7	14.8	3.7
Negative attitude toward Russia	2.2	1.9	2.0	0.7	2.0	5.8	5.2	8.1	3.7
Anti-communism	5.0	2.2	8.8	0.7	1.7	3.5	3.8	16.1	4.3
Justice	1.6	1.3	0.7	2.6	0.3	0.9	1.2	5.4	1.4
Welfare state	0.9	1.6	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.7	0.5	2.0	0.8

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Reference to religion	1.6	1.9	12.2	0.0	0.3	1.8	0.5	4.0	2.0
Reference to tradition and history	2.2	4.4	3.4	2.6	1.0	3.3	2.6	16.8	3.7
Criticism of the Third Polish Republic	2.8	1.3	2.0	0.7	2.7	3.3	14.4	18.1	5.7
IV Polish Republic	0.3	0.6	0.0	2.6	4.7	2.4	0.7	4.0	1.8
Criticism of liberalism	0.3	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.2	4.0	1.1
Intervention in the free market	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	3.4	0.4
Negation of political correctness	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.7	4.0	0.7
Construction of a crisis perspective	1.6	4.1	4.1	2.0	3.7	4.4	2.8	4.7	3.4

Source: Own elaboration.

The content of statements published in *Nasz Dziennik* is also noteworthy: this publication contained a relatively high rate of references to religion (12%) and anti-communism (almost 9%). These statistics are not surprising – *Nasz Dziennik* is a newspaper with a clearly conservative, self-proclaimed ‘Catholic and nationalist’ agenda, and right-wing world-view (owned by SPES – a company associated with Tadeusz Rydzyk, a Catholic monk and media figure who controls a considerable organization including a popular Catholic radio station, an affiliated TV channel, and a conservative college for journalists).

Relations Between Indicators of Populist Discourse

In order to examine the relationship between the three main dimensions of populism (i.e. reference to ‘the people’, criticism of ‘the elite’, and exclusion of ‘out-groups’), Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. A positive and statistically significant correlation was identified between reference to ‘the people’ and anti-elitism ($r=0.73$; $p<0.05$). Correlations including the third indicator, i.e. the exclusion of ‘out-groups’ (‘the others’), were statistically insignificant.

Table 2.7. Correlation in pairs of three basic dimensions of the populist style: references to ‘the people’, anti-elitism, and exclusion of ‘the others’/‘out-groups’

	Reference to the people	Anti-elitism	Exclusion of out-groups
Reference to ‘the people’	1	0.731*	0.089
Anti-elitism	0.731*	1	0.633
Exclusion of ‘out-groups’	0.089	0.633	1

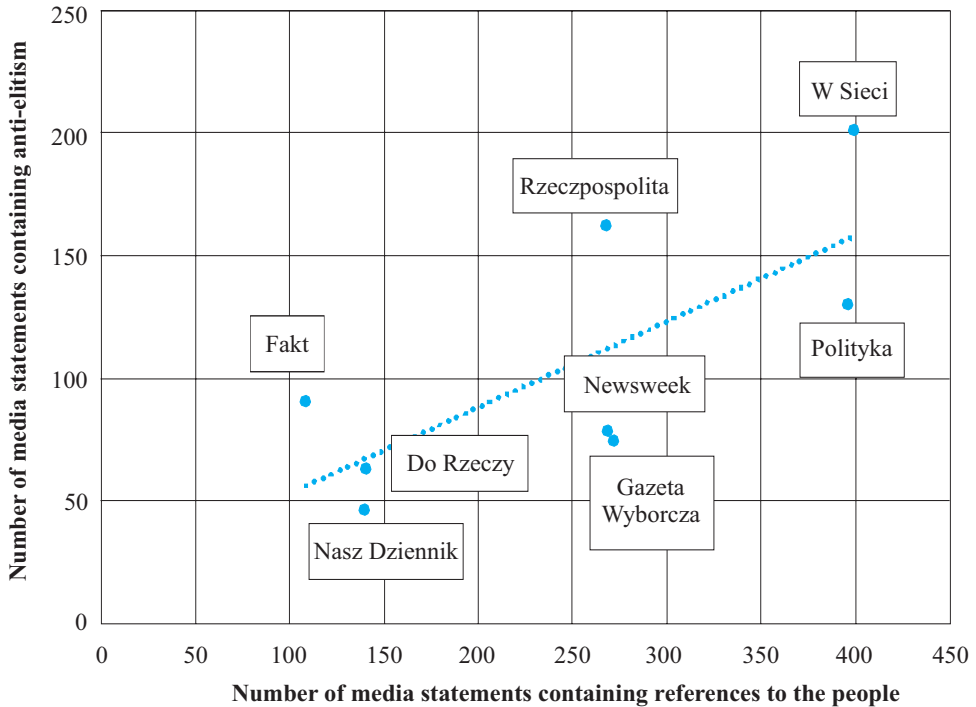
* Correlation significant at 0.05 (two-tailed).

Source: Own elaboration.

The scatterplot diagram shows a linear relation within various media outlets, which means that the greater the number of statements in which references to ‘the people’ are

present, the greater the number of distributed anti-elitist statements ($b=0.35$, $p<0.05$, $R^2=0.54$, $p<0.05$). The co-existence of these two indicators is most common in the case of the right-wing weekly *W sieci* and centre-left weekly *Polityka*.

Figure 2.6. Relationship between publications containing references to ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’ among media outlets



Source: Own elaboration.

Relations between the different types of populism are shown in Table 2.8. A statistically significant positive correlation occurred in the case of *empty populism* and *anti-elitist populism* ($r=0.96$, $p<0.05$), as well as *excluding populism* and *complete populism* ($r=0.95$, $p<0.05$).

Table 2.8. Relationships between publications containing different types of populism among media outlets

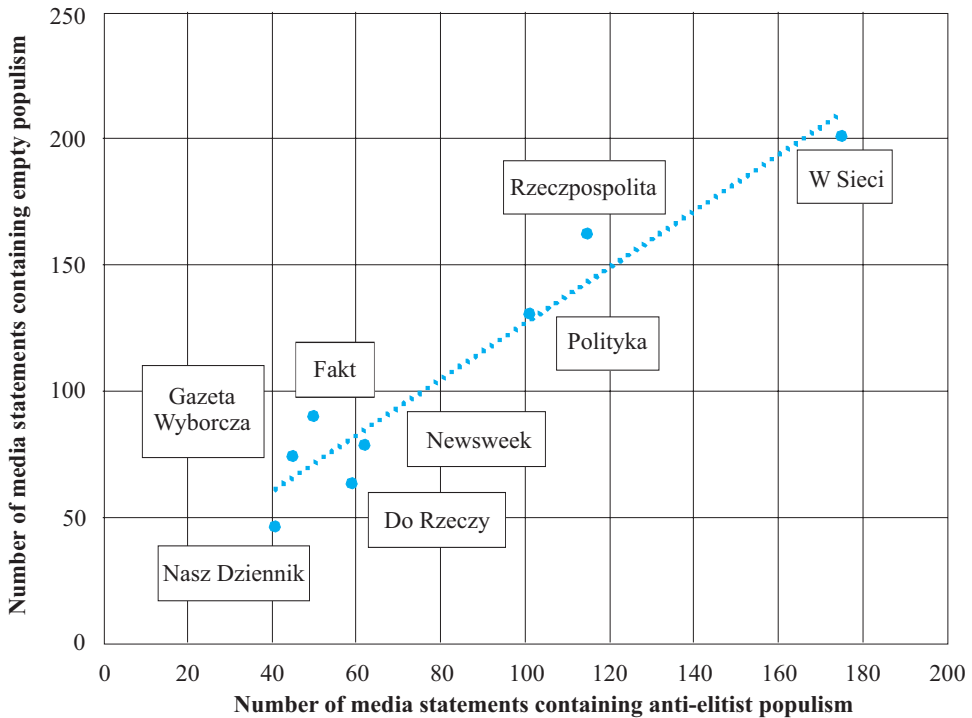
	Empty populism	Anti-elitist populism	Excluding populism	Complete populism
Empty populism	1	0.963*	0.273	0.290
Anti-elitist populism	0.963*	1	0.404	0.475
Excluding populism	0.273	0.404	1	0.948*
Complete populism	0.290	0.475	0.948*	1

* Correlation significant at 0.05 (two-sided).

Source: Own elaboration.

Graphical analysis of the coexistence of the aforementioned types of populism prompts the conclusion that there is a linear relationship between them. According to Figure 2.8 the greater the number of statements containing *empty populism* in a given media outlet, the more statements containing *anti-elitist populism* ($b=1.12$, $p<0.05$, $R^2=0.99$, $p<0.05$). In addition, Figure 2.7 shows that statements containing *excluding populism* positively correlate with those containing *complete populism* ($b=1.58$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.0$, $p<0.001$).

Figure 2.7. Relationship between statements containing *empty populism* and *anti-elitist populism* among media outlets

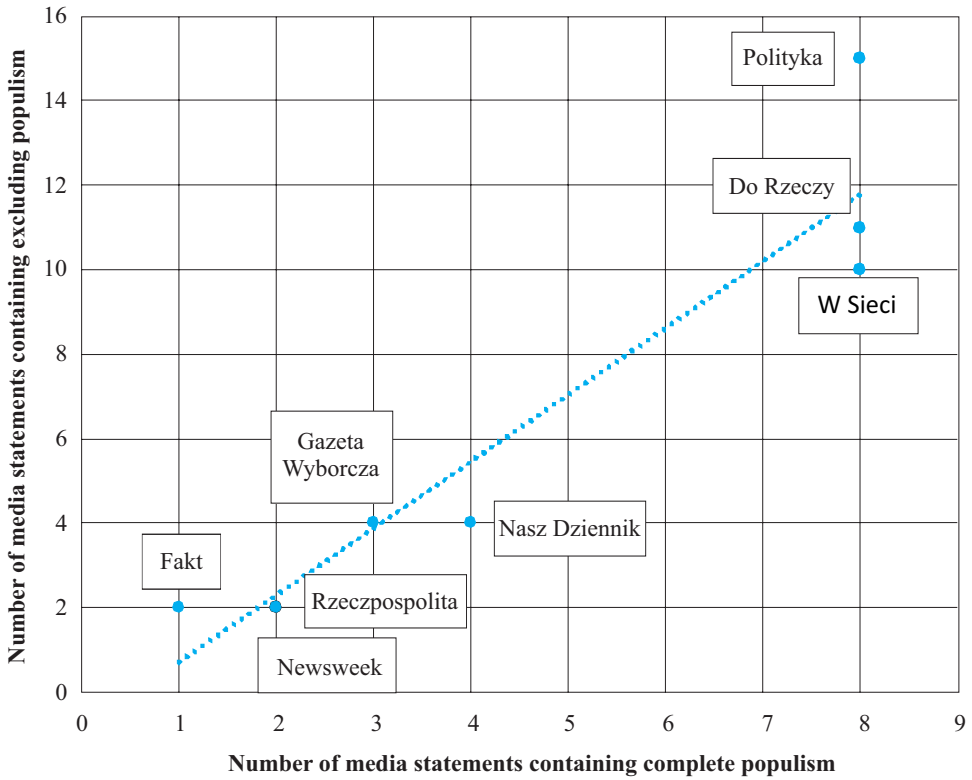


Source: Own elaboration.

Among the statistically significant relations between different types of populism, the most intense correlations can be observed in *W sieci*. In that right-wing weekly, the high level of saturation with populism is further confirmed by the populism index (1.5) showing the total level of distribution of populist statements in the range of 0–3.² For each newspaper, the values of the populist indexes established for every coded statement were summed and then divided by the number of statements containing at least one indicator of populist discourse encoded within each organization. The obtained result shows the saturation of a given media outlet with the elements of populist discourse.

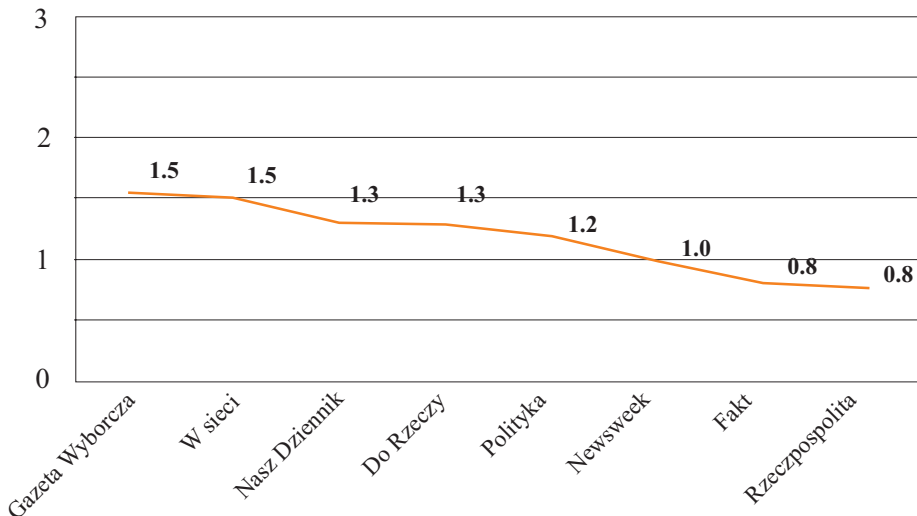
² A value of 0 indicates that there are no elements of populist style in a given statement; a value of 1 indicates the presence of one element; a value of 2 indicates the use of both ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’ or ‘the people’ and the exclusion of ‘out-groups’; a value of 3 indicates the use of all elements of populist style in one statement: references to ‘the people’, anti-elitism, and the exclusion of ‘out-groups’.

Figure 2.8. Relationship between statements containing excluding populism and complete populism among media outlets



Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 2.9. Populism index calculated for individual media outlets



Source: Own elaboration.

The daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* also showed a high level of saturation with populist elements (1.5). High levels of saturation were also observed in two conservative titles, *Nasz Dziennik* and *Do Rzeczy* (1.3). The lowest saturation level was observed in the *Fakt* and *Rzeczpospolita* dailies (both 0.8).

Characteristics of Individual Newspapers

Analysis of the obtained results allows us also to identify the characteristics of particular newspapers included in the study. Thus, the centre-left daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* is distinguished by a relatively low percentage of statements referring to ‘the people’, and a relatively high percentage of statements criticizing ‘the elite’ and expressing a negative attitude towards ‘the others’. It should be emphasized that the presented data did not allow determination of the attitude of *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s journalists towards such statements – it is only known that they referred to them relatively often in the published materials. Moreover, when referring to the category of ‘the people’, statements presented in *Gazeta Wyborcza* relatively often stressed (by publishing specific statements) the homogeneity of ‘the people’ (similarity of attitudes, characteristics, expectations, needs, values, and opinions). At the same time, among statements criticizing ‘the elite’, most frequent (in comparison with other daily newspapers) were those blaming ‘the elite’ for certain actions, and less frequent were those discrediting ‘the elite’, i.e. pointing out their negative features. Finally, in statements excluding certain groups from the category of ‘the people’, *Gazeta Wyborcza* again emphasized those attributing negative effects to the actions of ‘the others’ (blaming). Interestingly, the most numerous category of ‘out-groups’ discussed in *Gazeta Wyborcza* was that of immigrants and refugees.

Centre-right *Rzeczpospolita* was distinguished by the highest percentage of statements containing at least one element of populist discourse, which is due to the high percentage of those referring to ‘the people’ (over half) and the relatively frequent presence of statements criticizing ‘the elite’. This newspaper, however, had the lowest percentage of statements containing exclusion of ‘out-groups’ (less than 2%). Furthermore, *Rzeczpospolita* published the most statements discrediting ‘the elite’ out of the whole group of titles subject to the survey.

A high percentage of articles containing at least one element of populist discourse was also found in the right-wing Catholic daily *Nasz Dziennik*. Together with another right-wing title, weekly *Do Rzeczy*, it contained the highest percentage of statements expressing anti-elitism (94.6%), taking the form of both discrediting and blaming the political elite. In addition, *Nasz Dziennik* contained the highest number of statements excluding ‘out-groups’ in comparison to other newspapers, and the highest percentages of news items on a religion (12% of all statements).

The tabloid daily *Fakt* was characterized by the highest presence of statements containing references to ‘the people’ (nearly 60% of the statements), with these references mainly employing the category of Poles, the nation, citizens, or working people, while other strategies related to ‘the people’ (such as appreciating the advantages or achievements of ‘the people’) were reported rarely. At the same time, *Fakt* was characterized by the lowest number of statements criticizing ‘the elite’, a relatively low presence of

critical attitude towards ‘out-groups’, and a low rate of saturation with populist elements. Moreover, the tabloid *Fakt* had the highest percentage of statements containing demands for the sovereignty of ‘the people’, i.e. referring to *the will of ‘the people’*, the collective wisdom of Poles, or demanding the handing over of power to ‘the people’ by enabling independent decision-making in accordance with the principle of direct democracy. On the other hand, when writing about ‘the elite’, *Fakt* rarely presented statements blaming ‘the elite’ for their actions (blaming – less than 14% of statements), although it relatively often included statements discrediting ‘the elite’ (65%).

In the group of weekly magazines, two right-wing titles, *W sieci* and *Do Rzeczy*, were distinguished by a high percentage of anti-elitist statements; in both weekly magazines, much attention was paid to blaming ‘the elite’ (although *W sieci* mentioned ‘the elite’ more often than *Do Rzeczy*). These two titles were united by a similar, moderate level (42–45%) of statements containing references to ‘the people’, with *W sieci* presenting the highest number of statements mentioning ‘the people’ in the political (voters) and geographical senses (Poles or Polish nation). *Do Rzeczy* devoted more attention to the category of ‘the others’ (especially immigrants and foreigners), both by discrediting and blaming them. The specificity of *Do Rzeczy* is also seen in the presence of categories defined by Przyłęcki (2012) as Polish indicators of populism, mainly: Euroscepticism, references to tradition and history, criticism of the period of political transformation and the Third Republic, anti-communism, and negative attitude towards Germany.

Against this background, the centre-left weekly *Polityka* appeared to be essentially oriented towards the presentation of statements relating to ‘out-groups’ (11% of statements), and given the worldview represented by this title, one can expect a critical attitude towards statements containing exclusion of specific groups, including refugees, immigrants, foreigners, and representatives of other cultures.

Finally, *Newsweek* was characterized by a relatively low percentage of statements referring to ‘the people’ (26%) and a relatively high percentage of statements just criticizing ‘the elite’. In comparison to other weekly magazines, statements representing full and excluding populism were the least frequent in *Newsweek*.

The aforementioned characteristics are based solely on the numerical representation of individual elements of populist discourse in the statements published in individual newspapers. However, in order to more fully understand the similarities and differences in the application of populist discourse, it is necessary to conduct a qualitative analysis, like the one presented in chapter 10 of this book.

Conclusions

Analysis of the collected research material from four daily newspapers: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*, *Nasz Dziennik*, and *Fakt*, as well as four weekly magazines: *Polityka*, *Newsweek*, *W sieci*, and *Do Rzeczy* showed that in the analyzed publications the vast majority (about 70%) of the articles on Polish political actors contained at least one statement referring to the concept of ‘the people’, expressing criticism of ‘the elite’, or containing a negative attitude towards ‘out-groups’. These articles contained on average more than one such statement.

This indicates a significant tendency of the Polish printed press to describe events involving political entities from a ‘populist’ point of view, although *de facto* not all such statements can be classified as completely ‘populist’ according to the typology of populism proposed by J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007), i.e. containing reference to ‘the people’, criticism of ‘the elite’, and exclusion of ‘out-groups’. For example, statements containing only reference to ‘the people’ (*empty populism*) were found in at least one fourth of all statements reported by *Gazeta Wyborcza*, one third in *Nasz Dziennik*, *Newsweek*, and *Polityka*, and as many as half in *Rzeczpospolita*, *Fakt*, *W sieci*, and *Do Rzeczy*.

Our H1 hypothesis, assuming that tabloids would more frequently publish statements containing elements of populist discourse than the serious broadsheet newspapers, was only partially confirmed. While the *Fakt* tabloid was characterized by the highest presence of statements containing reference to ‘the people’ (nearly 60% of the statements), this publication was also characterized by the lowest rate of statements containing criticism of ‘the elite’, a relatively low rate of critical attitude towards ‘out-groups’, and low saturation with elements of the populist style.

The results of our analysis confirmed the H2 hypothesis: that the Polish press is dominated by criticism of ‘the elite’, which is not accompanied by any reference to ‘the people’. This is also confirmed by data on the types of elites most frequently referred to in the analyzed statements, i.e. individual politicians or political parties. Criticism of ‘the elite’ in general was reported much less frequently. It should be stressed, however, that *anti-elitist populism* was also notable in the studied materials. The least frequent were statements than can be classified as expressing *excluding* or *complete populism*.

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3. Who ‘Speaks Populism’ in Print Media? The Populist Discourse of Political Actors and Journalists

Agnieszka Stepińska and Maria Wąsicka-Sroczyńska

Introduction

Adoption of a perspective of political communication in research on populism allows a significant expansion in the spectrum of potential sources of populist statements. In contrast to ideology-oriented approaches that are focused solely on political entities, a communication-centered approach to populism acknowledges that media (journalists) and citizens may also be sources of populist statements (Reinemann et al., 2017). Such a reflection on the role of traditional and online media in the dissemination of populist messages (cf. Stewart et al., 2003) has resulted in the distinction of various types of media populism (Plasser and Ulram, 2003; Esser et al., 2017).

According to F. Plasser and P. A. Ulram (2003), media populism can be divided into; (1) populism by the media, (2) populism through the media, and (3) populist citizen journalism. In the first instance, journalists create their own statements that are critical of the political or economic elite, or materials where they identify with ‘the people’ and define their role as the ‘voice of the nation’ – articulating the opinions, expectations or needs of citizens.

The second type of media populism, *populism through the media*, consists of media coverage of the statements of populist political actors. G. Mazzoleni (2008) even accuses the media of “complicity” in the dissemination of populism, by presenting their arguments, slogans and ideological elements. The resultant recognition and publicity contribute to the legitimacy of the populist message. The last type of media populism, *populist citizen journalism*, takes place when the media open up to citizens’ statements – usually by encouraging comments on reported events or participation in discussions on Internet forums of media outlets (Esser et al., 2017, p. 371).

A further definition of media populism is proposed by B. Krämer (2014, p. 48) who describes the media’s use of stylistic and ideological elements such as “the construction of favoritism of in-groups, hostility toward and circumvention of the elites and institutions of representative democracy, reliance on charisma and (group-related) commonsense, and appeal to moral sentiments.” This approach is analogous to the first aforementioned type of media populism (*populism by the media*), because it treats media populism as “a distinct phenomenon: populism among the media themselves and independent of any relationship to populist movements” (Krämer, 2014, p. 42). As such, media populism may “parallel that of the respective populist movements and may seek strategic alliances with them; however, at times, the politics of populists in

the political system may also run counter to the interests of populist media (...). Media, then, may be opposed to populist parties while actually using populist strategies themselves” (Kramer, 2014, p. 42; see also Stewart et al., 2003).

In order to better understand *populism by the media*, it is necessary to refer to research on the role of the media and models of journalism, especially the roles that journalists play with regard to populism. First, it is worth noting that the media appear to speak directly to ‘the people’. However, as B. Krämer (2014, p. 49) points out, “they have to make the audience forget that media are organizations themselves rather than a pure movement without institutional structures, and that they often entertain close relationships to political institutions and agents.” Hence, in order to gain populist appeal and not be perceived as ‘the elite’ themselves, the media have to “present themselves as the mouthpieces of an unstructured but powerful movement that only consists of public sentiment, shared moral concerns, and collective mobilization” (Krämer, 2014, p. 49).

However, in media systems with a high level of political parallelism, such as in Poland (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011), traditional media (especially print press) represent specific political orientations or even directly support political actors. In combination with a strong political polarization in the society, it would be difficult to agree with their self-proclaimed role as ‘the voice of the people’. In reality, they only represent individual social groups or voters sympathetic to one of the political sides.

Nevertheless, “media are devices *par excellence* to exert symbolic power via the representation of society” (Krämer, 2014, p. 49). As such they may describe and prescribe divisions that exist in the society, including that between the common people and ‘the elite’.

Normative and empirical theories of journalistic roles predominantly focus on the relationship that journalism has with those in power, and on the way journalism approaches the audience (Culbertson, 1983; Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996; Weaver and Willnat, 2012; Hanitzsch, 2007; Mellado, 2015).

Following Mellado’s concept of journalistic role performance (2015), we may argue that media are more prone to an anti-institutional attitude in a watchdog model (oriented toward monitoring, questioning, criticism, or accusations against those in power), a service model (that combines the rights and self-interest of audience, creating a client-professional relationship with the journalist and the public), or a civic model (focused on encouraging people to get involved in public debate and participate in political events, as well as on the presentation of groups without social empowerment that demand the recognition or restoration of a right).

Additionally, media populism may be the result of the tendency toward the presence of the journalistic voice. In this interventionist approach to journalistic work, the news professionals provide their own opinions and suggestions, advocating for certain social groups (Mellado, 2015) and presenting an overtly (politically or anti-politically) biased coverage. As B. Krämer (2014, p. 49), following R. Davis (1997), claims, “a medium may profit from the suspicion that others entertain a hidden bias whereas its own is made explicit.” The presence of the interventionist journalistic role provides a fertile ground for the use of populist discourse by journalists. In fact, they may even outbid political actors by “being more martial, radical, polemical and so on, thus closer to the ideal-typical forms of populism” (Krämer, 2014, p. 49).

Discussion on the model roles of journalists with regard to populism was also joined by M. Wettstein, F. Esser, A. Schultz, D.S. Wirz and W. Wirth (2018), who distinguished three main roles: (1) gatekeepers for populist political actors and their messages, (2) interpreters of populist actors evaluating their behaviors, and (3) originators of populist messages" (Wettstein et al., 2018, p. 478). In their approach, the first of the roles (*gatekeeper*) refers directly to the idea of *populism through the media* (where the media decide on the dissemination of populist statements coming from different sources (e.g. political actors, representatives of companies, or citizens), the second emphasizes the importance of journalists in explaining and commenting on populist statements, and the third presents a more nuanced take on the concept of *populism by the media*.

As shown in chapter 1, a total of 2,258 statements were found in which at least one element of the populist discourse appeared, i.e. either a reference to 'the people', or criticism of 'the elite', or the exclusion of 'out-groups'. An in-depth analysis of the frequency of such statements in the various titles of the printed press (i.e. the analysis of media as gatekeepers) was presented in chapter 2.

The aim of that chapter is to answer the question of who are the main sources of the statements containing at least one element of populist discourse, and in particular the populist statements published in the Polish print press. The 'usual suspects' are political actors, whose statements are covered by the media. However, taking into account that the specificity of Polish journalism is characterized by a high level of journalistic voice (Stępińska et al., 2016) even in purely informative materials (Jurga-Wosik et al., 2017), it can be assumed that Polish journalists will adopt an active attitude towards populist statements, and thus will play the role of originators and interpreters of populist communications. It can be expected that this trend should be even more pronounced than previous research indicated (Stępińska et al., 2016), as the research material in this project came not only from the daily press but also from weeklies. Additionally, the high level of watchdog model in the daily press (Stępińska et al., 2016) should be conducive to both reporting and formulating critical statements about 'the elite'. Finally, due to the high level of political parallelism of the Polish print press, one should expect more critical statements regarding 'the elite' than actual *anti-elitist populism* with simultaneous references to 'the people' and criticism of 'the elite'.

In order to trace the gatekeeper, interpreter, and originator roles of journalists we will examine the categories of speakers and journalists' attitude toward the use of populist discourse by other speakers. We assumed that journalists who are the authors of the material (news item) may either just cover and disseminate the populist statements made by other speakers without any evaluation or provide their own opinions on these statements. In particular, journalists may select one of the option of such an active approach, that is: (1) criticize the populist statements, (2) support populist statements, or (3) express different evaluation depending on who is a speaker: criticize some statements and support others in one material.

Speakers in Populist Political Communication

In the codebook, we distinguished eight categories of potential speakers, i.e. those whose statements containing at least one element of populist discourse were quoted

or paraphrased in the sampled press articles. The list of potential sources of such statements included: a journalist, political actor, expert/scientist, public administration official, representative of a social organization (NGO) and a citizen. In the cases of a journalist, political actor or expert, it was possible to encode the name, surname and affiliation of the speaker. In turn, the category ‘citizen’ included individuals presented in the role of ‘ordinary’ inhabitants of the country. The category ‘not indicated’ was also distinguished, understood as persons appearing under their first and last names, but without the mention of their role in society. However, the category of ‘other’ included those who did not represent any of the aforementioned categories.

Analysis of the materials identified a total of 1,018 speakers who were the sources (authors) of statements including at least one indicator of populist discourse, i.e. either a reference to ‘the people’, a criticism of ‘the elite’, or the exclusion of ‘out-groups’ (in short: statements). In this chapter, the basic unit of analysis is a single statement that meets this criterion. Frequency calculations will be based on the number of coded statements reported in the examined press titles (general level of analysis), in individual press titles, or the categories of speakers (detailed level of analysis).

Table 3.1 shows that journalists constituted the largest source of such statements in materials published in the press (313, i.e. 31% of all speakers). A total of 1,052 statements containing at least one element of populist discourse were recognized, which accounted for almost half of all such statements. Political actors constitute the next greatest group, with 635 statements containing at least one element of populist discourse (28% of the total number of such statements) made by 212 politicians (nearly 21% of the total number of speakers).

Other categories of speakers were much less frequently present in the analyzed materials. However, it is worth noting that slightly more than 14% of all speakers were experts, and their statements containing at least one element of the populist discourse constituted almost 10% of all such statements.

Table 3.1. Categories of speakers: sources of statements including at least one indicator of populist discourse

Speakers	N of speakers	% of speakers	N of statements	% of statements
Journalist	313	30.75	1052	46.59
Political actor	212	20.83	635	28.12
Expert	146	14.34	224	9.92
State administration officer	10	0.98	10	0.44
NGO	44	4.32	44	1.95
Citizen	75	7.37	75	3.32
No role/affiliation provided	85	8.35	85	3.76
Other	133	13.06	133	5.89
TOTAL	1018	100.00	2258	100.00

Source: Own elaboration.

These results confirmed the assumptions of the high level of activity of Polish press journalists, not only in reporting statements including at least one indicator of populist

discourse formulated by other speakers, especially political actors (*gatekeeper model*), but also in formulating such statements independently (*originator model*) or evaluating them (*interpreter model*).

In a further part of the chapter, we will focus on the two largest categories of speakers: political actors and journalists. In particular, the results of a comparative analysis of the content of individual press titles will be presented, as well as an in-depth analysis of the statements by journalists and politicians whose populist statements appeared most frequently in the analyzed press titles. Finally, journalists' attitude towards the populist statements made by other speakers will be examined.

Political Actors as Originators of Populist Messages

Interestingly, political actors appeared to be the second largest group of speakers whose statements containing references to 'the people', 'the elite', or 'out-groups' were most frequently presented in the dailies and weeklies. Table 3.2 presents the frequencies of such statements in individual media outlets. The percentages were calculated on the basis of the ratio of the number of statements by political actors containing at least one indicator of populist discourse to the total number of such statements in a given newspaper, as given in brackets next to the names of these papers.

