



NATIONAL AND RIGHT-WING RADICALISM IN THE NEW DEMOCRACIES: POLAND

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1. Introduction

Nationalist movements in Poland in the post communist era vary within a broad spectrum. This spectrum may be characterized by a **diversity** of organisational forms in the last 20 years: political parties, quasi-political organisations, associations and discussion clubs gathered around magazines. In the majority of cases, these have had a **disintegrated** and **marginal role** in both social and political life.

Until this point a clear and exhaustive taxonomy has not been made of the groups and political parties which belong to the spectrum of nationalist political organisations. What could be recognized as the common ideological determinants of Polish national movement are the priority of Polish national interests and Poles regarded as a sovereign nation. Another determinant is the reluctance felt towards pan-European and international organisations. Simultaneously, there are evidently elements of their programmes which differentiate the nationalist movements in Poland and stem from a number of sources. Nationalist groups and parties vary in their relation to democracy, their level of identification with Catholic ethics and (by maintaining a critical opposition) in their vision of European integration.

In academic literature, the terms “right wing nationalism”, “right wing extremism” the “far right” and “ultra right” are used interchangeably and are applied to the members and sympathisers of national movements and nationalist parties as well as extreme and populist nationalists (Maj 2007; Sokół 2006; Tokarz 2002). In this paper, distinction is made on the basis of visions of political regime. The depicted part of Polish political stage is divided into three groups: right-wing nationalists, right-wing radicals and right-wing extremists.

The Polish national movements generally support the democratic system, even if they criticize the political and social order of the Third Polish Republic (III RP) (Maj 2007). The anti-elitism relates to Polish as well as global or European elites. At the same time, the majority of these parties or associations have remained on the margins of political life, leaving their visions at a verbal level. The most visible of these were the **National Party** (Stronnictwo Narodowe, SN) and the **National Democratic Party** (Stronnictwo Narodowo-Demokratyczne, SND). The most contemporary and, at the same time, effective example is the League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin, LPR) which is comprised of a broad

range of smaller right-wing nationalist organisations and political parties. These examples are labelled as right-wing nationalists.

A different position has been adapted by the two parties mentioned: the **National Revival of Poland** (Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski, NOP) and **Polish National Union – Polish National Party** (Polska Wspólnota Narodowa-Polskie Stronnictwo Narodowe, PWN-PSN), which deny the democratic regime in favour of authoritarianism. Moreover, they are labelled as extreme right parties based on their vivid xenophobic rhetoric. This opposition to the democratic system puts them into the right-wing radical category.

The abovementioned distinction between right-wing nationalists and right-wing radicals is fluid. Parties which accept the democratic system and do not have overtly racist or anti-Semitic views cooperate with the activists of radical parties and organisations. The latter, having dropped their anti-Semitic rhetoric, have taken part, for example, in elections, placing their members on nationalist voting lists. The spark which connects the two has frequently been a youth associations, among others – **All-Polish Youth** (Młodzież Wszechpolska, MW). To provide a clear picture of right-wing radicalism and extremism in Poland, this paper will also delineate a third distinction – the newly created organisations which belong to a neo-fascist and neo-Nazi networks. These organisations, present in Poland since the early 90's, typify right-wing extremism.

2. Right-wing nationalists

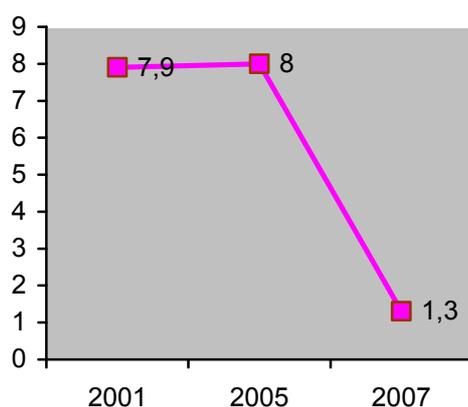
One of the most important national organizations of the 90s was the **Nationalist Party** (Stronnictwo Narodowe, SN), formed in December 1999 as a result of fusion between the **National Party** (senior) and the **Nationalist Democratic Party** (Stronnictwo Narodowo Demokratyczne, SND). The former was the continuation of the party working under the same name in 1929. It was one of the most crucial attempt to unite the Polish national parties after 1989. Their first joint undertaking was to support General Wilecki in the run for presidency in the 2000 elections. Their candidate declared to build a political camp – national, catholic and patriotic in character. The previous attempts to unite the national movement was made in the parliamentary elections of 1993 and 1997. All those attempts were unsuccessful. The Nationalist Party was not able to become a strongly unified group of smaller Polish nationalist movements – meanwhile there were many other nationalist groups with a strong local touch. More successful in that respect was another party with nationalist provenience the **League of Polish Families**.

The party was formed in 2001 and was to join the Catholic and independence streams of the Polish nationalist right-wing parties just before the parliamentary election. Led by Roman Giertych¹, it co-formed the electoral coalition with several right wing nationalistic parties and organizations. LPR makes strong reference to mid-war nationalist traditions and is defined as clerical, Polono-centric demanding the strengthening of executive powers. A considerable attribute of the party was the attainment of the support of the Catholic Radio Maryja and Father Rydzyk. To promote the activities of the group they made use of the paper “Nasz Dziennik” and specifically party-related literature such as “Głos”, “Myśl Polska” and “Nasza Polska”.

In the parliamentary elections of 2001 LPR obtained 7.9 percent of the votes and had 38 representatives, a success replicated in 2005 when they gained 8 percent of the votes and had 34 representatives, moreover the party joined the governing coalition. A turning point for LPR was 2007 when they were unable to obtain the percentage of votes needed to secure representation and future funding.

Their success in EU elections should also be noted since, in 2004, they took second place with 15.92 percent of the votes, resulting in the election of 10 of their deputies. The nationalist MPs to the European Parliament (EP) were not particularly coherent and, until 2009, they stayed on the margins of the Polish delegation. In the 2009 EU elections, LPR did not register its own electoral committee, with 50 candidates declaring their allegiance to the **Libertas party** list.

Chart 1. Percentage of votes attained by LPR in Parliamentary elections



source: www.pkw.gov.pl/wybory

¹ Grandson of Jędrzej Giertych, son of Maciej Giertych – both activists of nationalist Polish movement in the midwar and postwar Poland.

