

HANS-PETER MÜLLER

Berlin

JERZY LESZKOWICZ-BACZYŃSKI

Zielona Góra

GROWING DISTRUST TO IMMIGRANTS IN EUROPE AND RISING RIGHT-WING POPULISM – POLAND AND GERMANY COMPARED

INTRODUCTION

When in June 2016 a narrow majority of the British electorate decided for Brexit, this decision seemed to mark the last interim and ultimate victory of populism in Europe. Meanwhile the story went on with ups and downs. In Austria a green-liberal candidate instead of a populist one became Federal President, but after the general election in the autumn of 2017 the populist FPÖ became the second-strongest party in the Austrian parliament and has joined a conservative-right wing populist government coalition under Andreas Kurz - the 31 year old former foreign minister and political whiz kid; in May 2017 in France another political whiz kid Emanuel Macron defeated the Front National candidate Marine Le Pen who suffered a double devastating defeat: in the presidential election and in the following general election. On the other hand as the biggest bang ever, against all expectations Donald Trump -the ultra-populist and racist candidate won the US presidential election in late 2016, possibly with the KGB/FSB support. And within the EU the VISEGRAD states under the guidance of Poland and Hungary have formed a strong chauvinist anti-migration opposition. Finally, in Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel won the September 2017 general election but with the second-worst result of the CDU in the last 50 years. Moreover, the new populist AfD party (“Alternative for Germany”) came third (12.6%) becoming the third-strongest power after the CDU and SPD in the Deutscher Bundestag as a result of Merkel’s misguided policy on mass immigration to Germany. Meanwhile in Poland the PiS (Power and Justice) government instigated a sharp urban-rural antagonism to establish the majority support to its strong xenophobic anti-EU policy.

In late 2015 we began our discussions on some elementary facts of populism and since then things have taken a turn for the better or worse as the above examples show. But the sociological basics that form the structure of our theoretical Part I may be still valid. We believe that our empirical data on the climax of the crisis still support the general validity of our findings. We try to show that there are real facts and problems that cannot be met with moral rigorism or political correctness of official language regulations alone. It is also important to emphasize that it is not our intention to pro-

mote or justify any xenophobic views. We do point out basic sociological issues and parameters that should be taken into consideration by every country or government or discussant while trying to argue how to approach immigration policies and which may be misinterpreted due to political correctness watchdogs or abused by populist xenophobes.

Attempts at explaining populism made by politicians, journalists and scientists vary from an electorate insult (stupidity, abuse of suffrage, etc.) to self-critical reflections on what might have gone wrong. In 2016, Romain Leick stated that "Populist trends are forerunners of democratic failure"¹. The core problem seems to be clear: there is a feeling that something goes wrong in Europe. A considerable part of average people including the middle class is deeply sceptical about the dream of pro-European political and economic elites about increasing centralisation, liberalisation, differentiation, and immigration; in short: about globalization effects which average people see more as threats than promises. While the elites strive for more European centralisation and harmonisation, the latter focuses on "Brussel's" absurd regulations on bent cucumbers or the arbitrary limits on power consumption by household vacuum cleaners. "It's them who get the impression that democracy which shall safeguard people's sovereignty doesn't really defend their interests nor fulfils their will. Their representatives seem to elude the very ones who have chosen and delegated them"².

The mechanism of the inter-EU distribution of subsidies especially within the common agricultural market and by regional policy subsidies is highly valued by those who profit. Nevertheless the number of different developments causing indignation continues to grow: an apparently limitless expansion of the European Union, especially the debate on the admittance of (re-Islamised) Turkey to the EU; the introduction of Euro and Maastricht limits on national debt, the reduction of national economic policy competences; permanent disputes, resolved by a chain of absurd, rotten compromises reached behind closed doors; the growing dissatisfaction with the rampant growth of now the 30 000 people strong Brussels bureaucracy staff and black box decision processes unclear for ordinary people, but widely open to all kinds of economic pressure groups; the increasing European incapability to counter international terrorism by an effective joint response; problems with unlimited migration within the Schengen area and the nearly unlimited immigration to the EU against the background of rising integration problems of immigrants (e.g. a big city "no go areas").