Table 3.2. Frequency of political actors' statements per media outlets

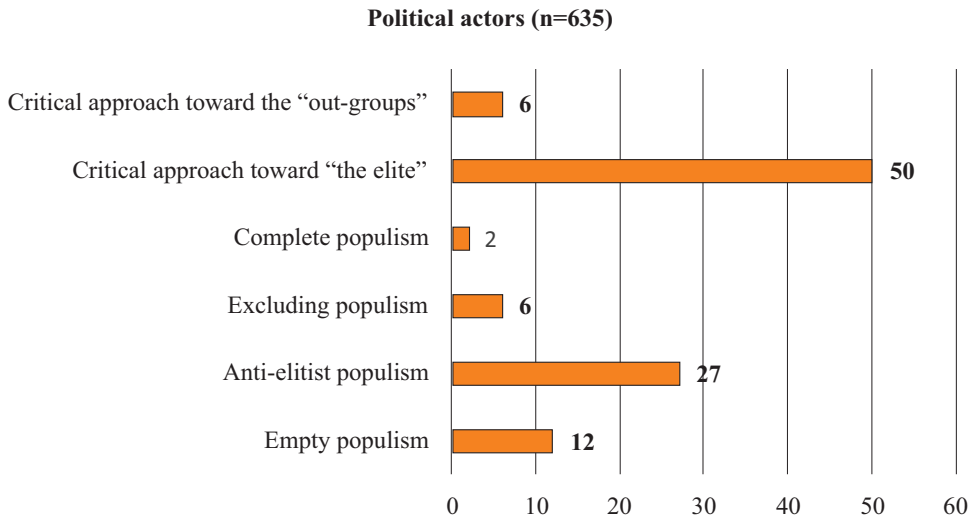
Media outlet	n	%
<i>Gazeta Wyborcza</i> (N=321)	137	42.7
<i>Rzeczpospolita</i> (N=317)	98	30.9
<i>Fakt</i> (N=151)	58	38.4
<i>Nasz Dziennik</i> (N=148)	55	37.2
<i>Polityka</i> (N=452)	124	27.4
<i>W Sieci</i> (N=425)	65	15.3
<i>Do Rzeczy</i> (N=149)	31	20.8
<i>Newsweek</i> (N=295)	67	22.7
TOTAL (N=2258)	635	28.1

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 3.2 shows that political actors' statements containing at least 1 indicator of populist discourse were covered most frequently by the quality daily newspaper, the centre-liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza* (almost 43% of all such statements came from political actors) and the tabloid *Fakt* (38%). Fewer such statements can be found in the Catholic-nationalist *Nasz Dziennik* (37%). Therefore, neither political orientation nor the type of press determined the amount of attention that daily newspapers in Poland given to the statements of political actors containing references to 'the people', criticism of 'the elite', or negative attitude towards 'out-groups'. However, we may conclude that weeklies less often presented such statements from political actors (from 15% to 20% of the total number of statements containing at least 1 indicator of the populist discourse).

Once we examine a frequency of elements of that discourse, as well as types of populism in political actors' statements (see Figure 3.1), we noticed that half of the statements included criticism toward 'the elite', while 27% of the statements represented the anti-elitism populism. In comparison to journalists, political actors more often referred to 'the people' (*empty populism*), as well as expressed their negative attitude toward 'out-groups'.

Figure 3.1. Presence of indicators of populist discourse and types of populism in political actors' statements (%)



Source: Own elaboration.

Next, we identified the most frequently cited political actors – authors of statements containing at least 1 indicator of populist discourse. We established the identity of 212 political actors and counted the presence of their statements in individual newspapers. This allowed the creation of a hierarchy of political actors ('top 5'), whose statements were most frequently quoted or paraphrased (see Table 3.3). The percentage was calculated as the ratio of the number of statements of a given politician containing at least 1 indicator of populist discourse to the total number of statements of this type from political actors in all analyzed papers (N=635).

Table 3.3. Political actors as (populist) speakers (N=635)

Name of political actor	Number of statements	% of the total number of political actors' statements (N=635)
Jarosław Kaczyński (PiS)	58	9
Andrzej Duda (PiS)	42	7
Beata Szydło (PiS)	36	6
Bronisław Komorowski (PO)	33	5
Paweł Kukiz	27	4

Source: Own elaboration.

This 'top 5' group included three politicians from the right-wing, conservative political party Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice hereafter PiS), namely: Jarosław Kaczyński – chairman and the absolute leader of this political group, Andrzej Duda – in 2015 a candidate for the President of Poland, and since the elections in May 2015, the President, and Beata Szydło – Prime Minister in 2015–2017. Their statements constituted one fifth of those that contained at least 1 indicator of populist discourse coming from politicians and presented in the analyzed newspapers. Slightly less frequently referred to were statements of this type made by Bronisław Komorowski, President of Poland in 2010–2015, who came from the liberal-conservative political party PO, the main opposition to PiS.

Among the political actors was also Paweł Kukiz – a musician, leader of the rock band "Piersi" and a self-proclaimed 'anti-systemic' activist, ranked third (after Andrzej Duda and Bronisław Komorowski) in the presidential elections held in 2015, and the founder of the Kukiz'15 movement and then a member of the Kukiz'15 parliamentary group.

Taking into account the political context – the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2015 – it is not surprising that the papers focused on the statements of the presidential candidates and political leaders. However, it is worth emphasizing that we analyzed only those statements that included references to 'the people', a critical attitude towards 'the elite', or exclusion of 'out-groups'. Our results do not concern the actual activity of political actors in formulating such statements, but the presence of their statements in the printed press. In other words, the statements containing at least 1 indicator of populist discourse that were reported by the print media were formulated by right-wing politicians. At the same time, no representative of left-wing parties was included in the group of politicians whose statements constituted at least 4% of the statements presented in the journalistic materials. This may indicate not so much a lower incidence of populist discourse among left-wing politicians as their lower media exposure (or any attention paid to those politicians).

Table 3.4. Frequency of indicators of populist discourse in statements made by selected political actors (%)

Name of political actor	Empty populism	Criticism toward elites	Negative approach to 'out-groups'	Anti-elitist populism	Excluding populism	Complete populism
Jarosław Kaczyński (n=58)	29	67	32	21	5	2
Andrzej Duda (n=42)	69	71	0	43	0	0
Beata Szydło (n=36)	61	66	12	36	2	2
Bronisław Komorowski (n=33)	48	66	0	18	0	0
Paweł Kukiz (n=27)	55	96	15	55	11	11

Source: Own elaboration.

The data presented in Table 3.4 shows how often the statements of the analyzed politicians included individual indicators of populist discourse. Just like in chapter 2, we identified elements in isolation or in combination, indicating the presence of the

following types of populism: *empty populism*, *anti-elitist populism*, *excluding populism*, or *complete populism*.

Once again, there was a visible percentage predominance of statements containing only criticism of ‘the elite’, without any reference to ‘the people’ (more than 60% of statements made by each of the politicians mentioned above). Paweł Kukiz is characterized by the highest rate of such statements. Furthermore, it is in his statements that one can most often find *anti-elitist populism* (55%) and *excluding populism* (11%). The research results confirm our earlier findings regarding the specificity of the populist discourse used by the leader of the political movement Kukiz’15 (see: Adamczewska, 2017; Wrześniewska-Pietrzak and Kołodziejczak, 2017).

Criticism of ‘the elite’ and *anti-elitist populism* were also clearly present in the statements of the leader of PiS, Jarosław Kaczyński, Andrzej Duda (presidential candidate in 2015 and then President of Poland, representing PiS) and Beata Szydło (the Prime Minister of the PiS government from the time of the parliamentary elections in 2015 until 2017). What distinguishes Jarosław Kaczyński’s statements presented by the media from those of the other two representatives is the higher frequency of statements representing a negative approach towards ‘out-groups’ (32% in comparison to 0% and 12%, respectively), as well as a lower frequency of statements referring to ‘the people’ (29% in comparison to 66% and 61%, respectively). It seems that both A. Duda and B. Szydło’s statements were much more oriented towards ‘the people’ since both of them were candidates for either a President or a Prime Minister, while J. Kaczyński did not run for any public office at that time (although he has always been the official leader of PiS).

Interestingly, Bronisław Komorowski who was the President-in-Office in 2015, running for a second term, was less frequently covered by the media as a political actor using populist discourse in his statements. Still, in almost half of his statements that included at least one element of populist discourse covered by the media, he made some references to ‘the people’ (*empty populism*). At the same time, only 18% of his statements with at least one element of populist discourse included indicators of anti-elitist populism, and none of the statements represented either *excluding* or *complete populism*. However, the amount of statements including a critique of ‘the elite’ was relatively high in that case (66%). Taking into consideration the context (elections in 2015 and the post-election period of 2016–2017) of the statements covered by the media, the findings are not surprising: attacking political opponents is one of the classic strategies employed in such circumstances.

Journalists as Originators of Populist Messages

Journalists appeared to be the type of speakers that generate the highest percentage of all statements in the media containing references to ‘the people’, ‘the elite’, or ‘out-groups’. The large number of journalists over the other categories of speakers is particularly visible in the conservative weeklies: *Do Rzeczy* and *W Sieci*. In both cases, journalists’ statements containing at least one element of populist discourse accounted for over half of the total number of such statements presented in those titles (the total number of statements containing at least one element of populist discourse in a given newspaper is given in Table 3.2 next to the name of the newspaper).

Moreover, the statements by journalists constituted almost half of the statements in such titles as *Newsweek* and *Polityka*. Slightly less (about 30–40%) statements could be found in the dailies: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*, *Nasz Dziennik* and *Fakt* (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5. Journalists' statements including at least one indicator of populist discourse per media organization

Media organization	Journalists' statements	
	n	%
<i>Gazeta Wyborcza</i> (N=321)	115	35.8
<i>Rzeczpospolita</i> (N=317)	114	36.0
<i>Fakt</i> (N=151)	61	40.4
<i>Nasz Dziennik</i> (N=148)	48	32.4
<i>Polityka</i> (N=452)	222	49.1
<i>W Sieci</i> (N=425)	256	60.2
<i>Do Rzeczy</i> (N=149)	93	62.4
<i>Newsweek</i> (N=295)	143	48.5
TOTAL (N=2258)	1052	46.6

Source: Own elaboration.

The results clearly show that regardless of the actual number of statements containing at least one element of populist discourse in individual press titles (N), a higher percentage of such statements formulated by journalists can be observed in weeklies (*Polityka*, *W sieci*, *Do Rzeczy*, and *Newsweek*) than in dailies (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*, *Fakt*, and *Nasz Dziennik*). Furthermore, the frequency of such statements is higher in right-wing weeklies, such as *W sieci* and *Do Rzeczy* (more than 60% of all populist statements in a given title). Among dailies, the highest frequency of statements (with at least one indicator of populist discourse) by journalists was found in the tabloid *Fakt* (about 40%), which confirms previous observations regarding the predilection of tabloid journalism towards media populism (Krämer, 2014, pp. 49–50; Mudde, 2007, p. 249).

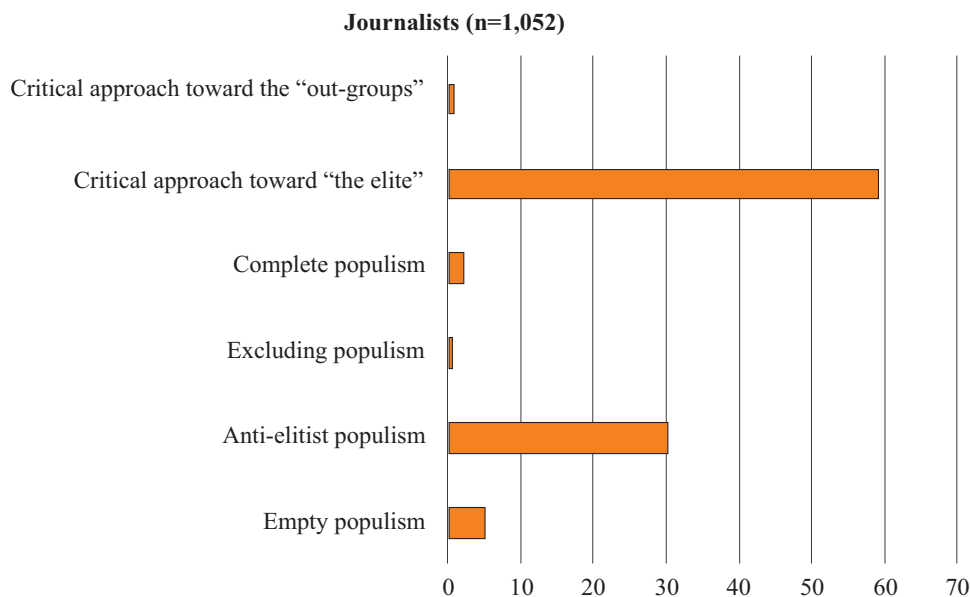
Interestingly, quality daily press in Poland (the centre-left *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the centre-right *Rzeczpospolita*, and the Catholic-nationalist *Nasz Dziennik*), regardless of differences in their political orientations, shared a similar percentage of messages including at least one element of populist discourse formulated directly by journalists (32–36%, see Table 3.2).

However, not all the statements including at least one indicator of populist discourse are in fact populist, according to the Jager and Walgrave's (2007) concept (see chapter 1 and chapter 2 for more details). Therefore, we traced which elements of that discourse, as well as types of populism were most frequently presented in the print media by political actors and/or journalists. Figure 3.2 presents the findings on the frequency of particular indicators of populist discourse in journalists' statements (i.e. reference to 'the people', anti-elitism, or exclusion of 'out-groups'), as well as combinations of these indicators, constituting *empty populism*, *anti-elitist populism*, *excluding populism* and *complete populism*.

Findings show that a majority of the journalists' statements (59%) included just a criticism toward 'the elite' without any reference to 'the people', while 30% of the

statements represented the *anti-elitist populism*. At the same time, hardly any statements included a reference to ‘out-groups’ or indicators of the excluding populism (0.5 and 0.7%, respectively). Interestingly, only a small amount of the statements (5%) included an indicator of the *empty populism*, that is just a reference to ‘the people’.

Figure 3.2. Presence of indicators of populist discourse and types of populism in journalists’ statements (%)



Source: Own elaboration.

In the next step of our analysis, we identified all journalist speakers who were mentioned by name in the articles under study. In this way we determined the identity of 313 journalists and their activity in terms of formulating statements containing at least one element of populist discourse in the analyzed press titles. As a result, we made a ranking of journalists from the various papers who most frequently published statements containing a reference to ‘the people’, a critique of ‘the elite’, or the exclusion of ‘out-groups’. Percentages presented in Table 3.6 were calculated as the ratio of such statements by a given journalist (n) to the total number of such statements from all journalists in that newspaper.

Table 3.6. Journalists as sources of statements including at least one indicator of populist discourse

Name and surname	Affiliation (media outlet)	N of statements	% of a journalist’s statements per number of statements in the media outlet
1	2	3	4
Krystyna Grzybowska	<i>W sieci</i>	25	10
Tomasz Lis	<i>Newsweek</i>	25	17

1	2	3	4
Stanisław Tym	<i>Polityka</i>	20	9
Rafał Ziemkiewicz	<i>Do Rzeczy</i>	18	19
Bronisław Wildstein	<i>W sieci</i>	17	6
Piotr Semka	<i>Do Rzeczy</i>	17	18
Jacek Karnowski	<i>W sieci</i>	15	6
Janina Paradowska	<i>Polityka</i>	15	7
Piotr Skwieciński	<i>W sieci</i>	15	6
Rafał Kalukin	<i>Polityka</i>	15	7

Source: Own elaboration.

The group of analyzed journalists included 10 authors with the highest total number of statements that contained at least one indicator of populist discourse, regardless of the number of publications in a given newspaper or the total number of statements coming from journalists in a given newspaper. The total number of 10 journalists who wrote under their names (185) comprised 17% of all statements by journalists (1,052).¹

It is worth noting that the applied method of selection of cases for in-depth analysis again confirms the high level of activity of journalists representing the right-wing weeklies, with 6 out of 10 journalists on our list. The remainder represented the centre-left *Polityka* and centre *Newsweek*. Importantly, the method of selection virtually excluded journalists of the daily press, and therefore in our further analysis we will deal with opinion journalists whose job is mainly to interpret and comment on various political events.

In order to better understand the obtained results of content analysis of the statements from the selected journalists in Table 3.3, it is best to present their biographies. Krystyna Grzybowska, Bronisław Wildstein, Jacek Karnowski, and Piotr Skwieciński represent the conservative weekly *W sieci*, with Jacek Karnowski acting as the editor-in-chief. It needs to be emphasized here that Bronisław Wildstein and Jacek Karnowski had not only been print press journalists, with B. Wildstein previously working for state-owned radio and TV stations (and as the CEO of National Polish Television, TVP, in 2006–2007), and J. Karnowski also working for the national TV broadcaster TVP and conservative television channel TV Plus.

Tomasz Lis is a press, radio and television journalist. He has hosted his original programs broadcast by public and commercial channels. Currently, he is the editor-in-chief of the liberal weekly *Newsweek*. His comments and columns have been frequently published in other press titles: *Polska The Times* and *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

Janina Paradowska, a respected veteran journalist, had been a columnist in the liberal-left weekly *Polityka* since the early 1990s until her death in 2016. Rafał Kalukin is also a political journalist of this newspaper, also publishing in other weeklies: right-

¹ It is worth noting that during the coding process it turned out that in some of the texts their authors did not disclose their names and surnames. Several variants of this type of situation were identified. First of all, the articles were not signed at all. Secondly, the articles were signed collectively by indicating the affiliation, i.e. the editorial board. Thirdly, the articles were signed individually, but not by name, but only by affiliation. In the entire sample of coded journalist statements containing at least one element of the populist discourse, i.e. a reference to 'the people', criticism of 'the elite' or exclusion of 'others', 27 such cases were recorded, which constituted 2.5% of all such statements coming directly from journalists.

wing *Wprost* and liberal *Newsweek*. He has collaborated with the centre-liberal daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Stanisław Tym, a columnist of *Polityka*, is a renowned satirist, actor, comedian and director.

Rafał Ziemkiewicz and Piotr Semka are columnists of the conservative-liberal weekly *Do Rzeczy*, with notable experience in press, radio and television journalism. Materials by R. Ziemkiewicz have been published in papers with various socio-political profiles (*Wprost*, *Newsweek*, *Polityka*, *Rzeczpospolita*, *Przewodnik Katolicki*), and articles by P. Semka were mostly published by papers preferring right-wing, conservative, and Catholic views, such as: *Rzeczpospolita*, *Gazeta Polska*, *Przewodnik Katolicki*, *Uważam Rze*, and *W Sieci*.

The most crucial point for the research was to diagnose the most frequent elements of populist discourse in the statements of the aforementioned journalists. During the coding of particular articles, attention was paid to all references from the previously selected categories, namely: ‘the people’, ‘the elite’, and ‘out-groups’. Similarly, as in chapter 2, we found some of these elements in isolation or in combination, indicating the presence of one of the types of populism: *empty populism*, *anti-elitist populism*, *excluding populism*, or *complete populism* (see also chapter 1). Table 3.7 presents the percentage distribution of the presence of particular elements of discourse or types of populism in the total number of coded statements of a given journalist.

Table 3.7. Frequency of indicators of populist discourse in statements made by selected journalists (%)

Name and surname (number of populist statements)	Empty populism	Criticism toward elite	Negative approach to the out-groups	Anti-elitist populism	Excluding populism	Complete populism
Krystyna Grzybowska – <i>W sieci</i> (n=25)	70	92	16	70	8	4
Tomasz Lis – <i>Newsweek</i> (n=25)	44	96	4	36	4	4
Stanisław Tym (n=20)	20	95	0	15	0	0
Rafał Ziemkiewicz – <i>Do Rzeczy</i> (n=18)	72	94	16	66	16	11
Bronisław Wildstein – <i>W sieci</i> (n=17)	41	94	6	35	6	6
Piotr Semka – <i>Do Rzeczy</i> (n=17)	23	100	12	23	0	0
Jacek Karnowski – <i>W sieci</i> (n=15)	80	93	13	73	6	6
Janina Paradowska – <i>Polityka</i> (n=15)	40	100	0	40	0	0
Piotr Skwieciński – <i>W sieci</i> (n=15)	40	93	0	33	0	0
Rafał Kalukin – <i>Newsweek</i> (n=15)	46	100	6	46	6	6

Source: Own elaboration.

The data presented in Table 3.7 indicates that the statements by journalists were dominated by elements of criticism directed at ‘the elite’ (without reference to ‘the

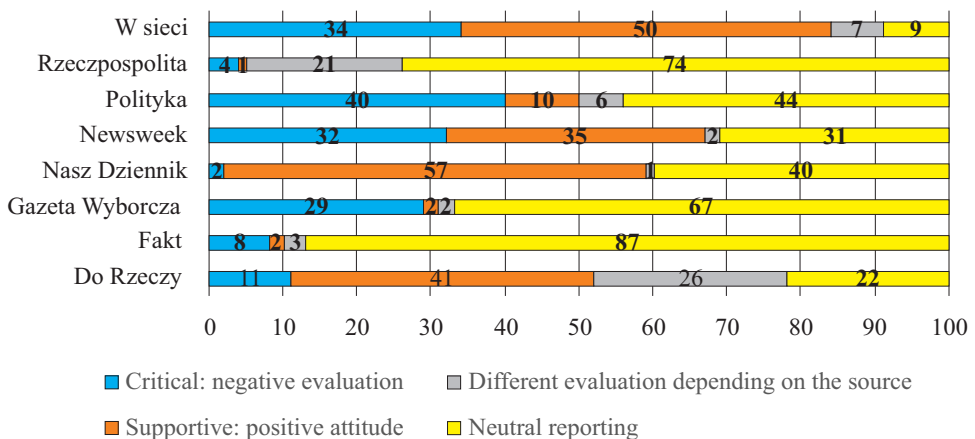
people'): over 90% of the statements of all the surveyed journalists contained this element. Interestingly, in the case of several right-wing weekly journalists (K. Grabowska, R. Ziemkiewicz and J. Karnowski), there was also a high percentage of statements containing indicators of anti-elitist populism. Moreover, the same authors were distinguished by a high rate of statements containing only references to 'the people' (*empty populism*). As a result, the picture of politics presented by these journalists in right-wing newspapers created the impression of a constant confrontation between two opposing worlds: 'the people' and 'the elite'.

Much less common in the statements of journalists were references to 'out-groups' or indicators of excluding populism and complete populism. The only exception was Rafał Ziemkiewicz – a conservative journalist of the right-wing weekly *Do Rzeczy*, with a dozen or so percent of his statements including these two types of populism.

Journalists as Interpreters of Populist Statements

Our study showed that Polish journalists do not only play a role of originator of populist statements in the news media, but also a role of interpreter. However, as Figure 3.3 presents, journalists from particular media organizations differed significantly from the others in that matter. Namely, journalists working for daily newspapers such as *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*, and *Fakt* preferred a neutral reporting over evaluation of populist statements provided by other speakers. On the other hand, journalists from two right-wing, conservative media organizations: *Do Rzeczy* and *Nasz Dziennik* most frequently supported populist statements made by other speakers. The highest percentage of critical approach (around 30–40% of all the attitudes) was found in four news media organizations: a right-wing weekly magazine *W sieci*, and three more liberal-oriented media outlets: a daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* and two weekly magazines: *Polityka* and *Newsweek*. The media outlets with the highest percentage of different evaluations depending on who was

Figure 3.3. Journalists' attitudes towards populist statements per media outlet (%)



Source: Own elaboration.

the speaker (a source of populist statement) were two conservative media organizations: *Do Rzeczy* and *Rzeczpospolita*.

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to determine who was the main source of statements containing at least one element of populist discourse (and populist statements in particular) in the Polish print press. Although political actors were ‘usual suspects’ here, journalists appeared to be the main source of statements referring to ‘the people’, criticizing ‘the elite’, or excluding ‘out-groups’. Still, political actors were the source of almost one third of all such statements covered by the media: their statements, containing at least one element of populist discourse, constituted almost 28% of the total, i.e. more than ¼ of all speakers’ statements of this type. Political actors, whose statements contained at least one element of populist discourse, were the most frequently reported by all the studied papers, and were the politicians of the PiS party: Jarosław Kaczyński, Andrzej Duda, and Beata Szydło. The statements of political actors reported by the media (in general and these particular persons) were focused mostly on a criticism of ‘the elite’ and emphasizing a dichotomy between ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’.

Based on the literature on roles of the media in populist political communication, as well as on the previous studies on journalist role performance in Poland, we assumed that Polish media would actively participate in populist political communication. We assumed that journalists would not only play the role of gatekeepers (disseminating the statements made by other speakers) but also originators and interpreters of populist messages. It has been confirmed by findings on media coverage of populist statements, the journalists’ attitudes toward populist statements made by other speakers, and on a populist statements generated by journalists themselves.

In comparison with other analyzed media organizations, *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Fakt* showed the highest percentage (42.7% and 38.4%, respectively) of politicians’ statements containing at least one element of populist discourse out of the total number of such statements published in the newspaper. What they also shared was a relatively strong tendency to rather neutrally report on the populist statements than employ any active approach towards them. Still, journalists from *Gazeta Wyborcza* were among those who quite often criticized populist statements they covered.

Other newspapers employed different strategies toward populist statements made by other speakers. For example, journalists in *Rzeczpospolita* were mostly focused on a neutral dissemination of populist statements of political actors, while journalists working for such media organizations as *Nasz Dziennik*, *Do Rzeczy*, or *W sieci* predominantly supported such statements. *Do Rzeczy* was also the media organization where journalists’ attitude toward the populist statements varied the most, depending on whose statements journalists covered in their publications.

It is worth emphasizing that in the analyzed materials, it was journalists who were the most frequent source of statements containing at least one element of populist discourse. They constituted nearly 47% of all coded speakers. However, most of their messages included just a critical attitude towards ‘the elite’ (without any reference to

'the people'). Significantly, journalists' statements containing at least one element of populist discourse were most often presented in the weekly press, regardless of their socio-political affiliations: most statements containing indicators of populist discourse were published both in the liberal-left weekly *Polityka* and the conservative weekly *W sieci*. Our results supported also observations made in other countries regarding the predisposition of tabloid journalism toward media populism (Krämer, 2014, pp. 49–50; Esser et al., p. 373), but in the case of *Fakt* it was the populism *through* the media, not populism *by* the media.

Determining the identity of journalists whose statements were most frequently published allowed us to notice that in the vast majority of cases, they were published by their primary media organizations (although most of them also published their materials in other media organizations) and these were mostly right-wing journalists from conservative right-wing papers such as *W sieci* and *Do Rzeczy*. Additionally, journalists of that type of the media outlets were the most engaged in evaluating populists statement made by other speakers and their evaluations depended on who the speaker was. In other words, they did not seem to have a clear attitude toward populist discourse as such, but a clear bias toward the sources of populist statements.

Once we compare political actors and journalists as originators of the populist statements we can notice similarities and differences. What these two groups share is a prevalence of criticism toward 'the elite', followed by *anti-elitist populism* in the statements included in the media coverage of the Polish politics. What differs them is a stronger tendency among political actors than journalists to refer to 'the people' and 'out-groups', as well employing the excluding populism in the statements.

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4. What Populism is About?

Topics in Populist Discourse in Print Media

Jakub Jakubowski, Agnieszka Stepińska, and Denis Halagiera

Introduction

According to the concept of populism as a thin ideology, the general structure of populist political narration can be augmented with hard ideology referring to permanent sets of values or topics (Stanley, 2008). Hence, one area of research in populist political communication is the analysis of issues or events that, when covered or discussed, trigger the use of populist discourse (Esser et al., 2019).

For the purpose of this study, we are using a heuristic model to analyse populist political communication (Reinemann et al., 2017, pp. 21–23). The model includes four key elements at three levels of social analysis: (1) Structural and situational context at the macro-level; (2) Parties, movements, and their representatives at the meso-level; (3) Journalistic and social media at the meso-level; (4) Individual citizens at the micro-level (Reinemann et al., 2017, p. 21). In this chapter, we will focus on structural and situational context at the macro-level. The contextual factors include relatively stable features such as characteristics of political and media systems, or a political and journalistic culture, as well as historical experience, ethnic issues, and previous international relations (Urbinati, 2013), while situational factors are related to real-world political, social, economic, or cultural events, issues, challenges, and phenomena (Reinemann et al., 2017, p. 21).

Some situational factors that can influence the presence of populist discourse in media coverage are indicated by the results of research investigating the conditions which facilitate the emergence of populist actors, such as deteriorating economic conditions, unemployment, and modernization (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, 2014; Kioupkiolis, 2016; Rooduijn and Akkerman, 2017; Rico and Anduiza, 2019). Certain studies also show that a rise of populism may be triggered by an increased sense of threat posed by migrants (Scheepers et al., 2002; Koopmans and Muis, 2009). However, a longitudinal study on media coverage of immigration (Esser et al., 2019) revealed no convincing empirical evidence for a direct relation between increased populism in news stories on immigration and immigration-related real world trends or growing public concerns about immigration. But, as the authors claim, “this does not mean that the events and concerns of the population do not play a role, but rather that they are not the main explanatory factors for how much populism there is in media reports” (Esser et al., 2019, p. 137).

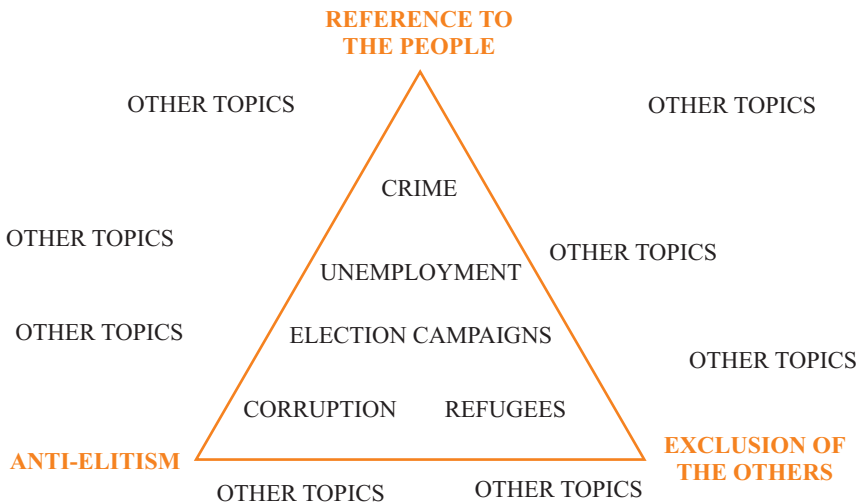
Another factor that could explain the presence of populist discourse in media coverage is the occurrence of electoral campaigns (Manucci and Weber, 2017). The claim

that mainstream parties are “imitating” populist parties, particularly those of the populist radical right, has been around for a long time. Empirical studies, however, provide little corroborating evidence. For example, M. Rooduijn, S.L. de Lange and W. van der Brug (2012) concluded in their comparative research that the programs of mainstream parties in Western European countries (France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom) have not become more populist in recent years (see: Hameleers et al., 2017). They found no evidence that mainstream parties change their programs when confronted with electoral losses or successful populist challengers. Similar conclusions were reached by scholars in the Baltic countries, specifically with regards to parties in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. They found that populism is stronger in the “policy” dimension than in “identity formation” among mainstream parties (Jakobson et al., 2012; Heinze, 2017).

Still, some studies found evidence to suggest that there is some spillover effect on either economy (Schumacher and Van Kersbergen, 2016) or migration issues (Meijers, 2017). Furthermore, all political actors competing in elections share an interest in strengthening their influence on the society they belong to in order to gain electoral support. Hence, many political actors have a tendency to focus on valence issues (such as corruption, jobs, economy, or crime) that are usually “owned” by the populist parties and presented in a negative way (Curini, 2018) during the election period. Therefore, mainstream political parties do tend to use populist communication style and content during election campaigns (Plasser and Ulram, 2003; Mudde, 2004; Bonikowski and Gidron, 2016; Aalberg et al., 2017; Stepińska and Adamczewska, 2017).

Previous research in various countries has made it possible to create a specific map of topics with high populist potential (see Figure 4.1). The aim of the analysis of the content of news media, presented in the later part of this section, will be to develop a map of the

Figure 4.1. ‘Populist potential’ of topics in media discourse



Source: Own elaboration based on Scheepers, 2002; Fieschi and Heywood, 2004; Taggart, 2004; Laycock, 2005; Koopmans and Muis, 2009; Kriesi, 2014; Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, 2014; Kioupiolis, 2016; Rooduijn and Akkerman, 2017; Manucci and Weber, 2017; Curini, 2017; Podobnik et al., 2017; Stavrakakis, 2017; The EEAG Report, 2017; Rico and Anduiza, 2019.

topics covered by the media which were accompanied by statements containing elements of populist discourse. This analysis will be preceded by a presentation of contextual and situational factors surrounding populist political communication in Poland.

