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The Issue of Securitization of the Refugee Problem in the Polish Political Debate

Abstract: Analyzing Poland's current activity regarding the influx of refugees and the formulated attitude towards action in the field of restriction and control of the influx undertaken by European and international institutions, one should notice increasing reluctance to accept immigrants. What is more, there is a growing trend in the public debate in Poland to identify (to correlate) the influx of refugees with the problem of security. Although Poland is neither located on the main transit routes nor a destination for immigrants (including refugees), there is a process of systematically including this issue in the public discourse and analyzing the consequences of the potential increase in the influx of immigrants in the context of state security. Relationships that arise at the interface between migration and security point to the process of securitization of immigration, which involves integrating migration issues into a catalogue of state security threats and considering them through the lens of possible threats to the receiving societies.

Keywords: *security, immigration, refugees, securitization, migration crisis*

Introduction

The massive influx of immigrants into the territory of the European Union Member States is a special experience for all Member States. The consequences of the intensity of the influx of people (mainly from African countries and the Middle East) into the EU territory are borne not only by those Member States that have the character of a destination country, but also those that are of a transit nature. The scale, background and complexity of people movements result in this problem becoming the largest and most demanding challenge for the Member States, and at the same time an extremely sensitive political issue, triggering a fierce political debate within the EU. The geographical location and the degree of saturation with refugees determine and shape the policies of individual Member States, both in the internal and external dimension. Regardless of the fact that Poland is not a destination country for refugees, the increase in the number of migrants coming to Europe and cross-

ing EU borders is today one of the factors that ordains Poland's activity in this area. What is more, it determines the increase in the society's interest in this problem, which – which should be emphasized – under the influence of the nature of the political debate is becoming more and more critical and unwilling to accept refugees, especially those from countries with different traditions, cultures and religions. This reluctant attitude strengthens the exposure of the issue of state security and the association of the influx of immigrants (including refugees) with the level and nature of threats.

Securitization of Public Debate

The appropriate tool for examining the relationships that arise at the interface of migration and security is securitization, which reflects the process of expanding the sphere of security with new issues coming from outside traditional understanding of it and identifying it with military threats. Yet, as noticed by Łukasz Fijałkowski, in fear of a too excessive expansion of the analytical scope of the concept of security and retaining its usability, precursors of securitization representing the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute – COPRI (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde et al.) postulate narrowing the catalogue of issues that are subject to securitization to matters of an existentialist nature (Fijałkowski, 2012, p. 153). Irrespective of revising the explanatory assumptions of the securitization theory (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde, 1998; Stritzel, 2014, pp. 11–37), its exploratory capabilities allow it to be used to analyze many security-related problems, including, key for this paper, the refugee problem.

Analyzing Poland's current activity regarding the inflow of immigrants as well as the formulated attitude towards actions taken by European and international institutions in the scope of limiting and controlling the inflow, one needs to mention the growing criticism. Since the intensification of the influx of immigrants into the EU territory (2015–2016), a trend to identify or even correlate the refugee issue with the problem of security has been outlined in the public debate in Poland. Although Poland is neither located on the main transit routes nor a destination point for immigrants (including refugees), there is a process of systematically including this issue in the public discourse and analyzing the consequences of the potential increase in the inflow of immigrants in the context of state security.

Therefore, using as a supplement the assumptions developed by the representatives of the Copenhagen School in relation to the problem in question, securitization means the inclusion of immigration issues in the catalogue of state security threats and considering them from the point of view of potential dangers to public order, including the receiving societies (Wyligąła, 2016, p. 166). Securitization is a frequently analyzed process that explains how emerging security issues reinforced by the message coming from the political elites advance in the public debate to the rank of crisis situations while raising concerns about threats to national security (Szalai, Göbl, 2015, p. 2). At the same time, an assumption that something becomes a security problem not only because it is an objective threat to the

state, but because it becomes a matter of security when the securitizing actor (often the state) argues that something constitutes an existential threat is important for securitization (Musiał, 2018, p. 48). Yet, as Elżbieta Szyszlak notes, the securitization process may take place not only at the level of the public debate, but may also be expressed in adopting specific solutions and in taking actions, especially if the presented arguments gain social approval (Szyszlak, 2016, p. 245).

Based on the assumption that securitization means making a given problem public as threatening the survival of the state and presenting it in non-negotiable terms and terms justifying the use of extraordinary measures to solve it (Kostecki, 2012, p. 112–118; Ziętek, p. 28–30), the paper attempts to characterize the dynamics of securitization of the public discourse related to the refugee problem in Poland and to show the implications of this discourse for political practice. The necessity to narrow the research field resulted in the fact that the analysis carried out in this paper was limited to key issues, i.e. emphasis was given to highlighting the securitization process at the level of public debate, demonstrating its specific features and dynamics, articulating the motives for introducing immigration (refugee) issues into the public debate and correlating them with the issue of security. At the same time, it should be emphasized that the securitization process may also take place on other levels, e.g. institutional and legal, and lead to the adoption of specific legal and organizational solutions. Due to the research assumptions, other issues, such as the impact of the securitization process on defining and implementing the immigration policy, will only be presented in a marginal way.

The paper aims to verify the hypothesis indicating a shift in emphasis in the Polish public debate in the perception of refugees in terms of a source of a threat to state security, including social, health and economic security. Perceiving the refugee question in terms of threats to the receiving society, for example due to – as Anita Adamczyk observes – the fact that the influx of foreigners is seen as a factor that weakens national traditions and the unity of the society and destabilizes public order and the labor market, strengthens the process of securitization, the more so that it does not have to result from a real danger, but only from the conviction of its existence (Adamczyk, 2013, p. 219). In the Polish reality one is dealing with a possibility of emergence of threats to the functioning of the state and society and not with their real presence. One can risk a statement that stressing in the public debate the negative events associated with them and exacerbating the rhetoric of the public discourse causes an increase in anti-immigrant attitudes and an increase in the society's reluctance to accept immigrants, including refugees. At this point, it is worth quoting an interesting opinion of Witold Klaus, who, analyzing Poland's recent migration policy, indicates the unreflective pointing only to the issue of security. In his opinion, such an attitude results in triggering social fears of immigrants (Klaus, 2017, p. 524–527). Regardless of the scientific dispute over the existence of links between the phenomenon of migration and the problem of security (Squire, 2015, p. 19), the analysis of dependencies between these categories may lead to interesting cognitive conclusions.

