

The discourse on Poland in German newspapers 2017-2019

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to present the results of the survey on the structure of the discourse on Poland in the content of three German quality dailies: "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung", "Süddeutsche Zeitung", "die Welt" and – additionally – the tabloid "Bild". In order to construct the collection of messages about Poland and Poles, a query was carried out in 140 editions of each daily. It resulted in the total of 560 editions representing 17 percent of all editions in 2017-2018 and the first quarter of 2019. The first step of analysis performed in this research was the lexical analysis of the German newspapers gathered in the text corpus of app. 300 000 words. The results of statistical evaluations were the words frequency lists which were used for the analysis of certain words concordances and collocations. The effect of such procedure was the reconstruction of important words co-occurrences common patterns. In this phase of the survey the units of analysis were words, so the intensity of the analyzed text attributes were measured by the number and percentage range of certain words. Additionally, the author of the article used text mining analytics software to extract the main concepts – i.e. recurring motifs in the discourse, so the results of that procedure served as a means of verifying the preliminary findings of analysis. The next phase of the survey was the computer assisted content analysis. For the research purposes the categories dictionaries were created. Those dictionaries consisted of the set of words gathered on the same semantic basis. The unit of the analysis in this phase of the research was a single sentence (N=18602 units) and the results of that analysis was the hierarchy and keyness of collective symbols, themes, actors and places present in the press discourse on Poland. In the last part of the research—as a result of factor analysis—the structure of the discourse on Poland in four German dailies was reduced to 19 strongest factors determining which different (detailed) categories have the tendency to co-occur and that is why they create easily distinguishable configurations.

Key words: press image of Poland; discourse, foreign news; content analysis; German press.

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie wyników badania dotyczącego struktury dyskursu o Polsce w treści trzech niemieckich dzienników jakościowych: „Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”, „Süddeutsche Zeitung” oraz „Die Welt”, a dodatkowo tabloidu „Bild”. W celu skonstruowania zbioru wiadomości o Polsce i Polakach przeprowadzono kwerendę w 140 wydaniach każdego z dzienników. W jej wyniku uzyskano łącznie 560 wydań stanowiących 17 proc. wszystkich wydań w latach 2017-2018 oraz w pierwszym kwartale 2019 roku. Pierwszym etapem analizy przeprowadzonej w niniejszym badaniu była analiza leksykalna niemieckich gazet zgromadzonych w korpusie tekstowym liczącym ok. 300 tys. wyrazów. Wynikiem pomiarów statystycznych były listy frekwencyjne słów, które posłużyły do analizy konkordancji i kolokacji określonych leksemów. Efektem takiego postępowania była rekonstrukcja wspólnych wzorców współwystępowania ważnych słów. W tej fazie badań intensywność analizowanych atrybutów tekstu mierzona była liczbą i zakresem procentowym określonych słów. Dodatkowo autor artykułu wykorzystał oprogramowanie analityczne ze sfery text mining do wyodrębnienia głównych pojęć – czyli powtarzających się motywów w dyskursie, a wyniki tej procedury posłużyły jako środek weryfikacji wstępnych pomiarów frekwencyjnych. Kolejnym etapem badania była komputerowo wspomaganą analizą treści. Dla celów badawczych stworzono słowniki kategorii. Słowniki te stanowiły zbiór słów zebranych na tej samej podstawie semantycznej. Jednostką analizy w tej fazie badania było pojedyncze zdanie (N=18602 jednostki), a wynikiem tej analizy była hierarchia i kluczowość zbiorowych symboli, tematów, aktorów i miejsc obecnych w dyskursie prasowym o Polsce. W ostatniej części badań – w wyniku analizy czynnikowej – struktura dyskursu o Polsce w niemieckich dziennikach została sprowadzona do 19 najsilniejszych czynników określających, które szczegółowe kategorie mają tendencję do współwystępowania i dlatego tworzą łatwo rozróżnialne konfiguracje.

Słowa kluczowe: obraz medialny Polski, dyskurs, informacje zagraniczne, analiza zawartości, prasa niemiecka.

INTRODUCTION

German issues were, are and will remain the Polish ones, and more broadly, those of the people of Central and Eastern Europe. The German question is deeply rooted in the collective consciousness of Poles and seems to be a particular expression of historical and geopolitical necessity. Poles – fated from the West to the neighborhood of German states, often seeing their overriding national interest in denying the Polish *raison d'État* and even the existence of Polish statehood – look at the present and future of the community of Poles in the closest connection with the situation on the Rhine and the state of the Polish-German neighborhood. This is a particular imperative of historical heritage and the specific experience of previous generations of Poles.

Germany, both in the past and present, looks at Poland with a sense of civilizational superiority. While earlier, in the 19th or early 20th century, this feeling very often found its expression in imperialism grounded on force and racism, today we are dealing with the German normative imperialism which derives from the experience of overcoming and controlling its own history, which seems to be very strongly present in the German thinking about Europe. The German tendency to universalize its own concepts on the continent, and perhaps also on a global scale, also has different sources. As Marek Cichocki writes, one of them is certainly the Faustian tradition in German culture, which relies on the conviction about a particular predisposition to transform nature and the world in order to control them. This particular tendency to shape reality and man himself is strongly present in the German view of modernity (Cichocki 2017). Angela Merkel treats her power as the Chancellery of European Humanitarianism and today Germany believes that it represents the ideas of rightness, justice and human rights (Rokita 2016).

The Federal Republic of Germany is undoubtedly one of the world's leading countries when it comes to building an open democratic society. However, despite the desire to overcome traditional prejudices and the widespread shame on the Rhine for the crimes committed during World War II, many Germans still look – with post-colonial superiority – at their Eastern neighbors (Marshall 2019). The victory of the right-wing parties in Poland in 2015 caused the German elite to be clearly concerned about the “Good Change”¹ on the Vistula River. Thus, in the new situation the common German *besservisserism* often manifests itself in the form of public ‘zwischenrufs’ addressed to Poles: *Das könnt Ihr nicht tun!*

¹ “The Good Change” (in Polish – “Dobra Zmiana”) is the leading political slogan used by right-wing politicians in present Poland.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH – HYPOTHESES, RESEARCH MATERIAL AND ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

The issues of Polish-German relations, and especially mutual images of both countries in the media are the subject of numerous publications (See: Ociepka, Łada, Ćwiek-Karpowicz: 2009; Szymańska 2000, 2005, 2009, 2011; Hess, Szymańska 2009). However, the change in the political situation in Poland has brought German-Polish relations to a new phase. Therefore, the interest of the German media in the affairs in Poland has increased and we are dealing with a more critical view on these issues. It is for this reason that the Press Research Centre of the Jagiellonian University has launched a research project devoted to the present mutual media images of both countries, with a particular emphasis on the critical image of Germany in the journalism of the Polish right-wing press (“identity media”) and the discourse about Poland in the German media. This article is a small part of this project.

The aim of this article is to present an excerpt from research on the reconstruction of the discursive image² of Poland in four selected German dailies in 2017-2019. The idea was to distinguish a clear configuration of values, themes, places and heroes of events related to Poland. The following hypotheses were put forward in the research project:

H1. The press in Germany is undoubtedly more interested in Poland than the media in other countries. The strongest international context of the messages about Poland in the German press is that of the European Union. The German press is reluctant – or disrespectful – to Warsaw’s regional initiatives, both political and economic.

² Discourse is a process of creating, strengthening and disseminating the system of social meanings, whose recognition takes place mainly owing to the analysis of its elements which refer to texts or their social backgrounds i.e. discourse participants. Public discourses – and thus also media discourses – can be presented in the model of mutual relations of three elements. *The subject(s) of discourse(s)* is taken by the phatic structure of the discourse, i.e. its participants, individuals (e.g. politicians, journalists, experts), communities (e.g. milieus, ideological formations) and institutions (e.g. political parties, state, local government institutions, market, media, etc.). The social configuration of a discourse generates specific structures of meanings, especially ideas and values that are reflected in the consciousness of discourse participants. Between these elements there is a kind of symbolic interactionism: a change in the sphere of ideas (system of meanings) indirectly, i.e. through the social consciousness of discourse participants (manifested in the form of e.g. social moods, opinions, attitudes of the community, motivation of decision-makers) which leads to a change in social configuration, and thus influences the shape of human communities (including institutions) and their actions. The last element of the described configuration is the materialised representation of discourse, i.e. the stream of public statements of various communication actors (including journalists and media), manifestos, programmes, strategies, assumptions, public policies, and especially media messages.

H2. It is more likely to publish in the German press such content about Poland that has a clearly negative overtone. The German media generally support the political theses about Poland disseminated in the European forum – they criticize the restrictions on the freedom of speech and media, as well as the violation of the rule of law and the limitation of the independence of the judiciary in Poland.

H3. The German press strongly rejects the possibility of any discussion on war reparations for Poland. The German media present a different position from the Polish one also on many other specific issues. An important role in shaping the German public opinion about our country is played by the voices of Poles themselves disseminated in the German press.