Contextual Factors Surrounding Populist Political Communication in Poland

In studying populist political communication in Poland it is important to recognize the ethnic and religious homogeneity of its population (95% declaring Polish nationality [GUS, 2016a] and nearly 92% Roman Catholicism [GUS, 2018]), strong memory of World War II, the period of enforced communism in the post-war history of Poland, and complicated relations with neighboring countries (especially Russia and Germany), which results in a strong sense of national identity. These factors, constituting an important point of reference for political debate, were the rationale behind P. Przyłęcki's (2012) inclusion of a negative attitude towards Germany, anti-communism, and references to tradition, history, and religion as specific indicators of Polish populism (Przyłęcki, 2012, pp. 119–120). In our codebook we also include a negative attitude towards Russia (see chapter 1).

Another important factor in the study of populist political communication is the specificity of the political and party system in Poland. Since 2005 we have seen a clear strengthening of two major parties on the political scene: Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform, hereafter PO) and Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice, hereafter PiS), placing many other political actors (such as Samoobrona, Ruch Palikota, Kukiz '15, Wiosna, and others) in clear opposition to “those who have already been in power,” i.e. mainly the aforementioned PO and PiS. Their absence from power structures combined with programs intended to help and empower the “ordinary man” (pro-social programs, direct democracy) seem to exacerbate the anti-elitist attitude of many actors on the Polish political scene.

The Polish political scene is also decidedly right-wing. Conservative parties have not only been holding power in Poland since 2005, but have also fully dominated the Polish parliament (between 2015 and 2019 there was no institutional representative of the traditionally understood left-wing worldview). This naturally introduces ideological and narrative elements characteristic of right-wing populism into the discourse (national and xenophobic elements, racism, anti-Semitism, arguments against minority groups).

A. Lipiński and A. Stępińska (2019) identified several other factors that have created a political, social, and cultural ‘reservoir’ to be exploited by far-right political parties, such as (1) voter volatility, (2) socio-economic conditions, and (3) voters’ opinions regarding the incumbent government. For example, they discuss a low level of consistency in voter behavior resulting in a high level of volatility and a low level of party loyalty: features that have been observed among Polish voters since the 1990s (see also Cześniak, 2009; 2010). They also claim that Polish voters express their distrust and disappointment as soon as possible, very rarely giving those who are in power an opportunity to further their agendas. Not surprisingly, though, some political parties change their labels quite frequently and eagerly adopt their politics to current social expectations and needs, hoping for a new chance (more about that in: Antoszewski and Herbut, 1999; Markowski, 2010).

Furthermore, A. Lipiński and A. Stepińska (2019) noticed that worsening economic conditions increase dissatisfaction with an incumbent government which may create a ‘propitious context’ for populist political parties. In fact, the perceived deterioration of the economic situation may enhance pro-populist attitudes among the voters. Despite the fact that a socioeconomic situation in Poland in 2015 was remarkably healthy (in view of the data provided by Główny Urząd Statystyczny [*Central Statistical Office of Poland*, GUS, 2016b; 2016c]), one third of Polish people (35%) were dissatisfied with their economic situation (CBOS, 2015).

Situational Factors Surrounding Populist Political Communication in Poland

In addition to more general social, political, and cultural features of the Polish public sphere, some particular events may act as triggers for the use of populist discourse in the media coverage of politics. It is also worth pointing out that the analyzed research material comes from the years 2015–2017 and covers the period of two election campaigns: the presidential campaign in May 2015 and the parliamentary campaign in autumn 2015. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that elections became one of the leading topics in the analyzed material, alongside national politics and party relations (with the keywords being the names of political parties and the names of politicians – see chapter 1).

The basic question is, therefore, what events were presented by the Polish media in reports on the activity of Polish political actors, especially during the election campaign, and which of these events contributed to the presence of elements of populist discourse in the reported statements. Compiling a review of the events to which the media and public opinion devoted their attention in the years 2015–2017 allowed us to make a preliminary separation of the events in national politics with a significant ‘populist potential’.

These included: (1) a government program *Rodzina 500 plus* (*Family 500 plus*): 500 PLN of financial support per child for families with two or more children; (2) “Black protest” against governmental plans to harshen the laws on abortion; (3) changes in the laws concerning the judiciary system; (4) changes in the educational system (dismantling of junior high-schools; layoffs of teachers); (5) changes in the media laws (leading to politicization of the public media in Poland); and (6) changes in the environmental laws (permission to cut down the trees).

The issues intensively discussed by the media and politicians at the time also included: the role of the referendum in the decision-making system (due to electoral calls made by populist political organization Kukiz’15 and its leader Paweł Kukiz), lowering the retirement age, relief for entrepreneurs, tax-free allowance, conversion of mortgage loans in Swiss francs into zlotys, and protection of agricultural land. The next part of the chapter will present a detailed analysis of the presence of topics related to these events in the printed press and the saturation of reports with the elements of populist discourse.

The immigration crisis in Europe, which coincided to a large extent with the parliamentary election campaign in 2015, was also important for determining the pres-

ence of elements of populist discourse in the media. It became an important topic of this campaign, polarizing the political scene into the right-wing, clearly opposed to admitting immigrants, and the liberals with an ambiguous attitude toward immigration. Earlier studies (Esser et al., 2019, pp. 130–132) showed that in 2016–2017 the Polish newspapers did not pay much attention to this topic, but when they did, the large part of the reports contained elements of populist discourse. It is worth noting that in the analyzed period (2015–2017) the issue of refugees was only one of the aspects of the phenomenon of immigration – another was the massive economic migration from Ukraine resulting from facilitated access to the Polish labour market and the economic and political crisis back home.

Another important factor was the tense relations between Poland and the European Union, covering such issues as: conflict over the Constitutional Tribunal, controversial changes in the public media introduced by the PiS government, and the elections for President of the European Council: Donald Tusk (a former prime minister from PO) won these elections despite strong opposition from the PiS government). While the EU blamed the PiS government for illiberal and non-democratic policy, the PiS government argued it was only fighting for greater autonomy within the European Union and strengthening of state sovereignty (so-called “not-on-our-knees-anymore” policy) and blamed the EU for interfering into the domestic issues of a sovereign state. As P. Przyłęcki (2012) noted earlier, PiS has been using an anti-European narrative for years, accusing EU authorities of lacking democratic mandate and imposing costly bureaucracy. In 2016, an additional impulse to discuss the condition of the EU was the referendum in the United Kingdom on leaving the EU (*Brexit*).

Finally, it is worth noting an event which did not take place in the analyzed period but left its mark on Polish contemporary politics, namely the crash of the Polish Tu-154M aircraft in Smolensk (Russia) on 10 April 2010, killing the Polish presidential couple and many prominent national politicians and military personnel. Although this issue could be classified as ‘historical’, it still constitutes a significant element in the current political dispute over the causes and culprits. Numerous conspiracy theories, the diplomatic dispute between Poland and Russia over the plane wreck which has not yet been handed over, the ongoing court proceedings, and the conflict over responsibility for this event are some of the main axes of the political dispute between the PO and the PiS parties. Since 2010, this topic has been mentioned on every occasion and it was therefore possible to assume that during the election campaigns in 2015, the subject of the disaster would generate a significant number of statements containing elements of populist discourse, especially anti-elitism and constructing ‘the other’ (‘out-groups’).

The Study

We will try to draw a thematic map of Polish populist discourse in 2015–2017 by answering the following detailed research questions: (1) What were the most frequently discussed topics in the collected information materials? (2) What topics were most frequently discussed in materials that contained at least one element

of populist discourse, i.e. reference to ‘the people’, anti-elitism, or exclusion of ‘out-groups’? (3) Which topics were accompanied by a specific type of populism identified by J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007), i.e. *empty*, *anti-elitist*, *excluding*, or *complete populism*? (4) Which topics were accompanied by additional, specifically Polish populist strategies? (5) What were the similarities and differences between the various media organizations?

The codebook contained a list of the following 21 general categories: (1) Domestic politics; (2) International politics; (3) Military and defense; (4) National security; (5) Economy; (6) Labour-industrial relations; (7) Business, trade, industry; (8) Transport; (9) Health and social work; (10) Population; (11) Education; (12) Media and communication; (13) Housing; (14) Environment; (15) Energy; (16) Science and technology; (17) Social relations; (18) Accidents and disasters; (19) Culture; (20) Official ceremonies; (21) Religion. Within these categories, specific topics were distinguished. Each article that contained a reference to Polish political actors was subject to coding in terms of topics, regardless of whether it contained at least one element of populist discourse or not.

The topics were assigned to the whole article, not to individual statements, so the unit of analysis in this chapter is a single article (not a statement, as in chapters 2 and 3). For each material analyzed, the encoder could use up to three codes to define detailed topics. They were assigned to the general topics only at a later stage of analysis (the categories were indicated by the first digit of the code).

The next part of this chapter will show the incidence of particular topics in press materials devoted to political entities, and then examine the presence of indicators of populist discourse in articles devoted to specific topics in individual newspapers.

Findings

Topics in Political News

Due to the specific nature of the research sample, it is not surprising that the most frequently discussed general topic in the materials devoted to Polish political actors was domestic politics. It dominated over the remaining categories, with nearly 60% of codes being assigned to this category, at 1.3 topics per article (i.e. one article concerned more than one specific topic within the category of domestic politics).¹

The second most common general topic was international politics, although it constituted less than 8% of all coded topics (i.e. 17% of the articles referring to at least one Polish political actor). Other relatively frequent general topics included economy (10% of articles), culture (9% of articles), and media and communication (8% of articles) (see Table 4.1; other general topics were present in less than 4% of articles).

¹ Calculations of percentage occurrence of particular detailed topics in relation to the total number of coded topics (N=4,465) sum up to 100, while calculations based on the number of articles (N=2,081) do not sum up to 100 due to the fact that each article could be assigned up to 3 codes specifying detailed topics.

Table 4.1. General categories of materials containing reference to Polish political actors

Categories	n	Frequency per topic (N=4566)	Frequency per article (N=2081)
Domestic politics	2684	0.58	1.30
International politics	362	0.08	0.17
Economy	209	0.05	0.10
Culture	198	0.04	0.09
Media and communication	169	0.04	0.08
Social relations	126	0.03	0.06
National security	122	0.03	0.06
Business, trade, industry	109	0.02	0.05
Population	91	0.02	0.04
Ceremonies	90	0.02	0.04
Other		<0.02	<0.04

Source: Own elaboration.

Topics related to domestic politics require a closer look. As predicted, the analyzed materials focused on elections (31% of all analyzed articles concerned the presidential or parliamentary elections held in 2015). The analysis showed that the other most frequently reported topics were statements and activities of specific politicians (26% of articles), the executive branch (17% of articles), and inter-party relations (14%) (see Table 4.2; other detailed topics were present in less than 3% of articles).

Table 4.2. Detailed topics in materials in the ‘domestic politics’ category with references to Polish political actors

Detailed topics	n	Frequency per domestic politics topic (N=2684)	Frequency per article (N=2081)
Elections	652	0.24	0.31
Statements and activity of individual politicians	544	0.20	0.26
Activities of the executive branch	350	0.13	0.17
Inter-party relations	289	0.11	0.14
Other (domestic politics)	166	0.06	0.08
Activities of the legislature	136	0.05	0.06
Intra-party relations	126	0.05	0.06
Public opinion and public opinion polls	101	0.04	0.05
Abuse of political power and corruption	72	0.03	0.03
Issues regulated by the constitution	57	0.02	0.03
Other		<0.02	<0.03

Source: Own elaboration.

Apart from the motifs concerning various aspects of domestic policy, detailed topics intensively covered in the media in 2015–2017 included the activities of foreign politicians (4% of articles), the activities of international political organizations (4% of articles), and aviation disasters (3% of articles). Other topics were mentioned even

more rarely, with the group of topics present in 2% of the materials including journalism and media, diplomatic negotiations and agreements, immigration, and international tensions. These data confirm previous observations of the relatively high degree of attention paid by the media to the activities undertaken by the European Union in the analyzed period and to the aviation disaster in 2010.

A comparative analysis of the content of individual newspapers showed a similarly high level of interest in national politics, ranging from 0.89 per article in *Nasz Dziennik* to 1.7 in *Fakt*. Differences in the attention paid by different media outlets to individual topics are particularly evident in areas such as economy, media, social relations, and health. The right-wing weekly *Do Rzeczy* was distinguished by a high percentage of articles on international politics (38% of the articles refer to this subject), the media (16%), and national security (13%). Another right-wing weekly, *W Sieci*, and the centre-right daily, *Rzeczpospolita*, also published a relatively high number of materials on international affairs (24% and 22% of their articles, respectively). *Rzeczpospolita* also focused on economy (19% of articles).

In turn, two liberally oriented weekly magazines, *Polityka* and *Newsweek*, devoted more attention than other newspapers to cultural events in which Polish politicians were involved (19% and 11%, respectively). Interestingly, two weekly magazines representing completely different political orientations, the right-wing weekly *Do Rzeczy* and the left-wing (liberal) weekly *Polityka*, devoted similar attention to the subject of social relations (16% and 15%, respectively). On the other hand, health and social service issues were most often mentioned in the tabloid *Fakt* (11%).

In terms of detailed topics, interesting similarities and differences can also be observed between two newspapers representing completely different political orientations, i.e. the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza* and the Catholic-nationalist *Nasz Dziennik*. What linked the two newspapers was the fact that immigration was one of the five most frequently discussed topics. What significantly differentiated them was the relatively high percentage of articles devoted to constitutional and media issues in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (articles criticizing the activities of the Law and Justice government in the judiciary and public media), while one of the most frequently discussed topics by *Nasz Dziennik* was abortion (in the context of proposals to tighten the abortion ban and protests against them, the so-called ‘black marches’).

Populist Discourse and Topics in the News

The next step in the analysis was to identify the topics that appeared most frequently in articles containing statements with at least one element of populist discourse (N=1,498). There was a total of 3,255 instances of the detailed topics being used in the studied articles. The juxtaposition of the most frequently reported general topics also emphasizes the clear dominance of national politics, with more than one topic belonging to this category (1.4) per article. The second most frequently discussed general topic was international politics, comprising 17% of the articles. It should be emphasized that the authors of the analyzed newspapers frequently raised issues related to economy (10% of articles), media and communication (7%), and culture (6%). Other thematic areas were less frequent (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3. General topics discussed in materials containing at least one indicator of populist discourse

General topic	n	Frequency per article (N=1498)
Domestic politics	2054	1.40
International politics	257	0.17
Economy	147	0.10
Media and communication	109	0.07
Culture	89	0.06
Population	68	0.04
National security	66	0.04
Other		<0.04

Source: Own elaboration.

The data in Table 4.3 show that the most frequently (over 4%) reported topics in materials containing statements with at least one element of populist discourse were almost the same as in the entire sample of articles concerning Polish political actors (see Table 4.1) except for official ceremonies, business/trade/industry, and social relations. Similar conclusions can be drawn for the most frequently reported detailed topics: in this case, the list of topics in Table 4.4 is almost identical to the list in Table 4.2. This phenomenon can be explained, *inter alia*, by the high percentage of articles devoted to Polish political actors containing at least one element of populist discourse (72%, see chapter 2).

Table 4.4. Detailed topics discussed in materials from the 'domestic politics' category containing at least one indicator of populist discourse

Detailed topics	n	Frequency per article (N=1498)
Elections	542	0.36
Statements and activities of individual politicians	395	0.26
Activities of the executive branch	278	0.18
Inter-party relations	213	0.14
Other (domestic politics)	126	0.08
Activities of the legislature	90	0.06
Inner-party relations	90	0.06
Public opinion and public opinion polls	75	0.05
Abuse of political power and corruption	62	0.04
Issues regulated by the constitution	43	0.03
Other		<0.03

Source: Own elaboration.

As in the case of the entire sample (i.e. all articles containing references to Polish political actors), so too in the case of materials containing statements with at least one

element of populist discourse we could observe some similarities and differences between media organizations.

In *Do Rzeczy*, *Newsweek*, *Rzeczpospolita*, and *W Sieci*, the second most frequently presented general issue after domestic politics was international politics (present in between 20% and 51% of articles published in the papers). In turn, in the articles published in *Fakt*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, and *Nasz Dziennik*, the other most popular general topic was economy (from 7% to 16% of articles). It should be noted that economy often appeared in *Rzeczpospolita* as well (17% of the materials published in this journal). *Polityka*, on the other hand, was particularly focused on culture (13% of the articles).

It is also worth recognizing that the authors of materials containing at least one element of populist discourse in *Do Rzeczy* and *Gazeta Wyborcza* often addressed issues related to media and communication (19% and 9%, respectively). In addition, a relatively common general topic in *Fakt* (10%) and *Nasz Dziennik* (7%) was health and social services, while the journalists of *Do Rzeczy* and *Polityka* often wrote about social relations (17% and 10%, respectively).

Differences were also evident in how often certain newspapers covered specific topics outside of national politics. In this case, discussion of the activity of specific foreign politicians dominated in *Do Rzeczy* and *Newsweek* and was also clearly present in the weekly *W Sieci*. *Newsweek* often wrote about aviation disasters. Moreover, the authors of materials published in *Nasz Dziennik* and *W Sieci*, i.e. two clearly right-wing, conservative newspapers, reported on international political organizations more often than journalists from other media outlets. In turn, *Gazeta Wyborcza* articles relatively frequently focused on journalism and media, while *Fakt* journalists preferred to write about social policy. The content of *Rzeczpospolita* could be distinguished by the frequency of articles about taxes.

Separation of the most frequently discussed topics in the materials published in the studied newspapers was the starting point for deeper analysis of the presence of particular elements of populist discourse and particular types of populism in these articles.

Tables 4.5 and 4.6 present the most frequently reported topics in articles containing at least one element of populist discourse. For each of these topics, we established how often they were accompanied by references to ‘the people’, critical attitude towards ‘the elite’ or ‘out-groups’, or whether a certain type of populism was present: empty populism (only referring to ‘the people’), anti-elitist populism (reference to ‘the people’ combined with criticism of ‘the elite’), excluding populism (reference to ‘the people’ combined with exclusion of out-groups), or complete populism (reference to ‘the people’ with criticism of ‘the elite’ and exclusion of ‘out-groups’). The data in both tables show the percentage of references to a given topic that were accompanied by statements containing a single element or a combination of elements of populist discourse.

The highest presence of empty populism among articles about national politics (see Table 4.5) was observed in articles discussing the activities of legislators (11% of all references to this subject contained references to ‘the people’) and opinion polls (9%). In turn, indicators of anti-elitist populism were seen most frequently in articles about constitutional issues (70%), elections (54%), and the parliament’s activities (54%). Indicators of excluding populism were practically absent, while indicators of complete populism were present most frequently in articles covering inter-party relations (7%)

and activities of the national government (7%). Interestingly, for some topics criticism of ‘the elite’ without reference to ‘the people’ was more frequent than the presence of anti-elitist populism (e.g. intra-party relations, corruption, or political actors’ statements and performance), while in other cases it was the opposite – anti-elitist populism was more frequent than elite criticism itself. This was the case with issues regulated by the constitution, elections, opinion polls, and the activities of legislators.

Table 4.5. Indicators of populist discourse in articles containing the most frequent topics from the ‘domestic politics’ category

Detailed topics	N	People (Empty populism)	Elite	Out-groups	Anti-elitist populism	Excluding populism	Complete populism
Elections	542	0.07	0.36	0.003	0.54	0.002	0.01
Statements and activities of individual politicians	395	0.03	0.51	0.01	0.38	0.005	0.04
Activities of the executive branch	278	0.01	0.49	0.01	0.37	0.007	0.07
Inter-party relations	213	0.009	0.48	0.0	0.42	0.0	0.05
Activities of legislators	126	0.11	0.33	0.0	0.54	0.0	0.05
Inter-party relations	90	0.0	0.61	0.0	0.24	0.0	0.07
Public opinion and public opinion polls	75	0.09	0.31	0.03	0.45	0.01	0.04
Abuse of political power, corruption	62	0.03	0.56	0.0	0.37	0.0	0.03
Issues regulated by the constitution	43	0.04	0.23	0.0	0.70	0.0	0.02

Source: Own elaboration.

Analysis of the content of media messages concerning the most popular topics apart from national policy (see Table 4.6) showed a higher frequency of critical statements towards elites than anti-elitist populism (the exception being immigration). At the same time, it is worth noting that the presence of most of the individual elements of populist discourse – and their juxtapositions representing specific types of populism – were significantly lower than in the case of topics concerning national policy.

Table 4.6. Elements of the populist discourse in materials containing the most frequent topics outside the ‘domestic politics’ category

Detailed topics	N	People (Empty populism)	Elite	Out-groups	Anti-elitist populism	Excluding populism	Complete populism
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Activities of foreign politicians	69	0.01	0.55	0.01	0.34	0.0	0.04
Activities of international political organizations	63	0.05	0.51	0.0	0.24	0.0	0.09
Plane crash	47	0.02	0.47	0.0	0.45	0.0	0.02
Journalism and media	42	0.02	0.43	0.02	0.40	0.0	0.09
Immigration	39	0.03	0.10	0.18	0.10	0.10	0.15

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Diplomatic negotiations and agreements	34	0.03	0.59	0.0	0.29	0.0	0.03
International tensions and conflicts	29	0.14	0.45	0.0	0.31	0.0	0.10
State of the economy	26	0.04	0.46	0.0	0.42	0.0	0.04
National defense policy	25	0.04	0.56	0.0	0.32	0.0	0.0

Source: Own elaboration.

However, it is worth noting that the highest rates of critical attitude toward elites were recorded in articles regarding diplomatic negotiations (59%), national defense policy (56%), foreign politicians (55%), and international political organizations (51%). On the other hand, relatively high rates of anti-elitist populism were recorded in materials related to the plane crash (45%), the state of the economy (42%), and foreign politicians (34%).

Populist Discourse and Topics in Media Outlets

One of our research questions (RQ5) concerned the differences and similarities between individual newspapers regarding the types of populism found in materials on various topics.

In the tabloid *Fakt empty populism* that dominated in materials about topics such as referendum and opinion polling, actions of specific foreign politicians, and statements on international policy, as well as budget and health policies. More than half of the references to these issues were accompanied by references to ‘the people’ in the examined articles. *Empty populism* was also present during discussions of issues related to national policy (activities of legislative authorities, elections, and statements and activities of specific politicians). Significantly, *empty populism* was also present in statements in articles on the Smoleńsk plane crash. *Anti-elitist populism* was clearly present in materials regarding Polish politics and economy, in particular in materials showing economic indicators, data on the labour market and employment, as well as tax scales.

The liberal daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*, which was critical of the political actors that came to power as a result of the elections in 2015, i.e. PiS and its presidential candidate Andrzej Duda, was characterized by a high presence (50% and more) of *anti-elitist populism* in materials devoted to national politics – mainly the activities of executive authorities (i.e. the government and the president) and issues regulated by the constitution, as well as military and economic activities (especially in the areas of the labour market and employment). *Empty populism* appeared in this press title mainly in materials devoted to inter-party relations, the economic situation in Poland, health policy, and public holidays and ceremonies.

On the other hand, *Nasz Dziennik*, a Catholic-nationalist daily, sympathetic to or even directly supporting PiS, was distinguished by a relatively low incidence of indicators of *anti-elitist populism* in materials devoted to executive and legislative power (about 30%). At the same time, high rates of this type of populism (50%) were record-

ed in materials devoted to the referendum, abuse of power and corruption, and the vote of no confidence in the government. Due to the political orientation of *Nasz Dziennik*, the critique focused on specific political actors (opposition and not the ruling elite). By the same logic we can explain the presence of indicators of *anti-elitist populism* in materials devoted to the national defense policy, peaceful demonstrations (against the PiS government), and strikes. *Empty populism*, i.e. references only to 'the people', could be found mainly in articles referring to the issue of educational reform in the statements of individual politicians. In turn, *complete populism*, combining references to 'the people', anti-elitism, and exclusion of 'out-groups', was detected in articles covering immigration and gender issues.

Rzeczpospolita, which can be described as moderately right-wing, was characterized by high rates of *anti-elitist populism* in materials discussing various aspects of national politics (60% to 90% of references to specific topics belonging to this thematic category included indicators of anti-elitist populism), international politics, and economy and health. Much less frequently we detected *empty populism*, e.g. in materials about public opinion (45.5%), activities of international political organizations (30%), diplomatic visits, diplomatic negotiations and agreements, economic and legal issues, business activities, and immigration and emigration (25% to 60%).

Among the analyzed weeklies, the centre-left *Polityka* was distinguished by a relatively high presence of *complete populism* in materials devoted to the activities of executive bodies: almost 69% of references to the actions taken by the government and president were accompanied by statements containing references to 'the people', a critical attitude towards 'the elite', and exclusion of 'out-groups'. In turn, there was a moderate level of *anti-elitist populism* (about 25–33%) in materials concerning the activity of the legislature, inter-party relations, and statements or activities of individual politicians, as well as international politics. References to 'the people' alone could be found in *Polityka* mainly in texts on budget, economic activity, and social policy. Given the liberal orientation of the weekly, it is not surprising that there was a high presence of *anti-elitist populism* (which in this case refers *de facto* to the ruling elite, i.e. PiS) in materials on social relations, in particular in articles on gender, class, and family issues. It was also the only press title in which populist discourse often appeared in articles on environmental protection.

Newsweek weekly was characterized by a moderate presence of *anti-elitist populism* in materials concerning the activities of the legislative and executive authorities and a relatively high presence in materials on elections, referendums, the airplane crash, and television. In addition, indicators of empty populism appeared in texts on emigration, culture (literature and poetry, painting and sculpture, awards and distinctions), and ceremonies (state, national, religious and anniversary events).

As shown in chapter 2, the right-wing weekly *Do Rzeczy* was characterized by high rates of *anti-elitist* and complete populism. Analysis showed that both these types of populism were present mainly in materials devoted to national politics (at least half contained indicators of *anti-elitist populism*), while indicators of full populism were present in about 10–20% of these materials. Similar observations can be made in the case of articles on international politics: 50% of references to the activities of foreign political parties, promises of aid and international cooperation, and wars between states contained indicators of *anti-elitist populism*, and 20% of references to the

activities of international political organizations and international tensions contained indicators of complete populism. It is also worth noting the presence of indicators of *excluding populism* in materials on immigration, police activity, employment, and social policy (33% to 50%).

Also, the second conservative weekly, the right-wing *W Sieci*, was characterized by relatively high rates of *anti-elitist populism* (see chapter 2). Analysis of the issues discussed in the materials published in the magazine shows that in the case of as many as 23 specific topics within the scope of 10 general categories (national policy, international policy, military and defense, national security, economy, social relations, transport, health and social care, population, media, and the environment), over 50% of references included indicators of *anti-elitist populism*. The presence of indicators of in articles on immigration (20%) and *excluding populism* in articles on immigration (20%) and ethnic relations (20%) should also be noted.

Specifically Polish Indicators of Populist Discourse and Topics

One of the aims of the study was to determine which topics in the press materials were accompanied by the aforementioned specifically Polish populist strategies: (1) *Euro-scepticism / anti-Europeanism*; (2) *negative attitude towards Germany*; (3) *anti-communism*; (4) *social justice*; (5) *welfare state*; (6) *reference to religion*; (7) *reference to tradition and history*; (8) *criticism of the Third Polish Republic*; (9) *the Fourth Polish Republic*; (10) *critique of liberalism*; (11) *intervention in the free market* (Przyłęcki, 2012); (12) *negative attitude towards Russia*; (13) *negation of political correctness*; (14) *constructing a crisis perspective* (see chapter 1). It is worth noting that the presence of these strategies was recorded only when at least one element of populist discourse was present in a given material (references to ‘the people’, criticism of ‘the elite’, and/or exclusion of ‘out-groups’).

It comes as no surprise that the negative information campaign against the EU, the desire to contest all major decisions taken within the EU, and the aversion towards European integration (Euro-scepticism/anti-Europeanism) could be found in materials devoted to international politics, especially those concerning the activities of international political organizations, i.e. the EU (44% of all materials concerning this topic). It is worth noting that this strategy appeared most frequently in materials published by the right-wing weekly magazines *Do Rzeczy* and *W Sieci* (60% of all articles containing this strategy came from these two newspapers). Similar observations can be made with regard to the negative attitude towards Germany, which is reflected by references to World War II and/or alleged German property claims in the previously German areas in western and northern Poland: one third of materials on diplomatic negotiations contained this strategy and once again the two right-wing media organizations were at the forefront.

In the case of negative attitude towards Russia, i.e. the use of discourse consisting in spreading fear by referring to historic and current relations, we are again finding this strategy mainly in materials concerning international politics, but this time especially in reports on diplomatic negotiations and agreements, promises of cooperation or aid, war between states, and international tensions and misunderstandings. As in the case

of the previous two, this strategy was mainly present in the *W Sieci* weekly (30%) and also in the centre-left weekly *Polityka* (30%).

Apart from articles on international politics, Euroscepticism/anti-Europeanism could also be found in the right-wing press texts devoted to economic activity and legal regulations defining such activity, immigration, media regulation, and environmental protection – i.e. precisely those areas in which EU bodies raised objections to the activities undertaken by the Polish government in the years covered by the study (i.e. 2015–2017). In turn, a negative attitude towards Germany could be found in articles about transport, immigration, and the media, while a negative attitude towards Russia was present most frequently in articles on national ceremonies and anniversary ceremonies. The negative attitude towards Germany presented in the right-wing press should in this case be interpreted as connected to Germany's involvement in the contemporary European debate regarding the activities of the Polish authorities (refusal to accept refugees and politicization of the Polish electronic media). However, a negative attitude towards Russia appeared in statements in materials on historical events (World War II and a post-war period).

Three other specifically Polish indicators of populist discourse: anti-communism, critique of the Third Polish Republic (expressed in critical statements about the period after 1989; the point of departure for building the Fourth Republic), and the Fourth Polish Republic (i.e. the idea of building a new social, political, and economic order, either in opposition to the Third Polish Republic or as an independent idea) mainly accompanied articles on national politics, and in particular texts on the activities of interest groups, intra-party and inter-party relations, political nominations, judicial decisions, and abuses of power. Particularly visible was the co-existence of critique of the Third Polish Republic and the Fourth Polish Republic in materials concerning issues regulated by the constitution (12% and 14%, respectively) and inter-party relations (13% and 6%, respectively). Therefore, it can be concluded that these strategies were used by the authors of statements reported by the media primarily to define and attack political opponents and to define their own political identity based on the construction of 'us' versus 'them'.

At the same time, one can find such indicators as *social justice* (social differences presented as a result of unequal distribution of capital, unfair behaviors of groups that own the means of production, poor versus rich, calls for a new social order based on equal access to goods), *welfare state* (calls for an increase in budget deficits to improve quality of life, especially among the poorest; promises to increase spending on social, educational, housing, and health initiatives, etc.), *critique of liberalism* (liberal democracy presented as an example of a state hostile to the poor and ruled by corrupt neoliberal political elites alienated from society), and *intervention in the free market* (negation of free market democratic institutions; critique of the free market; advocating an increase in the role of the state in the economy; market regulation). All of aforementioned indicators were most frequently present in articles on economy (including employment and GDP), policy and employment in industry, business, the healthcare system and social service, and social relations (around 10% in many topics).

Finally, we noticed that *references to tradition and history* (events, symbols, memory, historical policy) and *references to religion* (reference to Christian/Catholic val-

ues; references to persons important in the Catholic Church – including pope John Paul II) were used in different contexts. References to tradition and history were relatively frequent in articles on constitutional issues, lobbying, and corruption, as well as on international politics including the activities of international political organizations, the activities of foreign politicians and parties, and political, military and cultural statements. References to religion, on the other hand, were present mostly in articles on abortion, terrorism, immigration, family relations, minority – majority relations, national ceremonies, and anniversary ceremonies.