Based on the aforementioned Copenhagen school's key assumption that each specific case could be de-politicized, politicized or subject to securitization, the focus in this paper was on the last possibility.

The Scale and Specificity of the Phenomenon of Immigration in Poland – Contemporary Context

The issue of the inflow of immigrants (including refugees) into Poland present in the political debate may lead to erroneous conclusions about the scale of the phenomenon due to the exposure of security threats related to their stay. Poland has never been a destination country for immigrants. The systematic increase in the number of people choosing Poland as a place to work, study and live observed after 1989 does not change the character of Poland as a country with an emigration and immigration status (Fehler, Cebul & Podgórzeńska, 2017, p. 159). In comparison with other EU countries the scale of immigration to Poland is still small, and immigrants make up only about 0.3% of the population (Konieczna-Sałamatin, 2015, pp. 2–3). At the same time, it should be emphasized that a small percentage of immigrants is accounted for by refugees who constitute the key analytical category in this paper.

Further discussion requires emphasizing the difficulties that exist in accurately estimating the scale and dynamics of the phenomenon of immigration. In the opinion of Marek Okólski, the state of knowledge about foreign migrations is imperfect as “the content of migration data to which the main sources of data are adjusted makes it impossible, even approximately, to determine the size of the actual inflow and outflow (even the legal one) in standard units of time” (Okólski, 2014, p. 207). It should be noted that there are many sources of statistical data addressing the phenomenon of immigration in Poland, however, due to the nature of the investigated problem, they do not provide comprehensive and complete information. They allow one to indicate the properties of the phenomenon of immigration or to formulate general conclusions about its character. Due to the short-term and circulating nature of the phenomenon, its dynamics, difficulties in estimating undocumented inflow, as well as changes in the legal provisions regulating the rules of legalization of foreigners' stay, the use of precise data is impossible (Pędziwiatr, 2015, p. 1).

At this point it should be noted that the system of foreign migration statistics in Poland is based on three types of data sources, namely: administrative systems, statistical surveys and foreign data sources, including statistics and administrative systems of other countries. At the same time, it should be remembered that these sources usually provide information about a certain type of migration or a specific group of migrants (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2011). What is more, due to the fact that the data on the volume of immigrants' inflow into Poland comes from various sources, not only does it not fully reflect the scale of immigration to Poland, but it is also mutually exclusive (Konieczna-Sałamatin, 2015; Keryk, 2012, p. 136). As a consequence, when confronting data presented in various sources, one

can only observe certain trends regarding the phenomenon of immigration, the type of migration or a specific group of migrants. For example, the data of the Central Statistical Office in accordance with the adopted definition of immigration (arrival in the country of a person previously resident in another country with the intention of staying for at least 12 months) provides information on the registration of persons coming to Poland for permanent residence (Rocznik Demograficzny 2017, p. 393). At the same time, however, considering only foreigners staying in Poland for permanent residence does not fully reflect the scale of immigration to Poland (see Table 1), which – as mentioned above – is largely of a circulating and unrecorded nature.

Table 1. The scale of immigration to Poland for permanent residence in 1990–2016

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2012	2013	2014	2016
Total	2,626	8,121	7,331	9,364	15,246	14,583	12,199	12,330	13,475
Europe (without USSR)	1,700	4,892	4,737	6,906	12,463	11,976	10,023	10,049	11,439
Including EU (15)	1,134	3,425	3,845	4,710	10,928	10,222	8,344	8,197	8,436
Germany	624	1,965	2,494	2,823	2,677	2,485	2,203	2,358	1,921
Great Britain	97	218	256	468	4,409	4,066	3,040	2,944	3,286
Including EU ^a	x	x	x	4,992	11,115	10,423	8,524	8,377	8,870
Asia (without Asian states of the former USSR)	187	503	732	572	402	409	483	599	701
Africa	88	197	120	100	187	235	199	168	198
North and Latin America	534	2,327	1,530	1,607	1,972	1,753	1,309	1,326	989
South America	29	39	46	42	51	51	38	47	54
Australia and Oceania	87	162	162	134	163	158	143	137	89
Country not determined	1	1	4	3	8	1	-	4	5

Source: *Rocznik Demograficzny 2017*. Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warsaw 2017, p. 433. Retrieved from: <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/roczniki-statystyczne/roczniki-statystyczne/rocznik-demograficzny-2017,3,11.html>

^a for 25 countries, for 2010–2012–27 countries, since 2013–28 countries

Table 2. Immigration to Poland for permanent residence broken down by continents in 2016

	Total		
	Total	Men	Women
Total	13,475	7,299	6,176
Europe	11,439	6,151	5,288
Including			
Austria	213	126	87
Belgium	273	154	119
Belarus	393	175	218
France	352	200	152
Spain	220	141	79
The Netherlands	497	286	211
Ireland	627	331	296
Germany	1,921	1,093	828
Norway	352	1,093	828
Ukraine	1,351	550	801
Great Britain	3,286	1,761	1,525
Italy	524	364	160
Asia	701	376	325
Including			
Armenia	101	46	55
Kazakhstan	76	30	46
Vietnam	149	81	68
Africa	198	160	38
North and Latin America	989	521	468
South America	54	43	11
Australia and Oceania	89	45	44