As it was mentioned above, LPR is an example of an affluent national party. Its deputies led two ministries in 2006, within a governing coalition of the right-wing party **Law and Justice** (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS) and the populist **Self-Defense** (Samoobrona). The above mentioned governing coalition was established in 2006, after the failure of negotiations between the two winners of the parliamentary elections: the Law and Justice Party (PiS) and the **Civic Platform** (Platforma Obywatelska, PO). After the fiasco, PiS formed a minority government with Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz as Prime Minister, and started working with Samoobrona and the League of Polish Families over “the stability pact”. That, however, proved abortive and in March PiS motioned for dissolution of Parliament, because “the stability pact did not guarantee support for the government initiatives and other bills specified in the Pact”. New talks between PiS, Samoobrona and LPR started after the Sejm rejected the motion for dissolution.

During the talks with LPR the main issue was an attempt to strengthen the position of the party’s leader – Roman Giertych. In the first stage, the coalition agreement was signed with Samoobrona and a few members of the LPR who stepped out from the party line. However, that agreement did not guarantee majority in the Sejm. In the end, LPR joined the coalition and Roman Giertych became a Vice-Prime Minister and a minister of education. As a result of frictions within PiS, Prime Minister Marcinkiewicz resigned from office after 3 months. Jarosław Kaczyński became the Prime Minister and sustained the coalition agreement but not for long. In September 2006, the conflict with the leader of Samoobrona, Andrzej Lepper, who did not approve of the 2007 budget, led to his dismissal and sealed the collapse of the coalition.

Regarding both the genesis and the course of the coalition, for LPR it was not a successful one - after the former election in 2007, LPR lost all its seats. The success of LPR may be regarded spectacular but short-lived. The results of the elections in 2001 and 2005 as well as those of the European elections in 2004 did not crystallise into the formation of an institutionalised party. What is more, whilst the League of Polish Families went into a governing coalition, two years after its collapse it became marginalized.

All-Polish Youth (Młodzież Wszechpolska, MW) is a Polish youth group, formerly affiliated with the League of Polish Families, founded in 1989, on the initiative of Roman Giertych, the former leader of the LPR. The organisation referred to All-Polish Youth which was originally formed in 1922 by Roman Dmowski. It operates across all of Poland, working mainly with high-school and university students.

Its agenda declares that its aim is *to raise Polish youth in a Catholic and patriotic spirit* as well as to combat *the evils of liberalism, tolerance and relativism*. Emphasis is put strongly on these values and improving the image of “Polish nationalists”. The political pragmatism represented by MW has been a subject of criticism from other nationalist organisations.

Its activity was focused on promoting the work of the *father of Polish nationalist ideology* Roman Dmowski – collecting funds to build statues, organising conferences, participating in celebrations and commemorations of historical events. MW has organised street marches and demonstrations against, amongst others, abortion, the buying of Polish land by Germans and the spread of pornography. They were particularly vocal in their defence of the director of Radio Maryja – F. Tadeusz Rydzyk. The activity of MW has also been directed against the feminist, pro-Choice and LGB movements. MW have begun to organise anti-EU activity as well – with poster campaigns, conferences devoted to the threat to national identity and culture posed by EU integration and disrupting meetings concerning EU structures.

MW supported nationalist political parties in parliamentary elections in the 90’s as well as after 2001. This cooperation included the **Nationalist Party** (SN), the **Real Politics Union** (Unia Polityki Realnej, UPR) as well as the **League of Polish Families** (LPR) – members of MW organised promotional campaigns for candidates and the distribution of leaflets. The organisation was regarded as the youth wing of LPR and was supported by that party. This support was particularly evident during the 2005 elections when the leaders of LPR substituted MW members for some LPR activists in electoral lists.

In December 2006, the head of LPR announced that the party was breaking up links with MW and was forming its own new LPR Youth Movement. The decision of Roman Giertych was motivated by the negative press coverage of a neo-Nazi gathering which included MW members. Since then the League of Polish Families has always severely been criticized by leaders and members of MW for becoming an opportunistic organization abusing the achievements of the national movement in order to look after the party’s own interest.

In the meantime, applications were made twice to ban the group – the first, in 2005, by the **Freedom Union** (Unia Wolności, UW), which accused MW of promoting National Socialism and was rejected, and the second, driven by the same reasons, was lodged by **Democratic Left Alliance** (SLD). In 2006, the office of the Polish public prosecutor launched an investigation into MW’s connections with illegal neo-Nazi skinhead groups.

The main literary mouthpiece of MW was the quarterly “Wszepolak” which contained information about events, national culture, Catholicism and Polish history. In addition, they also published classical texts of nationalist ideas. Other titles which had a more limited range

were the “The Bastion”, “Us, the New Generation” (“My, nowe pokolenie”) and the series “Biblioteka Wszepolaka”. Considerable stress was placed on new forms of media – internet publication and the creation of an information distribution network.

To sum up, Polish nationalist movements after 1989 were prone to political factionalism, splits, secessions, joining new organisations and changing names, leaders and even the complete dissolution of their organisational structure. For such marginalised and diverse Polish right-wing nationalist groups a groundbreaking moment came in 2001. As a result of joining together of many small parties and nationalist organisations, LPR was formed. It was the first success of a nationalist group in the process of consolidation. Earlier nationalist groups expressed a desire to cooperate with the representatives of the **Polish Peasants Party** (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, PSL), **Self-Defence, United Christian Democrats** (Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe, ZChN) and the **Movement to Restore Poland** (Ruch Odbudowy Polski, ROP) (Maj 2007: 275).

During the eight years the group managed to consolidate itself and put its representatives in parliament and government. The prosperity did not last long. Work in the Government and media exposed scandals over the connections of the party members with organizations described as neo-Nazi and weakened support for the League of Polish Families. The Parliamentary elections in 2007 and the elections of 2009 proved the thesis. On national and European level the party became marginalized.

It does not mean, however, that right-wing nationalism has disappeared from political life. Some party activists from related national organizations upheld positions in the public sector, including the important ones as in the public television board. Until 2009 Piotr Farfał, a former activist of All-Polish Youth, the League of Polish Families and editor of the racist bulletin “Front” was acting as president of the board of the (public) Polish Television.