Discussion and Conclusions

Chapter 2 demonstrated the frequency with which newspaper articles about Polish political actors included statements containing elements of populist discourse, and chapter 3 provided insight into who the main sources of such statements were. In this chapter, we focused on the topics of articles in which populist statements were reported by the media. In particular, we wanted to identify the subjects of materials containing at least one indicator of populist discourse, i.e. reference to ‘the people’, anti-elitism, and/or exclusion of ‘out-groups’, or were accompanied by a specific type of populism identified by J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007), i.e. *empty*, *anti-elitist*, *excluding*, or *complete populism*. Separately, we wanted to identify the incidence of specifically Polish populist strategies in materials concerning various thematic areas and containing at least one of the aforementioned indicators of populist discourse.

The results of our analysis foster several conclusions. First of all, in media coverage of Polish political actors, the majority of attention in the years 2015–2017 was paid to the choices, statements, and activities of specific politicians, activities of the legislative and executive authorities, as well as relations between parties and within parties. In about half of the cases where the presence of these topics were discussed, they were accompanied by either pure critique of ‘the elite’ or indicators of anti-elitist populism, i.e. references to ‘the people’ coupled with a critical attitude towards ‘the elite’.

Thus, the media image of Polish politics was characterized by the use of a conflict framework and strong polarization. It was also accompanied by a negative assessment of national politics by politicians and/or journalists. Other types of populism were much less frequent.

References to Polish political actors were relatively often accompanied by discussion of international politics, economy, culture, or media activity. It is also possible to identify certain detailed topics, which in the analyzed articles appeared much less frequently (i.e. in less than 2–3 percent of the articles), but were distinguished by a high presence of indicators of populist discourse and their specific combinations indicating particular types of populism. Table 4.7 presents a list of topics that were most often accompanied by particular types of populism (over 10% each for empty, excluding, and complete populism, and over 50% in the case of anti-elitist populism) regardless of the number of articles devoted to a given topic. Therefore, in some cases a given topic appeared only once or twice, and was still taken into account.

Table 4.7. Topics accompanied by the highest presence of populism

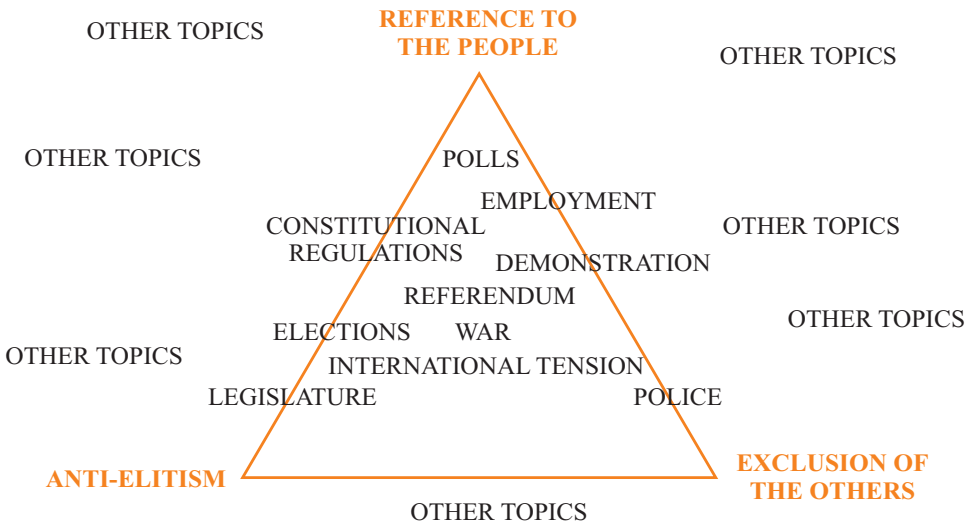
EMPTY POPULISM (>10%)	ANTI-ELITIST POPULISM (>50%)
Referendum	Activities of the legislature
Public opinion polls	Constitutional issues
Promises of cooperation or aid	Elections
Statements on the direction of international politics	Financing of political organizations
Employment	Promises of cooperation or aid
Budget	Wars between states
Economic-legal issues	Military activities
Trade unions	Attack, aggression
International business	Transport infrastructure/systems
Health policy	Buildings related to transport
Social policy	State of health care
Educational policy	Social policy
Newspapers	Poverty rate
Theatre	General population statistics
Movies	Magazines
Museums	Internet/Residential loans
Awards	Land use planning
National ceremonies	Environmental hazards (e.g. pollution)
Religious ceremonies	Activity of environmental organizations
	Sexual relations
	Minority-majority relations
	Exhibitions
	Official political/governmental ceremonies
	National Holidays/ceremonies
EXCLUDING POPULISM (>10%)	COMPLETE POPULISM (>10%)
Referendum	Wars between states
Peaceful demonstrations	International tensions and disagreements
Police activities	Activities of international political organizations
Employment	Peaceful demonstrations
Social policy	Violence against children
Benefits (social policy)	Health policy
Immigration	Social policy
Minority-majority relations	Benefits (social policy)
Awards	Immigration
National ceremonies	Media and journalism
Religious ceremonies	Sexual relations
	Ethnic relations
	Family relations

Source: Own elaboration.

The list in Table 4.7 confirmed our assumptions about the ‘populist potential’ of events such as elections, protests and demonstrations, changes in public media law, the 2010 plane crash, and topics such as referendum, economy, social welfare, immigration, and relations with the EU and neighboring countries. Among the topics not accompanied by the expected high level of populist discourse was the planned education reform in 2015–2017. As a result, it became possible to develop a map that takes into account contextual and situational factors influencing the presence of the populist discourse in the Polish printed press in the analyzed period (2015–2017).

Secondly, the study confirmed earlier observations concerning the high level of parallelism in Polish newspapers: the political orientation of the analyzed newspapers influenced the presence of specific Polish populist strategies. Euroscepticism/anti-Europeanism, negative attitude towards Germany, anti-communism, criticism of the Third Polish Republic, and the idea of the Fourth Polish Republic were found in right-wing oriented press materials devoted either to international or national politics. On the other hand, liberally (centre-left) oriented newspapers more often reported statements representing *anti-elitist populism* in materials devoted to gender, class, and social issues. The political orientation of a newspaper was also revealed by who was perceived as ‘the elite’ in the presented statements: the representatives of the government (i.e. PiS in the studied period), opposition parties, or the broadly understood Polish political scene. The first approach can be found primarily in *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Polityka*, the second in right-wing newspapers: *Nasz Dziennik*, *Do Rzeczy*, *W Sieci*, and the third in the tabloid *Fakt*.

Figure 4.2. ‘Populist potential’ of topics in the media discourse in Poland (2015–2017)



Source: Own elaboration based on the gathered data.

A similar observation can be made with regard to the presence of statements containing indicators of *excluding populism*. This type of populism was mainly present in materials concerning immigration, employment of immigrants, social benefits for immigrants, or in articles describing the proposal of the Kukiz’15 political organization to hold a national referendum regarding the admission of refugees to Poland. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results confirm earlier observations (Scheepers et al., 2002; Koopmans and Muis, 2009) on the ‘populist potential’ of refugee and immigration issues.

It should be emphasized, however, that the presented numerical data do not show the full picture of populist discourse. Quantitative analysis should be accompanied by qualitative analysis, which can be found in the chapter 10 of this volume, devoted to the construction of ‘the other’ in the discourse of the right-wing press.

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PART II

Coverage and Debate:

Populist Discourse on Television

5. Indicators of Populist Discourse in News Tickers on *Wiadomości* TVP1

Marcin Piechocki and Jacek Wyszyński

Introduction

In the age of an inarguable growing importance of internet media (including social networks) in political communication, TV news broadcasts are in decline. It is a gradual process, as research shows that a large part of society still acquires knowledge of current events through TV (Matsa, 2018). Television is still a primary source of information for 64% of Poles. One should note, however, that among respondents aged 18–24 in a 2017 survey, 58% named the internet as their main news source (CBOS, 2017). Therefore, although television is decreasing in significance, especially with the younger generation, this still leaves a substantial number of people relying on it to provide them with news.

The current use of news tickers (in the broad sense) is an expression of modern changes in the ways people consume media. Even though their history extends back to the 1950s, they have come a long way from the blurred scraps of paper used then. Their modern form was widely employed for the first time in the coverage of 9/11. Textual information presented during news broadcasts is most often located at the bottom of the screen. The ticker or crawl (crawler) is the scrolling part. Lower thirds mainly include static layout elements. We usually distinguish between three types of lower thirds (Rodrigues, Veloso, and Mealha, 2012, p. 358), of which the one-tier type is the subject of this research. These are used to display the headline of a news story while it is being presented. It is a widely confirmed thesis that lower thirds have a great impact on news perception and interpretation (Fratello, 2014, p. 108), resembling newspapers headline, which play a similar role (van Dijk, 1988, pp. 35–36) even if their perception varies (Fratello, 2014, p. 109).

The aim of this chapter is to analyze the presence of indicators of populist communication in news tickers on *Wiadomości*, the main evening newscast on the Polish public television station TVP1. Attention has been drawn to these short text messages because of their language and rhetoric – considered controversial by many political commentators in Poland and abroad. Such opinions have been articulated even by those supporting the Law and Justice government and are part of a wider discussion regarding biased and manipulative narration used by Polish public broadcasters (Zaremba, 2017; kw, 2019).

This chapter responds to the call for deeper investigation into the role of the media in promoting populism (Aalberg and de Vreese, 2018, p. 7). We would argue that the current political situation in Poland presents an interesting case. Although in the 1990s the media in Poland underwent a transformation from a state-owned system to a dual-

istic model with private and public electronic media, some features of the system have remained the same, including the politicization of public electronic media. The process of politicization is reflected in the influence that politicians hold over the content of public TV and radio, which can be achieved through appointment of media personnel (Dobek-Ostrowska and Głowacki, 2008, pp. 13–14), as well as by controlling the content of newscasts and commentary programmes. That leads to a clear contradiction between the public mission, which obliges the public broadcaster (Telewizja Polska [TVP] and Polskie Radio) to stay impartial, and its practice – heavily influenced by the political parties in power. According to Polish media law, TVP should not favor or promote any political organisation or orientation while expressing its own views on politics or any other matters that are subjects of public debate (TVP, 2005). However, the ways that TVP has presented events throughout the years, have clearly been the result of political colonization (Herbut, 2002).

In 2015, following parliamentary elections, the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość party (Law and Justice, hereafter PiS) took radical action. Not only did they replace the managers of TVP and Polish Radio, but they also announced a new media law, called the ‘small’ one since it was only a partial reform of the media system. The intention of the government was revealed by Ryszard Terlecki (head of the party’s parliamentary caucus), when he said: “If the media think that they can keep feeding Poles with the critique of our changes or our proposals of changes for weeks on end, then this needs to be stopped” (kło, rzw, 2015). When Andrzej Duda, the President of Poland, signed the new laws, his spokeswoman Małgorzata Sadurska explained that he had done so because the state media should be “impartial, unbiased and credible” (kło, mart, js, rzw, 2016).

The politicization of TVP is a subject of concern for many entities, including the European Parliament and various organizations monitoring freedom of speech. On June 2017, Freedom House presented a report “Pluralism Under Attack: The Assault on Press Freedom in Poland,” whose conclusion states (among others): “Since coming to power in the fall of 2015, PiS has sought to control coverage of its controversial political agenda by strengthening its grip on the media. It has replaced the heads of the public television and radio broadcasters, appointing one of its former lawmakers as director of TVP. *Wiadomości*, TVP’s main news program, has become a propaganda outlet for the government. (...) These changes go far beyond efforts by previous governments to secure favorable coverage in the public media. Further changes to the public media proposed by PiS, abandoned for now amid criticism at home and abroad, suggest that the government may try to increase its control over these outlets even more in the future. (...) With respect to Poland’s endurance as a democracy, changes introduced by PiS to the media landscape are alarming. In the short term, they mean that public television is feeding voters the party line every night. This creates a bias that goes against the very idea of a ‘public broadcaster’” (Chapman, 2017, p. 16).

In the medium-term, PiS’ control of the public media contributes to an uneven playing field in the run-up to elections: first the local elections in 2018 and then the parliamentary and presidential votes in 2019 and 2020. The 2019 legislative elections and their aftermath will be crucial in determining whether Poland remains a democracy in more than name. In the longer term, PiS’ politicization of the public media could leave these institutions permanently scarred, setting a precedent for future administrations to sack the incumbent officials and replace them with loyalists of their own (Chapman, 2017, p. 16).

This issue was also noticed by foreign media when more than a hundred TVP journalists were fired or quit in protest (Foster and Day, 2016), or when the new government introduced laws that enabled them to appoint new authorities of TVP and Polish Radio. The BBC's correspondent A. Easton explained that "(...) incoming governments in Poland put their own people in to run large state companies, institutions, and the public media – but the PiS is going faster and further this time" (BBC, 2016). Indeed, since January 2016 the office of the President of Polish Television has been held by Jacek Kurski, a former PiS Member of Parliament and Member of the European Parliament.

Interestingly, while reporting on the changes in the Polish public media, foreign reporters also took notice of TVP1 *Wiadomości* tickers, such as: "Opposition with no offer for voters," "Poles want changes in courts, not protests," "Total opposition's total hysteria," "Total opposition in total disarray," or "Total opposition totally divided," emphasizing the fact that these tickers were not taken from a "marginal right-wing website" or a satirical show, but from the main newscast of the Polish public broadcaster (Chapman, 2018).

Since previous studies (Przyłęcki, 2012; Stępińska and Adamczewska, 2017; Lipiński and Stępińska, 2018) have shown a clear tendency of PiS to use populist discourse, we decided to examine the presence of indicators of populist discourse in the tickers of *Wiadomości*, as well as to trace the political bias of these messages in the period when PiS has been in power for couple of years.

Methodology

The sample covered all the main evening editions of *Wiadomości*, the main newscast of the public TV station TVP1, broadcast between May 1st and September 30th 2018. We selected a cluster of data that exceeds the period of study in printed press presented in other chapters in order to capture a phenomenon that developed in 2018. For the purpose of the study, we used the same codebook that was used for a content analysis of printed press (see chapter 1).

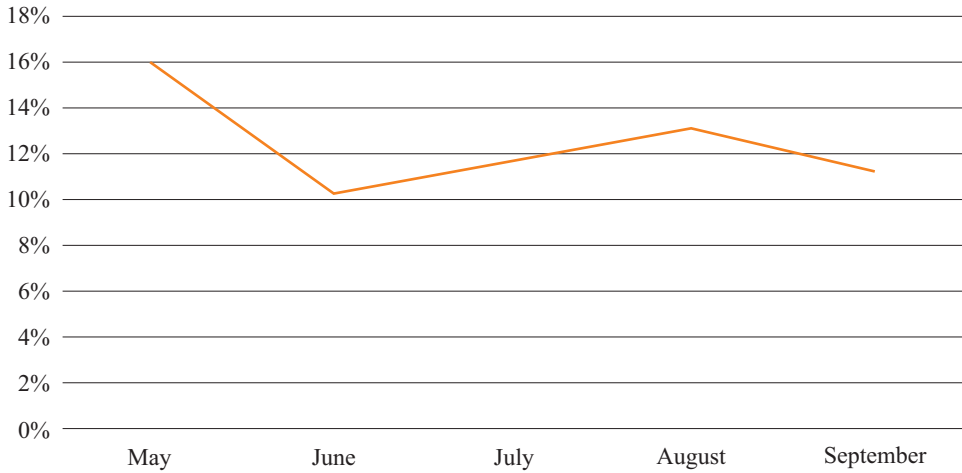
In total, 153 editions, including 1,683 news items, were recorded and analysed.¹ All of the items under study were accompanied by a static lower third containing the news title, a newspaper headline counterpart, as described previously. In the analysis, we also took into consideration the anchor's presentation of the story, in order to provide relevant context. The research was conducted using the Content Analysis System for Television (CAST – see chapter 1).

Findings

Quantitative analysis of the *Wiadomości* (TVP1) content revealed that 212 out of 1,683 (almost 13%) of the news items included at least one element of populist discourse. The percentage of items containing any indicator of populist discourse did not change significantly across the study period, although one may notice some fluctuations, e.g. from 16% in May 2018 to 11% in June 2018.

¹ The size of the sample should be large enough to prevent uneven distribution of analysed units (Krippendorff, 2004, pp. 116–117).

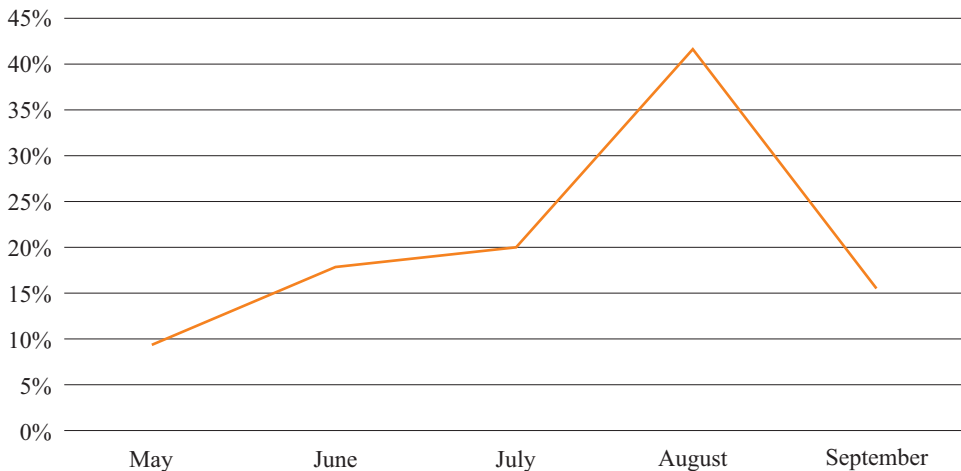
Graph 5.1. Tickers including at least one element of populist discourse (%), N=212



Source: Own elaboration.

More significant differences can be observed with regards to specific elements of the communication discourse. For example, with the rise of intensity of the Supreme Court crisis, *Wiadomości* (TVP1) increased its focus on the judges (see Graph 5.2). In August 2018, the Polish Supreme Court appealed to the European Court of Justice with a prejudicial question, referring to the law adopted by the Parliament (reduction of the retirement age for Supreme Court Judges). This resulted in unfavourable reactions from government members, the President's representative, and the acting President of the Constitutional Tribunal.

Graph 5.2. Percentage of tickers referring to 'judicial elites'. Number of occurrences May – 4 (n=42), June – 5 (n=28), July – 7 (n=35), August – 15 (n=36), September – 5 (n=32)



Source: Own elaboration.

The constitutional crisis in Poland began in October 2015, when the Platforma Obywatelska party (Civic Platform, hereafter PO) appointed five Constitutional Tribunal judges. The party was predicted to lose in the upcoming elections, so the replacement was unconstitutional according to PiS, the winner of the parliamentary election. In December 2015, parliament introduced a new law that changed the majority vote (2/3) and set the mandatory participation as at least 13 of 15 judges. These changes caused anti-government protests and were criticized by the European Commission who considered them as breaking the rule of law. New judges were elected, so they could forestall those that were elected previously. They were sworn into office at night, which only showed the importance of this to the ruling party (Szuleka, Wolny, and Szwed, 2016, pp. 6–10).

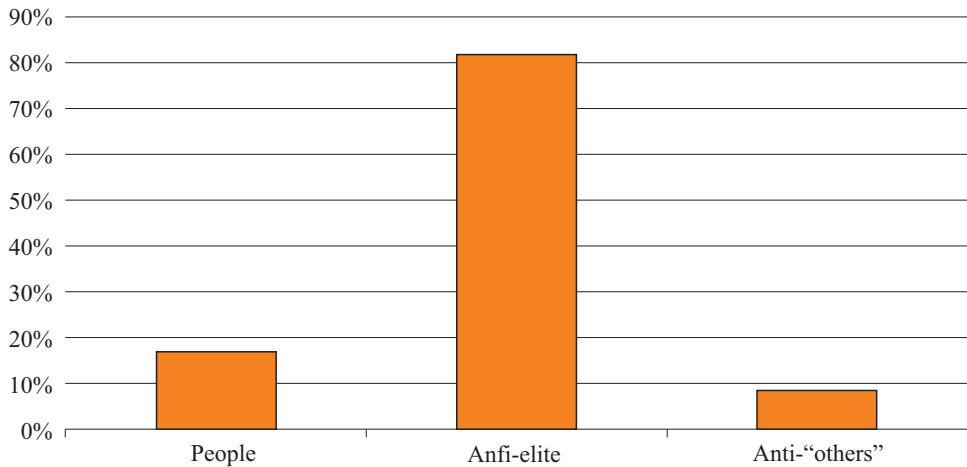
The next institution to be reorganized was the Supreme Court. In July 2018, the new law forced 27 of 72 judges to retire (including the First President of the Supreme Court, prof. Małgorzata Gersdorf). The retirement age was lowered from 70 to 65, which is reminiscent of the Hungarian Judicial reform introduced by Victor Orban. These steps also provoked domestic and international reaction. Not only the opposition parties, the Supreme Court, and the National Council of the Judiciary, but also the European Commission recognized that these changes were unconstitutional. In December 2018, a newer law was introduced, reinstating the judges that had been forced to retire.

The Elite

Findings revealed that references to ‘the elite’ were the most frequent (174 occurrences, 82%) (see Graph 5.3). Reference to ‘the people’, constituting *empty populism*, as suggested by J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007), were represented to a lesser extent (36 occurrences, 17%). ‘The others’ category was only marginally present (18 occurrences, 8%). This seems to support the thesis, formulated by many commentators, that TVP’s main concern is fighting political opposition of the PiS government (Oseka, 2018; Jędrzejewski, 2019).

Looking deeper into the types of elites presented by *Wiadomości*, one can see a predominant presence of particular parties, judicial elites, individual politicians, and international institutions (they appeared in 87% tickers, combined). As seen in Graph 5.3, the most heavily referenced category of ‘the elite’ is a ‘particular party/coalition’ (38%). In fact, all of these tickers targeted political opposition of PiS. Coincidentally, all explicit references to the term ‘opposition’ also constituted 38% of the tickers belonging to this category. At the same time, almost one quarter of tickers referring to ‘the elite’ explicitly targeted PO (23%) and 6% – Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (Polish People’s Party, hereafter PSL), while 2% referred to Nowoczesna (Modern Party). The remaining 31% of the tickers in this category didn’t mention any entities directly but, with the accompanying anchor’s introduction, left no doubt who the target was: e.g. “Stinking politics of the local government” (29.05.2018), “Slanders and lies” (15.05.2018), “Forgotten by the state” (07.07.2018).

It worth presenting some examples of tickers expressing the anti-elitist attitude: “PO’s policy is dictated by Berlin” (25.09.2018), “PSL’s political gain thanks

Graph 5.3. Types of indicators of populist discourse in the tickers (%), N=212

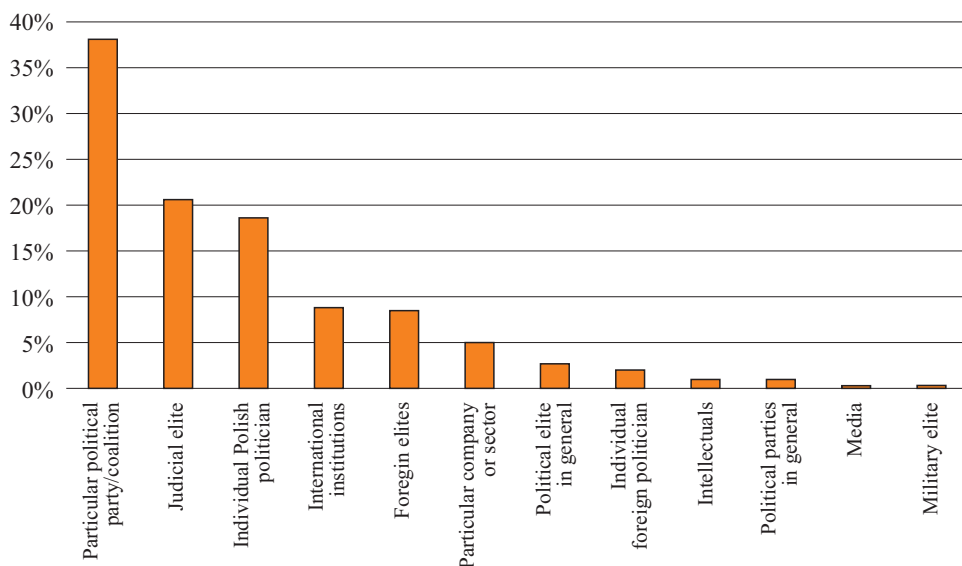
Source: Own elaboration.

to the farmers’ problems” (21.09.2018), “Opposition wants a political revolution” (02.07.2018), “False insinuations of the opposition” (30.07.2018), “Common front: judges, opposition, Brussels” (28.06.2018), “Civic Platform against large investments” (02.06.2018), “Who doesn’t like the program of affordable housing?” (26.09.2018), “The opposition hopes to profit from the difficult situation of farmers” (06.09.2018), “The Civic Platform is against freedom and democracy” (13.09.2018), “The Civic Platform longs for censorship” (12.09.2018), “The Civic Platform and the judges defend relics of the PRL” (29.05.2018), “Troublemakers from the total opposition” (23.05.2018, 22.05.2018), “Opposition militia disturbs talks with Poles” (21.05.2018), “The opposition politicians want to gag journalists” (15.05.2018), “The opposition is plunged into a political crisis” (11.05.2018), “Opposition’s campaign of fails and mistakes” (09.05.2018), “Contemporary face of Targowica” (03.05.2018),² “Opposition is frustrated and aggressive” (21.07.2018), “Helplessness and aggression of the opposition” (23.07.2018), “Who allowed plunder during the rule of the PO-PSL coalition?” (24.07.2018).

The aforementioned examples show that *Wiadomości* TVP1’s tickers played other roles beyond just announcing the news, introducing the subject, or complementing the program’s narration. In fact, they offered a particular framing of ‘the elite’: they either blamed certain political elites – i.e. political opposition to PiS – or praised the ruling political party (PiS). In order to distinguish between political actors that are criticized and those that are supported, sometimes the tickers form a specific two-line sequence. For example, the ticker “Unfulfilled promises of Civic Platform” (08.09.2018) preceded the ticker “The Law and Justice’s offer for the local governments.” By contrasting two political parties in one ticker, *Wiadomości* was clearly aiming to discredit the opposition while favourably framing PiS.

² Targowica is a synonym for national treason in Poland. It was a confederation established by magnates in the XVIII century, that opposed the Constitution of 3 May. Magnates were backed by Russia. The term carries a strong, negative connotation.

Graph 5.4. Types of ‘the elite’ (%) N=174



Source: Own elaboration.

Some tickers targeted more than one type of elite. For example, the ticker “PO politician bets on Berlin, instead of Warsaw” (01.06.2018) includes direct critique of an oppositional politician (namely, Rafał Trzaskowski – a PO candidate for mayor of Warsaw at that time) and of Germany, a country that is often portrayed in PiS discourse as a threat and enemy (Przyłęcki, 2012, pp. 119, 214–215). The same strategy can be found in a following ticker regarding Małgorzata Gersdorf, the President of the Supreme Court: “Małgorzata Gersdorf complains to Germans” (21.07.2018).

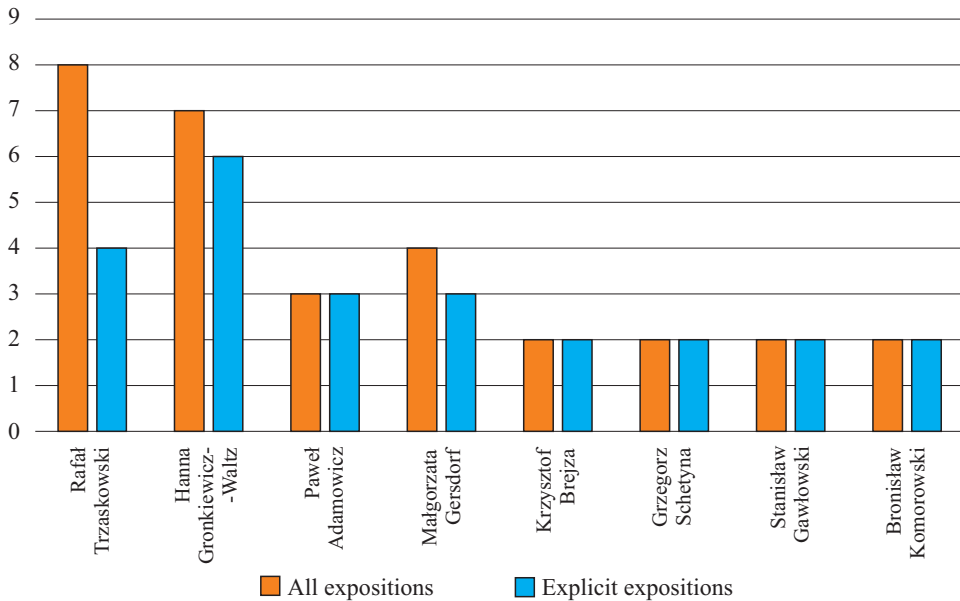
Graph 5.5 shows ‘the elites’ most often explicitly targeted by name in *Wiadomości* (TVP1). They either belong to the political opposition (such as Bronisław Komorowski – a former President of Poland, or Grzegorz Schetyna – a leader of PO), or are other types of officials criticizing PiS or disagreeing with the PiS government. For example, some tickers discredited leaders of opposition parties: “BREJZO-LAND³ under investigation” (17.05.2018), “Poles do not trust Grzegorz Schetyna” (24.09.2018), “Manual control by Grzegorz Schetyna” (22.09.2018), “Komorowski’s mutiny” (15.07.2018). One example of the latter category of targeted elites is the aforementioned prof. Małgorzata Gersdorf, the President of the Supreme Court, who opposed the government’s attempt to alter the composition of the Polish Supreme Court by lowering judges’ retirement age. The ticker reads: “Prof. Gersdorf calls for help from Brussels” (16.08.2018).

One can also find critical attitudes towards local politicians in the tickers (due to the local elections set for October 21st, 2018). The most frequently mentioned characters were the city mayors (Warsaw – Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, Gdańsk – Paweł

³ This refers to Krzysztof Brejza, a Civic Platform MP who is known for uncovering PiS misdeeds. His father is the mayor of Inowrocław. Naming this city Brejzo-land, *Wiadomości* (TVP1) suggests he is above the law there.

Adamowicz), or candidates for this office (Warsaw – Rafał Trzaskowski): “Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz did not do anything” (20.09.2018),” “PO politician [Rafał Trzaskowski] chooses Berlin over Warsaw” (01.06.2018), “Gronkiewicz-Waltz blocked compensations” (29.06.2018), “Gronkiewicz-Waltz puts herself above the law” (12.07.2018), “Gdańsk in times of Adamowicz – developers’ republic” (04.09.2018), “Adamowicz does not want Polish soldiers,” or “Gdańsk connivances of president Adamowicz” (11.05.2018).

Graph 5.5. Elite by names mentioned in the news tickers



Source: Own elaboration.

It is worth mentioning that the content and style of tickers devoted to Paweł Adamowicz (and other oppositional politicians) have been heavily discussed after the attack on Adamowicz on January 13th, 2019. The mayor of Gdańsk was stabbed by a recently released inmate during the final event of The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity and died in the hospital the following day. The event ignited a discussion about standards of political debate in Poland and beyond (ft, 2019). Certain voices attributed the violent attack to the “atmosphere of hatred” created by TVP1 and others (zma, 2019).