H4. The narrative about Poland in German dailies is dominated by axiological and normative discourse, often in a patronizing tone. The tone of humanitarian universalism is strongly present in the discourse about Poland in the analyzed newspapers, and Germany – led by Chancellor Merkel – aspires to the role of a “humanitarian power” in the modern world.

The research carried out for the purpose of this text used a technique of analysis of text documents (*text mining*), referred to as a set of algorithms of computer data processing, which serve to automate the processes of exploration of documents drawn up in natural languages (Lula 2005, p. 67) The aim of applying this technique was to identify the links existing between the information obtained from the collection of press materials published in the selected German dailies: liberal-conservative “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” (100 thous. wordforms), liberal and centre-left “Süddeutsche Zeitung” (101 thous.) and conservative and right-wing “die Welt” (104 thous.)³. In order to construct a collection of messages about Poland and Poles, a query was carried out in 140 editions of each daily, which totalled 560 editions, i.e. 17% of all four dailies in 2017-2018 and the first quarter of 2019.

³ A 12-thousand-word forms corpus of texts about Poland published in “Bild” tabloid was used as an additional source.

Tab. 1. The Rank of countries appearing in the four German dailies 2017-2019⁴

Rank	"FAZ"		"SZ"		"DW"		"Bild"	
1.	USA	5117	USA	12737	USA	7411	USA	738
2.	China	4017	China	3781	France	2715	France	419
3.	Russia	2899	France	3086	China	2437	Italy	315
4.	France	2827	Russia	2987	Russia	2224	China	257
5.	Italy	2080	Italy	2667	Italy	2035	Austria	241
6.	Switzerland	1737	Austria	2479	Switzerland	1595	Switzerland	227
7.	Austria	1621	Switzerland	1642	Austria	1290	Poland	206
8.	Poland	1114	Poland	1553	Poland	1232	Denmark	144
9.	Greece	951	Czech Republic	861	Belgium	809	Belgium	137
10.	Denmark	668	Greece	849	Greece	573	Russia	122
11.	Luxembourg	570	Belgium	720	Denmark	402	Greece	102
12.	Belgium	499	Netherlands	644	Czech Republic	393	Czech Republic	95
13.	Czech Republic	361	Luxembourg	133	Luxembourg	290	Luxembourg	53
14.	Netherlands	324	Denmark	131	Netherlands	288	Netherlands	49

After a preliminary study and preparation of the corpus, the analysis was started. The units of analysis were sentences (N=18 602). At the beginning, the frequency lists of words appearing in the examined texts were prepared, which served

⁴ The results were compared with the presence of Poland in the pages of the world's leading dailies during the period in question. It turned out, for example, that in the "New York Times" Poland appeared 388 times (in the international section), 231 times in commentary materials, 68 times in economic columns and 60 times in the newspaper's magazine supplement – altogether 747 times. More interest in Poland – about 1 thousand references in 2017-2019 – is observed in the pages of "Le Figaro" and "La Repubblica". It is worth noting that among editorial keywords (Mots clés) related to Poland in the pages of French dailies, the most frequent are – migration (70 times), EU (47), Brexit (31), but also populism (21). On the other hand, in the Italian newspaper, among political leaders who most often appear in articles about Poland are: Angela Merkel (27 times), Donald Trump (24), Jarosław Kaczyński (21), Donald Tusk (19), Jean-Claude Juncker (16), Andrzej Duda (14) and Viktor Orbán (14).

to reconstruct the intensity of specific content, i.e. topics, authors, concepts, etc. The information on frequency and percentage ranges of particular (groups of) words was combined with keywords (together with their contexts), which made it possible to present the clarity (specificity) of particular threads undertaken by individual editors. The next level of analysis was computer-assisted content analysis. The basis for the code-key were categories created on the dictionaries developed with regard to semantic fields tradition of linguistic research, i.e. ordered dictionary blocks corresponding to specific areas of reality (Pisarek 2007, p. 278).

The frequency wordlists and percentage ranges of particular categories of computer content analysis were used to reconstruct the intensity of specific content, which was an attempt to reconstruct the mechanisms of the *selection* and *gatekeeping* processes (White 1949, pp. 389-390; Shoemaker, Eicholz, Wrigley 2001, p. 233) in the German press coverage on Poland. This information – combined with keywords (together with contexts) – revealed the clarity of this content, which made it possible to reveal the *press agenda* – the importance hierarchy of topics, heroes, values and places (McCombs, Shaw 1972, pp. 176-187). The matrix of mutual correlations of certain key categories (and the cluster analysis based on the correlation matrix of categories), which was carried out at the last stage of the research, led to the disclosure of dominant interpretative *frames* (Entman 1993, pp. 51-58), while the factor analysis proved to be an effective tool for reconstructing cardinal *narratives* about Poland in the German press in 2017-2019⁵.

THE IMAGE OF POLAND IN GERMAN DAILIES – THE GENERAL RESULTS OF QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES

In the texts about Poland in German dailies, words and phrases denouncing the EXECUTIVE POWER⁶ appeared most often. Various forms of types (lexemes) such as 'government', 'prime minister', 'minister', 'president' (etc.) appeared about 2 thousand times in 1.9 thousand units of analysis (i.e. sentences)⁷. The next places in the ranking of the ten most frequent word types – which to some extent reveal the thematic structure of the analyzed discourse – are taken by: LAW (present in 1134 sentences),

⁵ The list of categories (coding frame) and the full research report is available in the Press Research Centre archive.

⁶ Due to a purposeful selection of texts, among the most frequently appearing forms of expression were references to Europe (over 3 thous.), Poland (2,6 thous.) and Germany (1,3 thous.).

⁷ The range of occurrence of all thematic categories (and categories relating to characters and places of events), as well as values (and anti-values), together with a matrix of the correlation coefficients of the different categories of analysis are available in the PRC archive.

POLITICS (GENERAL) (881), STATE AFFAIRS (664), FINANCE (514), JUDGMENT (504), SCIENCE-EDUCATION (477), HISTORY (440), CULTURE AND ART (GENERAL) (349) and WAR (344)⁸. The individual and collective heroes of messages about Poland in the German press are – most often – STATE (664), HUMANS (582), MILITARY AND POLICE (478), POLITICAL PARTY (PARTIES) (416), LEADER (397), COMMISSION (390), MEMBER (352), JOURNALIST(S) AND/OR MEDIA (348), NATION (329) and PERSON (302)⁹. The most common axiological categories – denoting the leading values and anti-values – are CONSENSUS (676), DEATH-ATROCITY (355), GOOD (GENERAL) (331), LIFE (322), FORCE (310), POWER-DEFENCE (268), JUSTICE (257), CARE (237), FREEDOM (223), and DANGER-THREAT (217)¹⁰. The leading positions in the ranking of the most frequently appearing actors indicated by name are occupied by KACZYŃSKI (296), MERKEL (167), TRUMP (151), DUDA (131), ORBÁN (111), MACRON (102), TUSK (96), PUTIN (87), HITLER (73) and MORAWIECKI (62).¹¹

⁸ Together they form the EXECUTIVE POWER category, which is most closely correlated with categories such as FEDERATION | INTERNATIONAL (ASPECT) | JUSTICE | name: DUDA | JUDICIARY | name: MORAWIECKI | LAW AND JUSTICE (PIS PARTY) | LAW | LEADERSHIP | name: KACZYŃSKI | PARTY | CONSERVATISM | name: SZYDŁO | name: ZIOBRO | REFORMS | TRIBUNAL | CONSTITUTION | LEGISLATIVE POWER | name: TRUMP | STATE | ELECTIONS | OPPOSITION | name: BABIŠ | name: ORBÁN | DECISION-MAKING | JOURNALISTS-MEDIA | name: MACRON | name: TUSK | POLITICS | name: NETANJAHU | GERSDORF | DEFENSE | CONSENSUS | CRITICS | NATION | POPULISM.

⁹ The next positions in the ranking are: JEWS (294), PIS (282), MIGRANTS (257), COMPANY-CORPORATION (250), REFUGEES (244), FAMILY (239), FEDERATION (232), OPPOSITION (212), COMMUNITY (197), WOMAN (194), INHABITANTS (190), CITIZENS (176), CHILD (160), VICTIMS (144), CHANCELLOR (142), MAN (137), ORGANIZATION (118), TRIBUNAL (116), CDU (86), PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE (83), EMPIRE (74), AUTHOR (72), EXPERT (72), DIPLOMACY (70), SPOKESPERSON (70), SPD (69), CANDIDATE (66), DIRECTORATE (65), CLIENT (65), AFD (63), PENSION (59), PROFESSOR (47), YAD VASHEM (46), MAYOR (45), ENEMY (42), DDR (40), PSYCHOLOGY (36), BUNDESTAG (30), WORKERS (29), UN (24), FOREIGNERS (22).