Source: *Rocznik Demograficzny 2017*. Główny Urząd Statystyczny. Warsaw 2017, p. 434. Retrieved from: <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/roczniki-statystyczne/roczniki-statystyczne/rocznik-demograficzny-2017,3,11.html>

An important source of information on the scale of immigration to Poland involves data presented by the Office for Foreigners, which provides knowledge about all categories of immigrants staying in Poland (Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz, 2016, p. 139). The data about immigrants (both EU citizens and their family members, as well as third country nationals) regarding even only temporary residence, permanent residence or international protection is a reliable source of information. At the same time, it is incomplete and does not reflect the whole immigration phenomenon in Poland, which is of a circulating and largely unregulated, often illegal nature (see: Górny et al., 2013). It only allows one to observe certain tendencies concerning, for example, the dynamics and directions of migrants' inflows or the geographical location of immigrants, and also allows for a diagnosis of factors that "attract" to Poland

or those that “push them away” from their countries of origin (Konieczna-Sałamatin, p. 6). The data presented by the said institution shows a gradual increase in the number of immigrants in Poland, and in recent years a significant increase in the number of Ukrainian citizens among those migrating to Poland (Table 4). It also confirms the thesis about the attractiveness of the Polish labor market for immigrants originating mainly from countries that are geographically close. In the case of Ukrainian citizens who in recent years have been dominating migration statistics, the political situation in this country (annexation of Crimea, events in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions) and economic considerations influenced the dynamics of the influx to Poland (Wawryniuk, 2017, pp. 111–112). The significant number of immigrants from Vietnam is also noteworthy, who, regardless of the cultural differences and the significant geographical distance from their country of origin, strengthen their position among immigrant communities in Poland.

Regardless of Poland’s transit nature, the number of immigrants deciding to associate their future with Poland is systematically growing. Strengthening Poland’s position on the international scene, increasing its importance and prestige, and above all, economic considerations, determine the growth of attractiveness of Poland as a destination country for immigrants. At the same time, the premises highlighted above are not the only ones that determine the increase in the number of immigrants in Poland. The latter have a diverse and complex character. The choice of Poland as the target country is determined by socio-economic, legal and cultural factors that increase the level of interest in the country, as well as those embedded in the outside, including the development of the international situation or applicable provisions of international and European law.

Table 3. Number of people holding documents entitling them to stay on the territory of the Republic of Poland in 2014–2017

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Temporary stay	54,876	63,568	107,961	16,4124
Registering the stay of an EU citizen	39,233	62,716	70,672	71,577
Permanent residence	27,880	35,608	44,538	58,418
Long-term EU resident stay	6,115	6,675	8,899	11,469
EU citizen’s permanent stay	4,606	6,589	7,246	7,886
Supplementary protection	2,592	1,964	1,820	2,030
Stay based on humanitarian reasons	1,103	1,261	1,459	1,795
Refugee status	793	1,025	1,279	1,330
Stay of an EU citizen’s family member	560	546	678	765
Tolerated stay	455	259	266	293
Permanent stay of an EU citizen’s family member	51	59	65	75

Source: Typ dokumentu. Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców. Retrieved from: <https://migracje.gov.pl/statystyki/zakres/polska/typ/dokumenty/widok/tabele/rok/2017/>

Table 4. Immigrants' main countries of origin

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Ukraine	25,880	51,743	91,991	142,420
Germany	19,628	21,772	23,857	22,138
Belarus	5,974	7,421	9,649	14,756
Vietnam	5,649	6,517	8,484	11,290
Russia	8,195	8,304	9,530	11,113

Source: Typ dokumentu. Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców. Retrieved from: <https://migracje.gov.pl/statystyki/zakres/polska/typ/wnioski/widok/tabele/rok/2018/>

The discussion that is taking place in Poland in connection with the migration crisis and the necessity to implement activities, postulated by the EU, addressing the admission of refugees inspires one to analyze the magnitude of this phenomenon. This is all the more necessary since different forms of immigration are treated equally in the political debate, regardless of their character. Misunderstandings result both from ignorance of basic concepts and from deliberate action to justify political practice. It needs to be remembered that according to the interpretation applied by the Central Statistical Office, immigration means arriving in a country of a person who has previously been usually resident in another state with the intention of residing for a period of no less than 12 months (Regulation (EC) No. 862/2007). A refugee – as stipulated for in the Geneva Convention – means a person who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (Convention relating to the Status of Refugees done at Geneva on 28 July 1951). Bearing in mind the ambiguity of the term refugee and including in it a diverse category of persons (Balicki & Stalker, p. 20) the political debate in Poland is characterized by a far-reaching simplification. The notions of an immigrant and a refugee are alternately applied, irrespective of the far-reaching differences between these categories. Pointing to Poland's involvement in the activity of the international community for counteracting the effects of the influx of refugees into the territory of the EU various figures were pointed out in the debate, overstating the statistical data and including jointly various forms of immigration. It is enough to quote the words of Prime Minister Beata Szydło, who on 19 January 2016 during a debate in the European Parliament spoke about a million refugees from Ukraine who were admitted to Poland (“Szydło mówi o milionie ukraińskich uchodźców w Polsce. Ukraińskie media: Taki status otrzymały dwie osoby”). Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski in an interview for the Italian *La Repubblica*, in turn, quoted the number of 1.25 million people (Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 22.03.2017). Ryszard Czarnecki MEP of PiS (Law and Justice), in an interview for *FronDa.pl*, mentioned Poland's taking of 400,000 refugees from

Ukraine (Polska jest drugim krajem Europy pod względem... przyjmowania uchodźców), while the then development minister Mateusz Morawiecki in a conversation with journalists at the Davos forum in January 2016 provided data about Poland's acceptance of 350,000 immigrants from Ukraine in 2014–2015 (Adamczyk, 2017, p. 315).