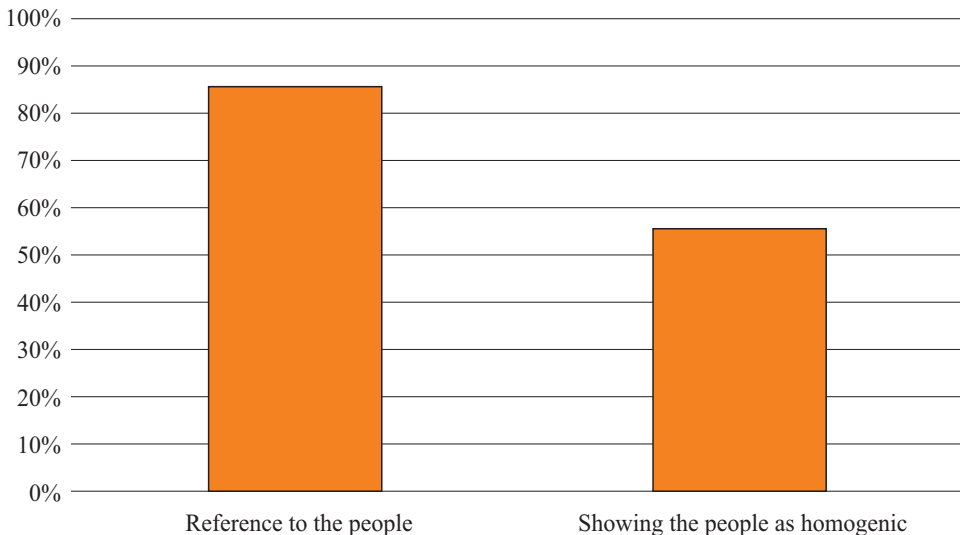
As was mentioned above, international institutions and other foreign elites were also targeted in the tickers. Each of these categories appeared in 9% of anti-elitist tickers. In particular, the tickers referred to the EU, Russian Federation, and Germany. These findings support previous observations of the significant attention paid by *Wiadomości* TVP1 to these three foreign entities (Piechocki and Wyszyński, 2018; Piechocki and Wyszyński, forthcoming), as well as the TV station’s critical attitude toward them. Most of the tickers referring to the EU included indicators of Euroscepticism, such as denying the EU institutions the right to interfere in the internal affairs of Poland (for example – judicial reform or the rule of law).

Previous studies (Piechocki and Wyszynski, 2018; Piechocki and Wyszynski, 2019) have also shown that the Russian Federation and Germany have been referenced in a predominantly negative way on TVP1 since 2015. Our study of the tickers revealed that negative connotations based on historical relations between Poland and its neighbours have been used either to directly criticize these two foreign countries or to discredit politicians by making a connection between them and Poland's 'long-time enemies'. In other words, Russia and Germany served as a reference point to sustain a fear of losing independence among Poles, and to create a negative image of the political opposition at the same time.

The People

As mentioned above, the category of 'the people' was less frequently mentioned in the tickers (17%) than 'the elite'. Hence, following J. Jagers and S. Walgrave's (2007) concept, we should clarify that many of the examples mentioned in the previous subsection illustrated rather a critique of political opponents than clear cases of anti-elitist discourse (see chapter 2).

Graph 5.6. References to 'the people' (%), N=36



Source: Own elaboration.

References to 'the people' in the tickers of *Wiadomości TVP1* usually accompanied a description of the government's performance. In most cases, they expressed the nation's support for the government's decisions and activities. For example: "Poles are opting for Law and Justice" (12.05.2018, 10.06.2018, 12.08.2018, 21.08.2018, 23.09.2018), "Poles choose Law and Justice" (27.09.2018), "Poles are awaiting the judicial reform" (23.09.2018), "Poles are definitely in favour of judicial reform" (11.08.2018), "Poles appreciate government social programs" (06.08.2018), "Poles trust the leaders of the

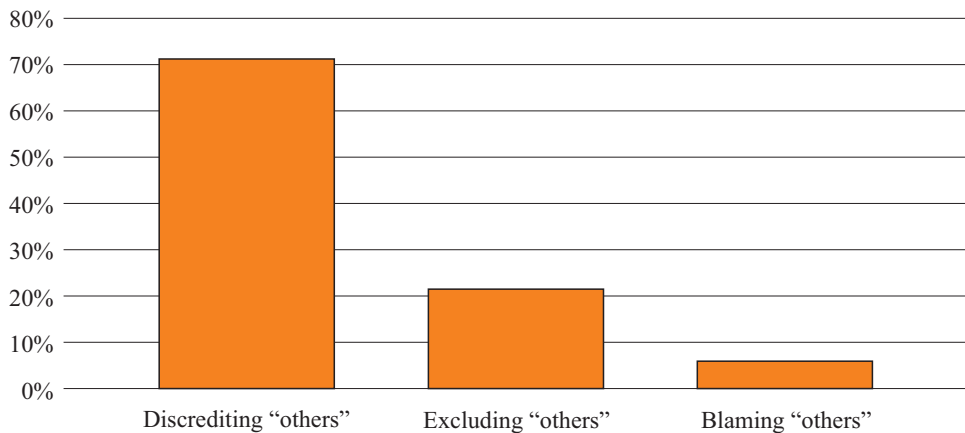
United Right” (23.06.2018), “Poles benefit from economic growth” (30.05.2018), “Poles in favour of the end of parliamentary protest” (18.05.2018), “Poles value the government for fighting with the pathologies of politics” (12.05.2018). The general implication being that *Wiadomości* builds a dichotomy between PiS that is with ‘the people’, and its opponents, who are against ‘the people’.

According to M. Głowiński (1993, pp. 358–359), the enemy may have many names. This allows for a large margin of freedom in applying this category, that can be observed in varied situations in references to unspecified persons or groups that are critical of current government or state institutions, thus harming Poland: e.g. “Who wants to take away the EU funds from Poland?” (06.05.2018), “Who wants to take away the black gold⁴ from Poles?” (08.07.2018), “Who doesn’t like the success of TVP?” (17.06.2018).

The Others/Out-groups

The category of ‘the others’ was present in 8% of the tickers under study. In these quite rare cases, two main categories were mentioned: immigrants and Germans. The tickers portrayed immigrants as a political and cultural threat, for example: “Migration wave creates political upheaval” (12.05.2018), “Islamization of Europe” (19.05.2018). Germany, on the other hand, was presented as either an enemy or unreliable country. For example, while covering a story concerning a rail accident in Germany (two people were killed and 14 injured), *Wiadomości* TVP1 focused on the alleged low quality of German railways, emphasizing “German unreliability” (08.05.2018).

Graph 5.7. Tickers referring to ‘the others’ (%), N=18



Source: Own elaboration.

The aforementioned strategy of constructing a multidimensional narrative that connects various opponents manifested itself, yet again, in the ticker “Brussels against Po-

⁴ Polish term for coal.

land, under German dictate” (26.09.2018). This referred to the EU immigration policy, contested by the Polish Government, thus presenting Brussels as being ‘against Poland’. And, to add insult to injury, the policy was supported by Germany. In one ticker, there are two types of elites and a type of ‘the others’ being targeted.

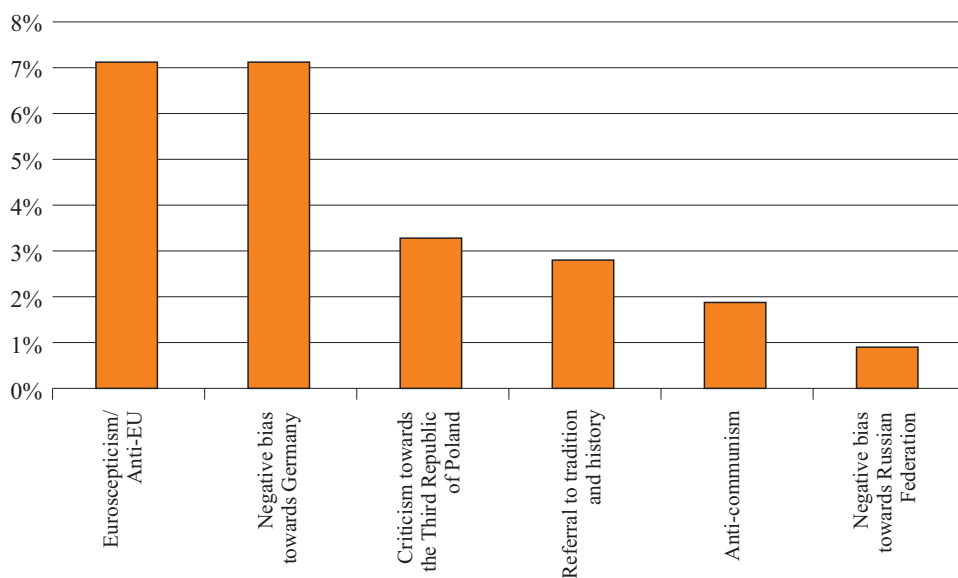
Most (72%) of the ‘anti-others’ category tickers used the discrediting strategy. There were only a few examples of tickers suggesting exclusion of ‘the others’, all of them referring to immigrants, as in these examples: “Illegal immigration threatens Europe” (19.06.2018) or “Italy doesn’t want immigrants” (14.07.2018). There was only one instance where Muslims were blamed – for trying to forcefully introduce Islam lessons at school “Islam at school without parents’ consent” (10.08.2018). Due to the small number of ‘anti-others’ tickers, it is not possible to draw any further conclusions.

Specifically Polish Indicators of Populist Discourse

The specific Polish indicators of populist discourse, as suggested by P. Przyłęcki (2012, pp. 119–122) and described in chapter 1 of this book, were quite rarely used in the tickers of *Wiadomości TVP1* (see Graph 5.8). Still, 7% of items included some direct anti-EU statement and 7% expressed a negative attitude towards Germany. This seems to confirm the findings of P. Przyłęcki, who recognized these elements in PiS discourse (2012, pp. 209–220).

At the same time, anti-communism or critique of the post-communist period (including the political transformation period and two decades afterwards) were hardly ever mentioned in the tickers.

Graph 5.8. Polish-specific indicators of populism (%), N=212



Source: Own elaboration. The indicators introduced by P. Przyłęcki (2012).

Conclusions

The findings of our study revealed a presence of populist discourse in tickers of *Wiadomości* (TVP1): almost 13% of the analysed news included at least one element of populist discourse. The majority of these referred to ‘the elite’ (174 occurrences, 82%). Reference to ‘the people’ were present in 17% and ‘the others’ were present in 8% of the analysed news. When looking deeper into ‘the elite’ category, one can see that the tickers were mostly aimed at the political opposition of the PiS government. It shows that TVP’s narration was strictly aligned with the government’s rhetoric (international institutions and other foreign elites were also targeted in the tickers – each of them appeared in 9% of ‘anti-elitist’ tickers).

Wiadomości’s reporting was clearly biased, with no visible attempts to conceal it. One may even say that the tickers served as a weapon in political fighting, extremely distant from the impartial journalism that is expected from a public broadcaster. References to ‘the people’ present in the tickers usually referred to the government’s decisions and actions – they mostly alleged nationwide support for PiS’ agenda. The category of ‘the others’ mostly included references to immigrants (they were presented as a threat to the European/Polish identity and culture) and Germans, who played the role of enemy or negative point of reference.

Such tickers represent the rhetoric of TVP, in supporting the government (often implying ‘the people’’s support) or discrediting political forces (not necessarily domestic) that Law & Justice disapprove of. As *Wiadomości* is the flagship of news programs, this may suggest that such biased presentation of news will manifest in TVP in general, and, less likely, in other TV stations in Poland, but further research is required.

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6. Journalist Populist Discourse: Journalists as the Originators of Populist Messages

Dorota Piontek and Małgorzata Tadeusz-Ciesielczyk

Introduction

Research on populism usually focuses on political actors, i.e. politicians and parties. Yet the increasing popularity of populism worldwide cannot really be understood without an in-depth analysis of the development and the current functioning of mass media. Some papers do mention the role and influence of mass media on the progress of populism, but there is little empirical research offering a comprehensive view of this phenomenon.

Analyses of relationships between populism and the media usually concentrate on how populist actors try to influence or manipulate the media to gain publicity. Media are perceived as highly susceptible to populist manipulation due to their insatiable appetite for “the salacious and entertaining headlines and soundbites that populist actors provide” (Moffitt, 2016, p. 70). This is exacerbated by the ongoing commodification of media, and professionalization of political communication, including the accommodation of politicians to media logic. Even if a populist message is not presented in a flattering way, the very fact of its coverage is essential for publicity and legitimization in the public space. This, in turn, leads to increased recognition and better poll results.

Regardless of how we define populism (ideology or communication style; broadly or narrowly) and how media present populist ideas, the presence of populism in political discourse in the media can be perceived by the public as a sign of social approval and hence as an acceptance of the expression of such views. The spiral of silence, where one is afraid to express controversial views, may reverse, leading to the overexposure of populists in the media in relation to their real political power, and in this way, help them obtain better results in polls and during elections.

Coverage of populists in the media has been the subject of a growing number of analyses of press, TV and Internet content. However, there are still but a few studies on how journalists and media figures contribute to increased populist communication (Wettstein et al., 2018). Accordingly, we trust that our preliminary and fragmentary analysis could serve as a point of departure for the discussion on the increasing significance of journalists in disseminating populist political discourse.

Theoretical Framework

In this paper we define populism to be “an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the (...) general will of the people” (Mudde, 2004, p. 543). However, this definition focuses on an ideological perspective, and may be used in research on those political actors and those journalists who are openly partisan, support certain politicians, and have a strictly political function in the fight for power.

Another research perspective is based on the discursive concept of populism (Moffitt, 2016, pp. 71–72; Aslanidis, 2018, pp. 1243–1244), which dominates in research on the effect of media exposure of populists on the perception of voters and their electoral choices. Here, usually, research focuses on how populism is presented by media/journalists, and not the original content created by journalists. Analyses concern the ways that those politicians can ‘read’ the influence of media logic, or can attempt to influence journalists.

Referring to recent research on journalism and populism, M. Wettstein et al. (2018, p. 478) proposed the following model of the role of journalists in relation to populism: “Journalists can act as (1) *gatekeepers* for populist political actors and their messages, (2) as *interpreters* of populist actors in evaluating their behaviors, and (3) as *originators* of populist messages,” defining the *originator*’s role as an active involvement in populist coverage of political life, regardless of any actual connection with the populist actors (see chapter 3).

In a democracy, journalists are perceived as being representatives of their readers/audience; as the counterbalance to politicians, representing and explaining the world, but also being able to directly shape social reality. The independence of journalists from politicians is vital for their credibility, which is why this is often emphasized by the journalists themselves. Therefore, although not necessarily sympathizing with ‘the people’, journalists place themselves on the side of ‘the people’, somewhat in agreement with the binary populist worldview of ‘the good people’ and ‘the corrupt elite’.

In this chapter we focus on the roles of the journalist in populist political communication. In contrast to previous analyses in this area, we do not examine how the media report the activities of populist political actors. Rather, we were interested in the activity of journalists as interpreters of populist actors and – first and foremost – as the initiators of populist content. We analyze TV political discussion programs involving the active participation of journalists, assuming that this format is the most convenient form of manifesting their agency in political discourse.

In this paper, we analyze those political discussion programs which deal with current events and present distinctive opinions; they are often polemical, highly partisan and even provocative (Encyklopedia PWN, 2019). Although their ultimate political message is somewhat mitigated by the viewers’ expectation of objective reporting on political events, the resultant ongoing commercialization results in their growing partisanship.

In the context of the mediatization of politics, media logic can be defined as “the dominance in societal processes of the value of the news and the storytelling techniques the media make use of to take advantage of their own medium and its format”

and is a tool for gaining competitive advantage in “the ongoing struggle to capture people’s attention” (Strömbäck, 2008, p. 233). The storytelling techniques used to capture people’s attention include simplification, polarization, intensification, personalization, visualization, stereotyping, and framing politics as a strategic ‘horse race’ (ibidem). These characteristics of narration are present in the populist style presented by political actors and media, both in information or political discussion programs. However, opinion programs give the chance to take a closer look at the original activity of the journalists. In this format, it is difficult for them to hide behind editorial policy or the general line of their broadcaster: they are supposed to present their own original views.

Methodology

In this research we used a qualitative analysis of political discourse. Following M. Czyżewski et al. (1997, pp. 10–18), we define this as the discourse of political elites present in the media, including journalists, media figures, writers, scientists, officials, intellectuals, experts, businesspeople, and politicians. All these groups have a direct degree of control over the knowledge available publicly, publicly legitimized opinions, and the shape and content of the public discourse. Political discourse is, therefore, the discourse of symbolic elites regarding political issues strictly associated with mass media, and plays a special role in shaping the hierarchy of the moral and esthetic values of the public.

This study focuses on two formats of TV political discussion programs; interviews and discussions, due their specificity and the role and significance in populist political communication. First of all, both these TV formats are based on interactions between the show participants. A TV interview is an interaction between an interviewer and interviewee, and a discussion on current political affairs is an interaction moderated by a host, who intervenes concerning the formal questions: the subject of the discussion, and maintaining the voice of each of the participants in the discussion.

Secondly, these formats give a large freedom to express subjective opinions, both in the questions/opening discussion and the reactions resulting from direct interactions. In this way they are a combination of the political discourse and the discourse on politics.¹ Finally, both formats are significant for political communication: an interview is one of the most popular forms of political journalism (Volmeer and Brants, 2011; Hoffman, 2013; Hordecki and Piontek, 2014), and the cyclical conversations of journalists on current political issues give them the chance to play the role of gatekeepers and interpreters of the political reality.

In this chapter, the study material included only statements by journalists from the leading information channels (political discourse has therefore been limited to jour-

¹ Discourse of politics refers to statements by politicians uttered in the roles assigned to them within political institutions, and to statements by political elites related to their political roles and functions. Part of the discourse of politics is reported in the media, which influences the communication behaviors of politicians and creates a double audience: direct audience (i.e. consisting of other politicians) and mass audience (Czyżewski et al., 1997). The existence of that other audience may strongly affect politicians (Piontek, 2011). Discourse of politics dominates in the information programs, while political discourse prevails in political discussion programs.

nalist elites), omitting the opinions of invited guests. The research was intended to be diagnostic in character: its aim was to determine whether the studied statements by the journalists contained indicators of the populist discourse.

There was no research hypothesis, only the following questions: (1) Did the journalists use expressions characteristic of the populist style? (2) Was the populist statement by the journalist a reaction to something or could it be defined as initiating a populist message? (3) Did the journalist define populism? If so, how? (as a threat to democracy, reinforcement of democracy, the expression of anger, communication style, electoral strategy, or as something else?) (4) Did the journalists' statements indicate the causes of increased popularity of populists? (5) Was somebody/something directly defined as populist? (6) Were media indicated as populist actors?

In line with the project that this research was part of,² we created a constructed sample, which included two types of live TV programs presented by two TV stations, one public and one private in years 2015–2017. The first type were interviews with politicians (*Tomasz Lis na żywo* on the public TVP2, and *Kropka nad i* on the private TVN24), and the second type were programs where journalists commented upon current political events (*Salon dziennikarski* on the public TVP Info, and *Loża prasowa* on the private TVN24). A list of the studied programs is shown in Table 6.6., included in the Appendix.

Differences in the number of programs broadcast on these TV channels resulted from external factors, independent of the researchers, such as institutional factors (the frequency of broadcast, editorial policy, the duration of contracts with external TV production companies) and technical limitations of the CAST software at the initial time of its operation at the Faculty of the Political Sciences and Journalism at the Adam Mickiewicz University, where the research was conducted (see chapter 1). However, in our opinion these limitations did not effectively undermine our study, given its aim and qualitative character.

Findings

Indicators of the Populist Discourse in the Journalists' Statements

The in political discourse may be characterized by reference to 'the people', both in the sense of addressing 'the people' and situating 'the people' as the main subject of politics (sovereign – the people, and its will as the most important law in democracy); speaking on behalf of 'the people'; identifying with 'the people' and representing its interests; linguistic simplification, aiming at the possibly highest accessibility of the statement; exposing conflict as the basis of the political process (between 'the people' and 'the elite', and within both the political classes) (Jagers and Walgrave, 2005; Wrześniewska-Pietrzak and Kołodziejczak, 2017).

In the selected political discussion programs with politicians or experts, journalists often asked loaded questions, arguing with the guests and presenting their own

² Premises and objectives of the project are presented in detail in chapter 1.

opinions. Some of the questions contained indicators of the populist discourse, especially anti-elitist populism, such as blaming ‘the elite’ and discrediting ‘the elite’. For example, journalists’ questions and statements concerned politicians inappropriately spending tax payers’ money, the lack of programs solving the problems of some social groups (benefits for entrepreneurs, no acceptance for the anti-violence convention, no proposals for *frankowicze* – the large groups of Polish people who took credits in Swiss francs and then faced the high increase in the franc’s value),³ or regarding the actions of politicians and other institutions playing a significant role in Polish politics, such as Catholic Church, against citizens and their will:

“Why is the Church intent on forcing women who have been raped to have those children?” (Monika Olejnik, *Kropka nad i*, May 26, 2015).

In the studied programs, the participants are supposed to comment on current events, and these were the subjects of their statements. The common practice of the hosts was to emphasize the conflict between the politicians as the main indicator and goal of politics, although the programs also included elements of the conflict between journalists and politicians. Journalists positioned themselves against ‘the elite’, which can be seen as part of the populist anti-elitism. The bias of the journalists was specially visible when criticizing certain politicians and their organizations.

A similar situation took place in TV programs moderated by journalists, involving guest journalists from different media organizations. Their attitude towards the political class was mainly critical. In *Salon dziennikarski* in 2016–2017 the criticism was directed towards the opposition (that is Platforma Obywatelska [Civic Platform, hereafter PO), while in *Loża prasowa* towards both the main ruling party at that period (that is Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – Law and Justice, hereafter PiS) and opposition parties (mainly PO), which was due to the differences in the selection of guests. The pro-government (mainly pro-PiS) *Salon dziennikarski* hosted journalists representing right-wing circles sympathetic towards the ruling party. *Loża prasowa* tried to maintain balance between journalists supporting the opposition and the ruling party, representing left-wing, centrist and right-wing attitudes (see Table 6.1 in Annex). The subjects of discussion proposed by the moderator M. Łaszcz, however, usually indirectly favored critique of the current administration and legislature (dominated by PiS), as well the President Andrzej Duda (PiS).

Initiating⁴ vs. Reactive Character of the Populist Statements made by Journalists

In the statements of the journalists conducting interviews with guests, only one program did not show any behaviour initiating a populist tone of debate. Journalists usually took a confrontational stance and asked questions which suggested answers, or

³ *Frankowicze* is the common term for the group of Polish borrowers who in 2004–2008 took out mortgage loans in Swiss francs. In 2009, the CHF exchange rate increased rapidly, which significantly worsened the situation of the borrowers. This issue became one of the most important issues of the 2015 election campaign (presidential and parliamentary).

⁴ Initiating statements open a new thread in a conversation or include a new proposal for interpretation/evaluation/explanation of the matter under discussion.

contained suppositions (“Wouldn’t you agree that ...,” “Won’t it mean that ...,” “How does your party deal with this mess?”), a good example of which is a question asked by Monika Olejnik in a program on September 5, 2016:

“Do you think, professor, that Jarosław Kaczyński has designed the state for us? Does he know what he wants to change in the consciousness of the Poles? Because it looks like he does. Looking at the beginning of the school year, for example – small children recited poems about the Second World War, the Prime Minister spoke to small children about the demographic decline, about 500+...”

The journalists demonstrated anti-elitist attitudes, visible in their negative or almost derogatory assessments of politicians:

“Isn’t it that for two, three, four months, president B. Komorowski was all the time lambasted with the critique (involving the following subjects): ‘chair (referring to his infamous blunder during his visit in Japan), shogun (referring to another infamous blunder during a visit in Japan), hunting (referring to the President’s unpopular hobby), he’s embarrassing, old and out of touch; shortly – we need young people’ and that was not accidental. Should not the fat cats from the Civic Platform (his political background) move and do something? Although I understand that the President in Poland is supposed to be impartial and not represent a single party, B. Komorowski’s party failed to act properly during the presidential campaign. For example, the national Civic Platform election committee closed down at 6:30 PM during the last three day before the elections. I have to say that with this level of involvement from his fellow party I am astonished he got 48.5% of votes” (*Tomasz Lis*, May 25, 2015).

Tomasz Lis on 4 May 2015, evaluated the presidential campaign of Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (Democratic Left Alliance, hereafter SLD):

“The campaign seemed like a trademark seppuku. (...) and you came to the conclusion it should be an unknown politician who distances herself from you at every step, dresses herself in a petticoat during evening meetings, and shows at each occasion that she does not give a damn about your party. I am sorry but it looks like it.”

Similar statements can be found in programs which hosted only journalists. However, their accumulation was even greater, which can be associated with the specificity of the format. Both the hosts and guests used populist rhetoric. Interestingly, potentially inflammatory statements concerned not only the discussed political events and behaviors of political actors, but also the journalists perceived as supporting the opposite side. One of the rhetorical means was to ascribe populism to the media from the other camp.

One interesting example of excluding populism was a statement by the host of *Salon dziennikarski* (October 8, 2016). Initiating a discussion on the ‘black protest’ against the proposed restrictive abortion law, supported by part of the ruling coalition and the Catholic Church, J. Karnowski argued that:

“according to official data, almost 98 thousand people protested in 100 cities all over Poland. Is it a lot or not? What does this protest tell us? Certainly we need to emphasize that the core of the protest was indecently vulgar, the organizers were extremely radical, and many of those women who joined the protest were not exactly aware of what was happening.”

Defining Populism

In discussions on current political events (regardless of the number of participants and the form of interaction – interview, commentary), the participants had a good chance to define populism. Based on the previous studies on populism, we assumed that the potential definitions could be categorized as follows: a threat to democracy, reinforcement of democracy, expression of anger, style of communication, or electoral strategy (see: Mudde, 2004; Bang and Marsh, 2018; Liddiard, 2019; Jagers and Walgrave, 2007; Moffitt, 2016; Aslanidis, 2018; de Vreese et al., 2018). Interestingly, we found no attempt at defining populism, and the journalists treated this term as self-evident, not requiring any additional explanation. However, statements which included the words populist/populism indicated they were associated mainly with the style of communication, and less frequently as an expression of anger. The remaining categories did not appear at all. At least in the case of the lack of implicit definition of populism as an electoral strategy is understandable, as the elections *per se* were not the subject matter of the analyzed debates.

The Causes of Populists' Popularity According to the Journalists. Examples of Populist Communication and Actions

Referring to populism as a phenomenon of political practice and discourse in contemporary democracies, none of the journalists in the analyzed programs attempted to explain the popularity of populists and their agenda. Interestingly, they also did not indicate any specific populist politician or political group. In the analyzed material, such a clear indication occurred only once, with an invited politician: Borys Budka, the Minister of Justice in the government of Platforma Obywatelska and Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (Polish People's Party, hereafter PSL) (*Kropka nad I*, March 30, 2016). However, given the strong politicization of journalism in Poland and the contexts of statements in the analyzed programs, it is clearly visible that the words populist/populism have highly negative connotations and always concern the opposite political side. The words were less frequently used in the programs broadcast by state-owned TVP, strictly controlled by the ruling right-wing coalition since 2015.

The Media as Populist Actors

In the typology of relations between the media and populism (Esser et al., 2017), three models are indicated: populism by the media, populism through the media, and populist civic journalism. However, journalists' statements in the studied TV programs cannot be directly qualified to any of these categories. Strong polarization of journalists dealing with political issues makes them active participants of populist political communication, which is manifested mainly in the interpretative (participatory) model of journalism (Patterson and Donsbach, 2004; Hanitzsch, 2007; Mellado, 2015). Of course, this was also associated with the nature of the studied TV programs, since the

aim of the discussions conducted in television studios was to interpret and explain current policies. Journalists, however, did not point to any specific media as populist, but through the visible parallelism of their views with specific political actors, one can see that they tended to assign populism to those media that favored their political antagonists.

Conclusions

The aim of our study was to determine whether journalists, acting as hosts or guests in TV political discussion programs used a populist style or they themselves could be defined as populist actors. Our research was diagnostic in nature, based on a qualitative analysis of political discourse. The diagnosis based on the obtained results will have, in our opinion, significance for showing the research potential of TV public affairs programs in research on populist political communication.

We obtained no clear answers to any of the six research questions. Journalists in their statements did use expressions characteristic for the populist style and also initiated populist discourse, but did not define populism, did not explain the reasons for its growing popularity, and did not indicate any specific political or media actors as populist.

Given the fact that the analyzed TV programs took place at roughly the same time, we may assume that the obtained results were associated with the issues that dominated the political debate at that time. The dominance of certain topics could have resulted in the formation of a populist attitude among the journalists. In addition, the selection of guests, especially in journalistic panels, was relatively stable, and resulted in a repetition of communication patterns, views and styles of expression.

If we assume that the populist discourse is characterized by “highly emotional, slogan-based, tabloid style language” (Mazzoleni, 2003, p. 5), linguistic radicalism, exaggeration, conflict and personalization, characteristic for tabloid journalism⁵ (Piontek et al., 2013), then that was the discourse that to some extent was present in all the analyzed materials. The populism expressed by the journalists was mainly present in the critique of politicians and other political actors, with visible partisanship and a certain snarkiness, which may testify to the low respect for the entire political class. Journalists did not refer to the people, and did not speak in the peoples’ name, and in one case (cited in our texts) a large group of citizens was discredited as susceptible to manipulation and views outside the mainstream of politics. In *Salon dziennikarski*, journalists indicated some political actors as more responsive to the opinion of the people, but – interestingly – they did not describe them as populist, probably due to their political sympathies.

Our in-depth analysis of journalistic statements resulted in yet another question, which may become an inspiration for future projects based on a larger database. In particular, it should be considered whether the institutional affiliation of journalists influences their inclination to use a populist discourse, whether there is a link between

⁵ This term refers to the journalistic standards that characterize modern quality information media that are becoming tabloidized (see Piontek et al., 2013).

specific events/topics in current politics that stimulates journalistic populist behaviors, or whether there are specific themes/events that encourage journalists to initiate a populist discourse.

Political opinion journalism appears here as a particularly important area of research, as journalists speak personally in these formats, without the visible interference of institutional factors, and the interaction taking place ‘live’ may provoke them to act spontaneously and express their real views. In addition, although the audience of TV political programs is smaller than that of TV news, they are also significant for the following reasons.

Firstly, the type and motivation of the audience is likely to be more interested in politics than regular TV viewers. They can be expected to seek in-depth information, and confront their own opinions with those presented by the journalists. These viewers are likely to play the role of opinion leaders in their communities, thereby increasing the real reach of political journalism. Secondly, by selecting topics, and discussing and interpreting political events, journalists not only influence the views of their audience but also actively participate in the political debate, which makes them significant political actors that those in power need to reckon with. We do not mean here the traditional interdependence of politics and the media, where journalists used to avoid open support of specific politicians/political parties. In a situation of acute political conflict, with little room for discussion and compromise, journalists may be treated as desirable allies, a kind of avant-garde influence, in times of low confidence in politicians. Hence the importance of research designed to determine whether they actually become one.