¹⁰ And then: REFORMS (212), DEMOCRACY (210), KNOWLEDGE (SCIENCE) (210), THE FUTURE (199), MODERNITY (187), SECURITY (185), PARTNERSHIP (165), YOUTH (163), VALUES (IN GENERAL) (161), SYMPATHY (143), VICTORY (143), TRADITION (135), HUMANITARIANISM (131), DUTY (120), PRINCIPLES (118), POPULISM (114), LOVE, HAPPINESS (112), PEACE (112), FAITH (109), STRUGGLE (105), RESPONSIBILITY (100), SOLIDARITY (99), HATRED, RACISM (97), EXTREMISM (89), HOMELAND (83), VIOLENCE (74), INDEPENDENCE (65), LIE (64), PROSPERITY-WELFARE (63), COURAGE, HEROISM (58), (NON)TOLERANCE (56), DIGNITY (50), WISDOM (50), ANTI-SEMITISM (48), INDEPENDENCE (46), BEAUTY (40), BRUTALITY (32).

¹¹ And then: TIMMERMANS (39), WEBER (38), OPPOSITION POLITICIANS NAMES (35), POLISH RIGHT-WING POLITICIANS NAMES (34), ZIOBRO (34), ADAMOWICZ (32), OETTINGER (31), BABIŠ (27), CZARNECKI (27), SZYDŁO (27), MAAS (25), WAŁĘSA (25), MACHCEWICZ (22), GOWIN (21), NETANJAHU (21), SCHROEDER (18), GERSDORF (17).

THE DRAFT MAP OF THE GERMAN NEWSPAPERS DISCOURSE ON POLAND IN 2017-2019

In order to reconstruct the configuration of the discourse in the journalistic messages about Poland in the German press, individual sentences (cases) were subjected to a specific analytical procedure, which takes into account both the frequency of occurrence of certain categories and their tendency to co-occur with other categories. The diagram presented below should be treated as a map that contains several different areas – clusters of categories. The size of individual areas on the map indicates how numerous a given category was represented in the examined texts, whereas the distances between individual areas (but also the distances between individual elements of these areas) inform about the tendencies for their co-occurrence in the analyzed sentences.¹² So the multi-stage analysis procedure led to the construction of a map illustrating the general order of the discourse on Poland in four German dailies in 2017-2019.

The configuration of categories on the presented map makes it possible to think that the discourse about Poland in the studied dailies can be arranged according to two dimensions: axiological (between the sphere of political, economic, social (etc.) practice and the sphere of values and ideas) and temporal (from the discourse on the past to the present and future ones).

In the discourse about the past, the strongest cluster is formed by the groups of categories denoting OCCUPATION and DEATH, then MUSEUM with DIGNITY and AUSCHWITZ, and – in the third cluster – VICTIMS, JEWS, WORLD and WAR. One of the categories that serves as the fulcrum element of the discourse about the past and memory, i.e. not functioning in any concentration, but showing a tendency to connect with many others simultaneously is LIFE. The key category of the ‘projecting’ dimension, i.e. the narrative about the present and future, is RULE OF LAW, which, firstly, is one of the most frequent categories in the texts studied and, secondly, shows a tendency to co-exist with elements forming four different clusters: (1) JUSTICE + JUDICIALITY + LEGISLATIVE POWER + (POLITICAL) ELECTIONS, (2) LEADERSHIP, (3) CRITICS and EXECUTIVE POWER (AUTHORITIES) together with REFORMS and (4) MEMBERSHIP with EUROPEAN COMMUNITY and COMMISSION.

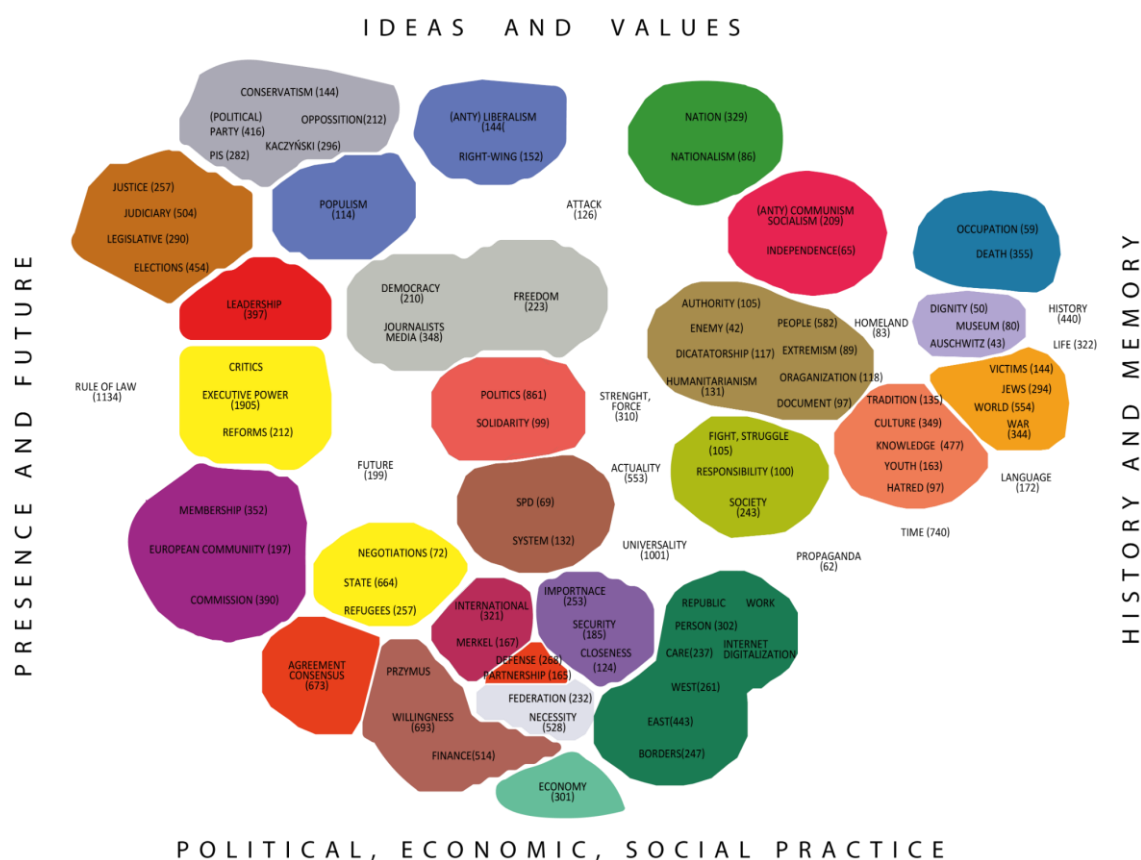
The foundation for the pragmatic dimension of the discourse about Poland in German dailies is ECONOMY, and the most extensive cluster in this sphere is created

¹² Using Text Smart software, an overall picture of the discourse was constructed in the shape of a ‘geographical’ map of mutual relations between different categories of analysis. For the detailed methodological description see: Planeta 2018.

by such categories as CARE, WEST, EAST, DIGITALIZATION and WORK. In the sphere of ideas and values (and anti-values), however, there are three – equally important in terms of frequency – broad clusters: (1) CONSERVATISM (together with categories such as LAW AND JUSTICE PARTY, KACZYŃSKI and OPOSITION), (2) (ANTI)LIBERALISM together with RIGHT-WING and (3) NATION (together with NATIONALISM).

It is worth noting that in the axiological dimension the key category ATTACK appears and combines with a large number of categories functioning in various areas (clusters). Another so multidimensional category which functions as a keystone of various detailed discourses is the category FUTURE.

Figure 1. The Map of the Discourse on Poland in Four German Newspapers in 2017-2019



Source: own elaboration.

THE MAIN "NARRATIVES" ON POLAND IN GERMAN NEWSPAPERS (2017–2019)

In order to reach more clear results on the structure of the German newspapers' discourse on Poland, in the next phase of the research, statistical measurements were made using one of the multidimensional inference techniques, namely factor analysis. As a result, the overall picture has been reduced to the nineteen most important factors determining which different (detailed) categories have the tendency to co-occur and that is why they create easily distinguishable configurations in the examined texts that refer to characters, problems, values and places, which makes it possible to call such separate configurations the main narratives about Poland in the German newspapers in 2017-2019.

The most expressive narrative about Poland is constituted by words which, in their combined configuration (2nd), denote the press criticism of the fundamental change in Europe, especially in its Central and Eastern part. This group constitutes a narrative, the core of which is the criticism of "good change" populism, e.g. the rules of "anti-liberal" and "authoritarian" power in Poland. In the group of texts we are interested in, the discourse about Poland under the rule of the Law and Justice party¹³ (and the personal influence of Jarosław Kaczyński¹⁴) clearly stands out in terms of the ubiquitous politicization of the state and the domination of the party apparatus. An important context for this – usually unequivocally negative – narrative is the European context, and especially the role that the German state has to play in the new political conditions. The greatest threat is therefore, in the new situation, the offensive of populism, authoritarianism, conservatism, nationalism, xenophobia and other "ghosts" of the past, from which – it was believed not long ago – that a united Europe was to be free.