At this point it should be noted that the numbers cited by them differ significantly from reality. In the public message all immigrants are often put together regardless of their legal status. Precise data on the actual number of people applying for international protection, including a refugee status, is provided by the Office for Foreigners. According to obtained information, in 2017 2,226 applications for international protection were submitted in Poland (they concerned 5,078 people). The largest group of applicants for international protection were citizens of the Russian Federation – 3,550 people (70%) and Ukraine – 671 people (13%). Among the applicants there were also, among others, citizens of Tajikistan – 154 people, Armenia – 85 people, Georgia – 70 people, Turkey – 56 people, and Kyrgyzstan – 51 people. The refugee status was granted to 150 foreigners, including 17 Syrians, 56 citizens of Ukraine, 14 citizens of the Russian Federation and 13 people from Iran (Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców, 2017b).

The discrepancies between the politicians' declarations and the actual state of affairs make the substantive debate about refugees in Poland difficult. The overestimation of immigration statistics, while opposing the acceptance of refugees as part of the relocation system, is intended to justify and substantiate state actions as part of its immigration policy. In addition, the conceptual chaos only hinders the substantive debate, while reinforcing the negative message about refugees. As a consequence, the issue of refugees is unjustifiably becoming sensitive from the point of view of the security of the state and its citizens.

A variety of factors decide about Member States' policies regarding the acceptance of refugees and, consequently, about the scale and dynamics of the phenomenon. These are not only the economic capacity of the receiving state, security considerations or the organizational and institutional capacity, but also social attitudes, openness and readiness to support them. What is important, negative aspects of this phenomenon are mostly emphasized in the debate about the processes of people influx into the territory of Poland, avoiding the beneficial consequences from the point of view of the state and society. Problems in the labor market, access to social benefits, difficulties with integration of immigrants, threats to national identity, development of organized crime or terrorism are the issues exposed by the opponents of accepting immigrants (including refugees) in Poland which, they believe, evidence the need to limit their inflow. It is worth noting here that the attitude towards refugees in Poland was correlated with subsequent terrorist attacks in Europe as well as events on the political scene (Fehler, Cebul & Podgórzeńska, p. 160). Bearing in mind Poland's lack of experience with admitting immigrants and stressing the issue of potential threats, including the terrorist threat, the unfavorable attitude towards accepting refugees increases. Systematically conducted opinion polls regarding the admission of refugees from countries affected by armed conflicts featured the dynamics of preferences dictated by both internal

and external determinants. Geographic and cultural-religious determinants of their origin predispose the perception of refugees as a source of threats to the security of the state.

As mentioned above, the reluctance to accept refugees in Poland was determined by the increase of terrorist threats in Europe. The confirmation of this state is seen in the rise of Poles' skepticism about accepting refugees in Poland as recorded after the Paris attack in November 2015 and a few months later in Brussels (22 March 2016). While the Poles were more open to accepting refugees before, after the attacks the favorable attitude towards them decreased. Initially, media reports on the catastrophes in the Mediterranean and the deaths of immigrants trying to get through to Europe influenced the attitude of Poles and their consent to giving shelter to refugees from countries affected by armed conflicts, though – which should be noted – only temporarily. With time, following the information about the immense number of immigrants from Africa and the Middle East, there was a gradual increase in opposition to the admission of refugees. Both the scale of the phenomenon and the display of threats related to migration have strengthened the reluctance to accept immigrants, especially Muslims (Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej, 2015, p. 1). It should be noted here that the opinions of Poles regarding the admission of refugees differed depending on the refugees' countries of origin. Research conducted by the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) indicated a different attitude towards refugees from Muslim countries and refugees from Ukraine. Public opinion polls carried out in May and October 2017 can be quoted as an illustration of this thesis. They showed that 70% of respondents were against the admission of refugees from Muslim countries. Only 25% of respondents supported their admission (Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej, 2017a, p. 2). A poll conducted a few months later (5–12 October 2017) on Poles' attitudes to accepting refugees from countries affected by armed conflicts (what is important – without specifying where they came from) revealed that nearly 63% of respondents opposed the acceptance of refugees while 33% expressed support for it (Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej, 2017a, p. 1). At the same time, the aforementioned research showed that 75% of respondents objected to the relocation to Poland of refugees from the Middle East and Africa who came to EU countries. On the other hand, the attitude towards accepting residents of eastern Ukraine migrating from areas affected by military operations was favorable. 61% of respondents approved giving them asylum and 32% were against it (Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej, 2017a, p. 3, 5).

To conclude this part of the argument, it should be noted that the diverse position of public opinion regarding the admission of refugees is determined by their cultural and religious background. Significant cultural and religious differences, and above all associating people coming from these areas with terrorist activities, strengthen the society's negative attitude and, consequently, the reluctance to accept them. At the same time, the distinguished factors determining the position of Polish public opinion in this respect do not exhaust the catalogue of reasons for reluctance to accept refugees. These lie both at the social as well as the economic level and above all at the political one.

Dynamics of Political Debate on Refugees and Its Determinants

Apart from a deeper analysis of the course of securitization, the situational context or the character and nature of threats, determining the inclusion of a given problem in the sphere of security of refugee issues may fulfill various functions serving the subject (actor) of securitization himself, as well as the issue that is the subject of securitization (Floyd, 2010). In the first case, it can serve, for example, to strengthen the image of a securitization entity, build its identity, autonomy or political potential, expand and integrate the political environment, and eventually strengthen the bond with the electorate. Bearing in mind this last element, it is worth stressing that focusing the political debate around the issue of immigration and exposing the security issue has the task of gaining the favor of voters, or it may provide a “substitute” subject. On the other hand, it may serve an issue so far overlooked or marginalized, and which is the subject of securitization through even exposing specific problems or consolidating around a certain idea or propagating solutions. In this frame of reference there are questions about the importance of the securitization process in the context of the refugee problem in Poland. However, it should be emphasized that securitization of the phenomenon of potential refugee influx has become one of the elements of shaping the discourse on security in Poland under the circumstances of the migration crisis. A specific type of narrative which is taking root, in which the category of crisis is exposed, strengthens the conviction about a threat coming from refugees. In the case of Poland, it is primarily a threat from refugees from North Africa and the Middle East, perceived through the lens of cultural and religious foreignness, and above all as a potential terrorist threat. Immigrants (including refugees) from neighboring countries, primarily from Ukraine or Belarus, are perceived as a group that strengthens the development of the Polish economy, integrates with the Polish society and therefore is not a source of threats or conflict.