3. Right-wing radicals

Polish Nationalist Community – Polish National Party (Polska Wspólnota Narodowa - Polskie Stronnictwo Narodowe, PWN-PSN), led by Boleslaw Tejkowski, was one of the larger groups active in the early 1990s, making international headlines for its rare attacks on Jewish property and the Catholic Church. Registered in 1990, the party supported the idea of the Slavonic brotherhood and was a member of the International Slavonic Committee. In the

concepts formed by PWN Slavdom was used in two ways: as an alternative for “spoilt” Europe and as centre of civilization and culture (Maj 2007: 42).).

In its own programme the party presented a negative disposition to liberal-capitalism and focused on several basic moral values: God, Fatherland, Family and a Working Community. It is necessary to clarify what is meant by the Slavonic idea, with the religious connotations being rather instrumental, since regarding “moral values” PWN fought with the Catholic Church’s domination. It contested the decisions of the hierarchy of the Polish church and proposed separating the church from the state. One conception of PWN-PSN was the creation of an alternative to the EU on the basis of a “Union of Slavonic Fatherlands” (Tejkowski, 1992; 1-16). It underscored the connections between Slavonic speakers and appealed to historical events and places connected with the creation of the Polish state (e.g. the first capital of the Early Piasts). National minorities did not feature in party materials, and were replaced instead by foreigners. Additionally, the Party presented a negative attitude to liberal-capitalist system.

At the start of the 90’s PWN-PSN was the most dynamic nationalist political party. The targets of their programme were social groups, most dissatisfied with the process of transformation: the deprived, the unemployed, the homeless and the socially discriminated. The activity of the party was aimed at helping the needy. In the 90’s, Tejkowski, in search for political allies, began to infiltrate skinhead and extreme left wing groups (Tokarz 2002: 18-20). Skinheads took part in the most dramatic activities: demonstrations targeted against Jews, Germans, Communists and immigrants (Pankowski 1993; Brunatna Księga 2009).

The leaders of other nationalist political parties began to collectively criticise the views and activities of Tejkowski, forcing the party to the margins of the nationalist movement with its members accused of racism and national socialist views. In 1996, a motion was introduced to ban the party (Maj 2007: 26).

As far as its electoral potential is concerned, the party did not get more than 0,1% of votes in the parliamentary elections of 1991, 1993, 1997, 2001. In 2005 and 2007 it did not register any candidates.

Table 1. Election results: PWN-PSN in parliamentary elections

	1991	1993	1997	2001
Number of votes	5.262	14.989	8.590	2.644
Percentage of votes	0,05%	0,11%	0,07%	0,02%

Source: PKW

The National Revival of Poland (Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski, NOP) led by Adam Gmurczyk, was officially registered as a party in 1992. This is one of the most dynamic radical right organisations active on streets and among the youth. It draws its strength from the anti-Semitic culture present in sport stadiums. NOP attaches special importance to the education of militants and sympathizers by organizing training cycles. The goal of its programme in the mid 90's was a "national revolution", implying violent seizure of power.

The best known NOP activities focused on anti-EU protests, anti-LGB and abortion activities as well as marches commemorating national holidays. The party has paid particular interest to the educational and integrational aspects, organising holiday camps for young people and pilgrimages to local shrines.

Cooperation between the NOP and other nationalist groupings has been particularly ineffective. NOP activists have criticised some of the parties and organisations as being pseudo-nationalistic and of distorting the interwar ideals of Roman Dmowski's National Democrats. They briefly worked with the United Christian Nationalists in 1990 and with a number of other smaller nationalist parties prior to Poland's accession to the EU (Tokarz 2002: 21).

Their propaganda base has been the journal "Szczerbiec", first published in November 1991, and, by the end of the 90's, it was supplemented with a number of other leaflets such as "Jestem Polakiem" i "Nowa Sztafeta". Considerable stress is placed upon this propaganda, featuring such ONR ideologues such as Adam Gmurczyk and Bolesław Piasecki, as well as their work conducted in sport, academic and professional clubs. Another form of propaganda has been White Power music. The bands NaRa, Hobbit, Attaca, Batalion, Oi, RAC, SK are the examples which have been promoted in the mentioned journals.

Despite its criticism of democracy, NOP has taken part in elections. NOP stood for parliamentary elections in 2001, 2005 as well as in the European elections of 2004 in which it did not pass the legal threshold. The party has begun to take care of its public perception, warding off allegations of neo-Nazism and anti-Semitic activity.

By and large, the two examples of right-wing radicalism PWN-PSN and NOP show the mixture of anti-systemic rhetoric and pragmatic political strategies. Although none of them can be considered successful in electoral terms, both have been playing a crucial role in political life after 1989. The non-mainstream position encouraged them to exploit the new extreme social strata, like nazi-skin's circles.

4. Right wing extremism

At the same time, the neo-Nazi movement appears to be a separate contemporary phenomenon. The movement is also diverse as we can observe it in its three attributes: Slavic, pro-German and directed towards the interests of the whole white race and its civilization. For example: the Young Patriotic “**White Eagle**” Association (Stowarzyszenie Młodzieży Patriotycznej Białe Orły), a group of Silesian skinheads, hooligans and extreme racists; the Patriotic “**Swastika**” Youth Association (Stowarzyszenie Młodzieży Patriotycznej “Świaszczyca”), a neo-pagan group from Koszalin; and the “**Niklot**” Culture and Traditions Association (Stowarzyszenie na Rzecz Tradycji i Kultury “Niklot”) is a neo-pagan group which makes reference to the pre-war fascist Zadruga group (Markiewicz, 2006). Another example is the National-Radical Camp (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny, ONR), a pre-war Fascist organisation resurrected by neo-Fascists from Czestochowa. It is explicitly anti-Semitic and also possesses neo-fascist tendencies. Within ONR’s programme there is a clearly anti-elitist and anti-systematic appeal: “ONR is the Greater Poland Movement. It is the movement of a young generation of Poles aware of their obligations towards their nation. ONR may be defined as a movement striving for greater quality also based on over 70 years of tradition. ONR is elusive for the system because it has no parliamentary aspirations. It is not limited by democratic concerns and thus will attain its goals by utilising any available means”. ONR, amongst other activities, has organised marches commemorating the most famous pogrom of Jews in pre-war Poland, known as the March on Myslenice. As a result of the latest split, a new organization “Falanga” emerged from the **National-Radical Camp** (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny – ONR). Their propaganda base has been the journal “Młodzież Imperium”.