In the analyzed newspapers the 2nd thread co-exists with another – 4th – area of the discourse formed by categories denoting the rule of law in Poland, which is a narrative about the violation of the constitution and political dominance over the judiciary¹⁵. Poland's problems in the European Union, especially in connection with – as one of the German publicists put it – numerous "flaws" and "failures to comply with membership obligations" in terms of compliance with the rule of law, and especially the controversial reform of the judiciary, are – together – the most expressive area of discourse (Ulrich 2017c, p. 4; Hassel 2018c, p. 2; Hassel 2019, p. 3; Müller-Thederan 2019, p. 6; Veser, 2019, p. 3; Fritz 2019, p. 1).

¹³ German journalists describe the Law and Justice party as 'extreme', 'nationalist', 'Catholic' and 'Eurosceptic', while the PO party is presented as 'moderate', 'cosmopolitan' and 'pro-EU'.

¹⁴ Created to be an authoritarian, who "like Józef Piłsudski, the founding father of Poland (...) does not hold public office, but nevertheless controls Poland by treating the party as a real seat of the government" (Hassel 2018, p. 8).

¹⁵ The categories included in this cluster are CHANGE, COMMON, IMPORTANCE, VALIDITY, CLOSURE, GERSDORF, OPOSITION POLITICIANS (total).

The separate (1st) narrative about Poland in the German newspapers is related to the tragic history of the 20th century and its commemoration¹⁶. The burden of tragic history, a peculiar evocative discourse about the past and contemporary memory, is a humanistic reflection on the collective and individual fates of people and the memory of tragedy and death, and the most important theme in that discourse is the annihilation of Jews during WWII¹⁷. The German press is exposing the painful problem of the co-responsibility of representatives of other – apart from Germans (including Poles) – nations for the Holocaust. This narrative also includes criticism of the current Polish historical policy and the instrumental use of history (Beethke 2019, p. 10; Hassel 2017, p. 12; Veser 2018, p. 10; Croitoru 2017, p. 14; Förderl-Schmid 2017, p. 12; Kijowska 2018, p. 18; Hassel, Neshitov 2017, p. 3; Ulrich 2017d, p. 4; Schümer 2017, p. 3).

Among the presented mutual relations of individual narratives about Poland in the German dailies in 2017-2019 (see Figure 2), we can see a strong link between the two elements. The 3rd cluster, which includes references to – let us call it conventionally – “the politics in the street” (i.e. the press coverage about demonstrations and public opposition activities, but also relations from successive Independence Marches in Warsaw), is combined with the 6th cluster – the narrative about the activities of the Polish opposition, including representatives of scientific, intellectual or artistic elites in the European arena (Schuller 2017, p. 6; Hassel 2018b, p. 9; Hassel, Neshitov 2017, p. 3). Both threads are connected with the 7th one, a group of texts about a difficult Polish-German neighborhood – a multi-faceted (also referring to the sphere of values) discourse about Warsaw-Berlin relations.

“Elżbieta Podleśna protests in the streets almost every month, against racism, rapists, judicial reform”, “tens of thousands of Poles demonstrated for the independence of the judiciary” – alerts “SZ”. “I believe in civic protests and demonstrations,” announces one of the Polish scholars in “DW”, while in another text one can read that “women fight against populists” and “defend the right to abortion”. During the period under review (2017-2108), the German dailies systematically

¹⁶ The most important elements in this area of discourse are the words (and the categories created from them) relating to HISTORY, DEATH, WAR, OCCUPATION, NAZISM, ANTI SEMITISM, MEMORY, VICTIMS, TRAGEDY. There are also detailed categories such as GETTO, CEMETERY, YAD VASHEM, HITLER.

¹⁷ Among the forms of expression that are key to the discussed trend are words denouncing patients – weak characters portrayed as the objects of action. These include ‘women’ and ‘children’. The key word form here is ‘youth’. It is also the most axiologically characteristic thread of discourse in which anti-values dominate (so-called *condemnanda* i.e. words and expressions empirically available in press texts, which in their denotational, connotational, and especially emotional layer construct the *axiosphere* of anti-values – see: Pisarek 2003) – apart from ‘death’ there are ‘Shoah’, ‘Holocaust’, ‘Auschwitz’. In the sphere of *miranda* (creating the world of positive values) there are ‘values in general’ but also ‘Europe’ and ‘freedom’. It is also worth pointing out that the key word in this sphere is the word ‘Yiddish’ (and also ‘language’).

informed about numerous protests of opposition circles against the controversial government policy. The same trend includes numerous (and mostly critical) references to patriotic demonstrations (such as the Independence March). Thus (3rd) “politics in the street” – the image of demonstrations and opposition activities vs. critical messages at patriotic manifestations is a clear stream of narration about Poland in the German press at the time under consideration.

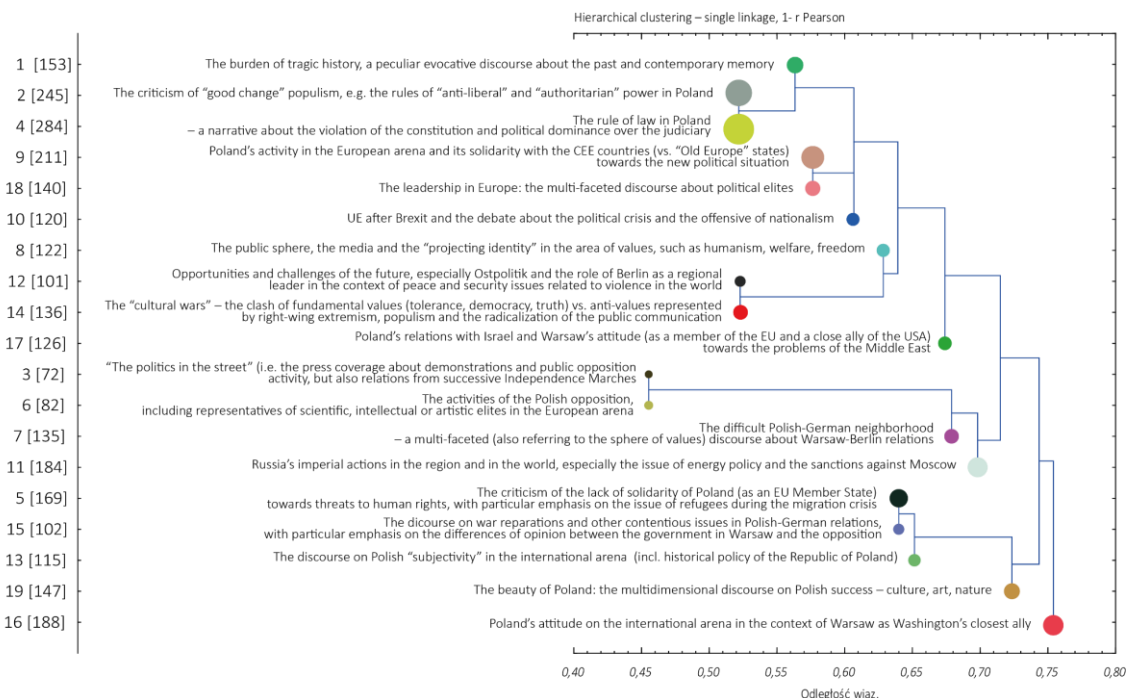
That sub-discourse tends to co-occur with the 6th trend of discourse on Poland in the German newspapers which is created by a stream of messages about the activities of the Polish opposition, as well as the representatives of scientific, intellectual and artistic elites in the European arena. (Schuller 2017, p. 6; Hassel 2018, p. 9; Hassel, Neshitov 2017, p. 3). These two (3rd and 6th) threads co-exist with the 7th one, i.e. the multi-faceted (i.e. also referring to the sphere of values) discourse on Polish-German difficult neighborly relations, especially economic ones¹⁸. Unfortunately, with the takeover of the government by the right-wing Law and Justice party – as “DW” writes – economic policy in Poland has become more unpredictable.

The three (3rd, 6th and 7th) threads of the discourse on Poland tend to co-occur with the narrative on European energy policy of which the imperialist actions of Russia in the region are obviously an important aspect. When asked years ago about the secret of an effective foreign policy, the “Iron Chancellor” Bismarck used to answer – “sign a good treaty with Russia”. This maxim – which we often forget – illustrates a certain contingency in German foreign policy. In the press narrative on Eastern policy, the word “dialogue” is key¹⁹, which – in the case of negotiations with Moscow – means difficult political talks and negotiations with Putin, constant attempts to discourage Russia from continuing the war in Ukraine, urging Russia to end the Syrian tragedy, dissuading Russia from waging a hybrid war against the West, and especially, stopping hacking attacks and disinformation campaigns and financing racist and nationalist parties in Europe. This is how the agenda of Germany’s cross-party consensus on the foreign policy can be characterized (Carstens 2018, p. 10). Therefore, Russia’s imperial actions in the region and in the world, especially the issue of energy policy and the sanctions against Moscow, are another (11th) strand of the discourse under examination.