When we agreed on the working title of this paper, the combination of problems of an unlimited mass immigration to Germany (and a limited one to Poland) and the growing anti-Muslim populism seemed to be the adequate focus to discuss the sociological background of the emerging populism. But after the Brexit decision, the issues involved have become more fundamental as Europe returns to the 2005 situation when the French electorate refused to endorse the idea of further integration and

¹ R. Leick (2016), *Die Idioten der Familie*, "Der Spiegel" no. 27, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/debatte-der-siegeszug-des-populismus-a-1101440.html> (12.7.2016)

² *Ibid.*

centralisation and rejected the common European constitution. Although nine other countries beside France announced referenda too, the shock caused by the French refusal was so profound that only two referenda were carried while the remaining seven were cancelled. Even then political analysts found out that the French “no” should mainly be interpreted as an expression of mistrust of French and European political establishment policies and not so much of the idea of the EU in general. The victory of Emanuel Macron and his “En marche” party stopped the fatal and apparently unstoppable trend toward populism. Nevertheless, the basic sociological problem in society and therefore in this essay is the fundamental question about the role of trust as the necessary societal bonding agent. The two other problems, i.e. immigration and populism, will be approached as subsets of the trust issue.

CONFIDENCE, IMMIGRATION, POPULISM – SOCIOLOGICAL FACTS

Confidence (trust)

Trust means reliable and justified expectations, individually and collectively. Trust is such a fundamental fact of social life that is presupposed automatically to be obviously existent - and therefore it has long been disregarded as an issue. All optimistic societal models took trust for granted. Thomas Hobbes regarded trust to be a powerful guarantor (the “leviathan”) and the only warrant enabling all individuals to expect a secure tomorrow. Adam Smith did not want to include trust in the confidence-building wisdom of a supreme ruler’s visible hand. He was the first to draft a kind of an institutional trust regulation where trust was confidence based on the capability of self-regulation by a market mechanism (“invisible hand”). Against the background of the French revolution and facing the “social question” of the 19th century, Marx, a young Hegelian, transformed the above to a philosophy of collective class distrust, i.e. class struggle is class distrust proceeding to action. Social confidence is only possible within one’s own class, i.e. class solidarity. But as long as in normal times class relations are predominantly peaceful and cooperative, in short, they are relatively confident, Joseph Schumpeter countered Marx by saying that that his theory of permanent class distrust must in fact rely on “largely pathologic cases for its verification”³.

What Marx had sensed but not really explicated, Emile Durkheim tried to define as a social fact: the original form and basis of any kind of social cohesion is affective; it is a feeling of proximity by similarity. According to Durkheim, confidence in similarity produces cohesion by solidarity *sui generis*, i.e. a mechanical solidarity.⁴ Therefore, confidence is a necessary basic collective predisposition of all individuals in any kind of society to a peaceful cohesion. Georg Simmel pursued this idea, however he regarded so-

³ J. Schumpeter (1987), *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (German) 6th edition. Francke, Tübingen, p. 40.

⁴ E. Durkheim (1988), *Über soziale Arbeitsteilung*, (German) 2nd edition. Suhrkamp Frankfurt/Main, p. 156.

cial confidence as a constructive balancing act between knowledge and non-knowledge. Social confidence is a mutually and altogether conductive “hypothesis regarding future behaviour”⁵. In 1932⁶, Ferdinand Tönnies in his dictionary article on “Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft” was the first to dedicate a whole entry entitled “on trust and distrust” to this subject. Differently to Durkheim’s approach, Tönnies assigned confidence a strong institutional character. We feel socially safe having “confidence in the regular and safe – though very differently functioning – three big systems of social volition which I call order, law, and morality”⁷. Based on these three elements social confidence means institutionalised expectation reliability. In 1968 Niklas Luhmann amended the functionalist interpretation, i.e. confidence is a pre-rational decision of an individual to stay reactive in his environment while facing the complexity of action alternatives.⁸ Pierre Bourdieu returned to the old class question in a new way: economic capital is not enough to describe an individual’s social position and his social capital. How do individuals handle confidence and safety within their social status? By the formation of social capital. Confidence therefore is a status adequate and reliable expectation born by social capital at the individual’s disposal.⁹ Communitarian Robert Putnam somewhat recombined the ideas of Durkheim and Bourdieu. How do confidence and societal cohesion correlate? Following Putnam one could say that social capital based on mutual trust is equal to expectation reliability with respect to the existence of social reciprocity. One offers his input in advance and is rather sure that he will be repaid in some way sooner or later. Confidence in reciprocity presupposes some kind of an institutionalised collective memory. Putnam highlights this argument saying: “Trust is a ‘lubricant’ for social life”¹⁰.