The consequences of the migration crisis occur on many levels and concern many segments of the Member States’ activity, including the economy, internal and external policy, security, protection of human rights, crisis management and humanitarian aid. It should be emphasized at this point that the migration crisis did not bypass Poland, while as regards Poland it is not about the influx of immigrants, but about the potential influx of immigrants and political emotions that are related to the decisions of the EU bodies on how to respond to and counteract this phenomenon. Above all the decision to place immigrants in individual Member States, serving the purpose of diversifying and relieving those countries which bear the greatest expenses related to the inflow of immigrants, encountered many opponents in Poland. Due to the relative national-ethnic homogeneity and the lack of experience with an influx of large numbers of immigrants, citing security considerations, Poland expressed skepticism about accepting refugees into its territory through relocation or resettlement from camps outside the EU, strongly rejecting the “top-down” mechanisms of refugee distribution among Member States (Monika Trojanowska-Strzęboszewska, 2017, p. 137). A position unfavorable to immigration strengthened after the parliamentary elections in

autumn 2015, when the winning PiS party (Law and Justice) began to modify the policy on the admission of immigrants. The problem of immigration, unlike so far, has become the subject of the political and public debate in Poland, resulting in a polarization of opinions on the nature and directions of the Polish immigration policy. Discussions on the migration crisis, its sources and consequences for Poland's security strengthened the divisions on the Polish political scene.

The securitization process emerged in the political debate during the discussion on the admission of refugees under the EU relocation system. Assuming that securitization is a process in which a securitization actor uses the rhetoric of an existential threat in a given issue, and thus leads it out of the sphere of normal policy into the sphere of extraordinary policy, where all appropriate measures can be taken to reduce the threat (Szalai & Göbl, 2015, p. 4), one can observe all the distinguished features in the Polish reality. The issues associated with the broadly understood subject matter of immigration since 2015 have often been taken up during political discussions. First of all, it became present during the autumn election campaign and it was clearly associated with the problem of security. It needs to be noted that it both took place at the declarative level, in the form of politicians' statements, and was expressed in undertaking specific actions aimed at preventing the threats emphasized by opponents of accepting immigrants (including refugees). What is more, it needs to be highlighted that the problems associated with the influx of refugees into Poland were an element of the discourse on the immigration phenomenon and were treated identically by the discourse participants. There was an absence of a clear differentiation between the categories of an immigrant and a refugee. As a consequence, both the scale of the refugee influx into Poland and the potential threats were misperceived. Bearing in mind the above, analyzing the nature of the ongoing refugee debate in Poland, one should articulate several of its specific features. Firstly, the debate on the problem of refugees was related to the discussion on EU policy regarding containing and counteracting the consequences of the migration crisis, the responsibility for an uncontrolled influx of people, reaction mechanisms and more rights of individual Member States to autonomous decisions in this area. Secondly, the debate on refugees revealed a polarization of positions of political parties on the role of Poland in overcoming the consequences of the migration crisis. What is more, it was another installment of the political conflict that had been going on for years on the Polish political scene. Thirdly, the characteristic feature of the Polish debate on refugees involves a kind of internal contradiction. The influx of immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East ignites a different rhetoric and different arguments to those accompanying the influx of immigrants from e.g. Ukraine. Fourthly, following the politicization of the immigration issue, the debate takes on a negative character. Fifthly, in the political debate issues concerning immigrants and refugees were most often associated with a terrorist threat and with lowering the level of security, including the security of the society. What is more, the current discourse on immigration seems to shift from economic threats and implications for the labor market onto security threats (including the security

of the society), as well as threats to identity, culture and religion. Finally, it is worth noting that the refugee issue has become a subject of great interest in the Polish media and political discourse in recent years, to a limited extent it is associated with real processes of the influx into Poland of people seeking protection (Górny et al., 2017, p. 7).

Reconstructing the character and determinants of the political debate regarding the inflow of refugees, attention should be paid to associating it with both the migration crisis in the EU and the decisions of EU institutions regarding the ways of solving it, as well as with internal (national) determinants. The discussion on ways of engaging Poland in solving the migration crisis in the EU has become an element of a political dispute that has been strengthening the political conflict that has been ongoing for several years between the political groups that dominate the Polish political scene. The 2015 parliamentary campaign became an exemplification of this conflict, while the issue of the migration crisis in the EU, and especially the problem of accepting refugees in Poland, became one of its elements (Starzyk, 2016). As never before, problems related to the influx of refugees were included in the election campaign, making them an element around which political supporters were integrated. At the same time, the issue of refugees was one of the threads of political campaigns run by individual political parties and contesting the actions of the previously ruling Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform) concerned many areas of activity (Starzyk, pp. 120–121). PiS (Law and Justice) were definite opponents of admitting immigrants (including refugees) into Poland. Already during the election campaign this group pointed to threats to state security which may be related to the inflow of immigrants to Poland in the economic, social, cultural and religious dimensions. The admission of immigrants was considered in the context of a threat to the security of the society, lowering the standard of living and the security of Poles. Jarosław Kaczyński drew attention to those during one of the meetings with voters, suggesting that “there are already symptoms of the occurrence of diseases that are very dangerous and long not seen in Europe: cholera on the Greek islands, dysentery in Vienna, various parasites, protozoa, that are not dangerous in the bodies of these people, yet they can be dangerous here. This does not mean discriminating against someone ... But it needs to be checked” (Newsweek Polska, 13.10.2015). By recommending that the then minister of health take an interest in the problems resulting from the inflow of people from culturally different regions, he emphasized the issue of health security and factors determining it. In the opinion of the aforementioned PiS (Law and Justice) leader, Jarosław Kaczyński, the dangers associated with the inflow of immigrants into Poland were of a wider nature, as evidenced by his speech during the Sejm meeting on 16 September 2015 devoted entirely to the Message from the Prime Minister on the migration crisis in Europe and its repercussions for Poland. He pointed to the possibility of a systematic increase in the number of people coming to Poland, which in his opinion they already declared today, to the fact that they would not obey Polish law and Polish customs, and what is more, that in the future they would impose “their sensitivity and their requirements in the public space in various areas of life, and in a very aggressive and violent way”. Citing examples from other