¹⁸ An important element of this narrative are economic issues. Its indicators are groups of words such as (zone) ‘euro’, ‘million/billion’, ‘net’, ‘budget’, ‘investments’ or ‘bonds’. It can be said that an interview with Prof. Zdzisław Krasnodębski published in “die Welt” is a model representative of this trend (Schiltz, 2019, p. 6).

¹⁹ In the press narrative on this subject, other key words such as ‘energy’, ‘gas’, ‘sanctions’ also appear repeatedly.

Figure 2. The Main Narratives on Poland in Four German Newspapers in 2017-2019



Note: In brackets the standardized frequencies of the total categories forming clusters are given. Source: own elaboration

Another (9th) element of Poland's image in the German dailies is related to **the Poland's activity in the European arena and its solidarity with the Central European countries** (as compared to "Old Europe" states) **towards the new political situation**²⁰. Geographical references are the backbone of this multidimensional and critical narrative about regional solidarity – from Visegrád Group to the Three Seas Initiative – in the European arena. Apart from the countries of the region, i.e. Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, there also appear the Baltic States, Turkey and Israel in this focus. This discourse includes a number of references – obviously – to the international relations and foreign policy – e.g. the names of prime ministers (Szydło, Morawiecki), ministers of foreign affairs (Waszczykowski, Sikorski, Czaputowicz) and to the national security policy (Błaszczak) in the broad sense, and thus also to energy security²¹. This (9th) thread tends to co-occur with the narrative on **the leadership in Europe: the multi-faceted discourse about political elites** (18th) is another of the

²⁰ The key categories in this focus are LEADERSHIP, ACCUSE (ACCUSATION), CRITICS, ATTACK, MERKEL, DUDA, MORAWIECKI, SZYDŁO.

²¹ Hence, 'Nord Stream', 'electricity', 'oil', 'gas', but also 'investors' function as key words and expressions in this discourse.

discourse areas identified (Fritz 2018b, p. 6; Steiner 2019, p. 6; Veser 2017, p. 10; Crolly, Kálnoky 2018, p. 7; Löwenstein 2018, p. 2; Fritz 2018a, p. 7; Schiltz, Fritz 2019, p. 8; Gnauck 2017a, p. 7).

The German press writing about the right-wing political elites in Poland correctly notes that they strongly oppose the dominant role of Germany in the European Union. This is a completely new situation for Poland's Western neighbors if we take into consideration the international activity of the Republic of Poland before "the good change", described by its critics as a policy of "swimming in the mainstream" (i.e. together with Germany), and whose symbol became the famous so-called "Berlin tribute" of Radosław Sikorski²².

Andrzej Duda, on the other hand, is characterized as a politician who "met a particularly bad fate" because, paradoxically, his wife, a Germanist, facilitates contacts between the President of the Republic of Poland and Angela Merkel (e.g. during official meetings), while it is difficult for the President to establish a close relationship with Kaczyński. This and other similar statements prove German journalists' lack of professionalism and their unconfirmed thesis – directly transferred from satirical programs – about the difficult communication between the head of state and the leader of the power camp.

The German press writes a lot about Jarosław Kaczyński that, not being involved in any scandals, the hardened bachelor appreciates the company of the cat and that "he loves neither women nor wine, but only his homeland". The quoted excerpt proves that German journalists may accurately read the sensitivity of their readers, but do not understand the majority of Poles at all. The cutting remark that the leader of the ruling party "loves only his homeland" is in fact one of the greatest compliments that the German press could give to Kaczyński. At the same time, German journalists have no doubt about the source of real political influence in current Poland. SZ writes that like the 'founding father' of the reborn Rzeczpospolita, Józef

²² "I fear Germany's power less than their inactivity" – Sikorski's famous appeal at The German Council on Foreign Relations (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e. V. (DGAP) in Berlin in December 2011. According to many political commentators and journalists, this speech made a tremendous impact on German and European politics, not least because it changed the perception of Poland: from a problematic and needy recipient of Western support, to a full-fledged member of the European Union. But the critics in Poland referred to Sikorski's appeal as the "Berlin tribute", in which the minister unambiguously called on Germany to take a hegemonic role in Europe. The German press interpreted this statement completely differently than it did in Poland. For example, the weekly "der Spiegel" compliments Sikorski by calling him a 'realist' and adding that Sikorski's statement is not a Polish nomination for German leadership in Europe but 'recognition of reality'.

Piłsudski, Kaczyński does not hold public office, but holds real control over the country, and the seat of the party is 'the actual seat of the government'. The President of Law and Justice – as we read in "DW" – is 'rather withdrawn', 'pious' and 'gentle'. The German press often portrays him – which may come as a surprise – as a 'nice' man, a 'strange uncle' who, however, like the 'King of the Sun', has full power over the state.

PUTIN, TRUMP, BREXIT, NATIONALISTS: MORE EUROPEANS ARE TERRIFIED alerts one of "SZ" headings. The latent euro crisis, the influx of refugees, growing Euro-scepticism and, above all, the upcoming negotiations on the UK's exit from the Community are engrossing the EU, wrote "FAZ". Thus separate – but connected with the 9th and 17th threads mentioned above – is the discourse (10th) focused on the **EU after Brexit and the debate about the political crisis and the offensive of nationalism**, also in Poland. The main elements of that press agenda are such elements as the latent euro crisis, the influx of refugees, growing Euro-scepticism and the Brexit negotiations which kept the EU in tension and, in the context of Poland, German journalists' concern whether Warsaw, like the UK, could leave the EU (Gnauck 2017b, p. 3; Ulrich 2017a, p. 4). **Opportunities and challenges of the future, especially Ostpolitik and the role of Berlin as a regional leader in the context of peace and security issues related to violence in the world** are another (12th) area of the press discourse under investigation. Considerations about the position of Germany in the face of contemporary security challenges are undoubtedly a difficult topic for the German media²³. Meanwhile, among the fundamental threats to Europe and Germany are the increase in aggressive rhetoric and actions on the part of Russia (Kautz 2017, p. 2), the unpredictability of US foreign policy, the emergence of a new – perhaps soon to be hegemonic – Chinese power, global terrorism, the development of "turbo-capitalism" and the domination of large corporations, especially in the field of new communication technologies.

In this sub-discourse, Germany – together with France – are portrayed as regional leaders. Therefore, one can read that it is necessary to deepen European integration and effectively implement the collectively developed – i.e. by Merkel and Macron – projects in the sphere of defense, digital economy, aid for Africa and joint border control. One of the main challenges for the future – and somewhat a condition for the implementation of numerous projects developed by the German-French

²³ When, for example, Joachim Gauck did not want to explicitly exclude the use of violence – as a certain final option – for the defense of peace and human rights, he was criticized in Germany as a "warmonger".

cooperation – is strengthening the eurozone. Some of the journalists also see the problems of the German leadership. One of them is the naive idealism of Berlin's foreign policy, which consequently leads to setting unrealistic goals on the political agenda. For example, the assumption that the Federal Republic will undertake a global crusade against new fascism sounds retrospective, irrational and ideological. On the other hand, as one can read in "FAZ" that unlike the entirely delusional concepts of the SPD, Merkel's policy is not based on prayers for peace and great future, but on the pursuit of minimal progress in the international sphere, which facilitates and sometimes even saves human lives.

In the discourse about Germany's policy towards Poland – and the security of the entire region – there was also an interesting thread about the consequences of the peaceful revolution of 1989, which, as "DW" writes, was not ideal. According to many critics, communism was not accounted for its crimes. However, it could not have been otherwise, as Poland, being a pioneer of changes in the Eastern Bloc, was a kind of experimental area of negotiations for establishing a new order. It was then believed that in the following years – already in the new political system – all the illegalities of the old system could be accounted for. And in present difficult times, Poland, as a member of the European Community and a neighbor of Germany, should contribute to stabilizing the situation rather than joining the "international autocrats", therefore, "Berlin has a duty to help Poles defend their freedom" (Urlich 2017 c, p. 4).²⁴

The 12th thread of the discourse co-occurs with the discourse about **cultural wars** (14th) that is a stream of messages devoted to the clash of fundamental values (**tolerance, democracy, truth**) with the threatening anti-values represented by – mainly right-wing – **extremism, populism** and the **radicalization of the public communication**²⁵.

The events that particularly attracted the attention of German journalists were consecutive Independence Marches described as mass demonstrations (gathering up to 60 000 people), during which – as it was written many times – "right-wing extremists" demonstrated their nationalism with flags and torches, which was quite a clear suggestion of the allegedly fascist attitudes of Polish patriots.²⁶ In this way, the alleged

²⁴ „Berlin steht in der Pflicht, Polens Freiheit zu verteidigen“ (Urlich 2017, p. 4).

²⁵ In July 2017, "FAZ" published an interesting text by Jacek Dehnel, who was presented by the editors of the daily as one of the most important Polish poets and novelists. He was the author of the novel published at that time in Germany (and on the occasion of anti-government protests in defense of the independence of the judiciary) made an in-depth analysis of the radicalization of the language of politics in Poland (Dehnel 2017, p. 15).