Actually Piotr Sztompka in his comprehensive study on trust tries to analyse the macro-societal conditions of chances and patterns following from an “endemic” distrust culture to a democratic trust culture in post-communist transition societies.¹¹ Is it possible to overcome the legacy of the distrust culture from communist times? A culture of trust needs time as it arises from the continuity of processes including five micro-societal preconditions which – as Sztompka argues – include: (1) normative coherence, (2) stability of social order (changes must be gradual, slow and predictable; a sudden fundamental change is the enemy of trust culture as it undermines “the existential fabric

⁵ G. Simmel (1992), *Soziologie*, O. Ramstedt ed., Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main, Vol. 11, p. 393.

⁶ F. Tönnies (1982), *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, in: A. Vierkandt (ed.), *Handwörterbuch der Soziologie*. Enke Stuttgart.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 29.

⁸ N. Luhmann (1968), *Vertrauen: Ein Mechanismus der Reduktion sozialer Komplexität*. Enke Stuttgart, p. 10, 13.

⁹ P. Bourdieu (2005), *Die verborgenen Mechanismen der Macht*. VSA Hamburg, p. 63ff.

¹⁰ R.D. Putnam, K.A. Goss, *Introduction*, in: R. Putnam ed. (2001), *Gesellschaft und Gemeinsinn. Sozialkapital im internationalen Vergleich*. Bertelsmann, Gütesloh, p. 21.

¹¹ P. Sztompka (2000), *Trust. A sociological Theory*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press. We focus our summary on the social aspects in Sztompka’s concept. As far as an individual perspective is concerned, Sztompka adheres to the framework of Luhmann and the stochastic theory, i.e. trust is a “simplifying strategy that enables individuals to adapt to complex social environment” and more generally: “trust is a bet about the future contingent actions of others.” *Ibid.* p. 25.

of social life”), (3) transparency of the social organisation, (4) familiarity “as the keynote to trust” – where he quotes Giddens, and (5) accountability of other people and institutions.¹² Maybe policy can help trust building by generating a “learning pressure” while shaping institutions and by educating for trust.¹³ As a trust culture is more likely to emerge in democracy, Sztompka argues that trust in democracy is confronted with two inherent paradoxes. (1) Trust in democracy means institutionalising the distrust in the democratic architecture of institutions. The more there is the institutionalised distrust safeguarding against a breach of trust, the more spontaneous trust is possible. Building democracy means institutionalising trust. Trust - Sztompka argues - arises from the elementary principles of incorporated distrust. “People are more prepared to trust institutions and other people if the social organization in which they operate insures them against potential breaches of trust. Democratic organization provides this kind of insurance”¹⁴. So the most serious violation of trust happens if the “meta-trust” in democracy itself is undermined. “When people live in a democracy, they develop a kind of meta-trust, trust in democracy itself as the ultimate insurance of other kinds of trust they may venture. Once this meta-trust is breached, and the insurance defaults, they feel cheated. This is immediately reflected in all other relationships where they invested trust; the culture of trust is shattered. [...] the failure of democracy is more destructive for the culture of trust than an outright autocratic regime”¹⁵. (2) The second paradox is that institutionalised distrust is constitutive for democracy but also its sparing application. “The extensive potential availability of democratic checks and controls must be matched by their very limited actualization. Institutionalized distrust must remain in the shadows, as a distant protective framework for spontaneous trustful actions”¹⁶. Democracy engenders trust, but once it is enrooted, the trust culture helps to sustain democracy.¹⁷

If populist trends are “forerunners of democratic failure” as Romain Leick stated, what might have gone wrong with a growing minority of people in nearly all Europe who no longer want to rely on the trust generating and well-working democratic institutions and procedures? What could be the reasons?

IMMIGRATION

As opinion polls from different countries presented below demonstrate, there is a widespread fear of uncontrolled Muslim immigration to Europe. This is more valid the more the original inflow of civil war refugees from Syria and Iraq began to include

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 122-125 *passim*.