European countries, including Sweden, Italy, France, and the Great Britain, he warned against the possibility of imposing cultural and moral norms incompatible with the Polish tradition (Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2015). The then opposition also indicated attempts to impose a position on Poland in the context of the EU policy. Jarosław Kaczyński stated during this extraordinary session of the Sejm addressing refugees that: “the important question is: does the government have the right – under foreign external pressure, without the expressed consent of the nation – to make decisions which with a high degree of probability may have a negative impact on our lives, our everyday existence, our public life, public space, our real sphere of freedom, and finally our security” (Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2015). This kind of rhetoric, which emphasized the issues of cultural and religious identity, Polish tradition, and finally the independence and cohesion of the nation, appealed to some voters who were sensitive to any potential threats to national identity. What is more, opinions about a threat coming from refugees were shared by President Andrzej Duda. In a television interview on 18 October 2015, commenting on Jarosław Kaczyński’s words, he shared concerns about health security, stating that the state should protect citizens from an epidemic from abroad. He stressed that for him “the safety of our countrymen is the most important”, both in terms of material security or lack of crime, as well as health and “the danger associated with the inflow of refugees into Poland” (Andrzej Duda w “Kawie na Ławę”).

Opinions expressed by Jarosław Kaczyński and Andrzej Duda regarding the admission of refugees reflected both the position of some political circles in Poland and the conviction of the public opinion. Recalling arguments about a threat to the security of the state and its citizens, the reluctance to accept refugees was strengthened while integrating those voters who shared the above views. This type of discursive practice resulted from an attempt to capitalize social fear against a migration inflow for short-term political goals, especially in the context of the election campaign before parliamentary elections (Pędziwiatr & Legut, 2017, p. 621).

At this point, it is worth noting that for years the issue of immigration (including the refugee subject matter) was not at the center of interest of Polish political parties. Issues associated with it were usually placed on the margins of matters considered to be important (Trojanowska-Strzęboszewska, 2010). Despite the systematic inclusion of this issue in the political discourse, this problem had not advanced to a priority rank from the point of view of both political parties as well as Polish public opinion. Incidentally, these issues were also raised during election campaigns without being consequently a problem around which the parties decided to build their electoral narrative and gain political capital. The situation changed with the escalation of the migration crisis in the EU and the initiation of the discussion on European solidarity (Górny et al., 2017, p. 7). The discussion on the role of Poland in solving the migration crisis, on ways of participating in the EU policy to limit the influx of immigrants, and above all on the attitude to actions for solving the crisis proposed by the EU institutions unleashed political disputes in Poland. The 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections were a factor strengthening political divisions in Poland. What

should be emphasized, for the first time the issue of immigration was integrated into the rhythm of the election campaign. The parties rarely decided to specify their position on the phenomenon of immigration in the form of program documents, limiting themselves to public speeches on the subject.

By reconstructing the declarations on admitting refugees that appeared during the campaign, one can notice a polarization of positions in this matter. Strong opposition to the admission of refugees was expressed – as mentioned above – by PiS, as well as Kukiz'15 and KORWIN. This last group, not differentiating between immigrants and refugees, focused in their campaign on scaring voters with “hordes of illegal immigrants” while its leader Janusz Korwin-Mikke announced that if he comes to power, “he will not admit a single immigrant” (Program wyborczy KORWiN. Populizm (LISTA NR 4)). PSL (The Polish People’s Party) declared aid to refugees, but they opted for their quick return to their countries of origin (Wybory parlamentarne 2015. Podatki, ustrój, prawa obywateli. Krótki opis partyjnych programów wyborczych). Platforma Obywatelska (The Civic Platform) proposed an active, friendly and open policy towards refugees. Integrating Poland’s activity into European solidarity, it stressed the principle of voluntarism in the process of admitting immigrants and full government control over the admission process, their efficient separation from illegally arrived economic immigrants and the ability to verify arrivals in terms of security (Polska przyszłości – Program Platformy Obywatelskiej RP 2015). Zjednoczona Lewica (The United Left) called for a “reasonable” policy towards immigrants, stressing that Poland should accept immigrants, but only in such numbers that would allow providing them with “safety and care”. Partia Razem (The Together Party) was favorable to accepting refugees (without formulating threshold conditions) (Wybory parlamentarne 2015. Podatki, ustrój, prawa obywateli. Krótki opis partyjnych programów wyborczych). On the other hand, Nowoczesna.pl (Modern Party) opted for the admission of refugees to Poland, which in the opinion of its leader Ryszard Petru would constitute an element of the overall EU strategy (Wybory parlamentarne 2015: Nowoczesna przedstawiła hasło wyborcze). At the same time, postulates regarding immigration expressed by particular political parties featured a high level of generality. The parties avoided clear declarations, limiting themselves to emphasizing their position. Due to the fact that the issue of refugees was introduced to the electoral debate, individual political parties were obliged to form an opinion in this matter. Bearing in mind the polarization of public opinion on this issue, they avoided far-reaching declarations for fear of losing potential electoral votes. Thus, the discussion about the immigration problem was very superficial where arguments about threats to the security of the state and citizens prevailed.