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ANNEX

Table 6.1. The list of TV programs with the date of broadcast and the list of participants

TITLE	TYPE	DATE	GUESTS
1	2	3	4
<i>Tomasz Lis na żywo</i>	interview	20.04.2015	Michał Fiszer (e), Wiesław Jedynek (e), Barbara Nowacka (RP), Maciej Komorowski (e), Marek Bukowski (a)
		27.04.2015	Aleksander Smolar (ngo), Andrzej Celiński (SLD), Konstanty Gertbert (GW), Jan Grabowski (h), Piotr Gontarczyk (h)
		4.05.2015	Joanna Senyszyn (SLD), Jacek Protasiewicz (PO), Zbigniew Ziobro (SP), Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz (PSL), Agnieszka Holland (f)
		11.05.2015	Aleksander Kwaśniewski (b. prezydent RP), Aleksander Smolar (ngo), Radosław Markowski (ps)
		18.05.2015	Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz (b. premier), Janusz Lewandowski (PO), Tomasz Karolak (a)

1	2	3	4
		25.05.2015	Joanna Mucha (PO), Ryszard Petru (N), Ryszard Kalisz (DWP), Aleksander Smolar (ngo), Radosław Markowski (ps), Anna Materka-Sosnowska (ps)
		1.06.2015	Roman Giertych (b. polityk LPR), Wojciech Olejniczak (SLD), Karolina Figura (KL), Wojciech Sadurski (p), Ireneusz Krzemiński (s)
Kropka nad i	interview	2.04.2015	Joachim Brudziński (PiS)
		14.04.2015	Stefan Niesiołowski (PO), Zbigniew Ziobro (SP)
		5.05.2015	Marzena Wróbel (niezrzeszona, d. PiS), Stefan Niesiołowski (PO)
		18.05.2015	Jacek Kurski (przedstawiony jako coach Andrzeja Dudy, PiS), Michał Kamiński (przedstawiony jako coach Bronisława Komorowskiego, PO)*
		26.05.2015	Marek Belka (prezes NBP)
		3.02.2016	Leszek Balcerowicz (b. polityk PO)
		8.02.2016	Waldemar Żurek (rzecznik KRS)
		15.02.2016	Cezary Tomczyk (PO), Jacek Sasin (PiS)
		30.03.2016	B. Budka (PO), Patryk Jaki (SP)
		4.04.2016	Józef Kloch (EP)
		20.04.2016	Beata Kempa (SP)
		12.09.2016	Ryszard Patru (N)
		20.09.2016	Jerzy Miller (PO), Paweł Deresz (e)
		27.09.2016	Andrzej Dera (PiS)
		3.10.2016	Romuald Dębski (e), Magdalena Cielecka (a)
		11.10.2016	Roman Giertych (b. polityk LPR)
		24.10.2016	Małgorzata Kidawa-Błońska (PO), Jacek Żalek (PR)
		7.11.2016	Borys Budka (PO), Grzegorz Długi (K'15)
		9.11.2016	Aleksander Kwaśniewski (b. prezydent RP)
		17.11.2016	Roman Giertych (b. polityk LPR)
		24.11.2016	Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz (b. premier)
		2.02.2017	Andrzej Zoll (b. prezes TK)
		8.02.2017	Ryszard Czarnecki (PiS), Rafał Trzaskowski (PO)
		20.02.2017	Agnieszka Holland (r)
		28.02.2017	Mirosław Róžański (e)
		21.03.2017	Andrzej Zoll (b. prezes TK), Waldemar Żurek (rzecznik KRS)
		3.04.2017	Rafał Trzaskowski (PO)
10.04.2017	Maciej Lasek (e)		
19.04.2017	Cezary Tomczyk (PO), Jan Maria Jackowski (PiS)		
3.06.2017	Adam Bielan (SP)		
Salon dziennikarski	journalistic comments	3.09.2016	Magdalena Ogórek (TVP), Henryk Zieliński (I), Piotr Zaremba (WS), Piotr Semka (DR)
		10.09.2016	Henryk Zieliński (I), Jacek Łęski (TVP), Piotr Zaremba (WS), Stanisław Janicki (wP)
		17.09.2016	Marek Markiewicz (p), Henryk Zieliński (I), Piotr Zaremba (WS), Anita Gargas (TVP)
		24.09.2016	Agnieszka Romaszewska (Tv Bielsat), Henryk Zieliński (I), Piotr Semka (DR), Piotr Zaremba (WS)
		1.10.2016	Stanisław Janicki (wP), Henryk Zieliński (I), Jan Pospieszalski (TVP), Piotr Zaremba (WS)
		8.10.2016	Dorota Łosiewicz (wP), Henryk Zieliński (I), Piotr Zaremba (WS), Piotr Gursztyn (TVP)
		22.10.2016	Marzena Nykiel (wP), Marek Markiewicz (p), Agnieszka Romanowska (TV Bielsat), Piotr Zaremba (WS)
		5.11.2016	Anita Gargas (TVP), Henryk Zieliński (I), Piotr Zaremba (WS), Piotr Semka (DR)
		19.11.2016	Witold Gadowski (WS), Henryk Zieliński (I), Piotr Skwieciński (WS), Stanisław Janecki (TVP)

1	2	3	4
		26.11.2016	Konrad Kołodziejcki (R), Henryk Zieliński (I), Piotr Zaremba (WS), Krzysztof Skowroński (radio Wnet)
		4.02.2017	Dorota Łosiewicz (wP), Henryk Zieliński (I), Marek Markiewicz (p), Piotr Zaremba (WS)
		11.02.2017	Adrian Stankowski (GPC), Henryk Zieliński (I), Piotr Skwieciński (WS), Stanisław Janicki (wP)
		18.02.2017	Piotr Semka (DR), Henryk Zieliński (I), Jan Pospieszalski (TVP), Piotr Zaremba (WS)
		25.02.2017	Maciej Pawlicki (WS), Henryk Zieliński (I), Ewa Stankiewicz (f), Piotr Zaremba (WS)
		4.03.2017	Radbad Klijnstra (a), Henryk Zieliński (I), Piotr Zaremba (WS), Piotr Semka (WS)
		18.03.2017	Stanisław Janicki (wP), Henryk Zieliński (I), Piotr Semka (DR), Piotr Zaremba (WS)
		25.03.2017	Anita Gargas (TVP), Konrad Kołodziejcki (wP), Marek Markiewicz (p), Piotr Semka (WS)
		1.04.2017	Agnieszka Romaszewska (TV Bieslan), Piotr Zaremba (WS), Maciej Pawlicki (f), Henryk Zieliński (I)
		8.04.2017	Piotr Semka (DR), Piotr Zaremba (WS), Henryk Zieliński (I), Anita Gargas (TVP)
		15.04.2017	Tadeusz Zysk (w), Bronisław Wildstein (TVP), Piotr Zaremba (WS)
		22.04.2017	Dorota Łosiewicz (wP), Maciej Pawlicki (WS), Henryk Zieliński (I), Marek Markiewicz (p)
		29.04.2017	Piotr Zaremba (WS), Maciej Pawlicki (f), Piotr Skwieciński (WS), Piotr Semka (DR)
Łoża dziennikarska	Journalistic comments	7.06.2015	Seweryn Blumsztajn (GW), Jacek Czarnecki (Radio Zet), Dominik Zdort (R), Piotr Skwieciński (WS)
		6.03.2016	Renata Grochal (GW), Daniel Passent (P), Andrzej Stankiewicz (R), Paweł Lisicki (DR)
		20.03.2016	Adam Szostkiewicz (P), Dominika Wielowieyska (GW), Andrzej Stankiewicz (R), Paweł Lisicki (DR)
		10.04.2016	Jacek Zakowski (P), Renata Grochal (GW), Tomasz Skory (RMF FM), Kamila Baranowska (DR)
		11.09.2016	Sławomir Sierakowski (KP), Wojciech Maziarski (GW), Andrzej Stankiewicz (Onet.pl), Agnieszka Romaszewska (Bielsat TV)
		23.10.2016	Mariusz Janicki (P), Seweryn Blumsztajn (GW), Tomasz Skory (RMF FM), Agaton Koziański (PT)
		30.10.2016	Renata Grochal (GW), Daniel Passent (P), Paweł Lisicki (DR), Agnieszka Romaszewska (Bielsat TV)
		13.11.2016	Cezary Michalski (NW), Piotr Stasiński (GW), Andrzej Stankiewicz (Onet.pl), Paweł Lisicki (DR)
		20.11.2016	Wojciech Maziarski (GW), Daniel Passent (P), Tomasz Skory (RMF FM), Michał Szuldrzyński (R)
		27.11.2016	Sławomir Sierakowski (KP), Cezary Łazarewicz (no), Jacek Czarnecki (Radio Zet), Filip Memches (R)
		5.02.2017	Tomasz Walek (no), Ewa Siedlecka (GW), Michał Szuldrzyński (R), Paweł Lisicki (DR)
		19.02.2017	Sławomir Sierakowski (KP), Seweryn Blumsztajn (GW), Tomasz Skory (RMF FM), Paweł Lisicki (DR)
		12.03.2017	Mariusz Janicki (P), Maciej Stasiński (GW), Jędrzej Bielecki (R), Paweł Lisicki (DR)
		26.03.2017	Mariusz Janicki (P), Piotr Stasiński (GW), Tomasz Skory (RMF FM), Michał Szuldrzyński (R)

* Television broadcast before the second round of the presidential election.

Source: Own elaboration.

LEGEND**POLITICAL PARTIES:**

PiS – Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice)
PO – Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform)
SP – Solidarna Polska (Solidary Poland)
SLD – Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (Democratic Left Alliance)
PSL – Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (Polish People's Party)
LPR – Liga Polskich Rodzin (League of Polish Families)
N – Nowoczesna.pl (Modern.pl)
DWP – Dom Wszystkich Polska (Poland – Home to All)
RP – Ruch Palikota (Palikot's Movement)
K'15 – Kukiz'15 (Kukiz-15)
PR – Polska Razem (Poland Together)

MEDIA:

GW – *Gazeta Wyborcza*
P – *Polityka*
R – *Rzeczpospolita*
NW – *Newsweek*
DR – *Do Rzeczy*
WS – *W Sieci*
KP – *Krytyka Polityczna*
PT – *Polska the Times*
I – *Idziemy*
wP – *wPolityce*
GPC – *Gazeta Polska Codziennie*

OTHERS:

NBP – Narodowy Bank Polski (National Bank of Poland)
EP – Episkopat Polski (Polish Episcopate)
TK – Trybunał Konstytucyjny (Constitutional Tribunal)
KRS – Krajowa Rada Sądownictwa (National Council of the Judiciary)
ngo – non-governmental organization
h – historian
f – film-maker
p – lawyer
s – sociologist
ps – political scientist,
e – expert
a – actor
w – publisher
no – no affiliation

PART III

New Space for Populism:

Populist Discourse in Social Media

7. Theoretical Background of Studies on Populist Political Communication in Social Media

Jakub Jakubowski

Introduction

For several decades, academic reflection on populism has constituted a significant portion of the research discourse in the fields of political science and media studies in the European context (Aalberg et al., 2017). Additionally, intensified extremist left/right-wing sentiments in Europe, Brexit, and the election of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States have encouraged attempts to seek information about the sources, reasons, and outcomes of a new wave of populism. It is therefore worthwhile to refer to publications from recent decades and to review cases of intensified populism from the past, as well as the communication strategies employed by the populists themselves. These publications provide a point of reference for the dearth of papers, analyses, and case studies in the field of political communication. In the present ‘age of populism’ (Aalberg and de Vreese, 2017), many of these papers provide an indispensable foundation for further studies into ‘what populism is today’ and how it is specific to our times. This may bring us slightly closer to answering a more fundamental question: why has populism recently spread to such a spectacular degree and what is the role of social media in this process?

Given the momentous transformations in politics, the media, technology, and – by this token – our everyday lives in recent decades, it is time to both expand on present studies and to review some theoretical concepts. The findings of various research projects should be adapted to national conditions in order to explain the local character of populist entities, strategies, and their outcomes. From the point of view of academic reliability, it is also important to test old concepts in new conditions created by changes in the media and how they are used by politicians and citizens – the increasing role of the latter in the process of political communication is now widely recognized.

Social Media and Political Communication

Social media¹ and their specific nature have aroused considerable social and political expectations, seen as facilitators of pro-democratic, civil, and deliberative activities.

¹ On account of the lack of consent as to the definitions and terminological relations between fundamental research categories, this chapter employs two terms. The broader one, social media,

They are frequently perceived as essential for the democratizing function of the Internet. This function first manifested itself in the 1990s, when the commercialized Internet was expected to ease the crisis of democracy resulting from the tabloidizing influence of traditional media (Wilhelm, 1999). It manifested itself again in the early 21st century, when the new ‘social opening’ and enthusiasm of the new millennium aroused hopes for greater civil independence (Baciak, 2006), and after 2011, when the Arab Spring and the protests against ACTA demonstrated the mobilizing power of the Web (Lakomy, 2013).

There is no doubt that over the last decade social media have become prominent in the landscape of modern mass communication media. They have clearly made their mark on the interpersonal and mass communication and have aroused the hopes of media researchers that the principles of ‘rational discourse’, understood in terms of its model as developed in the second half of the 20th century, could actually be implemented (Szachaj, 1990).

Several years ago, the Internet seemed to be evolving into a tool to control the authorities and expand democratic discussion. For instance, in 2013 E. Schmidt and J. Cohen, heads of Google, expressed this opinion when they wrote that “citizen participation will reach an all-time high as anyone with a mobile handset and access to the Internet will be able to play a part in promoting accountability and transparency (...). People who perpetuate myths about religion, culture, ethnicity or anything else will struggle to keep their narratives afloat amid a sea of newly informed listeners” (2013, p. 35).

Given recent experiences, it appears that such forecasts never came true and quite the opposite scenario was actually implemented. The lack of control over the content posted on the Web, based on ‘post-truth’, repeated data leaks, hacking attacks, illicit use of information about online consumers, the Cambridge Analytica data scandal, and other negative phenomena, show the Web as an ideal field for populists. The very foundations of the modern Internet seem to be conducive to dysfunctional styles of politics.²

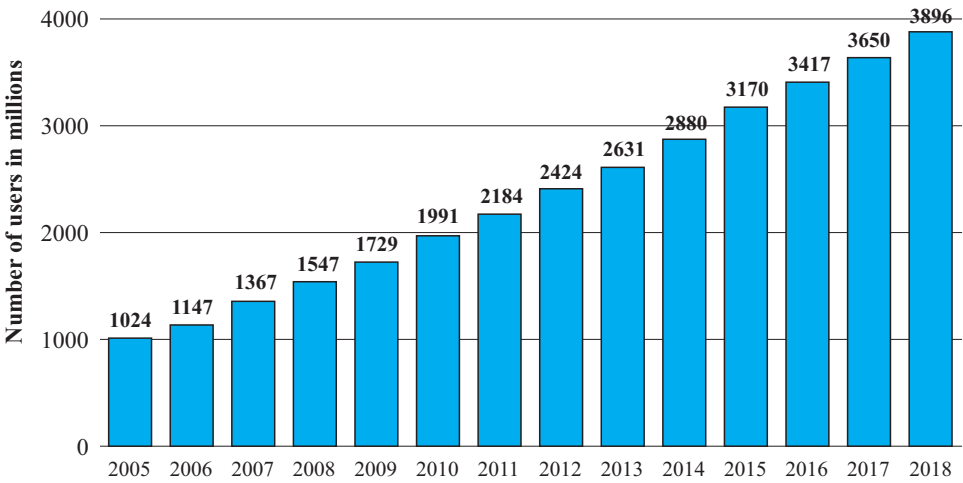
Not only have the hopes for the Internet failed to come true, but the Web might have further exacerbated the same problems of political communication that emerged at the advent of mass media (Orliński, 2013). Such phenomena as hate speech, post-truth, tabloidization, and trivialization of politics have become serious problems that are addressed in essays about the condition of democracy and the abandonment of its liberal model. For over a decade, the Web has become increasingly ‘socialized’, which has further exacerbated these issues and transformed the relations between politicians and citizens, providing the former with a new weapon with which to struggle for their platforms. This struggle is at the core of today’s political marketing which has increasingly become the essence of modern politics *per se*.

encompasses forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). The more precise term, which is the object of studies as the source of materials to be analyzed, is social networking services (SNS) that translate the concept of social media into specific communication solutions, websites, social portals and other.

² Similar observations can be found in media studies in Poland. These dysfunctional styles intensified particularly during the 2015 election campaign, when both the victory of the conservative Law and Justice party in the parliamentary and presidential elections, and the growing support for candidates with extremist and anti-systemic views (e.g. Partia KORWIN, Kukiz’15) were linked to brutal online campaigns (Nowina Konopka, 2015).

Critical considerations on the mutual influence of the Internet and politics should always include the important question of their populist components (Groschek and Engelbert, 2012). The first attempts at research on this relationship date back to the late 1990s (Bimber, 1998), in the times when the Web was essentially static, years before the 2.0 technology made it a social tool. The access to the Internet has also dramatically increased. It has almost quadrupled worldwide since the early 2000s (see Graph 7.1). An attempt to describe the changes in the Internet itself would probably take several volumes.

Graph 7.1. Number of internet users worldwide from 2005 to 2018 (in millions)



Source: Statista, 2019.

Populism and Social Media

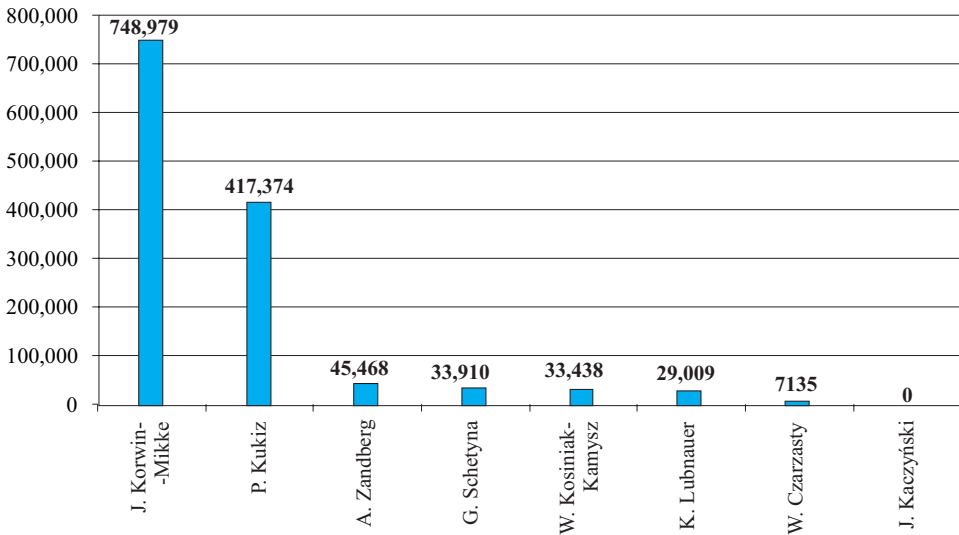
The relation between social media and populism has been addressed by an increasing number of papers in recent years (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, and Büchel, 2016; Dittrich, 2017; Ernst et al., 2017; KhosraviNik, 2017; Postill, 2018; Schumann et al., 2019 and others). Many of them focus on a single country cases like Switzerland (Ernst, Engesser, and Esser, 2017), Italy (Mazzoleni and Bracciale, 2018; Bobba and Roncarlo, 2018) or Portugal (Salgado, 2018). They feature qualitative and quantitative research that tests theoretical concepts of the development of rhetorical strategies on the basis of source materials obtained from social networks. Such research generally concerns the following topics: the ways politicians use social media, how social media are used during electoral campaigns, social media as tools of permanent campaigns, social media as tools for supplying political content and building a dialogue with voters and as a source for influencing electoral decisions and informing citizens about politics, and the opportunities social media offer for expressing opinions, building political involvement and participation, creating political agendas, and influencing journalists (Ernst, 2016).

It appears that populism and communication via social media have many common characteristics. On account of the lack of proper analyses, however, this statement re-

mains only an academic intuition. These two phenomena are mutually related and they can support and complement one another for the benefit of politicians and the media as such. It can be presupposed that the nature of communication conducted via social networks supports the style and strategies of populists who are keen to use tools such as Facebook and Twitter.

Such an intuitive presupposition is confirmed by statistical data, showing the dominating social media popularity of party leaders who have become the symbols of populist narratives, for example among Polish politicians: J. Korwin-Mikke (≈749k Fb followers) and P. Kukiz (≈417k) compared to A. Zandberg (≈45k), G. Schetyna (≈34k), W. Kosiniak-Kamysz (≈33k), K. Lubnauer (≈29k), W. Czarzasty (≈7k), J. Kaczyński (0k) – see Graph 7.2.

Graph 7.2. A number of followers of Polish political leaders’ profiles on Facebook (2019)



Source: Facebook.

Similar conclusions can also be found in literature featuring theoretical foundations for empirical studies (Aalberg and de Vreese, 2017). But there is still insufficient number of in-depth studies on the relationship between SNS (Social Networking Services) and populism as a political ideology/style of communication (see Engesser, Fawzi, and Larsson, 2017; Gerbaudo, 2018; Mazzoleni and Bracciale, 2018; de Vreese et al., 2018; Ernst et al., 2019). It is also worthwhile to verify the hypothesis that social networks provide a useful functionality to politicians and citizens who implement populism in their communication processes.

Populism as an Ideology and a Style of Political Communication

A significant portion of the extensive body of literature on populism is devoted to creating definitions and terminology. The discussion that emerges is interesting; however, it would be a mistake to name it an academic dispute. It is more of a collection

of paradigms that make up what C. Popper called a ‘searchlight’ that sheds light on the object of cognition from different angles (Popper, 2002). This situation may be used to accentuate various features of populism, to show the different points of view, to demonstrate the cultural specificity of its perception in different parts of the world, and to mutually complement the theories, thereby enhancing them or changing the direction of research. As concerns populism, its definitions and paradigms appear to be exceptionally extensive – approaching it as a left-wing or right-wing ideology,³ a style of political communication, a third road between capitalism and socialism, or the result of the discrepancy between the idea and practice of democracy (Wysocka, 2010).

Media logic, definitional similarity of political marketing and politics as such, and the critical approach to describing the media-politics relation, are subjects often taken up by philosopher E. Laclau, who treats populism as a manner of articulation rather than an ontic category which should be defined by its form rather than its content (Beasley-Murray, 2005). This approach focuses on the use of rhetorical mechanisms and styles of speech that are defined as populist in various studies. They are usually used quite consciously, as shown by research on propaganda, rhetoric, and political marketing, demonstrating that politicians and media representatives perform communication activities purposefully in order to evaluate political facts, create an agenda, or exert influence over citizens. Politicians take courses and training sessions in political communication, there are guidebooks about it, not to mention the fact that media sections of political parties provide their MPs with instructions on how to talk about certain issues – ready-made patterns for public statements on a daily basis. In undertaking communication attempts aimed at fulfilling specific goals, political actors demonstrate intuition combined with willfulness, even if also sometime tinged with spontaneity. Although politicians may not be willing to call themselves populists, they are aware that they apply strategies that could easily be named populist.

P.A. Taguieff (2001) claims that populism is a style that can be applied in different frameworks, a method of manipulation, and a manner of expressing particular interests (2001). J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007, p. 3) state that this style has three foundations: (1) it always refers to ‘the people’ and justifies its actions by appealing to and identifying with ‘the people’; (2) it is rooted in an anti-elite sentiment; and (3) it considers the people as a monolithic group without internal differences except for some very specific categories who are subject to an exclusion strategy.

In this manner, the authors take a stance in the conceptual dispute of whether to understand populism as a style or a specific ideology. This coincides with the understanding of populism as an element in a political game aimed at attaining electoral goals. Assuming that such a style is purposefully applied in order to imbue statements with certain characteristic properties that may become a source of social influence, populism as such

³ It is worth noting here that this paper focuses mainly on the phenomena and processes characteristic of right-wing populism in social media. This choice results from the dominant character of populism in the narration of right-wing politicians who use social media as the main channels of mass communication and their recent electoral successes (e.g. Donald Trump in the USA, Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage in the UK, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Andrej Babiš in the Czech Republic, Paweł Kukiz in Poland and others – more about the latter in chapter 8). The manifestations of left-wing populism present in social media are of a different nature, relying to a greater extent on the activities of collective entities, using them as a tool for organization and mobilization.

is a compound of rhetorical and strategic techniques and measures, and can therefore be called a significant element of political marketing. The populist style is manifested by means of different rhetorical and conceptual aspects externalized in the process of political communication. Social media emerge here as a natural extension and complement of the formerly researched methods of establishing relations between political actors and citizens (voters), such as political manifestos, statements for the media, participation in televised debates and programs, etc. A political post on Facebook or Twitter may be seen as a new 'genre' containing messages employing a populist style.

This style is characterized by its application of exceptionally diverse 'communication techniques' (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007) that make use of rhetorical constructions and specific content. Some of these are mutually exclusive and marked by different ideological origins (agrarian, right-wing, left-wing and so on), making it impossible to develop a list that would be universal for populism and to then refer to this list in studies on political communication, trying to identify them, for instance, in posts on social media. Another crucial issue that influences the manifestation of a populist style are its cultural determinants. The three foundations proposed by J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007) should be deemed most universal, particularly in reference to politicians as senders of messages and to users of social media (for instance, online opinion leaders). Nevertheless, these communication activities also encompass the emotionalization of messages (Demertzis, 2006), hyperbole, and appealing to the extremes (e.g. economic liberalization and welfare state), as well as scandalization (Mudde, 2004) and at the level of content: referring to one's private experience (being 'one of the people'), the category of one's 'native land' (Taggart, 2000), anti-party sentiment (Scarrow and Poguntke, 1996), the negation of political correctness (Greven, 2016), the glorification of strong leadership (di Piramo, 2009), building the image of a strong or eccentric personality of the sender of messages (Taggart, 2000), and combining political matters with pop-cultural issues (Mazzoleni, 2008).

Populism and Social Media – Marriage of Convenience?

When defining populism in terms of the stylistic or thin-ideological component, one can assume that populist communication techniques are strategies that befit the paradigm of activities oriented at consumers (voters) who are "the core of marketing activities" (Żuchowski and Brelik, 2007, p. 207). The selection of a communication strategy also determines the appropriate selection of methods for reaching the recipients. Thus, persuasive messages broadcasted by politicians on breakfast television, in specialist press, and on Twitter will differ vastly from one another. Given the present state of development of the Internet, it can be assumed that social media – with their specific functionalities that differentiate them from other media – will offer the best adapted channel for populist messages. It even appears that, due to their non-elite character and significantly lower access barriers for citizens than in traditional media, the Web is becoming a "natural environment" for those who employ a populist communication style (Groschek and Engelbert, 2012).

The thesis may be risked that choosing the Web as a distribution channel for populist content is not accidental at all; it tends to be a purposeful and highly pragmatic

choice. The rationality of populist communication via social networks is confirmed by the first studies in this field. It appears that, on account of the high degree of fragmentation of social media content, the populist elements become simplified, making it easier for social media users to interpret and complement them with their own ideological approaches. This significantly enhances the dissemination of populist messages (Engesser et al., 2016).

Apart from studies and general considerations on the functionalities of the Web that invite the use of specific communication styles, it should also be stressed that there are numerous tangential points between populism and social media, listed in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1. Populist communication activities and the corresponding features of social media⁴

Populist ideological factor/style	Features of social media supporting populist strategies
Referring to the category of ‘the people’	Social media as ‘the media of society’, of ‘the people’
Anti-elitism	Generating content independent of mainstream media, which are part of the elite
Exclusion of ‘the others’	The ease of overcoming political correctness in the social network, where the sense of anonymity encourages hate speech directed at minorities, refugees, etc.
<i>Stammtisch</i> (Germ., society gathered around a table)	Textual and visual simplification of messages and their emotional nature
“Heartland”	Online community as a ‘homogenous and virtuous society’
Anti-party sentiment	Potential for general and open criticism
Negation of political correctness	Limited gatekeeper functions
Cognitive emancipation	Multiple sources facilitate access to more extended/complex knowledge of politics
The principle of “more leadership, less participation”	Websites are constructed so as to facilitate the personalization of politics and emergence of a star-like online system
The strategy of extraordinary personality	Image creation potential
Close relations with pop-culture	Pop-culture’s interference in the language of the internet

Source: Own elaboration.

Social media appear not to have fulfilled the hopes and expectations placed in them, and their role in the development of democracy in the age of another wave of populism is highly dubious. At the same time, everything seems to be pointing to the idea that social media are “genetically adapted” to support politicians who employ populist communication styles (Barlett, 2014) and their functionalities create a certain “climate” bolstering media users in expressing their opinions (Mazzoleni, 2014).

It is also beyond doubt that social media have made people more eager to express their views online and to do so more often. It is a paradox that those media which are called social are, in fact, exceptionally individualistic (Gerodimos, 2012). Commenting on recent events, media users join the political discussion and support or deplore

⁴ It is worth noting that this comparison may provide a starting point to not only discuss the validity of the above collation, but also to search for other, similar, and complementary proposals. When describing populist narrative styles and the operation of the modern electronic media, we are facing a highly dynamic object of research where it is not feasible to design a universal theory and the phenomenon may only be captured at a specific moment in time and political circumstance.

politicians' postulates. In doing so, they make use of a wide range of means of expression, including comments, podcasts, pictures, and memes, the most popular of which remain text-based genres. In this respect, media users do not differ much from political actors who employ social media tools in their attempts to stimulate civil activities that will help them achieve their political goals (electoral support, participation in political events, promulgation of specific ideological values, etc.).

It is worth remembering that this process is based on the new (network) media logic which differs from the theories familiar to us in terms of how content is produced (by media users), how news are distributed (via the Web), and how media users apply information (Klinger and Svensson, 2015). Others emphasize the lack of traditionally understood logic (Engesser et al., 2016). Assuming, however, that this logic exists, it is likely that one of its important elements consists of politicians encouraging media users to be active (creating a so-called "buzz" around a given issue and helping attain their goals). Recent years have brought a certain qualitative change, making it possible to collect and analyze such activities. Thanks to the new functions of social media, each user may create a personal channel aiming to achieve certain goals, similar to politicians. It is worth stressing the difference in the ways in which political actors and citizens employ a populist style. It seems that, in the former case, the primary goals are clearly defined (winning support which is to translate into electoral results), whereas in the latter case, we are dealing with a broader range of intentions and objectives. These may include a need for recognition, a search for popularity, expression of political opinions and ambitions, and so on. However, it is impossible to rule out a scenario in which citizens' online activities (creating content, sharing, commenting, etc.), working for the benefit of politicians, are dictated by their individual convictions. These activities may involve voluntary or paid work for electoral committees as well as other informal activities supporting a political entity. It cannot then be excluded that the objectives of political actors and social media users are convergent and complementary, more so as online communities are typically based on shared ideas and interests (Ernst, 2016).

The aforementioned relationship is the essence of marketing interdependence between political actors and other web users inclined to be active in supporting politicians by sharing content or posting their own materials. Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and YouTube are natural environments for political mobilization (Gerbaudo, 2014). This mobilization occurs at several levels, in line with the principle of transmission of content from political entities to media users via opinion leaders (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). Although its scale is dramatically different, a similar process takes place in the communication environment of social media, with information spreading geometrically across the Web, wherein opinion leaders form the nodes. It is the primary goal of online political marketing to trigger the activity of such nodes. In studies on political communication, this activity tends to be an underestimated stage of political mobilization (spreading from one social media user to another) that may employ a populist narrative style similar to the communication strategy adopted by politicians. The scheme of this process may be seen in Graph 7.3.

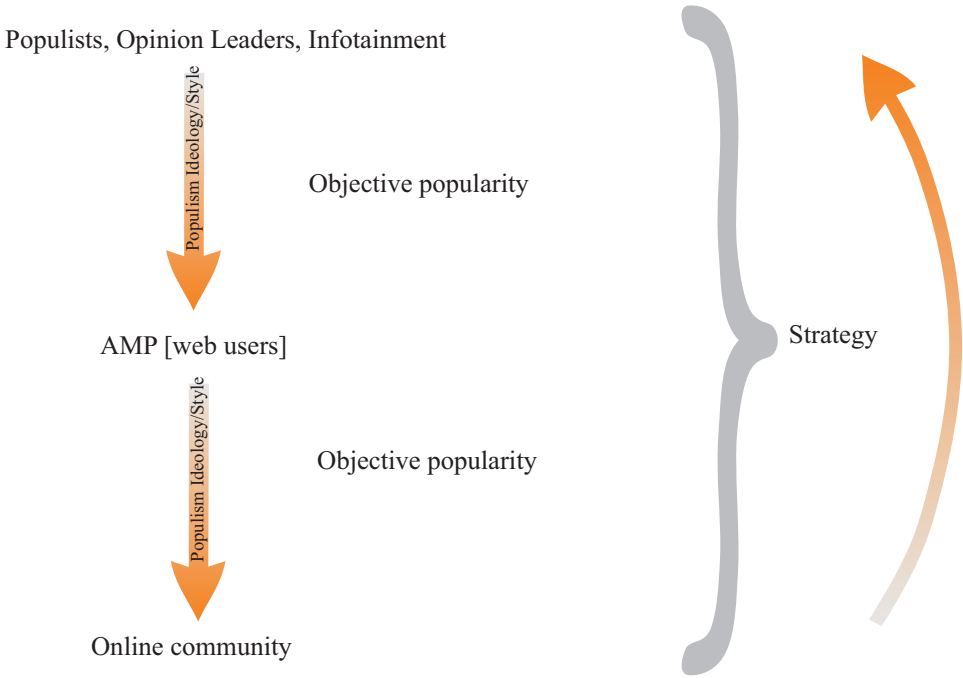
The adoption of a populist operating strategy will call for preferred rhetorical tools and styles conforming to the media logic, in order to arouse the interest of other social media users by means of emotionalization, shocking language, and other tools of populist narration. This leads to a question: can populist styles be employed not only

by politicians, but also by citizens? Before the age of the Internet this question was impossible to answer, but in the age of Facebook we are presented with an opportunity to analyze textual units created by social media users.