The slogans used by Polish national socialists are directed against the Jews, the Roma and non-white immigrants. They have been very critical of the political situation in Poland, and regarded the government (both post-communist and post-transformation) corrupt and predominantly lawless. They are openly opposed to democracy and pluralism which they believe have led to the downfall of the Polish nation. In relation to other nationalist groups, the national socialists see themselves as being the only ones able enough to bring about a just society (Grott 2006). Their main areas of activity are sport stadium, skinhead rock concerts and the National Socialist Black Metal (NSBM) subculture and internet sites.

Examples of international neo-Nazi groups are Blood and Honour and Combat 18. They are openly neo-Nazi illegal organizations, active on the international level, as Polish divisions.

They operate through skinhead rock music, and the first concert under their supervision took place in Poland in 2002. Both organisations have been “authorised” by British leadership (Pankowski, Kornak 2005). They glorify National Socialism as well as Adolf Hitler himself. The World Church of the Creator (WCOTC) also has a branch in Poland, combining the attributes of a political movement with those of a religious sect. Its members refer to themselves as followers of the Fourth Reich and are among the most radical white extremist groups.

Other neo-Nazi organisations formed after 1989 in Poland are spread around the country in small groups. As far as their agenda is concerned, no clear consensus exists on pan-Slavonic/pan-German/pan-European orientation. The common ground is general criticism of Christianity and the current Polish political and social system (Grott 2007). Concerning anti-elitism and anti-democratic attitudes, neo-Nazis radically criticise the system and social and political order of the III RP. For them EU integration seemed to be a threat to “Polish Nation weakened by democratic system”.

5. Referring to the pre-war era

In the newly independent Second Polish Republic (II RP), the political spectrum in Poland consisted of two major forces, one of which was a national movement. Its most influential representative was the **National Democrat** (Narodowa Demokracja, ND) which played a crucial role in opposition to parliament in independent Poland (1918-1939).² After gaining independence by Poland in 1918, the ND was represented first by the **National Populist Union** (Związek Ludowo-Narodowy, ZNL), and, from 1928, by the National Party (Stronnictwo Narodowe, SN).

These facts are of significant importance in the evaluation of the Polish political scene after 1989. The role of nationalist movements in Poland after 1989 highlights the continuity of interwar nationalist traditions. Polish nationalist movements, during their renaissance after 1989, referred to the rich ideological and organisational tradition of the interwar era. They made reference to the work of activists of the **National League** (Ligi Narodowej, LN) and **National Democrat** (ND).

² The main opponent was Sanacja (Reform), a coalition political movement created in 1926 by Józef Piłsudski as a broad movement to support the "moral cleansing" ("restoration to health") of the Polish body politic before and after the May 1926 Coup d'État that brought Piłsudski to virtually dictatorial power. From then until 1939, Reform was the dominant political force in Poland, largely controlling the government

Many organisations took the names of historical pre-war nationalist movements. At the beginning of the 90's this group consisted of the following parties: **National Party** (Senioral), **National Democratic Party**, **National Party "Fatherland"**, **National Party "Sword"** (Szczerbiec), **The Greater Poland Camp** (Obóz Wielkiej Polski, OWP), **All-Poland Youth** (MW), **National Revival of Poland** (NOP).

To emphasise these relations, organisations used also a whole set of symbols used in the interwar period. The most frequently used symbol was the sword (also Chrobry's sword) in different versions as well as the national emblem of the eagle crowned with a cross. The main ideas of the National Democrats still have a symbolic meaning for the nationalist movements - Roman Dmowski, Jan Popławski, Jędrzej Giertych and Bolesław Piasecki.

Simultaneously the Polish fascist and national-socialist organisations in the interwar era were significantly smaller and less influential in comparison to nationalists. In the first half of the 1920's there were groups such as the **Secret Polish Patriot's Brigade** (Tajne Pogotwie Patriotów Polskich) which made direct reference to fascist ideas and conspired to prepare a violent putsch. Following the break-up of this organisation in 1923, it swiftly crumbled. The leader of the national movement, Roman Dmowski, also used paramilitary units based on Italian models in order to create the Greater Polish Camp (Pankowski, 1993: 5). One cannot equate interwar Italian fascism with the Polish movement. The differing worldviews came about as a result of the strong Catholic presence in the Polish group.

During WW II the movement was divided into many smaller organisations and, after the war, the former Falange group led by Bolesław Piasecki cooperated with the communist authorities within a new organisation – the PAX Association and developed an ideology with some socialist elements mixed with nationalist slogans. Furthermore, members of the former neo-pagan group "Zadruga" were present in political life during communism in Poland. They continued to make anti-capitalist statements of the 1930s "Falange" and other organizations. In the early '90s the main agent of the former national radical position was the **Polish National Community – Polish National Party** (PWN-PSN) led by Bolesław Tejkowski.

In Poland after 1989 the neo-Nazi movement was fragmented with no direct links (ideological or organisational) to Polish national-socialist groups from the interwar era. Neo-Nazi groups in Poland today do not appear to be a continuation of the interwar period; rather international (mainly western) influences visible. These groups are Polish branches of widespread

organisations (Blood and Honour, Combat 18) while others e.g. Zakon Zadruzi, Świaszczyca, Białe Orły do not directly refer to their Polish predecessors from 1918-1939 (Grott 2007).

6. Social base

The parties and nationalist groups have concentrated their activities in large towns, often those with a pre-war tradition of National Democrats and in traditionally Catholic and academic centres such as Lublin or Krakow. Radical groups are particularly strong around the German border in the Western part of the country (Wroclaw, Gliwice).