Unclear messages regarding the admission of refugees came also from the Polish government. When reconstructing the position of the government of Ewa Kopacz, one should emphasize the lability of the approach that was then presented. Initially, European ideas for resolving the migration crisis were criticized, only to finally agree to their key element, i.e. the relocation to Poland of some of the refugees who had already arrived in Europe.

What is important, when analyzing the position of the Polish government, one can also see an attempt to analyze the phenomenon of immigration in connection with the problem of state security. This is confirmed by the position expressed by Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz at the beginning of September 2015, from which an attempt emerges to perceive migration as a problem and a threat to state security. Emphasizing the need to ensure the security of Poland's own citizens, the Prime Minister pointed out that Poland should be able to reserve full control of the verification of arrivals, so as to know that immigrants do not have bad intentions towards the country (Ewa Kopacz: Możemy przyjąć więcej niż 2 tys. Uchodźców). She indicated that the government is formulating such conditions that will ensure security for both those who come to Poland and its own citizens. Therefore, the Prime Minister pointed out that Poland reserves "full control over the process of verifying the arrivals in terms of security, so as to be sure that they do not hold bad intentions towards the countries to which they will come" (Kopacz: Polska gotowa pomagać uchodźcom, nie imigrantom ekonomicznym). The same view was repeated by the Prime Minister during the parliamentary debate on 16 September 2015, stressing that it is the duty of each government to first of all ensure the security for citizens who live in the country, to ensure the security of Poland's countrymen. Security was a superior value, as Teresa Piotrowska, the Minister of Interior, argued during the same sitting of the Sejm. In her speech, she stressed that in all undertaken actions security is the highest priority, which is why in her assessment the possibility of verifying and the possibility of refusing to accept persons who could pose a threat was important (Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2015).

The scale of an illegal inflow of immigrants into Poland was low, as evidenced by statistics. The aforementioned minister Piotrowska pointed to single attempts of group migrant trafficking to Poland, such as stopping 31 migrants from Syria, Afghanistan and Yemen in Szklarska Poręba on 11 September 2015 or stopping 9 immigrants from Syria and Afghanistan on 5 September in Chyżne (Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2015). Security reasons were used to justify not only the modesty of the declared refugee quota that Poland is able to admit, but also a certain selectivity in their selection, and above all, the verification in terms of security of people accepted in Poland. "We will use our choosing as to who we will offer this help to", bearing in mind first and foremost the security of the country and the peace of Polish families as a superior and indisputable value "even in the face of the dramatic fate of our closer or more distant neighbors" (Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów, 2015.).). By demonstrating solidarity, it was clearly stipulated that only refugees, and not economic immigrants, would be supported and only if it did not affect the level of Poland's security.

Poland joined the strong opponents of the relocation system after the change of power as a result of parliamentary elections in October 2015. After the autumn election, Beata Szydło's government has been contesting EU solutions in this matter in a much firmer manner (Pędziwiatr & Legut, 2017, p. 609). The literature includes a view that the position of the Polish government until the autumn elections had reflected the nature of the Polish migration policy, which after 1989 was shaped primarily in response to the need to adapt Polish legal

regulations in this area to international standards. Migration itself was perceived – in the context of Poland as a country with a negative migration balance – in terms of a marginal phenomenon (Pędzwiatr & Legut, 2017, p. 616). This view had its consequences in the form of an absence of a wider interest both of parties and political circles, as well as public opinion. Intensification of the influx of people into the territory of the EU and the need to respond to EU activities in this area revived discussions on immigration in Poland. At the same time, however, due to the growing political conflict in Poland, this discussion was characterized by attempts to discredit political opponents, and not by striving to develop coherent solutions or explaining the problem to public opinion. Responding to the emerging mechanism of EU influence on the migration crisis, following the EU rhetoric, slogans of solidarity with refugees, the need for support and cooperation within the European community were used. However, attempts were made to limit participation to necessary actions and such that would not entail far-reaching obligations. Consent to the relocation of refugees and the acceptance of 7,000 refugees did not mean acceptance of EU decisions, but only cooperation in activities that were perceived as an expression of co-responsibility. The need for voluntarism was consistently pointed out in the context of the relocation and resettlement program, pointing to the dynamic situation in Eastern Europe and east Ukraine.

The dividing line separating the supporters and opponents of accepting refugees ran according to the shape defined during the election campaign. After the autumn elections, the dispute over the admission of refugees became a permanent part of the Polish reality while fueling the political conflict between the main political formations. The arguments against the admission of refugees emerging during the election campaign were repeated each time when European institutions requested Poland's response. The arguments regarding a threat to state security and the need to protect Poland's own citizens were consistently cited. The victorious formation, contesting the current activity of the Polish government in the matter of refugees, announced a modification of the Polish policy in the context of accepting refugees. Importantly, despite declarations of honoring the obligations of predecessors in the context of admitting refugees, the declarations of Prime Minister Szydło were not unambiguous. On the one hand, declarations of respecting the decisions adopted by the predecessors were made, and on the other hand, the right to decide who to accept and under what conditions was reserved. Over time, the position of the Polish government became stiffer, and it was emphasized in the appearing comments that Poland would not participate in activities that may negatively affect the security of its citizens. The reconstruction of the Polish government's position was significantly influenced by terrorist attacks in Europe, which reinforced and strengthened the conviction of a threat posed by immigrants. As Anita Adamczyk points out, the narrative of representatives of the Polish government, the parliamentary majority and representatives of some political parties meant in the political debate that issues related to immigrants, including refugees, were most frequently associated with terrorist threats and with lowering the level of security (Adamczyk, 2017, p. 314). Pointing to security issues, as well as using Poland's involvement in humanitarian aid