Commenting and content sharing form a part of the system of dependencies that is beneficial for all three parties of political communication:

(1) Political actors promulgate preferred content via social media users who create/transfer populist messages. Importantly, politicians setting up accounts on social media and posting messages through them is only the first stage of online marketing activities. The main objective of increasing the popularity of a post, and thereby of the political actor who authored it, is achieved only after the post is shared, recommended, and commented on (generating unique content) by other users (Klinger and Svensson, 2015).

Graph 7.3. Using populist ideology/style as political strategy



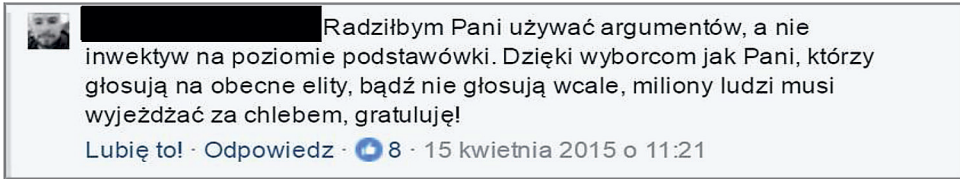
Source: Own elaboration.

(2) Social media users fulfill the goals of individual or collective political entities, achieving their own goals (usually broader goals that are analogous to those of political actors) at the same time.

(3) Following traditional media logic, media institutions (such as SNS) can take advantage of social media’s extensive content and their growing popularity, resulting from the emotional and populist rhetoric employed by their users, and achieve their own business goals, such as selling contextual advertising. Thus the distribution of content that triggers the activities of others (“buzz”) by both citizens and politicians is economically advantageous for such media.

This approach is somewhat atypical of studies on populism and political communication because it recognizes that citizens/media users are fully-fledged senders in the classical communication model. Earlier studies concentrated on media users primarily as recipients of populist messages. Their reactions and responses to ‘external’ populism were examined. At present, when a vast majority of messages are created by citizens rather than by politicians, researching the communication activities of this dominant group seems justified. Additionally, the online communication activities of members of the public have begun to overtake their offline activities in many fields (Barlett et al., 2013), which provides yet another reason for such studies. Figures 7.1 through 7.3 show further examples of the employment of a populist ideology/style by Polish SNS users.⁵

Figure 7.1. Anti-elitism in the post of a discussion participant on Facebook



[I would advise you to use arguments instead of playground taunts. Thanks to such voters as you, who vote for the present elites or do not vote at all, millions of people have to earn their living abroad, congratulations!].

Source: Facebook, April 15, 2015.

Figure 7.2. Referring to the category of ‘the people’ in the post of a discussion participant on Facebook



[I am glad that we, Poles, have such a president, for now – in Słupsk, later on maybe in the country].

Source: Facebook, 10 April 2015.

Figure 7.3. Exclusion from the community (of the politicians of Law and Justice) in the post of a discussion participant on Facebook



[Or maybe they are not true-born Poles but agents? Because, that’s my impression!].

Source: Facebook, April 1, 2015.

Statistics of the number of shares, retweets, emotional markings (such as Facebook’s ‘likes’), and subscriptions by other users may indicate that such posts as those quoted

⁵ In chapter 8 we will present an application of semi-automated content analysis (quantitative method) to show how social media can be used in populist political communication (using the example of a Polish populist political actor Paweł Kukiz in 2015).

above and others similar fulfill their role. On the one hand, it is about individual SNS users achieving their particular goals – after all they do not write for themselves but in order for every message to gain the greatest popularity possible. On the other hand, the web structure of media users in this case, in contrast to traditional media, provides a kind of ‘conveyor belt’ for messages created by individual (politicians) or collective (political parties, organizations) political entities. This relation may be named symbiotic, while also being central to web media logic. The conscious selection of a populist style, or elements of populist ideology, may constitute an important step in the process of political communication. It can even be said that, owing to this mechanism, “populism is becoming populist” both in content and form, focusing on increasing the popularity of the message and inducing other users to adopt and promulgate it.

Conclusions

Electoral successes of populists in recent years around the world are a clear indication that the Internet has failed to stand up to the hopes that it could improve politics. On the contrary, it has become an element in numerous negative developments, including its becoming another channel offering support to populists. Everything seems to indicate that the evolution of the Web into a social, interactive medium that can only be legally controlled to a limited degree, makes it an excellent communication channel adapted to spreading populist content. Politicians who choose a given strategy to communicate with voters believe it is most rational and effective to use the Internet as the best tool to increase their popularity. Studies in this field confirm that this is actually what politicians commonly do.

The phenomena that have been examined thus far are only some of many ways in which content circulates on the Web (political actor – citizens). A considerable majority of communication acts take place between citizens. It is impossible to design a comprehensive picture of what we call populist communication if these are not identified and examined as well. It is also impossible to understand the operational mechanisms of contemporary political marketing techniques. It seems that today, more than ever, the ability to mobilize citizens to be active in promoting electoral candidates is at the root of a successful campaign, especially on social media.

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8. Populism and Social Media. Analysis of the Political Communication Activities of Paweł Kukiz and Citizen Social Media Users During the 2015 Electoral Campaigns

Jakub Jakubowski and Kinga Adamczewska

Introduction

Hybrid media systems with increasingly interlinked new and traditional media (Chadwick, 2013; Kübler and Kriesi, 2017) have created new possibilities in political communication. Thanks to these systems, political actors are now able to choose between various channels of communication, with social media being most effective in providing unfiltered access to the general public and potential voters (Golbeck, Grimers, and Rogers, 2010; Jacobs and Spierings, 2016). In this sense, social media have become an ideal channel for populist communication (Ernst et al., 2017). Their appeal is increased by the widespread perception that they are free from the influence of professional journalists (i.e. ‘media elite’) and are thus much closer to citizens (‘the people’). Social media are generally seen as giving citizens greater opportunities to express their opinions and influence the information agenda.

In contrast to research focused on social media interactions between specific political actors and other social media users (i.e. reactions to statements posted by a political actor on his/her Facebook or Twitter profile), this chapter analyzes populist political communication from two different perspectives: that of the political actor and that of citizen users. In the first perspective, we will concentrate on messages constructed and disseminated by a political actor on social media, aiming to identify the elements of populist discourse in the Facebook posts of Paweł Kukiz, a Polish populist politician. The second perspective will concern the statements of social media users who may also use populist discourse; here, we will analyze their posts concerning various Polish politicians, including Paweł Kukiz.

These two study perspectives share (1) the same study period, covering the electoral campaigns preceding the Polish presidential and parliamentary elections in 2015, and (2) a focus on critique of ‘the elite’ (*anti-elitist populism*) in the analyzed statements that were posted on (3) social media platforms – Facebook and YouTube. However, before presenting the results of our analysis, it is necessary to explain the methodological challenges associated with both aforementioned perspectives. To this end, we will elaborate on the observations made in chapter 7, regarding the specificity of social media in populist political communication.

Populism and Social Media – Methodological Challenges

Research from the Perspective of a Political Actor

In this perspective, whose characteristics and consequences are presented in detail in chapter 1, the main goal was to analyze the statements disseminated by actors of political communication and to identify the elements of populist discourse in those statements. The research process consisted of several stages: (1) selection of the political actor, (2) selection of the communication channel, (3) determination of the study period, and (4) content analysis (concerning the format and actual content of the statements). Each of these stages will be explained in detail later in this section.

As noted in chapter 7, modern populism owes a lot to the development of social media. However, it is worth explaining in greater detail how the presence and activity of political actors (parties and their leaders) in this specific communication area can be considered in the context of populism.

In literature, the role of a populist leader is defined in two ways. In one interpretation, the political leader is seen as a central figure of populism who is essential for mobilizing the masses (Weyland, 2001), and whose personalist and paternalist leadership is a fundamental feature of populism (Roberts, 1995). The second interpretation treats the political leader as just one of many articulators of the populist style, the main protagonist of populism, accompanied by other actors, such as political parties (Stanley, 2008; Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2011). The latter approach is characteristic not only of researchers who see populism as an ideology, but also of those who define populism as a kind of discourse or political strategy (Pauwels, 2011; Rooduijn and Pauwels, 2011). In this chapter, we employ the latter approach.

Our decision to focus on the statements of a single Polish politician, Paweł Kukiz, the leader of the Kukiz'15 movement, follows the argumentation of B. Moffitt, who defines political leaders as visible symbols of modern populism, widely covered by the media and responsible for setting the limits of discourse on populism. In addition, many populist parties are in fact 'personal parties' of their leaders, with activists working for the personal success of the man at the head. Thirdly, the political position of a populist leader is relatively stable on the national scale, in contrast to the parties or political movements whose senior members may even be barely known outside the party (Moffitt, 2016). In this sense, Paweł Kukiz is a fine example of a populist leader, even though his movement – taking its name from his surname – is not formally a political party.

The selection of Paweł Kukiz for this study was associated with his success in the Polish presidential and parliamentary elections in 2015. An ex-rock star and political novice, he received 3 million votes in the presidential elections in May that year (third place with 20.8% votes). In the parliamentary elections held in October 2015, his political movement Kukiz'15 won 42 seats in the Sejm, the lower chamber of the Polish parliament, making it the third strongest political force in Poland.

The choice was also largely based on the fact that social media were the main channel of communication for Paweł Kukiz. He often argued that traditional media were not interested in him or his political views, accusing them of bias and favoring politicians from other parties (Adamczewska, 2016). In addition, previous analyses of

Paweł Kukiz's political career and the communication aspect of his electoral campaigns show that in his statements (those published by traditional media and social media, as well as his parliamentary addresses) Kukiz relied heavily on constitutive features of populism – critique of 'the elite' and reference to 'the people', while emphasizing his anti-systemic stance and using colloquial and emotional language (Kołodziejczak and Wrzeźniewska-Pietrzak, 2017; Wrzeźniewska-Pietrzak and Kołodziejczak, 2017; Lipiński and Stępińska, 2018).

The combination of these two premises, i.e. social media as the main channel of communication and the presence of core elements of populist discourse, places this study among a relatively small body of research concerning relations between populism and new media, especially as it pertains to political communication through social media. These relations may be considered on at least two levels.

First, new media are becoming an environment which exacerbates the division between 'the political and media elites' and 'the people' (Van Zoonen, 2012). As B. Krämer (2017) argues, actors using the elements of populist discourse via the Internet tend to contest traditional media, accusing them of bias, while proclaiming themselves to be the sole holder of true information and the only representative of 'the people'. Therefore, new media are becoming a place for expressing anti-elitist attitudes and for frequent reference to 'the people'.

Political actors using the elements of populist discourse have successfully used new media to become independent of traditional media and have been able to overcome geographic barriers in disseminating their messages (Moffitt, 2016). It does not mean, however, that they have completely forsaken traditional media. Quite to the contrary, research shows that "there is a compatibility of media logic and populism that lead to a media coverage of populist political actors or populist statements made by politicians. There are at least three aspects of media logic that are especially favourable to the dissemination of populism: the media interests in conflict framing, strategic framing, and personalization" (Esser et al., 2017, p. 372).

Secondly, novel technological possibilities created by new media are also important for populist political communication. The directness and openness of this communication sphere may be beneficial for populists (Barlett et al., 2013). Social media platforms create much more direct links between users than traditional media (Engesser et al., 2017) and enable immediate interaction. Thus, the use of these new communication tools by populist actors allows them to have close, almost personal contacts with potential voters, closing the gap between political actors and their followers.

In addition, the environment of social media and their specific mode of information transfer, based on short, simplified posts, facilitates the spread of ambiguous ideologies, including populism (Ernst et al., 2017). Finally, social media are free of charge, removing any potential financial barriers on the part of the senders and receivers of any messages.

The aforementioned observations lead into the next stage of the research procedure, which involved selection of a specific communication channel. In this study, we chose to analyze only Facebook posts, even though in 2015 Paweł Kukiz also posted content on Twitter.

The reason for this decision was partially due to the low number of tweets and their high irregularity. Furthermore, in Poland, Facebook is the clear leader among social me-

dia platforms, reaching 82% of Polish Internet users, i.e. 23 million people, compared to 4 million Twitter accounts (IAB Polska/PwCADEX, 2017). In Poland, Twitter is also perceived mainly as a platform for politicians and journalists, and as such it is less relevant in research on populist political communication (Królowie Polskiego Twittera, 2013). With its reputation for being a platform for communication among elites and not between elites and ordinary citizens, Twitter did not fit the purpose of our research: analysis of political communication directed toward citizens – potential voters.

The third stage of the research process involved determining the study period from which we could select materials for the research sample. The collected material covered the presidential and parliamentary campaigns (days between May 1 and 8, 2015 and between October 16 and 23, 2015). On one hand, that period may be described as the most dynamic, characterized by increased communication on the part of political actors fighting for potential votes. On the other hand, the voters themselves can be expected to be more interested and to actively participate in communication on social media, e.g. to obtain information essential for choosing their candidate. This assumes an exceptionally intense relationship between political actors and citizens during that period, which is crucial for research on populism.

In order to characterize the populist political communication on social media from the perspective of a political actor, we also need to examine the character of the content and the way it is presented by the political actor on his Facebook profile. This can be established using content analysis – objective, systematic, and quantitative review of the visible content of statements (Berelson, 1952). This is a permanent feature of content analysis, regardless of whether the analyzed statements are published via traditional or new media.

In our research, we used traditional content analysis (Herring, 2004). This was possible thanks to the relatively small sample and short time period under study. Our analysis was based on Facebook posts treated as individual text units and on the categories of the codebook presented in detail in chapter 1.

Research from the Perspective of Citizen Internet User

The access to content generated by the web users – and not only to that created by political actors – is invaluable for researchers dealing with political communication. However, many experts on media and politics fail to notice the fact that only a small fraction of content in the Internet is created by politicians and journalists. Most of it is produced by non-professional web users but research on political communication rarely reflects that.¹

In research on the content of messages disseminated via social media it is important to emphasize the challenges and limitations associated with this material. One of the

¹ This process is sometimes noticed by theoreticians, although it is called “certain actions of citizens” (Schultz, 2008, pp. 36–72), “associative communication” (Goban-Klas, 1998, p. 9; Pawełczyk and Piontek, 1999, pp. 41–42) or “horizontal-associative communication” (Kolczyński, 2008, pp. 17–18). It is worth noting that an important element of social media communication is its public character, which before the twenty-first century was largely hindered by the lack of a widely accessible communication channel for citizens.

greatest problems is creating the database itself, which requires the use of an appropriate web crawler (Amudha, 2017, pp. 128–136). This challenge appears immediately and concerns the selection of material, related to the immense amount of data that may be included in the analysis. For example, the number of Polish Facebook users exceeded 17 million in 2018 (Digital, 2018), and given that more than half of them log in everyday (Sadowski, 2012), we are dealing with the audience similar in size to the number of viewers during the largest events broadcast by the Polish television.²

However, it is much more difficult to estimate the actual scale of user activity in the generation of content on a specific subject (e.g. politics, populism, elections, etc.). Depending on the applied exclusion criteria, these numbers may range from a few thousand (research on microtopics), through dozens of thousands (mesoscale), to several million posts (macroscale). In our case, the number of posts directly related to ‘the elite’ (using the keyword “elite” and its various declensions in Polish) was about 1,000 for the parliamentary elections and about 900 for the presidential campaign, selected from about 30 thousand and 43 thousand posts, respectively, suggesting elements typical of populist discourse. With such high numbers, reduction of the sample material can pose a significant problem (Gabbouj et al., 1999).

In research on the content produced by political actors, selection criteria rely mainly on the subject itself and additional criteria such as the popularity of a given text unit, time limitations, etc. In comparison, in analysis of content created by users, the selection criteria can be much more intricate. There are criteria related to a political actor or social media user (e.g. fans, followers, or subscribers of a given politician) and those related to the scope and character of the statement. Therefore, selection may be based on the presence of a given additional element (a photo, link, or shares by other users), time (e.g. publication during or after the electoral campaign), or location of the author. However, the most important for selection are the topics present in the research material itself, identified based on the catalog of relevant keywords.

A lot depends on the precision of keywords. In research on electoral communication, one can use candidates’ names or the word *election* in various declensions in Polish, but these need to be accompanied by exclusion keywords (e.g. due to other meanings of the Polish word for elections, *wybory*, which may also mean *choice* as in *consumers choice*, or *decision* as in *life decisions*). In addition, after software-based selection, the relevance of each text needs to be reassessed by a researcher (coder), as the automated content analysis is imperfect – it has problems with reading graphics, cannot interpret irony, and cannot apply the cultural background that is often indispensable for evaluating the context of a given statement (Weitzel et al., 2015).

Another crucial element of research is delineation of text units. It is easier in traditional media, due to the relative linearity of texts and the absence (or low number) of intertextual links. This means that analysis of a press article involves its natural components such as its title, lead, main text, headings, photos, etc. More problems arise when delineating radio and TV materials.

Meanwhile, the level of complexity and diversity of text units constructed or distributed by social media users are associated with a much greater number of chal-

² The number of Facebook users who log in everyday (about 9 million) is similar to the average audience of the national team football matches (e.g. Poland–Portugal on February 29, 2012).

lenges. These include (1) intertextuality – references to other texts on other websites, retweets, materials from external servers, comments, shares, reactions, extended galleries of photos, (2) metadata accompanying social media posts, and (3) text present in the graphical elements of the text unit and graphical elements in the text itself.

Only allowing for the aforementioned issues, can a database consisting of social media posts be used to perform content analysis. This research technique requires a theoretical foundation and operationalization of terms, preparation of a categorization key (also known as a codebook), and processing the final database which contains the results of the survey. It is also crucial to determine an effective method of encoding the collected information, which is described in detail in chapter 1.

Findings

Paweł Kukiz's Communication Activity on Facebook During the 2015 Electoral Campaigns

The aim of the first part of this research was to determine whether or not Paweł Kukiz used elements of populist discourse in posts on his official Facebook profile, and if so, which components of populism were present. Quantitative analysis showed that in May 2015 his Facebook profile was 'liked' by 36,657 users. By October 2015 that number increased more than tenfold, reaching 395,803 people. This upward trend can also be observed in the number of posts published by P. Kukiz in both analyzed periods (May 2015 – 26 posts, October 2015 – 65 posts) and in how often Facebook users shared his posts (283 and 425, respectively). The opposite trend can be observed in the number of 'likes' and comments his post received, which dropped by about 40% between May and October. Therefore, Paweł Kukiz's increased activity on Facebook did not result in increased involvement of his fans.

In P. Kukiz's posts, the most frequently represented elements of populist discourse were anti-elitism and reference to 'the people' (ordinary citizens). Every other post in both analyzed periods criticized 'the elite', understood mainly as the political elite (parties or specific politicians) or media elite (journalists and media organizations). During his presidential campaign anti-elitist posts constituted 46.1% of all posts, compared to 53.8% a few months later, during the parliamentary campaign. During the earlier period, Paweł Kukiz focused mainly on criticizing the political elite (every fourth post), but in the second campaign he turned strongly to the media elite (every third post).

It should be emphasized here that Paweł Kukiz's message can be distinguished by an anti-systemic stance, which was excluded from the category of anti-elitism in our analysis. Posts that included anti-systemic content constituted an additional reinforcement of Paweł Kukiz's anti-elitist message, accounting for 8% of all posts in both analyzed periods.

Every tenth post contained reference to ordinary people – citizens. Paweł Kukiz demanded that power be given to 'the people', and asked for justice for 'the people' and greater control by the people over the state (see Table 8.1). This approach is char-

acteristic for the populist strategy described in chapter 7, i.e. one which uses social media to reinforce the division of ‘the elite’ and ‘the people’, questions the objectivity of traditional media and accuses them of failing to represent the interests of ‘the people’.

Table 8.1. Presence of indicators of populist discourse in Paweł Kukiz’s Facebook posts

	Presidential campaign (May 1–8, 2015)		Parliamentary campaign (October 16–23, 2015)		Total	% of all posts
	number of posts (N=26)	% posts	number of posts (N=65)	% posts		
Critique of the elite – including:	12	46.1	35	53.8	47	51.6
Critique of political elite	7	26.9	16	25.8	23	25.3
Critique of media elite	5	19.2	19	29.2	24	26.4
References to the people	3	11.5	10	15.4	14	15.7
Anti-systemic attitude	2	7.7	6	9.2	8	8.8

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 8.1 shows the frequency of appearance of individual elements of populist discourse. In our research on the content published on social media, we observed that the small size of text units may lead to difficulties in identifying individual types of populism in a single post. Therefore, we attempted to determine the simultaneous presence of the individual elements of populist discourse in the analyzed material, and their combinations – in order to detect various types of populism according to the classification by J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007 – see: chapter 1).

Table 8.2. The presence of types of populism in the Paweł Kukiz’s Facebook posts

	Presidential campaign (May 1–8, 2015)		Parliamentary campaign (October 16–23, 2015)		Total	% of all posts
	number of posts (N=26)	% of posts	number of posts (N=65)	% of posts		
Complete populism	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anti-elitist populism	2	7.7	10	15.4	12	13.2
Empty populism	1	3.8	0	0	1	1.1
Excluding populism	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Own elaboration.

The aforementioned data show that on Paweł Kukiz’s Facebook page anti-elitist populism was identified in 13% of posts from the entire study period. Excluding populism and complete populism were not found in any of the analyzed posts. Incidentally, empty populism could be found in posts made during the presidential campaign, i.e. when in a single post Kukiz referred to ‘the people’ (the citizens of Poland), but did not include any reference to ‘the elite’ or ‘out-groups’. According to the applied typology, Paweł Kukiz’s stance may be described as anti-elitist, with every third post being critical of ‘the elite’, but without mentioning ‘the people’ or ‘out-groups’ (‘the others’).

Although in the light of J. Jagers and S. Walgrave's (2007) typology, Paweł Kukiz's communication on social media can be described as populist (i.e. including reference to 'the people') in only 15% cases, one needs to take into account the specificity of this communication platform – its short form and large number of posts which refer to previous posts. Therefore, in our opinion, analysis of populist content in social media posts should also take into account individual indicators of populism even when they are not accompanied by the constitutive reference to 'the people'. In short, in research on populism, social media posts should not be evaluated in isolation.

The obtained results confirm the previous observations that Paweł Kukiz and his movement Kukiz'15 are one of the clearest examples of populist discourse in recent politics (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2017; Hess and Kasprówicz, 2017).

Communication Activity of Social Media Users During the 2015 Electoral Campaigns

The purpose of this part of the research was to determine the intensity of discussion (measured in text units – posts) about individual candidates among social media users in Poland during the two electoral campaigns in 2015. We also wanted to measure how frequently the indicators of anti-elitist populism were present in statements by social media users referring to individual political actors (candidates for president of Poland or political party leaders).

To this end, we conducted a content analysis of around 30,000 text units posted during the presidential election campaign (February 4–May 24, 2015) and 43,000 text units posted during the parliamentary election (July 17–October 25, 2015).

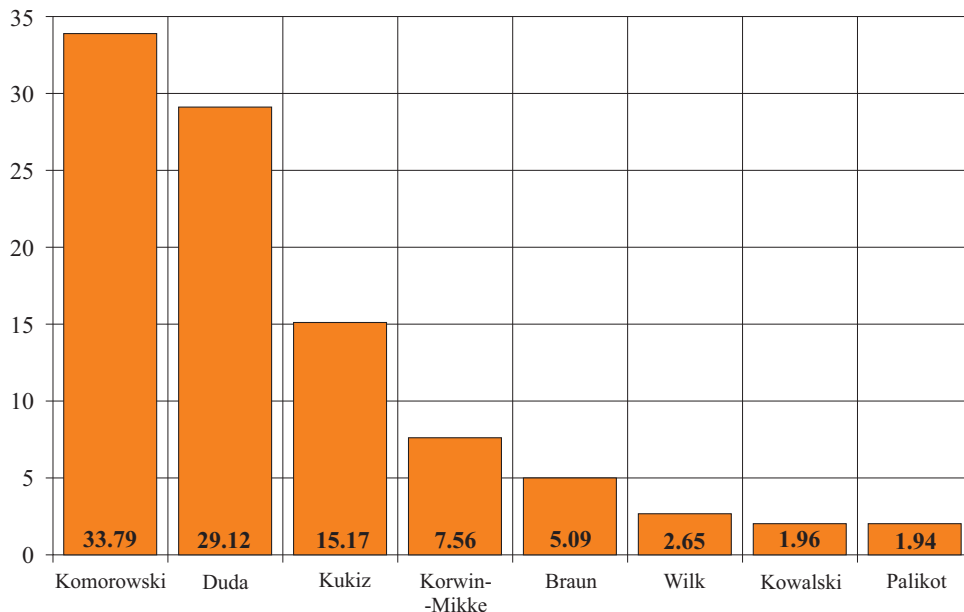
The selection of text units (social media posts) was based on the catalog of keywords which suggested that a given statement contained features of populist discourse, i.e. various declensions of the words 'people' and 'elite' in Polish. The decisive majority of posts came from Facebook (presidential elections – 81% of all materials, parliamentary elections – 85%) and YouTube (presidential elections – 13%, parliamentary elections – 8.6%). We focused on those posts that were autonomous statements or comments on previous posts. Any extensions, such as hyperlinks or texts in pictures, were excluded from analysis.

Then, we narrowed the database by selecting only those posts that unambiguously contained information on presidential candidates or the leaders of parties participating in the elections. Given the large size of our database, it can be used as an indicator of the popularity of topics related to individual candidates themselves.³ The results of this analysis are presented in Figures 8.1 and 8.2.

The results indicate that during the 2015 presidential campaign social media posts referred mainly to two major rivals – the incumbent president Bronisław Komorowski, representing Civic Platform (33%), and Andrzej Duda, the candidate from the main opposition party, Law and Justice (29%). Paweł Kukiz was the third most popular politician in the selected posts (15%). The remaining candidates were mentioned in less than 10% of posts in the study period.

³ These data are not intended to represent the popularity of candidates in the sense of the sympathy expressed towards them. In this case, only the number of entries was examined, not the sentiment expressed.

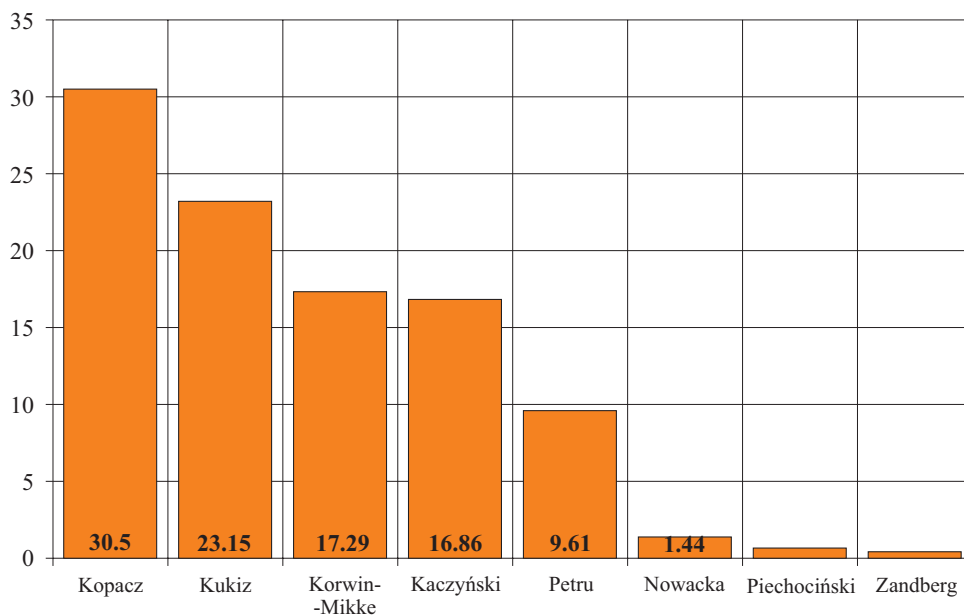
Figure 8.1. Percentage of posts referring to individual candidates in the 2015 presidential campaign (% , N≈30,000)*



*Magdalena Ogórek: 1.86%; Paweł Tanajno: 0.56%; Adam Jarubas: 0.53%.

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 8.2. Percentage of posts concerning the leaders of political parties in the 2015 parliamentary electoral campaign (% , N≈43,000)



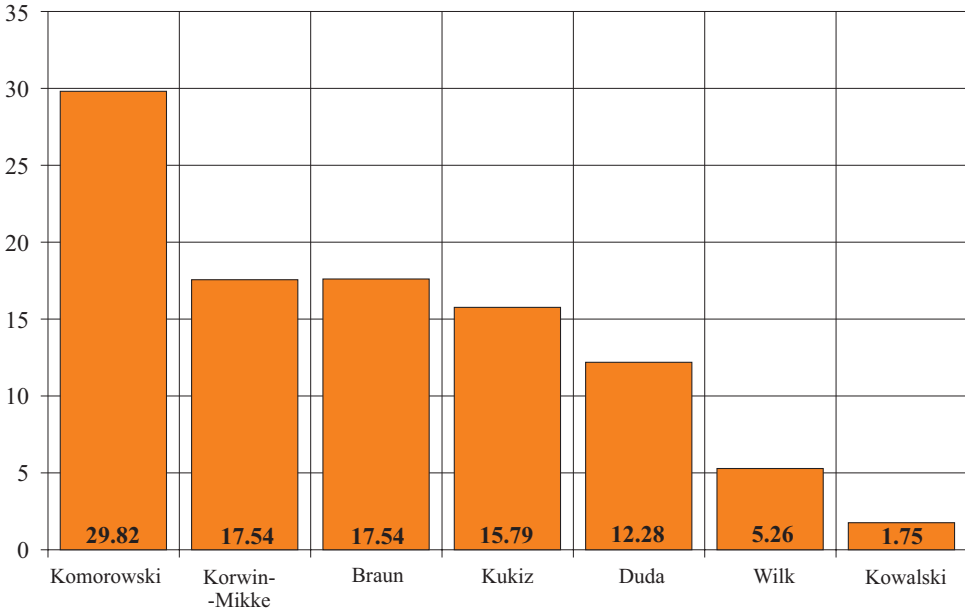
Source: Own elaboration.

During the parliamentary campaign in autumn 2015, social media users focused mainly on the incumbent Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz from Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform, hereafter PO) (30.5%) and Paweł Kukiz (23%). Third most discussed was Janusz Korwin-Mikke (a right-wing politician and a leader of the KORWIN party), followed by Jarosław Kaczyński: a leader of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice party, hereafter PiS).

Content analysis of statements referring to political actors and at the same time containing indicators of *anti-elitist populism* produced interesting results. After selecting posts which contained at least one anti-elitist strategy (discrediting, blaming, or detaching ‘the elite’ from ‘the people’), the number of posts referring to individual politicians changed. However, it needs to be emphasized that the presence of *anti-elitist populism* in these posts did not necessarily come from the viewpoint of the post’s author but could also be quoting the anti-elitist message of a political actor.

Thus, in the case of the presidential elections, the inclusion of anti-elitist criteria resulted in an increase in the proportion of posts referring to Janusz Korwin-Mikke (from 7% to 17%) and the extreme right-wing Grzegorz Braun (from 5% to 17%). A large decrease was observed for posts dedicated to Andrzej Duda, the candidate of PiS party and the major rival of the incumbent president at that time, Bronisław Komorowski (from 29% to 12%). The proportion of posts referring to other candidates did not change as dramatically (Figure 8.3).