The structure of the right wing radical electorate is difficult to fathom and current information in opinion polls is mainly concerned with LPR. Prior to the 2005 elections, women had an expressed intention to vote for LPR (14 percent) rather than men (9 percent) and what differentiated the followers of this party most was their adherence to religion – amongst those who practice a few times a week, support was as high as 26 percent. Amongst those who only practised once a week, however, the number was the same as in the whole population (12 percent). Most often people over 65 (19 percent), with a primary education (17 percent), working in manual labour (14 percent) and either earning the lowest (19 percent) or at least below average income (15 percent) were inclined to vote for LPR. What is interesting is that LPR's voters did not have clearly defined political views. Even though there were centrist or even left wing views the right wing views had a higher weight (13 percent). On the eve of the 2005 election, LPR's electorate belonged to the most uncertain swing voters. This particularly weak connection to the party – the lack of those staunch supporters who are at least 90 percent sure of voting for the party – manifested itself in only one third of all supporters being sure of voting for them (36 percent). One in every three LPR supporters declared with a considerable degree of certainty (at least 40 percent) that they would vote for a different party. In addition, the electorate was not presented with a *de facto* alternative to the party. At the same time, LPR voters belonged to a group which was most critical towards public institutions in the state (CBOS 2005).

Regarding the psychological profile of voters, the electorate belonged to the most pessimistic group of voters in terms of their attitude to change and a readiness to engage in it, which markedly applied to the LPR contingent. They fell somewhere around the average in terms of self confidence and willingness to cooperate but the authoritarian indicator was lower than amongst other voters - the highest was amongst Self Defence supporters (CBOS, 2002).

7. The movement's subculture

The movement's subculture is linked to Polish nationalist rock bands as well as National Socialist Black Metal (NSBM). The following may serve as examples: BTH, Grunwald, Ramses and the Hooligans, Szczerbiec (Sword), White Power, Slav Power, Zyklon B, Fatherland, Poland, Sex Bomba, Zadruza, Honor, Sztorm 68 and Legion, Graveland, Tunderbolt Ohtar, Sunwheel, Antisemitex, Selbstmord. The bands Konkwista 88 and Falanga 88, both from Wrocław, describe themselves as National Socialist.

NSBM presents an extreme form of neo-Nazi racism accompanied by Satanism, neo-paganism and a fascination with evil and death. The Third Reich and Adolf Hitler are particularly evident examples. In the messages of the NSBM group we see rejection of Christianity and a return to pre-Christian cults. All of these elements offer to followers a new kind of complex identity which combines neo-fascism with neo-paganism (Pankowski, 2007: 67-73). The political message of the black metal scene in Poland can be ascribed to the "Niklot" Culture and Traditions Association (Kornak 2003). The burgeoning Polish black metal underground scene is very developed in comparison to other post communist countries. As Dornbush and Killgus put it: *in the last few years, underground Polish black metal has been enriched by a range of new bands of an openly Nazi character which is manifested in their public appearances.*

From the start of the 90's, the group Graveland was formed in connection with the figure Rob Darken. Its leader openly supports terrorist activity against *Christianity, democracy and Jewish conspiracies*. Polish bands from the NSBM scene record and distribute their records via Polish or Western European labels (Graveland had a contract with the Austrian Lethal Records, later with the German No Colours and the American Resistance Records). The NSBM group Capricornus reformed in 2000 and played together with German and Greek bands as part of an international project. The message of NSBM is characterised by an enmity towards Christianity and a desire to return to paganism and the beliefs of their ancestors (Dornbush, Killgus 2005).

The national rock scene in Poland has mainly been promoted by record labels - Fun Music and Narodowa Scena Rockowa, Rebelia 14, Celtic Sound. In recent years there has been interest in Gothic music, part of the so-called "dark wave" which is also played by bands associated with the extreme right and keen to propagate fascist ideology.

The second important element of the right-wing radical and extremist subculture in Poland is stadium hooliganism. The phenomenon itself originated in the 70s although with the fall of the communist regime it evolved into its own subculture, known as “hooligan league”. The number of the incidents at the sport stadiums grew dynamically in the 90s. (Piotrowski 2004: 87). This social base was also used by right-wing radical and extremist groups. The organisation which clearly addresses stadium hooligans is National Revival of Poland (NOP). Its members declare advanced cooperation with “nationalistically oriented soccer fan-clubs”: “(...) *we cooperate with a number of club-fans who at the stadiums openly manifest their nationalism and political protest. We do also cooperate on other actions e.g. displaying posters with our slogans*” (Dyduk 2009). The anti-Semitic and nationalistic slogans and songs are frequently covered by the local press and NGO’s reports. The victims of racial harassment are soccer players of Polish clubs as well as inhabitants and immigrants of non-Caucasian origin.

The symbols used by neo-Nazis in Poland refer to “neo-Nazi international catalogue” - the Polish national flag with a Celtic cross, used by skinheads and nationalists, the "88" symbol (neo-Nazi groups) and the swastika. Characteristic Polish symbols are the “falanga” (arm and knife), “toporzek” (an axe combined with an eagle) and the Szczerbiec (a sword).

8. Codes of conduct

It is difficult to define the register of events which emanate the activities by the organizations described here or their sympathizers in the last years in Poland. It is mainly due to the lack of systematic actions by the public institutions registering and evaluating such events in official statistics. Isolated “official” sources are selective police records and reports of the Team for Monitoring Racism and Xenophobia (Zespół do Spraw Monitorowania Rasizmu i Ksenofobii), established in November 2004 within the Polish Ministry of the Interior and Administration (Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, MSWiA) and the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) which has been conducting surveys on the attitude of Poles towards other nations.

The statistics are supplemented by reports of non-government organizations from monitoring of the racist and xenophobic events. Special attention should be paid to the Polish Association “Never Again” (Nigdy Więcej), which, in its Brown Book (Brunatna Księga) registers racist, xenophobic and homophobic incidents. Its members have documented a few thousand cases of hate crime and hate speech since the beginning of the 1990s, mostly committed by

offenders affiliated to neo-Nazi or skinhead groups. Other organizations monitoring such incidents are among others “The Open Republic” (Otwarta Rzeczpospolita), Polish Humanitarian Action (Polska Akcja Humanitarna, PAH). New and promising is the Center for Monitoring Rasizm and Ksenofobia in Eastern Europe established in 2009 in Warsaw (Centrum Monitorowania Rasizmu w Europie Wschodniej). The main activities are performed within a three year long FARE (Football Against Racism in Europe) project supported by the UEFA. The project started in connection with the oncoming UEFA Euro2012. Its main goal is to register and study racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic events, especially in Poland and Ukraine.