²⁶ Florian Hassel writes: „Only red and white are allowed“, and adds: "Fearing a parade of right-wing radicals, Poland's government is now marching itself on the anniversary of

peculiarities and authoritarian tendencies of Poles, but also of other countries and nations, especially those in Central Europe, were presented. In this context, the intensification of cultural war in our region was also mentioned. Therefore, in line with the typically patronizing and normative narrative of the German media, the efforts of Community institutions, which should be made – as “DW” writes – to defend the freedom of art and science against “non-liberal” regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, are becoming increasingly important and urgent.

“SZ” writes – in the spirit of the ideology of progress – about fundamental cultural conflicts involving issues such as abortion or homosexual marriages, in other words about everything that is described by traditionalists as an offensive of “progressivism” and “political correctness”. The most important ally of European values in this peculiar cultural war is the free press, which, unfortunately, is persecuted not only in Turkey or Russia, but also in Poland and other Central European countries. The independent media – the last bastion to defend the constitution and the democratic order – is threatened not only by the offensive of authoritarianism and populism, but also by the ubiquitous presence of lies in the post-truth era. In many parts of the world the threat of institutional censorship has been removed, but a new danger has emerged: the ubiquitous communication chaos, which, especially on the Internet, is an effective weapon in the hands of anti-democrats (Michnik 2018, p. 2).

This strongly axiological 14th configuration is complemented by the 8th one focused on the **public sphere, the media and the “projecting identity” in the area of values, such as humanism, welfare, freedom**²⁷. It is easy to find numerous references to the “progressive” values which – in the normative dimension – are the basis for the European identity and the public sphere. The key concepts of this discourse are “openness”, “pluralism” and “diversity”, which – as “SZ” writes – constitute an axiological community comprising such values as “human rights”, “freedom”, “equality”, “tolerance”, but also “justice” and “solidarity” (Mühlauer, Munzinger 2017, p. 8; Lepenies 2018, p. 2; Hassel, Neshitov 2017, p. 3)²⁸. In this narrative, what prevails

independence”. In the same article its author informs that “Fascists from other countries also take part in the >March of Independence<, for example from Italy”. (Hassel 2018, p. 9).

²⁷ The German press also often uses the term “fundamental rights” (which the EU is based on) and includes, in addition to those mentioned above, respect for human dignity. Hence the presence of categories such as FEMINISM and – treated as mirandum – ABORTION in this group.

²⁸ Culture is therefore becoming a major battlefield, a place where discourses clash.

Marginalized ideas and views – so far effectively silenced – nowadays resound loudly in the public space, as populists such as Trump, Le Pen, or AfD leaders proclaim them without any

is the argument that the “new EU members” (such as Poland) must meet democratic standards of values, human rights and the rule of law by joining a community founded on democratic and, above all, liberal principles such as the principles of tripartite separation of powers, freedom of the press, independence of the judiciary and economic freedom. Meanwhile, in Poland there is a systematic centralisation of the state, as evidenced by the appropriation of the Constitutional Tribunal and the liquidation of its control function, the takeover of public media, and soon – as one can read – the freedom of action of non-governmental organisations will also be restricted.

The basic element of the next (5th) area of discourse is **the criticism of the lack of solidarity of Poland (as an EU Member State) towards threats to human rights**, with particular emphasis on the issue of **refugees during the migration crisis**²⁹ and the fundamental difference of opinions between Berlin and Warsaw in this matter.³⁰ This narrative is strongly connected with the **discourse on Polish “subjectivity” in the international arena** (13th) (Schuller 2018, p. 5; Croitoru 2017, p. 14) and – to an even greater extent – with the press messages on **war reparations**³¹ and other **contentious issues in Polish-German relations**, with a particular emphasis on the differences of opinion between the government in Warsaw and the opposition (15th).

The discourse about Polish subjectivity on the international arena has many dimensions. With the arrival of the new government, Warsaw – as we read – has, for example, undertaken an active historical policy. The most visible manifestation of this

restraint. The overwhelming consequence of this peculiar offensive of populism – according to Timothy Garton Ash in “SZ” – is “restoring dignity”. Voters are delighted that the English, Americans, Poles and Germans can be proud of their traditions and identity. This peculiar identity policy is no longer – as it was not so long ago, during the hegemony of political correctness – the right and privilege of various ethnic, religious, sexual and other minority groups. (Garton Ash 2017, p. 2).

²⁹ The key words in this group are ‘war’, ‘care’, ‘defence’, ‘refugees’, ‘migration’, ‘border’. There are also the names of foreign ministers, e.g. Sikorski, Waszczykowski, as well as the names of countries particularly affected by the wave of refugees – Italy, Greece and the Middle East countries. It is worth mentioning that in the described thread there are words and expressions that indicate the normative character of the approach to the problem, e.g. ‘cooperation’, ‘consent’, ‘procedures’, ‘need’, ‘necessity’, etc. The issue of the migration crisis was important in all of the examined titles, also in “Bild” (Link 2018, p. 2).

³⁰ The European Commission has launched infringement proceedings against three countries because they did not want to comply with the plan to distribute refugees to individual EU members. See: Drei Länder auf der Anklagebank. Die Europäische Union eröffnet ein Verfahren gegen Ungarn, Tschechien und Polen – weil sie zu wenige Flüchtlinge aufnehmen, „dW“, 14 VI 2017, p. 1.

³¹ At that time the German press not only published many of its own articles on this contentious issue, but also presented – noteworthy – for the opinions of Polish authors who were sceptical about the idea of demanding war reparations from Berlin (Goschler, Ruchniewicz, 2018, p. 6).

is a tough attitude to war reparations from Germany. Another example of Warsaw authorities seeking to consolidate Poland's subjectivity in the world is – as FAZ writes – the “conservative” and “right-wing” criticism of the European Union by Jarosław Kaczyński, which ignores the peculiar features and character of the Polish state by imposing liberal economic rules on it. The newspaper also writes about the Polish government “fueling” disputes in the international sphere, which, according to German authors, is manifested by the adoption of a law against “allegedly excessive use of the term >Polish death camps<”, which, in Warsaw's opinion, is an attempt to charge Poland and Poles with the Holocaust crime. At the same time, German journalists observe that the pursuit of greater Polish subjectivity in the international arena should not be marked by a critical attitude towards Berlin, because – as Adam Krzemiński, a publicist and specialist on Polish-German relations quoted by the German press, points out – Germany and Poland have the same problems: they are close to Europe's eastern border and look on Russia with concern.

WWII reparations and other current problems in Polish-German relations, especially the framing of the disputed issues from the perspective of the Polish opposition's conflict with the government in Warsaw, are another expressive narrative present in the analyzed newspapers. Polish claims for war reparations were presented not only as completely contrary to the German interest, but above all as absolutely unjustified and incomprehensible to Poland's western neighbors. “FAZ” wrote that the Law and Justice party puts the topic of war reparations into public circulation as a provocation directed at the hot phase of elections in Germany.³²

Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of the national-conservative Polish ruling party – who announced that Poland must energetically reinstate its repeated demands for war reparations from Germany – is mainly responsible for Polish claims against Germany. Following this appeal, many Poles want to prove their fervent patriotism. And, although Poles are among the most friendly Europeans in the Union, it was Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of the Law and Justice party and de facto head of the government, who poisoned the Polish-German relations, claims “SZ”.

The German side strongly rejects Polish claims, because – as “FAZ” writes – Germany has a regulated legal situation in this matter and all claims for damages were eventually settled, so – adds the author of the quoted text – any political or social debate on this subject in such an important country neighboring Germany as Poland is

³² „Die PiS bringt dieses Thema als gezielte Provokation in der heißen Wahlkampfphase in Deutschland auf (...) See: Forderung ist Provokation, „FAZ”, No. 211/2017, p. 4.

pointless. However, Jarosław Kaczyński thinks differently: Berlin paid compensation to other nations, while the Poles received almost no compensation for their suffering during the Nazi occupation. In turn, "FAZ" writes that although the relative share of Poland in compensation for foreign victims of Nazi persecution is much higher than the alleged one percent (as the Polish side claims), this does not change the fact that the absolute sum of individual compensation paid to Polish citizens is negligible in relation to the damage suffered. There is no doubt that many victims did not receive any compensation or that the amounts were insufficient in relation to their suffering. And yet Poland – as we can read – was one of the countries that suffered most during the Second World War.

The German journalists draw attention to a fundamental problem that overshadows not only the issue of war reparations, but also poses a serious threat to mutual relations. It is a common belief in Germany that the problem of reparations was eventually solved after the war, mainly because the Federal Republic lost the "German eastern territories". So, one can read that it has always been included in the reparation balance for Poland. This point of view is completely rejected by Warsaw.