Figure 8.3. Percentage of social media posts referring to presidential candidates during the presidential campaign, containing indicators of anti-elitist populism (% , N≈30,000)

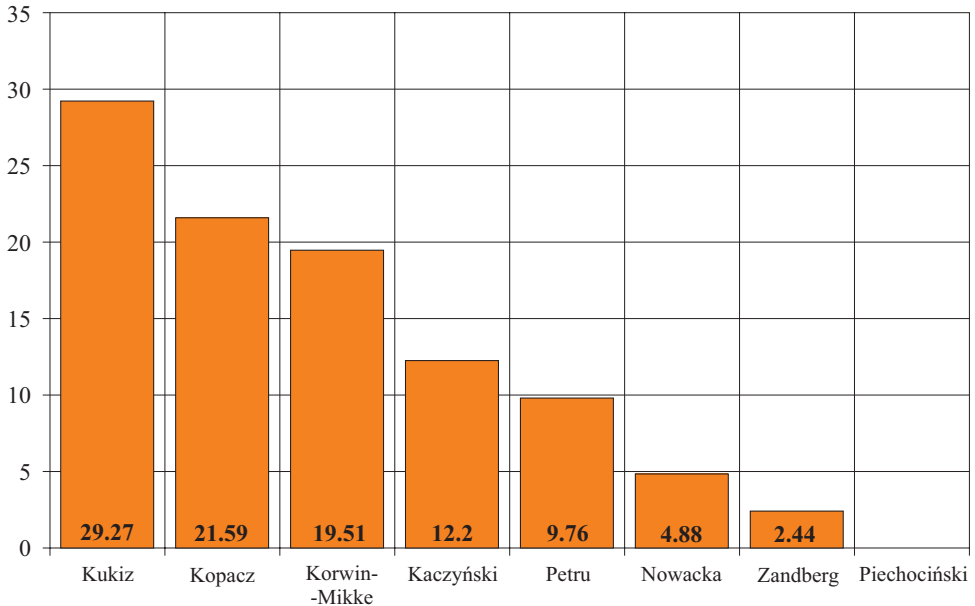


Source: Own elaboration.

Even greater discrepancies were seen for material from the parliamentary campaign in 2015. In the case of text units containing both reference to Paweł Kukiz and

criticism of ‘the elite’, the percentage of posts rose from 23% to 29%, putting P. Kukiz at the top of this ranking (see Figure 8.4). The proportion of posts about Janusz Korwin-Mikke also increased (from 17% to 19%), but there was a decrease in posts about Ewa Kopacz (from 30.5% to 22%) and Jarosław Kaczyński (from 17% to 12%).

Figure 8.4. Percentage of social media posts referring to leaders of political parties during the parliamentary election campaign, containing indicators of anti-elitist populism (% , N≈43,000)



Source: Own elaboration.

Conclusions

Analysis of the content of Facebook posts by Polish populist politician Paweł Kukiz before the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2015 revealed a high percentage of statements criticizing ‘the elite’, in particular political and media elites, and a relatively high number of statements criticizing the existing political system in Poland. These results confirm previous observations based on analysis of the content of Paweł Kukiz’s communication, conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2017; Wrześniewska-Pietrzak and Kołodziejczak, 2017), that he consistently dissociates himself from other actors on the political scene and from mainstream media, which he perceives as ‘the elite’. Moreover, Paweł Kukiz often emphasizes his anti-systemic attitude and the need to completely change the existing political order, including the way political parties function and the entire electoral system in Poland. Such action is part of his movement’s self-proclaimed fundamental strategic goal: to break the duopoly of the Polish political scene.

It should be noted, however, that the percentage share of anti-elitist populism in the sense proposed by J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007) – although still higher than any

other type of populism – was significantly lower than the percentage of critical statements about ‘the elite’ without any reference to ‘the people’, similar to the observations made in chapter 2 on the populist content in print media.

Secondly, analysis of the content of Facebook posts published by ordinary users (i.e. not political actors) provides insight not only into the level of their interest in particular political actors during electoral campaigns, but also their attitude towards these politicians. In both analyzed periods (the presidential and parliamentary campaign in 2015) Paweł Kukiz was among the top three political actors referred to in social media posts: during the presidential campaign, he was outdone attention-wise only by the two main election rivals – Bronisław Komorowski and Andrzej Duda, while during the parliamentary campaign only by the incumbent prime minister, Ewa Kopacz.

Interestingly, if we considered only posts that referred to a particular political actors and at least one anti-elitist strategy simultaneously (discrediting, blaming, or detaching ‘the elite’ from ‘the people’), Paweł Kukiz’s numbers went up. During the parliamentary campaign in 2015, posts devoted to him were the most numerous among those containing critical references to ‘the elite’.

The activity of Internet users who join the discussion about politicians by adopting their language or viewpoints (here: juxtaposing the evil ‘elite’ with good ‘people’) is an important factor in the dissemination of ideological postulates. Due to the fact that Internet users mainly trust other Internet users, their adoption of narratives and distribution of content advantageous for certain political actors may be an important component of populist political communication, as such persons may serve as intermediaries or even opinion leaders influencing other potential voters.

In the course of our research on social media content from the perspective of political actors and citizen users, we have identified some challenges posed by this type of research. While when assessing traditional media it is possible to treat a unit of analysis (usually a single article or news item) as a complete statement and sufficient to determine whether a given message is populist or not, the specificity of social media publications is not subject to the same rules. Applying the same approach may distort the actual picture of the situation. Therefore, the content of communication via social media requires a populist researcher to take a more comprehensive view of the study material, taking into account the self-referential and mutually complementary character of the social media posts. Only in this way is it possible to build a coherent picture of the political message on social media.

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PART IV
‘Us’ and ‘Them’ in the Polish
Populist Discourse

9. The ‘Us–Them’ Antinomy: A Category of Grammatical Person in the Polish Language and its Function in Populist Discourse¹

Marta Wrześniewska-Pietrzak and Małgorzata Kołodziejczak

Introduction

In Polish, the person is a grammatical category of verb inflection, including first, second and third person singular and plural.² The category of person (often classified as a verbal category – see Bańko, 2004, p. 166; Nagórko, 2002, p. 138) includes primarily personal forms of the verb which form the conjugation paradigm of *verbum*.³ This category also includes personal pronouns and – indirectly – possessive pronouns.⁴

Some linguists, e.g. A. Nagórko (2002, pp. 138–139), include first, second and third person pronouns in this class, but it is difficult to agree with this classification. It is Nagórko herself who associates the meaning of pronouns with the roles of sender (1st person singular and plural) and receiver (2nd person singular and plural), and it seems that this emphasis on the process of communication should be consistently maintained. In this approach we can notice the different character of third person pronouns in Polish (compared to 1st and 2nd person), shown in traditional classifications of pronouns, where they are consistently included in demonstrative pronouns, such as *ten, tamten, ów* (roughly equivalent to *this* or *that* in English), etc. (see Klemensiewicz,

¹ The content of the chapter is an extended version of the chapter that was published in Polish: see Wrześniewska-Pietrzak and Kołodziejczak (2020). The literature review focuses on the Polish papers analyzing ‘us–them’ antinomy in the context of Polish language in order to familiarize non-Polish speaking readers with a methodology and findings of the Polish studies.

² It should be noted here that not all verbs in Polish can be conjugated. Apart from the class of verbs changed by the person, there is a class of non-inflected verbs in Polish, e.g. *trzeba, można, warto, należy* (all meaning ‘one needs to’, i.e. with no specified grammatical person) (see Saloni, 1974).

³ We do not discuss here verbs in the past tense, whose endings in Polish provide information on the sex of the speaker, or receiver, or the person that is the object of a given statement.

⁴ According to Polish linguist J. Bralczyk, possessive pronouns referring to the first person “do not concern me as much as ‘I’. They do concern me, but somewhat from the outside” (quoted in: Łysakowski, 2005, p. 29). We must, however, acknowledge the presupposition within a possessive pronoun. By using the forms *nasz, nasze* (*our* or *ours*) as a modifier, the speaker provides information on the existence of a ‘we-community’ (cf. Łysakowski, 2005, pp. 39–40). That is why in this chapter we do not include the category of possessive pronouns, as they assume the existence of a community that is already determined by the use of the personal pronoun *my* (*we*) or implicated by the ending of a verb in the first person plural.

1984), whose meaning is updated each time by the context of the statement. This approach clearly indicates the non-personality of pronouns related to the third person resulting from the absence of the actual third person in communication situations when the third person pronoun is used.

In communication, the use of the first person singular refers primarily to the sender (speaker), while the second person singular and plural refer to a single or collective receiver (addressee) (see also Łysakowski, 2005, p. 21). The definition of the grammatical person by R. Grzegorzczkova (1993, p. 453) indicates that it “updates the statement by referring a given situation to the participants of the dialog; one form distinguishes a situation when the sender of the statement is also the performer of the activity, another form refers to the receiver, while yet another describes a situation where neither the sender nor the receiver is the performer of the activity but is someone (something) else” (cf. also Tokarski, 2001, p. 166; Okopień-Sławińska, 1977, p. 47).

In this sense, the third person is sometimes described as a non-person (see Łysakowski, 2005, pp. 20–21). It is usually used to denote the object of a statement (cf. Okopień-Sławińska, 1977, p. 47) and indicates someone (something) we are speaking about. The third person (both singular and plural) is a kind of protagonist of the sender’s statement, and therefore does not participate in the communication and has no voice (their words may be quoted by direct or reported speech). Moreover, the third person may (although it does not have to) be definite and unambiguously identified in a given statement (cf. Lyons, 1975, p. 306). It is worth noting that in Polish (similar to English) the third person pronouns *on, ona, oni, one* (*he, she, they*) make it possible to emphasize the distance between the speaker and those they are talking about. This distance makes it easy to associate these pronouns with negative valorization, and use them to build a situation of exclusion, otherness, or even enmity.⁵

This is not always the case, as is exemplified by the Polish honorifics used by the speaker to emphasize the different status of the sender and the receiver. The third person, when expressed in third person verb forms in combination with the lexemes *pan, pani*⁶ (in plural – *państwo*, roughly – *Mr and Ms*), becomes a receiver whose status is usually not negative, with the sender emphasizing the receiver’s considerable rank or social status. For this reason, linguists classify Polish honorifics as the second person (see Huszcza, 1996; Łysakowski, 2005, p. 21).

The situation is slightly different for the category of persons in the plural, associated with the notion of a group, not an individual, so the speaker is not automatically a “personification” of the applied plural form. As argued by A. Nagórko (2002, p. 138), personal forms in the singular and plural are different lexemes, exemplified by the different roles of individual pronouns. Nagórko (2002, pp. 138–139) explains: “The first-person (‘I’) is unique; however, ‘WE’ is not a mere collection of ‘I’s. Equation: ‘WE = I + I + I...’ would be nonsensical. ‘WE’ means ‘I + someone else’ or ‘I + YOU’. Similarly, YOU in the plural is not a duplication of an individual addressee, but an indication of a group of

⁵ It is often visible in studies on the functioning of language in the political sphere, where the opposition ‘us vs. them’ becomes ‘friend *versus* enemy’.

⁶ A similar function may be played by the words *towarzysz* (*comrade*) or *obywatel* (*citizen*), combined with the third person.

people including the addressee: YOU means 'YOU + others' (cf. also Tokarski, 2001, pp. 166–167; Łysakowski, 2005, p. 42).⁷

The communicative use of the first person plural most often indicates the construction of a group; a community characterized by common values (or constructed as common) and views. The so constructed community is highly ambiguous. It may appear in two distinctly different forms – one including the receiver (where *we* includes the speaker and the singular/plural *you* – the addressee(s) of the statement), and the other form excluding the receiver (where the sender constructs the community, but places the receiver outside of it).⁸ This ambiguity of *we* makes it possible for the sender to freely shape a group of *swoi* (which can be roughly translated as *ours*, *our kind*, *our group*, *our community*), or to change the understanding of *us* within a single statement (which turns out to be a characteristic feature of statements by Polish populist politician Paweł Kukiz, the leader of Kukiz'15; see Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2017; cf. Łysakowski, 2005, pp. 52–59). For this reason, to quote T. Łysakowski: "The first person plural is traditionally considered to be the most effective in terms of persuasion (...), which may be associated with the fact that it is the most ambiguous and opaque, and that you can use it to include, transpose or hide anything, and then deny everything by distorting the meaning that we originally ascribed to *we* (or pretended to ascribe)" (Łysakowski, 2005, p. 35).

The category of person is not only valorized by number, but also by the relation between the speaker and receivers, or the presence or absence of a link between the community and the subject (cf. Okopień-Sławińska, 1977, pp. 44–45). Individual personal forms must be concretized in each statement, but the semantic specification of individual forms is not obvious, predictable and unambiguous. Therefore, they are only different fillings of equal semantic possibilities within a given form" (Okopień-Sławińska, 1977, p. 44).

The figurative use of the category of person (excluding the first person singular – 'I') should also be indicated here. The metaphoricality of meanings, most strongly used in constructing the meaning of 'us', is defined as a transposition based on conventionalised concretisations (conditioned by sociolinguistic considerations, such as belonging to a specific group – e.g. *pluralis maiestatis* or *pluralis modestiae*),⁹ or occasional ones used in poetic works (see: Okopień-Sławińska, 1977, p. 45 and p. 50) or specific communication situations (*pluralis benevolentiae* – uniting, *pluralis commo-dii* – condescending, *pluralis simulatus* – manipulative, *pluralis coniuncturalis* – bathing in someone else's glory, *pluralis adulatorius* – ingratiating; see more: Łysakowski, 2005, pp. 46–59). A. Okopień-Sławińska (1977, p. 46) rightly points out that: "The transposition of personal forms is in conflict with their usual uses, because they attack and transform one of the elementary semantic components of a given form: an

⁷ A. Okopień-Sławińska, in her discussion of the different meanings of *my* and *wy* (*we* and *you* plural) argues that the correct reading of communication roles behind these linguistic forms requires "semantic complementation" (Okopień-Sławińska, 1977, p. 44).

⁸ In Chinese there are two different forms for *we* – 'inclusive we' and 'exclusive we' (Łysakowski, 2005, p. 41; cf. also Lalewicz, 1983, p. 269).

⁹ A. Okopień-Sławińska also includes here the use of the third person in honorifics or as a derogatory form, which justifies including such pronouns as honorifics related to the second person (Okopień-Sławińska, 1977, pp. 45–46 and pp. 55–56).

indicator of quantity or an indicator of the communicative role.” They are a kind of grammatical metaphor, whose “mechanism (...) of action always consists of multiplying the meaning of the applied form by imposing on it functions proper to the primary personal form in a given communication situation, but superseded and at the same time represented by the applied form. This procedure makes it possible to enrich the social characteristics of personal relations by introducing complications, nuances and various perspectives in the attitude of the speaker towards himself or herself and others” (Okopień-Sławińska, 1977, p. 49).

It should be stressed here that the mechanism of so-called grammatical metaphORIZATION described by the researcher is a tool held by the sender – the speaker. It is that person who becomes the decision-maker and creator of actants present in the communication situation, which in the further part of the chapter will allow us to show the correlation between this ‘power’ and the populist construction of sender/receiver relations in the populist discourse. However, both psychologists and linguists point out that in this opposition (‘us–them’), defining the first segment of the opposition (‘us’) by the participants of the communication is much more important (see Łysakowski, 2005, p. 35). It allows them to determine further relations between the participants of the discourse, in accordance with the assumptions of psychologists who confirm that “the notion of ‘us’ is an important system of reference for social categorization, and its scope decides who is included or excluded from *us*” (Grzelak and Jarymowicz, 2000, p. 121).

The aforementioned characteristics of a grammatical person, and the associated class of personal pronouns in Polish, show that the main axis of antinomy is connected with one of the most important categories in Polish, the ‘swój–obcy’ opposition (‘native–stranger’, synonymous to ‘us–them’¹⁰), characteristic for the culture and the social and political life of Slavic nations (Bartmiński, 2014 p. 33). This opposition is indispensable for identity construction. It allows forming various types of collective identity by looking for similarities or differences between the subject and a given social group. In social (Marody and Giza-Poleszczuk, 2004, p. 338) and cultural analyses (including ethnolinguistic research), the ‘us’ *versus* ‘them’ antinomy is seen as one of the most significant categorization frameworks (Bartmiński, 2014, pp. 32–33),¹¹ and is strongly axiological.

This binarity of both oppositions (‘us–them’, ‘native–stranger’) reflects the processes responsible for constructing identity, and in the broader context for building so-called ‘identity politics’.¹² The polarity of these relations corresponds to the manner of defining individual or collective identity: by specifying one’s own characteristics (positive identity), and/or the values that create the difference, specifying the excluded (negative identity). These processes show two directions inherent in the very process

¹⁰ The choice of the term (‘native–stranger’ or ‘us–them’) depends on the choice of analysis. When analysis concerns the structure of language (with structuralist approach as the point of departure), authors prefer ‘us–them’ (i.e. ‘my–oni’). When analysis concerns semantics, researchers usually prefer ‘native–stranger’ (i.e. ‘swój–obcy’).

¹¹ In analyses of the language of politics, it is often the basic element that is subject to research (see Nowak, 2002; Zdunkiewicz, 1987, pp. 610–620; Sałkowska, 2013; Markowka, 2013).

¹² As C. Offe (1998, p. 122) writes, “The politics of identity-based difference is an increasingly prominent feature of increasing segments of the contemporary world, developed and developing alike.”

of identity construction, which are often essential in the conscious construction of one's own image of *me/us*, which is complete when the two areas are defined: the area of 'us' and 'the other', 'strange', 'excluded'. This identification (by applying labels, stereotypes, etc.) may be performed by the speaker or by the external individual or group.

J. Bartmiński emphasizes that the opposition 'us–them' is not binary but gradual, as shown by the following lexical units in Polish: *przyswoić sobie* (*assimilate something*), *oswoić coś* (*familiarize something*), *wyobcować się* (*alienate*), all suggesting a process (Bartmiński, 2014, p. 34). This gradual character of the opposition is the Polish notion of 'the other', which is not axiologically negative in itself.¹³ The difference perceived by the members of a given social group and the sender is not given a negative sign, but becomes a characteristic with an axiological value (positive: *the other* as the partner in a dialog; negative: *the other* becomes a stranger; neutral: when between there are no relations between the speaker/group and *the others*) (more: Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2017, pp. 86–91).

According to linguist A. Pajdzińska (2001, p. 34), the 'us versus them' opposition is the most important conceptual category in Polish. Referring not only to Polish, she argues that "the notion of *swojskość* (*familiarity*) is usually treated as obvious and self-evident. Its positive valorization is revealed by linguistic facts. *Swój człowiek* (*our man*) denotes the person seen as one coming from the same circles, and is therefore trustworthy and positive. *Swój* used as a noun (meaning *our one, of our kind*) implies someone we know, from the same environment, or even the same family or country.¹⁴ In Polish *swój* may even imply 'human' or 'associated with humanity'¹⁵ – one of many examples of anthropocentrism, the most distinct concretization of *swojskość* (*familiarity*). Anthropocentrism, found in many languages, may be seen as a natural consequence of the fact that the language is a human creation. Because it was created and used by people, it comes as no surprise that it shows the world in the eyes of man, a man-oriented world where it is most crucial to define 'human' versus 'non-human'" (Pajdzińska, 2001, pp. 34–35).

This anthropocentrism, together with the 'swój–obcy' ('us–them'), overlaps with another conceptual 'category', 'blisko–daleko' ('close–distant').¹⁶ *Swojskość* (*familiarity*), evaluated positively, refers to all that is *close, ours* (something that we/I can

¹³ In his research on the multiculturalism, similar observations were made by M. Golka (2010, p. 164), who argues that: "approach to otherness or strangeness does not exhibit the features of binary thinking (...) because it is not merely a simple opposition 'me–other' or 'us–others' (...). Especially now, in modern times, it hard to find a typical member of a separate group and its culture, and affinity and degrees of identification change under the influence of many factors, especially the unprecedented scale social mobility."

¹⁴ J. Bartmiński (2014) points to the semantic ambiguity of vocabulary definitions of *swój* (*native, ours*) and *obcy* (*strange, alien*). The common denominator is the social and spatial context of these words, especially in the derivative *swojak* (*our man, a guy from here*). This ambiguity was confirmed by the questionnaire survey conducted by that linguist.

¹⁵ According to A. Pajdzińska (2001, p. 35) this is confirmed by the verbs such as *oswajać* (*to be tamed*) which may mean "to lose a wild character, to get used to living among people, to serve people."

¹⁶ J. Bartmiński (1993, pp. 23–48) notices the concurrence of these oppositions in the formation of the notion of *ojczyzna* (*homeland*).

identify with). *Obcość* (*strangeness*) or *inność* (*otherness*) reflects all that is distant, foreign; the more distant it is and the more different from me/us,¹⁷ the more distinct is the negative valorization. The overlapping of these two antinomies shows the correspondence between spatial valorization ('close–distant') and the evaluation of a person or thing that the speaker locates in space.

The grammatical opposition 'my–oni' ('us–them') in the conceptual framework 'swój–obcy' ('our man–stranger') is therefore also a perceptual and cognitive form. Its semantic content and context, as well as the way it is used in communication, depends on the speakers and the role that they construct for themselves in their discourses.

The 'Us–Them' Opposition in Populist Political Discourse

Even a cursory review of public discourse shows the high frequency of references to 'swój–obcy' ('our man–the other') constructed using linguistic forms referring to the personal antinomy 'us–them'. It is especially seen in the statements of senders whose goal is to convey views, argue with values or theses of interlocutors. It is therefore present in each text that can be ascribed a persuasive function. This opposition is significant for the sender because, for the assumed receiver, it becomes a certain interpretative framework, a signpost for the intended meaning of the statement. This framework is somewhat sought, expected by the receiver, to be able to establish if the sender is 'swój' ('our man' with a similar worldview) or 'obcy' ('a stranger' with the opinion that the receiver cannot possibly agree with). The point of contact on this route between the sender and the receiver influences the entire relation between the participants of the discussion.

Public discourse, especially in the sphere of politics, is governed by its own specific rights. The characteristic feature of this communication with primarily persuasive functions is to avoid the category of the second person plural, although it is a natural figure of the collective receiver in the dialog (see Bralczyk, 2007, p. 151).¹⁸ Polish linguist J. Bralczyk explains this absence of the second person plural in communication he labels as "propaganda communication" in the following way: "(...) in an antagonistic relation, and with no full confidence by the society in the government, the natural opposition 'us–them' appears. This opposition is also present on the other side: for those in power, the citizens are also 'them'. However, it is natural that those in power cannot use this 'them' publicly. They even cannot use the form *you* which seems to emphasize the alienation of power" (Bralczyk, 2007, p. 151).

These observations show how important it is for the political discourse to create a relation between the sender and receivers, with an inclusive 'us' encompassing also those receivers that the sender tries to convince to vote for him/her. This inclusive and unambiguous meaning of *us* (and also verb forms in the first person plural) cannot be assumed *a priori*. *We* may be specified in various ways, and also its form assumes ambiguity and non-obviousness (cf. *Pluralis politicus* discussed by Łysakowski [2005, pp. 54–59]).

¹⁷ The more the speaker is distancing from that *other* or *alien* phenomenon or person.

¹⁸ The use of the second person plural is possible when *we* (*you*) does not related to the audience but to 'them', 'the excluded'. This form can be termed an *ostensible you* (cf. Łysakowski, 2005, pp. 68–69).

The constitutive features of populist political discourse are the speaker's reference and identification with 'the people', in opposition towards 'the elite' (often expressed as anti-elitism), and exclusion of 'out-groups' (cf. e.g. Jagers and Walgrave, 2007, pp. 322–324; Stanley, 2009, p. 95; Deiwiaks, 2009, p. 2). It needs to be emphasized here that political communication, including populist, reformulates this opposition and simplifies it by emphasizing its binarity. There is nothing 'in-between' in populist communication, there is only 'us' or 'them'; there is nothing in the sender's vision of the world which cannot be placed in this framework (cf. Mudde, 2007, p. 295).

The binarity of this opposition clearly separates these two components. They exist on two opposite poles as something totally different, but can only be distinguished by the reference to the other one. In political discourse, the aforementioned constitutive elements of populism (and their various combinations) provide semantic content of the conceptual structure of 'us–them'. It must contain not only a construct of the community, characterized as 'the people', but most importantly imply the connection between the community and the speaker, a populist politician. Moreover, the speaker clearly indicates the excluded 'out-groups' – 'them', either 'the elite' or 'the others' (Mudde, 2004, pp. 541–563). Axiologization is important here, where 'the people' are seen as a positive force, the embodiment of good and virtue, while 'the elite' or 'the others' personifying all evil.

'The people' in modern Polish is usually presented as *obywatele* (citizens) or *naród* (the nation) (or even in individualized forms 'each Pole', 'each Polish citizen') as opposed to everything that is not 'the people'. This axiological mechanism can be either vertical ('the people' *versus* 'the elite') or horizontal – where individuals or institutions are deemed a threat to 'the people' by the populist sender (e.g. refugees, ethnic or religious minorities, foreign capital) (Moroska, 2010, pp. 26–27; cf. Meny and Surel, 2007, p. 15). This simplification of the worldview and values is filled by populist senders with various content (depending on the cultural, political and individual circumstances). They use the threads of anti-pluralism, anti-elitism (often taking the form of anti-intellectualism, see Mudde, 2007, p. 144) or anti-institutionalism (Markowski, 2004, pp. 11–32), which can be seen as the permanent components of the simplified populist view of the social world.¹⁹

In populist discourse, 'the people' is not only presented in opposition to all 'out-groups', but also to the general status quo, thanks to which "populists can define themselves not only through something they advocate, but through the opposition towards other people and things" (Moroska, 2010, p. 27; cf. Laclau, 2009). Importantly, this antagonistic relation of 'the people' and 'the elite' or 'the others' makes 'the people' ambiguous (Szacki, 2007, p. 10; Meny and Surel, 2007, p. 41), because it can be defined by either negating 'the others' or 'the elite' (cf. Bennett and Pfetsch, 2018, p. 246). A populist sender may give 'the people' various masks, in accordance with the sender's intentions.

These considerations are supposed to show the insufficiency of using the aforementioned three indicators as the only determinants of populist discourse. The linguistic form of 'swój–obcy' ('native–stranger') is only one of many persuasive means which

¹⁹ For the examples of previews studies on these features in the Polish political context please check: Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, and Kołodziejczak, 2017; 2018.

should not be assigned to populism. In other words, the strict connection between populism and persuasion is mostly a correlation and not a dependence. For example, there may be populism without persuasion, e.g. if the sender genuinely believes in the ‘populist ideology’, then his heartfelt need to ‘serve the people’ makes the question of ‘persuading the people’ obsolete.

Persuasion as an effective linguistic strategy serves to “obtain a real influence on the thinking or actions of the receiver – not directly but implicitly, so that the statement is seemingly not dominated by the wish to influence the receiver” (Barańczak, 1983, p. 31). It is widespread among populists, but it cannot be automatically assigned to a populist statement. The symptoms of persuasion in populist discourse (or any other, for that matter) are characteristic rhetorical mechanisms described by S. Barańczak, such as: (1) emotionalization of reception, (2) construction of shared world and language, (3) simplification of values, and, finally, (4) mechanisms of no alternative (Barańczak, 1983, pp. 33–35). The strength of connection between these linguistic means and populism can be seen when we confront persuasion (which releases the receiver from the obligation to engage in autonomous intellectual activity) with the characteristics of ‘the people’s leader’ – a demagogue who “is a rather sloppy disciple of a sophist, but does not have to try too much, because he addresses not those people whom he would have to confuse with a perverse logic, but those who prefer to live rather than think, believe rather than know and examine, they also prefer to ‘decide’ to do what is suggested to them” (Karwat, 2006, p. 16).

Therefore, our position is that the definition of populism should include more constitutive features than currently included. Following Wiles (2010), we argue (as we did in our previous research – see Wrześniewska-Pietrzak and Kołodziejczak, 2017) that populism can be defined by: (1) the central position of idealized people in the constructed vision of the world, (2) the opposition to ‘out-groups’ (‘the elite’ or ‘the others’), (3) simplification of the linguistic vision of the social world, (4) the presence of a leader who plays the role of a real or self-appointed *vox populi*, and (5) the high understandability of the statement which makes it accessible to the largest possible number of viewers.²⁰

The features listed here are indispensable for the populist discourse, but their intensity may vary, depending both on the linguistic means used by a given sender and on extra-linguistic factors such as political circumstances (especially the specificity of contemporary liberal democracy) (Meny and Surel, 2007), and on the individual way in which the sender interprets the category of ‘the people’ and implements the individual vision of the political role of ‘the voice of the people’.

Although the populist syndrome is formed by all the aforementioned components, we must emphasize the correlation between the ‘we–they’ opposition and the simplification of the worldview (see Skarżyńska, 2001). Even more importantly, the *sine qua non* is the role of the populist leader that they themselves construct in their statements (implicitly or explicitly). This constructed image contains information on the relation

²⁰ In his research on the characteristics of populist discourse, K. Ożóg also mentions the specific axiological system, emotional character of texts, use of irony and rhetorical questions, arbitrary definitions, using the colloquial style (Ożóg, 2006, pp. 206–216; Ożóg, 2005, pp. 325–334). Some of these elements can be included in our categories, e.g. axiological system, colloquial style or emotionalization, are part of the lingual vision of the world which we define according to the assumptions of cultural linguistics.

of the populist leader with the receiver(s) that are included in the 'we' category.²¹ It is an unalienable element of the discursive order that cannot come into existence without a populist sender.

Therefore, the category of 'the people' cannot be treated as a constitutive feature of populism if it is not accompanied by a simplified worldview and a specific relation between the sender and receiver (Bralczyk, 1999, p. 82).

Conclusions

Researchers of populist discourse draw attention to the existence of four forms of populism: (1) *empty populism* characterized by the presence of a reference to 'the people', (2) *anti-elitist populism* containing not only references to 'the people' but also anti-establishment slogans, (3) *excluding populism*, which distinguishes such elements as: reference to 'the people' and excluding 'out-groups' other than 'the ruling elite', and (4) *complete populism* with all the aforementioned characteristics (see Jagers and Walgrave, 2007; Taggart, 2000). However, the results of quantitative research presented and discussed by A. Stępińska and K. Adamczewska (2017) indicate these variables are too broad as constitutive features (see also chapter 2 of this publication).

Is a category of 'us' essential for populism? Or is the additional reference 'the people' necessary for a given statement to be defined as populist? The results of this research on populist discourse in Poland provide an interesting insight. It turns out that the reference to 'the people', a feature deemed constitutive for populism in many studies, is not necessary. A populist sender may be completely convinced to be acting on behalf of 'the people', and therefore does not have to use this reference each time. Instead, the sender may supplement it with other elements that are deemed more effective in separating 'us' from 'them'. By referring to the opposite features of the 'out-groups', the sender constructs a community in opposition to the common enemy, a construct which is essential for filling the 'us-them' framework. The sender does not need this image to be too detailed to 'pull the strings' and create a discursive space with a strong sense of difference between 'us' and 'them'.

Due to the fact that the 'us-them' antinomy is a common feature of political communication in general, it is difficult to consider it a distinctive indicator of populism. A more important facet is the position and role of a populist leader who constructs this antagonistic and simplified worldview, and at the same time implies his/her dominant role in this vision. The dependence of populism on the semantic content of linguistic forms is confirmed by Y. Mény and Y. Surel (2007, p. 34), who emphasize that "populism is an empty package, which may filled with a variety of content." This would explain the chameleon-like ability of populism to adapt to a variety of political contexts. The multifaceted and changeable nature of populism, with seemingly fresh albeit quite similar forms, seems to be the most important factor behind its political success worldwide.

²¹ Our analysis of the language used by Paweł Kukiz show that his self-image as a leader includes domination, either in the relation politician-receivers (within the 'us' category), and also in the relation politician – other politicians, enemies of the Poles, 'them' (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2017).

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

Artur Lipiński

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Populism and the Exclusion of ‘the Others’

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Political and Social Context of Populism in Poland

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Methodological Assumptions and Empirical Sample

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Analysis

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions

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

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