The abovementioned CBOS surveys’ results from 2008 suggest that the level of declared national xenophobia is declining³. According to the Helsinki Fund for Human Rights Report, the number of officially registered racial/nationality crimes is fairly low. For the last three years, the number of such crimes has remained at approximately the same level. The exceptions are insults of persons because of their ethnic origin or incitement of ethnic or racial hatred, whose number has been increasing year by year. In 2005, 18 such offences were reported, compared to 47 in 2006 and as 82 in 2008. In the case of racist incidents such as physical and verbal taunts, distinctive appearance is a determining factor. The victims are usually people whose appearance indicates African or Asian origin. The dislike towards the Roma is also noticeable (Helsinki Fund for Human Rights Report 2008). Racist incidents mainly provoked by stadium hooligans dominated the NGOS’ reports prepared in 2006, 2007, and 2008. Other types of recorded violent incidents dealt with anti-homosexual actions and public promotion of neo-Nazi symbols (Brown Book, 2009).

9. The Agenda

In an analysis of the writings of nationalist parties and groups, the role of the nation and its interests take the foreground. Social elements such as the fight against poverty and unemployment as well as helping Polish families are also present.

Their list of national enemies consists most frequently of Jews, Germans, free masons, and communists, members of religious sects and supporters of supranational structures. This catalogue is often the basis for the creation of a programme for the party or nationalist group.

³ According to the census results, in 2002 - 96.74% of population declared Polish nationality. The remaining 3.26% are the people belonging to ethnic and national minorities, foreigners or migrants (GUS, 2002).

Depending on their acceptance, a restrained or a radical position is adopted towards the opponent. Strategies range from building national pride amongst Poles (a restrained group) to active operations which aim at discrediting a group (e.g. Jews) in the eyes of society and representing them as attacking the interests of Poland and the world.

Homosexual persons as well as supporting organizations, feminist circles and left wing oriented groups which represent them, pose another threat to the nation. Individuals and groups with a liberal lifestyle (e.g. accepting abortion) also evoke aversion. For the right wing nationalists and radical groups people open to the issue of euthanasia and biomedical experiments, pluralistically oriented in terms of religion accepting a neutral worldview also provoke such reactions. These groups are seen as a threat to the traditional model of the Polish family, and thus the whole nation.

The aim of *anti-Polish activity*, according to LPR, is particularly varied and may result in threats not only to the economy and finances of Poland but also to its territorial integrity and the independent nature of the state. The Jewish and German issues had an important role on that agenda. LPR members expressed their opinions about the Jews in the context of the book “Neighbours” (“Sąsiedzi”) by Jan Gross regarding the events in Jedwabne in 1941⁴. The party leaders were active in time of the debate over this issue. The book itself was considered to be published under provocation of the “anti-Polish forces”. Dangers were also to be seen in the claims of Jews, especially given the high unemployment and the effects of catastrophic elements.

As far as Polish-German relations are concerned, the League of Polish Families stance also deals with economic issues. The main fears were connected to the entry of Poland into the EU, and the expected German claim for land given to Poland after WWII based on EU regulations. Since 2004, the party’s agenda has been focusing on the activities of the Erica Steinbach’s The Federation of Expellees (Bund der Vertriebenen, BdV). Also the so called “historic policy” is of big importance.

Anti-Semitism is presented in more extreme form amongst radical right-wing parties and organisations. In the 90s according to Tejkowski, the leader of PWN-PSN, this anti-Polish

⁴ The book presents a story of a exterminations of the Jewish people in town Jedwabne. The Poles were show as the main perpetrators. Gross Jan Tomasz (2000), *Sąsiedzi*, Sejny. This case has been investigated by the Instytut Pamięci Narodowej in the years 2002-2003. Komunikat dot. postanowienia o umorzeniu śledztwa w sprawie zabójstwa obywateli polskich narodowości żydowskiej w Jedwabnem w dniu 10 lipca 1941 r., Report available on www.ipn.gov.pl (31.09.2009)

agenda was created by the Jews and the Germans, hence the parties opposition to the stationing of foreign troops (NATO) on Polish soil. EU integration was to lead to dependency as well as discrimination of nations and societies in Central and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, it would also result in the loss of land in the North and West of the country and its occupation by Germans. Cooperation with the West would result in the loss of Poland's independence. In 2003 they questioned the results of the accession referendum.

In the publications of the NOP and the ONR, Poles are the subject of a detailed hatred of Jews. In much the same way as their predecessors in the II RP claimed, Jews want to take over the entire world but Poland is to be the first target and the creation of a "Jewland" on Polish soil as a replacement for the Jewish homeland. Defence against Jews is thus essential and the battle should be especially strong in Poland as a country on the frontier of Christianity. A condition of an effective defence is the mobilisation of the greatest number of Poles. Anti-Semites try to show that in Poland there is no anti-Semitism but rather an anti-anti-Semitism – the fight against a non-existent anti-Semitism. Apart from the publications of NOP and the generally available press, there are other titles which are solely, or almost completely, anti-Semitic. Such titles include: *Only Poland* ("Tylko Polska"), *Super Detective* ("Super Detektyw"), *The Secrets of the World – this world is strange* ("Tajemnice świata – dziwny jest ten świat") (Gliszczyńska, Sękowska-Kozłowska, Wieruszewski 2007).

Accusations frequently made against the Jews by Polish neo-Nazis are that they betrayed Poland to the USSR, that they have prepared Christianity to enslave the Aryan race, that they faked the Holocaust and that they are directing the Zionist Occupied Government (ZOG) for the secret control of Poland while the formal government is a puppet regime.

They are firmly against the return of former Jewish property. Anti-Roma propaganda is also clearly not as strong. Roma are treated as a foreign race and culture and are considered harmful. The greatest hysteria is reserved for the black minority in Poland. In relation to them, neo-Nazis utilise biological racism, treating them as subhuman and a danger to society (Grott 2006a).

The anti-immigrant issues, even if they are not of the biggest importance in the agenda, are addressed both by radicals and extremist. The vivid hatred is being felt towards immigrants of non-Caucasian origin.

Anti-elitism is also strongly present in the programs of radical right, especially understood as a protest against political elites of the Third Republic of Poland (1989-). Nationalist groups

have criticised the social-political makeup of Poland which came about as a result of the Round Table discussions of 1989. The establishment which resulted from these negotiations is regarded by nationalist groups as being a post-communist, Masonic and un-Polish conspiracy.