A distinctly separate place in the pages of the analyzed dailies is a narrative about **Poland's attitude on the international arena in the context of Warsaw as Washington's closest ally** (16th). In the texts representing the discussed trend, the "Polish issue" is often presented in the aspect of the global policy of the USA and President Donald Trump³³. Another – clearly distinguishable group – is the bunch of articles devoted to **Poland's relations with Israel** and, in a broader perspective, **Warsaw's attitude** (as a member of the EU and, at the same time, a close ally of the USA) towards **the problems of the Middle East** (17th).

Europeans should cultivate the great European project that is the Union, making it more democratic and empathetic towards the Greek unemployed, French steelworkers or Polish peasants. Europe must show social sensitivity, which as we read neither Putin nor Trump are capable of. The community cannot therefore be a Europe of corporations, but must seek the acceptance of its citizens. In this narrative appears the thesis that the European Union will only be able to solve its own problems effectively when the political class of the member states has acknowledged – in reference to Donald Trump's electoral slogan – that "Europe is most important". The European Union (under German leadership) should oppose US policy that prioritizes

³³ This discourse is connected with the issues of foreign and security policy, and an important person as an actor of the messages from this group is president Andrzej Duda.

the export of its own energy resources (in order to maintain jobs in the US), and its tool in the international arena is sanctions, e.g. against companies involved in finalizing the Nord Stream Project.

German journalists wonder how far Donald Trump can go. Is he going to declare a trade war on the rest of the world? Will the European Union give in to US demands in terms of security policy? The President of the United States – especially just after the elections – was the subject of ruthless criticism by the German journalists, who allowed themselves to be mischievous about him by writing sarcastically about “an elderly gentleman who regards Belgium as a beautiful city” and who, as Jean Claude Juncker put it, “will need to be explained how the European Union works”.

In the critical media discourse about the USA under the leadership of Donald Trump, Poland appears in numerous contexts, the most important of which is the theme of Russia. As “dW” writes, Poland’s former Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski stated just after Trump’s “disturbing” performance in Helsinki that Warsaw, which is allegedly an ally of Washington, should not believe the US President’s assurances about defending Poland against Russia in case of aggression (Wergin 2018, p. 18). “FAZ” also noted that European politicians were nervous about that kind of “peace agreement” between Putin and Trump. In turn, the journalist of “SZ” observes that the world is at the beginning of a new global political era in which the US is retreating from its role as a world leader and Russia is trying to weaken the West with its aggressive foreign policy and hybrid warfare methods, which is why it is so difficult to formulate a coherent foreign and security policy.

Trump can become – as we read in “DW” – one of those figures whose appearance on the arena of history usually means the end of a certain era and forces humanity to abandon old assumptions³⁴. The journalist continues to write about numerous interpretations and speculations about the strange rapprochement and “new opening” in Trump-Putin relations, which took place in Helsinki in July 2018. The author asks whether Trump’s arrogance (or maybe his naivety) gave the experienced former KGB officer the chance to play the US President, manipulating him like a puppet. Or perhaps Moscow has materials discrediting the leader of the United States, who, for fear of their disclosure, is willing to sacrifice the interests of the USA and the whole world to Russia. And finally, as we read, Trump knows perfectly well, although he will never admit it, that he owes his electoral victory to Moscow, so he must be

³⁴ American issues sometimes appeared in very surprising contexts. In “dW”, for example, we read that people like Trump, Kaczyński and other right-wing populists can most effectively be opposed by women.

grateful and should hope for further support from Russia. The journalist points out that whatever is done to explain Trump's behavior in Helsinki and Brussels, it means that America is now resigning from its role of Western world leader.

German authors believe that after the shocking appearance of Trump in Brussels and his submissive attitude towards Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, the question is whether Europe can still rely on America for defense issues. It was also stressed that in an interview for Fox News the U.S. president was unable and unwilling to mention a single reason why the U.S. should defend its NATO partners in Europe in case of an attack. Therefore, the EU must strengthen its external borders, protect its own democratic processes and invest in research and innovation, as the US and China do.

One might think that the German political elite is concerned about the Polish-American rapprochement. And, although this attitude is not formulated directly, such a tone of reluctance towards unprecedented political cooperation between Warsaw and Washington – especially in the security sphere – is clearly present in the German press. In this context, journalists write about the difficulties in the process of creating a common „European army”, especially due to the sceptical attitude of Poland and those EU countries which believe that NATO should continue to be the main guarantor of regional security. What is more, writes „dW”, the development of the EU army is hindered by the weakness of the German defense forces. The author of the article aptly notes that the project of the European army is of purely political nature and is an unsuccessful response to Trump's unilateral actions aimed at “playing Europeans” against each other, as Brussels believes. This is why the US President so often and loudly condemns the eight European NATO members for failing to meet their allied obligations and calls for higher spending on defense.

An example of Warsaw's almost unconditional support for Washington's concept can be – as we read in “SZ” – the issue of the deployment of American military bases in Western Europe, as well as weapons of mass destruction. Unlike Germany, as we read, where the withdrawal of nuclear weapons stationed at the Büchel air base has been repeatedly demanded, Poland, for example, is expected to gladly welcome the possibility of stationing nuclear warheads on its territory, which would make all foregoing forms of NATO-Russia cooperation obsolete.

The German press, criticizing the USA, points to the failures of Washington's policy. To increase the strength of their argumentation, the German journalists cite US expert sources. In “FAZ”, for example, you can read that the famous think tank RAND has revealed a “security paradox” that has been going on for many years: despite the strategic advantage of defense spending, the training of soldiers and the most

important weapon systems, NATO (under the US leadership) has failed to reduce the operational imbalance in the Eastern flank and especially in the Baltic States to its advantage (Hemicker 2018, p. 10). Loud and controversial statements made by former Defense Minister Radosław Sikorski about Poland's relations with the USA and the possible rapprochement – at Poland's expense – between Moscow and Washington were also cited in this context.

One of the interesting threads in the German press under analysis are Poland's relations with Israel and – in a broader perspective – Poland's attitude (as a member of the EU and, at the same time, a close ally of the USA) towards the problems of the Middle East.

The German press has written a lot about an unfortunate amendment to the law introducing criminal provisions for attributing responsibility for the crimes of the Third German Reich³⁵ to Poles. This regulation met with great opposition from Israel and Jewish circles around the world. As FAZ writes, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who maintains close relations with the “conservative and nationalist” government in Warsaw (and other Visegrád Four), called for a change in the newly enacted law. “SZ” informs about an amicable settlement of the dispute. When the Polish government withdrew the penalizing solutions, the Prime Ministers of Israel and Poland signed a joint statement in which they rejected any attempts to blame the state or the entire Polish nation for the atrocities committed by the Nazis and their collaborators.

Poland's commitment to the Middle East question was also taken up by the German newspapers on the occasion of the Warsaw conference on Iran, which was described as a success and a “historic turning point”, as the head of state of Israel and the foreign ministers of the leading Arab states came together in one place to oppose the common threat from the regime in Tehran with extraordinary determination, clarity and unity.

Another thread of the discourse about Poland in relation to the Middle East was related to criticism of Polish Islamophobia. “DW” writes that Law and Justice politicians, state television and other progovernment media routinely turn against Muslims, stressing that “Islam does not fit in with Europe” and by expressing security

³⁵ Under the new law, anyone, both Poles and foreigners, could be sentenced to imprisonment of up to three years for imputing responsibility or co-responsibility for Nazi crimes committed by the Third Reich to Poles or the Polish state. This includes the use of the expression “Polish death camps”.

concerns point to terrorism and crime in France, Belgium or Germany, which are related to Muslim immigration.

There were also references to the history of the Polish People's Republic. As "FAZ" writes, after the defeat of the Arabs supported by the Soviet Union, the Polish communists spread the slogan "Zionists to Zion", and the First Secretary of the PZPR (Polish United Workers' Party), Władysław Gomułka, described the few Jews who survived the Holocaust in Poland as the "Fifth Column" and forced them to leave the country.

The characteristics of the discussed sub-discourse should be supplemented by a few additional threads. The "exotic" issue in connection with Poland appears in the migration messages. The media write about the manipulated image of the West – including Germany – as a "lawless space" dominated by Islamic radicals, the criminal "Arab clans", no-go zones, etc.

There is also the theme of Turkey as a certain interpretative framework for the allegedly authoritarian features of power in Poland. But when an "SZ" journalist writes in one of his texts about Turkey as a country in which tens of thousands of teachers, journalists, judges, lawyers and officials have been imprisoned, and almost every criticism of Erdogan is subject to threats, dismissal, imprisonment and even extermination, it is really difficult to take such analogies to Poland (or Hungary) seriously.

The beauty of Poland: the multidimensional discourse on Polish success – culture, art, nature (19th) is the last of the discourses on Poland in the German newspapers. The Polish culture and art function in it not only in the European but also in the global dimension³⁶.

The German press also writes about world-famous Polish artists. The biographies of Polish artists, especially Roman Polański³⁷Krzysztof Komeda, Jerzy

³⁶ From the perspective of the German media, for example, the works of outstanding people connected with the area of the "German Eastern Borderlands" are particularly interesting.