in the future as an argument, the government consistently refused to carry out relocation obligations even under the pressure of sanctions from EU institutions (Beata o uchodźcach: nigdy nie zgodzimy się na narzucenie kwot przez UE). The discussion on refugees was devoid of substantive arguments. Theses about the threat (more or less real) or the European Commission's attempts to force Poland to take over responsibility for actions caused by other countries resounded in opinions expressed by opponents of receiving refugees. The work carried out in the Polish parliament on the initiative of PiS parliamentarians connected to the adoption of a resolution on immigration policy was an exemplification of reluctance to accept refugees. Contesting the decisions of the Council of the European Union of 22 September 2015 regarding the relocation of 120,000 refugees in a resolution adopted by the vote of PiS deputies, opposition to permanent EU mechanisms of allocating refugees or immigrants was voiced, stressing that "instruments of the refugee and immigration policy should remain in the hands of Poland". The adopted position was justified by the growing social tension caused by the "excessive wave of migration from the Middle East to Europe" (Resolution of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland of 1 April 2016 on Poland's immigration policy). The emphasis on the security issue in the political discourse devoted to refugees was a permanent element of Polish reality. Prime Minister Beata Szydło very often referred to this kind of narrative. For example, during a sitting of the Sejm, during which the application for dismissal of the minister of national defense Antoni Macierewicz was considered, referring to the events in Manchester (22 May 2017), she linked the phenomenon of immigration (without distinguishing between refugees and economic migrants) with terrorist attacks and emotional questions "Where are you going, Europe? Rise from your knees and wake up from lethargy, or else you will mourn your children every day" only reinforced the message that was unfavorable towards immigrants (Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2017). The problem of immigration was consistently inscribed in the context of state security, stressing that it was the migration crisis that was a factor determining its level, also implicating an increase in a terrorist threat. The Manchester events were used to illustrate the consequences of the influx of immigrants to Europe.

The message from the PiS (Law and Justice) politicians regarding refugees clearly outlined a tendency to identify the influx of immigration with an increase in a threat to state security. Various threats related to the influx of immigrants were pointed out, including – as PiS president Jarosław Kaczyński pointed out – the possibility of radical lowering of the standard of quality of life of Poles (Mocne przemówienie prezesa PiS. W sprawie uchodźców mamy prawo powiedzieć nie). In the opinion of the said politician, decisions of the EU institutions on the relocation of refugees (we are talking here about the European Parliament resolution of 18 May 2017), adopting a large group of foreigners from culturally-alien regions, could lead to a social catastrophe. In his opinion Poland would have to "change our culture completely, radically lower the level of security in our country" ("Kaczyński: Nie możemy w to wchodzić"). The way of interpreting the problem of refugees presented by the head of the PiS designated the narrative of the ruling party. The exposure of possible threats

associated with the admission of immigrants as well as the questioning of EU policy in this area was attempted to be mitigated by the message about Poland's readiness to participate in providing humanitarian aid on the spot. Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, sharing the reluctance to accept refugees in Poland and contesting the EU relocation system, declared at the same time the willingness to provide financial and organizational support (Premier Morawiecki: Pomoc uchodźcom na miejscu jest najbardziej realna i konkretna)

The discourse on the problem of refugees in Poland, its dynamics and intensity were dictated firstly by the scale and circumstances accompanying the influx of immigrants into the EU, secondly, by the nature of the EU proposal, and thirdly, by domestic, internal conditions. The problem of refugees was most often discussed when EU institutions expected decisions and involvement. Falling back on rhetorical wording, referring to stereotypes and prejudices, the EU policy was challenged by pointing to the right to defend one's own citizens from potential dangers related to the influx of refugees. At the same time, it should be emphasized that the presence of refugee issues in the public debate in Poland in the dimension in which it has been dealt with in recent years is a *novum* in the Polish reality. Previously, refugees were not a subject of political disputes in the same scope as today. Apart from a deeper analysis of the causes of this phenomenon, one should note the clear trends to politicize this issue and to perceive it in terms of usefulness in the current political activity of political parties. The subject of refugees was in the area of interest of all entities active on the Polish political scene, with the difference that not all political parties perceived the refugee influx as a threat to the security of the state, or at least they did not associate this issue with the consent to accept them in Poland. Recognizing the possible repercussions for security, using the category of solidarity and shared responsibility for solving the migration crisis, they postulated the admission of refugees and the fulfillment of EU obligations.

Conclusions

The ongoing debate in Poland on the influx of refugees is dominated by emotional statements that lack justification in data, focus on stereotypes and simplifications, and moreover, serve to strengthen, not to slow down, the political crisis in Poland. Notwithstanding that immigration is not an existential threat in Poland, but rather a time problem, the securitization process that is dealt with serves political purposes. A belief in the existing threat and obtaining acceptance for the conducted policy are essential. Reinforcing the conviction about the existing threat strengthens ties with the electorate and cements political support convincing the society about the determination of the rulers in ensuring security even at the expense of unfavorable international reactions. In the debate on refugees, attempts have been made to redirect the center of gravity from the analysis of the refugee phenomenon itself, its causes, consequences and the role of Poland in solving the migration crisis, towards the direction of threats resulting from their presence in Poland. A refugee (at least one from cultural and religious circles that are distant to Poland) has become a potential source of

threat to state security, hostile, foreign, and alien. What is more, the discussion about refugees in Poland and the potential threat resulting from their presence was carried out when their numbers were minute. What is more, it should be noted that immigrants were not interested in obtaining refugee status in Poland, as evidenced by, for example, the example of 50 Syrian Christian families who arrived in July 2015 at the invitation of Fundacja Estera. Almost all of them quickly left Poland, and those few who applied for a refugee status and received it applied for its repeal (*Syryjczycy nie chcą być uchodźcami w Polsce*). The above example, pointing to the lack of refugees' wider interest in Poland, shows that the political debate devoted to refugees was devoid of rational foundations. Exaggerating the security issues, including exposing the terrorist threat in the situation of refugees' little interest in staying in Poland served only immediate political purposes and points to the extreme process of politicizing the refugee problem.

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