From the very start of their operations, the leaders of LPR, have been negatively predisposed to the transformation period and the establishment, attacking the former presidents, Lech Walesa and Aleksander Kwasniewski personally as well as the former finance ministers Leszek Balcerowicz and Jarosław Bauc and the editor of the ‘Gazety Wyborczej’ newspaper Adam Michnik. They are described as being part of a conspiracy against Poland and having tried to discredit the country on the world stage. The changes advocated by LPR called for a national democracy with the nation as a purely sovereign state in control of its national territory. Territorial committees were seen as playing a considerable role in this system.

The more radical stand is taken by the **National Revival of Poland** (NOP). The party does not accept the political and economical order existing in Poland after 1989. Moreover, the party (sic!) itself claims not to be involved into the political life. It makes efforts to change the system in order to bringing to life the idea of “Catholic State of Polish Nation”. The Polish establishment after 1989 was considered representation of corrupt and cosmopolitan elites.

In turn, National Socialists in Poland also critically assess the political situation in the country, regarding the government (both post-communist and post transformation) both corrupt and lawless.

These parties and organisations regarded international organisations as a threat to Poland’s national policy, political sovereignty, economy and a source of negative influence of globalisation on Polish culture, in which the main role is played by anti-European rhetoric vivid in the LPR agenda, as well as in ultranationalist partisan organisations.

The anti-EU tendencies in the political conception of LPR stem from three types of ‘threat’ which the Community poses – economic, political and social-cultural. The anti-European approach was developed before the Polish accession. The LPR appeal to members of NSZZ “Solidarność” during the commemoration of the events of August 1980 criticised, amongst others, the AWS coalition for its “faulty alliance with the EU and strong readiness to serve the interests of foreigners” and prominent politicians “for guaranteeing to serve the plans to subject Poland to the EU. This assistance without reservations has affected the rights of workers and nations. This is most important for Solidarity people.”

Before the Polish EU accession in the programme of LPR we could also read “(...) *We reject the association agreement with the EU which has resulted in us losing 12 billion US dollars per year and led to the creation 1.5 million unemployed (...) we will bring efficiency and trust to the state, reduce the number of ministers and the amount of bureaucracy, declare war on corruption and the bribe taking of state employees. The guarantees given in March 2002 show the disquieting fact that the negotiations with the EU are led without regard for Poland’s interests and for those of Poland’s families*”. The party leaders also created a **Polish Independence Committee** (PKN) which had the goal of convincing society of the need to reject the referendum on the accession treaty to the EU. PKN was “a nationwide movement to retain the freedom and sovereignty of our fatherland in the face of plans for integration into EU structures” (The League of Polish Families Manifesto 2003). As an alternative to the EU, LPR ideologues advocated a vision of a Europe of Sovereign Nation States (Maj 2007: 265).

Following Poland’s entry into the EU (which the party opposed), it agreed to cooperate within its framework according to equal laws and conditions, but opposing further integration and federal ideas which would limit the sovereignty of individual nations. For this reason the party rejected the acceptance of the Euro and also any kind of EU constitution. The party deputies to the European Parliament were supposed to introduce a sense of patriotism, national pride and attachment to catholic values.

The anti-elite posture evident in the programme of **All-Poland Youth** (MW) had a complementary character in relation to that of LPR. The basic tenets of the programme were contained in a prism of Catholic ethics which ought to be applied in both, private and public life, generally private property, a Roman civilization and the fight against external dangers from the German nation and people. In terms of internal policy, they were committed to maintaining the right of Poles to govern their own country.

Also NOP presents a strongly anti-European rhetoric too. The European Union is regarded as a centralised and beaurocratic structure which cannot go with any nationally oriented state; it is supposed to take back the nation-state prerogatives. Moreover, NOP identifies the European establishment with *Jewish and demoliberal anti-Polish forces* (Deklaracja Europy Wolnych Narodów).

National socialists in Poland present Poland and Poles in the European Union as weak and unprepared to fight for national interest. Eventual benefits derived from EU funds are regarded as a threat to national independence. European Union is in their opinion equal to the oppressive and exploiting structure (Grott 2006).

10. The public image

The public image has been created by the activists of right-wing nationalistic, radical and extremist organisations and parties in political life. Faced with a lack of representation in parliament, party members and nationalist centres formed electoral alliances with mainstream parties in the 90's and, more recently, between 2002-2008. MW activists, the NOP, PWN-PSN appeared on parliamentary coalition lists. In 2002 in the Zachodniopomorski region, the populist Self Defence party appeared alongside the activists of the "Niklot" Association and that of the "Swastika" Young Patriots.

Following the successful consolidation of nationalist ideas thanks to LPR and their entry into parliament and, in 2004, the European parliament, nationalists began to enjoy greater media coverage and to attract the attention of the media,

The diffusion of the agenda of these groups in recent years has been connected with three communications channels. The first was the official press distribution network, with some of their periodicals as well as those of other extreme right wing groups available in nationwide press networks. In 2007, controversy arose over the public financing by the Ministry of Culture for the magazine "Templum Novum" which is run by activists from the National Rock Scene and containing articles deemed to be anti-Semitic and supporting a neo-Nazi subculture in Poland (Nigdy Więcej, 2007). Another example of the attempts made to promote extreme right wing content was the plan to fund the publication of David Irving's work, a Holocaust denier. The promotion of his work did not reach fruition.

The second area of activity for the extreme right has been the public media. It is important to underscore the mutual dislike between right wing radicals and the majority of private media companies, but a crucial factor has been the role of the media group owned by the Catholic foundation Lux Veritatis and led by the charismatic Father Tadeusz Rydzyk. The group contains Radio Maryja, the TV station Trwam and the newspaper "Nasz Dziennik". Broadcasting since 1992, the station has been criticized by both Polish and international media, notably for the use of Catholicism as a political tool, and accused of the promotion of conspiracy theories and anti-Semitic propaganda. Radio Maryja played a tremendous role in uniting nationalist factions under the banner of LPR. During the formation and existence of the coalition between Law and Justice, Self Defence and the League of Polish Families in

2006, the radio station was used as a propaganda tool, hosting the leaders of the coalition group. A contract between the three parties was signed in the studios of Radio Maryja and was broadcast only by that station. The only journalists allowed in the room were those associated with F. Rydzyk like *Nasz Dziennik*, thus sealing the direct transmission rights for only Radio Maryja and Trwam TV. Other journalists, who had not been informed about the time of the transmission of the contract details, protested against this unequal treatment. Furthermore, RM hosted a weekly broadcast with members of MW and was the first mass media outlet which gave them the opportunity to present and promote themselves.