³⁷ The press writes about Roman Polański, for example, as an exceptional director who spent his childhood in the Krakow ghetto, and who was not spared personal tragedies in the USA. The analyzed newspapers also wrote extensively about the charges against the author of "Chinatown" related to his alleged sexual offences. See: *Wissen*, Samstag/Sonntag, 28-29 X 2017, No. 249, p. 14; also *Polanski-Retrospektive im Filmmuseum. Die Werke des Skandal-Regisseurs sind noch bis 20. Dezember am Jakobsplatz zu sehen*, „SZ“, Mittwoch, 22 XI 2017, No. 268, p. 12; Tobias Kniebe, „In unserer Zahl liegt Kraft“, „SZ“, No. 238, 16 X 2017, p. 13; OSCAR-AKADEMIE. Protest gegen Polanskis Rauswurf, „DW“, MONTAG, 9 VII 2018, p. 16.

Kosiński, Leopold Tyrmand and Marek Hłasko, are an interesting thread. FAZ lists them as an example of artists who began their careers in Poland but gained global fame after emigrating to the United States. What they have in common is the fact that they grew up during the war and lived in post-war poverty but were able to break through in foreign lands without losing their originality³⁸.

Among the Polish composers who have appeared in the German newspapers one can mention world-famous composers (e.g. Fryderyk Chopin, Krzysztof Penderecki Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, Witold Lutosławski) (Kel 2018, p. 16; Brembeck 2018, p. 9), prose writers and poets (e.g. Bruno Schulz, Czesław Miłosz, Olga Tokarczuk, Julian Kornhauser, Adam Zagajewski, Ryszard Krynicki), contemporary painters (e.g. Wilhelm Sasnal) or performers (Piotr Uklański). There have also been references – most often in the review form – to the achievements of Polish art in the past and nowadays (Stach 2017, p. 14), including those representing popular culture, among them Robert Górski and his cabaret “The President’s Ear”.

The German media highly appreciate the achievements of contemporary Polish filmmakers (Kurianowicz 2018, p. 12). The journalists wrote about Agnieszka Holland, Krzysztof Zanussi, Andrzej Wajda (Belousova 2018, p. 22), Wojciech Smarzowski, and the works of Paweł Pawlikowski (“Ida”, “The Cold War”³⁹) were highly rated, as well as Filip Bajon and the film “Butler” (because of the interesting German subject matter) (Kurianowicz 2018, p. 12).

The discourse about Polish culture also concerns the current political situation. “The rhetorical dragging of the rope” – as we read – concerns in Poland not only the memory of the past, but also culture in the broader sense of the word, which has become a field of political rivalry (Halter 2018, p. 12). According to German journalists, there is a problem of censorship in the art world. “As befits an authoritarian regime,” writes FAZ, “the ruling party shows an aggressive approach to cultural policy”⁴⁰. The

³⁸ „Sie alle begannen ihre Karrieren in Polen, um irgendwann in die Vereinigten Staaten zu kommen und sich dort einen Namen zu machen. Im Krieg und Nachkriegselend aufgewachsen, wussten sie sich in der Fremde durchzuschlagen, ohne dabei ihre Originalität einzubüßen“. See: *Bilanz einer dreifachen Existenz*, „FAZ“, No. 255/2018, p. 10.

³⁹ “SZ” assesses “The Cold War” as a perfectly told love story. The author of the review states that Oscar winner Paweł Pawlikowski (for “Ida”) enchants the viewer with beautiful black-and-white pictures and even more beautiful music, which determines the structure of the work. The film is a melodrama whose history oscillates between East and West, communist Poland with its folklore and propaganda and Paris with its existentialists and magical jazz (Knoben 2018, s. 14).

⁴⁰ Por. *Frau Zivilisation. Die Regisseurin Agnieszka Holland wird siebzig*, „FAZ“, 28 I 2018, ·No. 277, s. 12.

author of the quoted text further argues that wherever the Minister of Culture Piotr Gliński has something to say, he tries to eliminate liberal influences in the cultural landscape of Poland⁴¹. And this is particularly true of Polish theatre, where – as we read – in the past internationally acclaimed directors used to work, today the “provincial middle class” has a say (Halter 2018, p. 12). “The aim of cultural policy,” the author writes, is to bring about a state in which Polish art is to (once again) become patriotic, Catholic and loyal to the authorities. Only the film industry in Poland can effectively resist the actions of the Minister of Culture, which was particularly evident at the 43rd Gdynia Film Festival, the most important event of its kind on the Vistula River. The author discusses the “scandal” related to Smarzowski’s film “Kler” (“Clergy”), but admits – and in a way contradicts his thesis – that the film was not only nominated for the “best feature film” award in the competition, but was also financed from public funds, which proves that the Polish film world is still autonomous.

CONCLUSIONS

The research on the image of Poland in German dailies in a short though significant moment of political change has led to several conclusions. The press in Germany is undoubtedly more interested in Poland than the media in other countries, which is related to Berlin’s aspirations to consolidate its political leadership in Europe and to preserve German economic interests. At the same time, German journalists, and thus their audiences, have less and less understanding of Poland. Our country is more and more foreign to our neighbors, despite its close location and the intensification of various economic or interpersonal relations.

The strongest international context for the messages about Poland in the German press is that of the European Union. From the perspective of the German media, Poland’s place in relation to the elite countries of the world, especially Russia and the USA (as the ‘global hegemon’) is also important. At the same time, the German press is reluctant – or disrespectful – to Warsaw’s regional initiatives, both political and economic. The foundation of this narrative is a kind of media diplomacy, an attempt to manifest the German-French domination of the EU after Brexit.

⁴¹ The reader learns, for example, that after the election victory of the right-wing and conservative Law and Justice party, the new Minister of Culture Piotr Gliński and the demonstrators gathered in the social movement named “Crusade of the Rosary for the Motherland” demanded the removal of an allegedly pornographic – in their opinion – staging of Elfriede Jelinek’s play in the Polish Theatre in Wrocław (Halter 2018, s. 12).

The discourse about Poland is definitely dominated by the content unequivocally negative in tone, which is related to a critical assessment of the profound political change that took place in Poland five years ago. It should be stressed that this criticism is skillfully reinforced by the publication of 'voices from Warsaw', i.e. the dissemination – in the form of quoted statements or reprints – of opinions of Polish authors. Thus, an important role in shaping German public opinion about our country is played by the voices of Poles themselves, both well-known people (authorities from the worlds of politics, media and culture) and ordinary citizens of the Republic of Poland, eagerly quoted in the German media.

The critical and normative discourse is very often accompanied by a patronizing and paternalistic tone. The German media generally support the political theses about Poland disseminated in the European forum – they criticize the alleged restrictions on freedom of speech and the media as well as the violation of the rule of law and the restriction of the independence of the judiciary.

The German press strongly rejects the possibility of any discussion on war damages for Poland. Warsaw's demand for reparations from Berlin is – more than 70 years after the end of the war – recognized as completely unfounded and absolutely incomprehensible to politicians, journalists and ordinary German citizens.

The German print media present a different position from the Polish one also on other specific issues. For example, on global questions such as migration and/or on EU energy policy (especially in the case of the Nord Stream 2 project). German journalists also take a different view of Donald Trump's presidency and – although slightly less frequently – Russia's actions in the international arena.

In the discourse about Poland, the tone of axiological universalism is clearly present in the analyzed dailies. And Germany – led by Chancellor Merkel – aspires to the role of a humanitarian power in the post-modern world. The foundation of this discourse is the position of ordinary people in the era of globalization. The German press unequivocally condemns the violation of fundamental freedoms and human rights, defends the rights of women and various minorities and supports the policy of the federal government during the refugee crisis. This discursive orientation is nowadays a peculiar feature of the German press, in which the cosmopolitan vision of a world without borders and an open society gains an advantage over the national perspective. Meanwhile, Poland favors traditional values and 'a Europe of sovereign homelands', which – from Berlin's perspective – is assessed as obscurantism or even xenophobia and nationalism incomprehensible in the 21st century.

However, there are journalists in Germany – such as Christoph von Marschall, for example – who understand that in Poland (and other countries in the region) the political center has clearly shifted to the right, while in Germany, under Angela Merkel, left-liberal progressiveness combined with the Green Movement and ecological agenda has gained a dominant position. This has resulted in numerous discrepancies on many political issues. Unfortunately, thirty years after the beginning of the peaceful transformation in Poland and after the reunification of Germany, our neighborly relations are in crisis. Therefore, the media – both in Poland and Germany – should present their common achievements and explain to their citizens how much interest both countries have in each other. Politicians in Berlin and the media supporting them must abandon the tactics of distancing themselves from Warsaw and the attitude of waiting for the change of power in Poland. In turn, the Polish government of the United Right – and the Polish ‘patriotic’ media – should stop playing the extremely dangerous ‘anti-German card’. It is to be wished that Stefan Ulrich is right when he writes: “Friendship is like wine, the older the better (...). This gives hope. The friendship between Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany is young and, therefore, there is great potential for improvement” (Ulrich 2017b, p. 4).

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