After 2001, the leadership of MW and LPR began to increasingly appreciate the role of mass media in the shaping of public opinion (Maj 2007: 144). This has been reinforced in recent years with the appointment of a former PWN-PSN, NOP, MW and LPR activist Piotr Farfał to the directorship of Polish public TV. Appointed in May 2006 by the Governing Council of Polish State Television, he conducted this role until September 2009, bringing a number of MW and LPR activists into the organisation with him, despite wide criticism by the media and by the people from the world of film and culture.

It is important to add that the characteristics of the extreme right also manifested themselves in other nationwide publications not directly associated with them.⁵ The analysis of the examples of “hate language” in the five selected publications with right wing leanings provides interesting information. A veritable host of enemies of Poland featured in the rhetorical analysis of these press titles.. Most often mentioned were the Jews, deemed to be anti-Polish and involved in anti-Polish conspiracies of a political and financial manner. Frequently mentioned was the Jedwabne massacre and Germany’s involvement in contemporary Polish history (Kowalski, Tullia 2003).

The third manner of disseminating right wing radicalism is the use of new forms of media such as the Internet. The example of how racist ideology from Polish nationalists and neo-Nazis has permeated the underground black metal music scene has been covered by Rafał Pankowski in his work *Rasizm a kultura popularna*. He shows how new channels have been exploited by the far right such as comics or computer games.

There are Polish versions of the websites of Blood and Honour, Combat 18 and the World Church of Creator (WCOTC), including a number of references to affiliated organisations in

⁵ The analysis focused on “Tygodnik Solidarność” “Nasz Dziennik”, “Nasza Polska”, “Głos”, “Najwyższy Czas” in 2001, see Kowalski Sergiusz, *Zamiast procesu. Raport o mowie nienawiści.*, Warsaw 2003, and the titles of the publications themselves – Solidarity Weekly, Our Daily, Our Poland, The Voice, High Time

the whole world. Multimedia such as Internet radio and short films showing actions of the organization are also used.

11. Cooperation

Cooperation attempts were made on the national, European and international level. One example from the European Parliament forum was an attempt by the League of Polish Families to create an extreme right faction. The body, however, did not meet the formal requirements and was dissolved.

The NOP is particularly visible amongst political parties described in terms of being willing to reach an agreement with political organisations in Western Europe. It is part of the International Third Position (ITP) movement – a forum for nationalist political movements – and the European National Front. Within this organisation, the NOP works with the Romanian Legion of the Archangel Michael, nationalists in Ireland, the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain. Its common activity is focused on an anti-EU campaign – NOP activists worked with the Czech group “Občané proti EU” in May 2003.

Another example of international cooperation is European National camps. Such training camps (the last in 2009) are organized for the activists in cooperation with Polish “Falanga”, Slovaks (“Slovenska Pospolitost”), the Czech (“Delnicka Strana”) and Romanians (“Noua Dreapta”).

In terms of the neo-Nazi scene, the situation is complicated by illegal and secretive nature of their activity. Western European influence is evident in the organisation of branches of B&H, Combat 18 and WCOTC. This cooperation is also visible in an analysis of the NSBM or nationalist music scene. Rafał Pankowski, co-organiser of the monitoring group “Never Again”, said in one of his lectures that *“Poland is an integral part of the European neo-Fascist scene. International racist organisations are able to function here without fear (...) fascists organisations began to infiltrate our society in the 90’s (...) in Poland, racist organisations are able to exploit the conditions to build an infrastructure which can later be used to work with young people in Western countries (...) Poland is thus a testing ground for the European fascist movement and a place where they can organise boot camps with a paramilitary character aimed at, for example, German fascists (...)”* (Pankowski 2004).

12. Conclusions

Polish nationalistic movements in their “comeback” after 1989 refer to the rich ideological and organizational tradition of the pre-war era. After the collapse of communism the newly created or restored forms embraced the names and ideas of the predecessors. They developed mainly the elements of the pre-war agenda supporting the Polish nation and using the same catalogue of national enemies. This continuity has been declared by both right-wing nationalists and radicals. The new, modern challenges that the party faces are connected with the process of EU integration and social issues, such as secularization of the society, gay rights, abortion or euthanasia. With regard to these issues, the parties and organizations have taken a conservative stand, guarding the traditional model of the Polish and catholic family – the basis of a strong national state independent from foreign influences.

The neo-Nazi movement appears to be a separate phenomenon which does not refer to scarce pre-war Polish roots. From the organizational and ideological points of view, in there are different trends: pan-German – inspired by the western European as well as American movements and pan-Slavic ones.

Both right-wing nationalists and radicals were strongly present in the public and political life. In the last 10 years three parties in question stood for the elections: the League of Polish Families, PWN-PSN, NOP. Generally, public support of these parties is marginal, as they received only 2.8% of the vote in the 2007 parliamentary elections. Prosperity occurred in the years 2001-2008, when, for the first time, the consolidated national circles grew in power. The culminating moment of that process was the joining the coalition government. However the outstanding performance of LPR in 2001 (8% of votes) and 2005 (8% of votes) took place under specific conditions – decomposition of a wide right-wing coalition bloc (AWS, in power from 1997 to 2001), social dissatisfaction with the misrule of post communists (2001-2005), exposure scandals with prominent representatives of the post communist party, favorable for smaller parties seat formula allocation. The marginalization of the party after 2007 did not mean disappearance of its activists still present on the exposed positions of the public administration. What becomes salient is the fact that there are no radical rights excluding action strategies. From the early 90’s the parties achieved established positions and the other organizations grew “slowly but visibly” (Pankowski R., Kornak M., 2007). Additionally, the nationalist or anti-system slogans are widely distributed in the public. Right-wing nationalists themselves are in the possession of an extensive propaganda base, such as newspapers and the Internet sources of information.

The analysis of activities and social base within the right-wing extremism in the recent years is indicative of their strong position and international connections. The symptoms of internal cooperation between nationalists and neo-Nazi underground are visible especially the NSBM and rock music scene. The youth are unchangeably the target group for the parties and organizations in question.

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