¹³ But even if he might be right – the problem in Marx’ eleventh thesis on Feuerbach remains unsolved to him: the educator himself must be educated. But by whom? Realistically, this will be a time consuming and laborious matter of trial and error.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 144, with reference to Offe (1996), p. 34.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*

both the people who sought political asylum (first migration wave) and those who chose to migrate in search for work and a better life (second migration wave) The second migration wave has been encouraged by the open-door policy towards everybody who knocked at the door especially of Germany.

How to treat immigration from a sociological perspective? In 1908 Georg Simmel published his famous essay "The Stranger"¹⁸. It includes his now classic observation that the "stranger" is not a hiker "who comes today and leaves tomorrow", but someone "who comes today and stays tomorrow". Simmel's "stranger" may be read as a description of the roller coaster of feelings and attitudes to strangers to whom a right to hospitality does not apply but who may claim the right to the internationally codified form of asylum for victims of political persecution. "The stranger is near to us insofar as we feel equality of national and social, of professional or generally human kinds between him and us. He is strange to us, insofar as these overarching equalities only connect us in the way they connect people very much anyway"¹⁹.

Simmel argues that there is a different and more aggressive attitude to strangeness that refuses acknowledgement of any equality: the stranger is denied any general human features and rights. Relations to the stranger are non-relations. He is not regarded to be a group member as his *differentia specifica* is emphasized: strange origin, strange type. Simmel also pointed out the danger of prominence being assigned to strangers: in conflict situations it may happen that their role is exaggerated making them the "outside" scapegoats blamed for unrest, agitation and rebellion. The "stranger" is both the insider and outsider. The question is whether what may have been appropriate to describe the role of Jews in central European societies at the beginning of 20th century is adequate to describe mass immigration of today?

Highly respected German sociologist Karl-Otto Hondrich took up Simmel's reflections on the relations of proximity and strangeness but also referred indirectly to Durkheim's notion of solidarity. Under the pressure of mass immigration the risk of social regression to mechanical solidarity may surface. This solidarity is a special kind of *Gemeinschaft's* solidarity based on the affective feelings of nearness by similarity. We differentiate between "us" and "them". "Immigration is imposition" is the provocative title of Hondrich's essay.²⁰

Immigration, he argues, is one of the most gross phenomena in sociomoral life. (All following quotations loc. cit.) No relational feeling is historically more rationally justified than xenophobia: prudence, refusal, and hostility against the stranger are basic feelings of *Gemeinschaft's* type. We like who is similar to us. This follows from basic sociomoral principles: the principle of reciprocity (tit for tat), the principle of favouritism ("you should love yours more than strangers"), the principle of *Gemeinschaft* (you shall accord) and the principle of seniority (older ties have priority over

¹⁸ G. Simmel (1908), *Exkurs über den Fremden*, in: G. Simmel, *Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung*. Duncker & Humblot, Berlin, p. 509-512.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ K.O. Hondrich (2006), *Einwanderung ist Zumutung*. „Die Welt“ 6.5.2006, <http://www.welt.de/print-welt/article214904.html> (12.2.2008).

younger ones). "These elementary principles are the basis of social life in all cultures and are against immigration. But how have they come about?" By respecting the elementary principles of morality. Those who are longer in, decide about who is entitled to get in now. Affiliation must be advantageous for society. Moreover, mutuality of advantage and willingness to conform are expected.

Judaism and Christianity, Hondrich continues to argue, promoted the greatest possible moral revolution ever. All basic moral principles were inverted: altruism instead of xenophobia (love your neighbour like yourself), universal fraternity prior to one's own community, individual personality prior to collective conformity pressure, freedom of restart prior to relevance of origin, forgiveness instead of retaliation. "We regard this counter morality exaggerated by the Protestant Reformation, Enlightenment and general Human Rights to be moral par excellence. But we ignore the earlier replacement effect." Durkheim would have called this "organic solidarity", social cohesion in spite of social differentiation, and it takes place although we are all somewhat unknown to and a bit different from one another. This new type of counter morality has become the benchmark for western freedom culture.

In fact one could complete Hondrich's argument saying that what is unknown does not have to be is strange. In an organic solidarity society there is a core of binding mechanical solidarity principles by similarity. We wish to be sure that certain basic collective feelings, interests, and values remain unchallenged, and so we acknowledge that to an extent we are similar to others. Usually this is attributed to a common language, habits, customs, values, signs, symbols, and connotations – culture in short. But what happens in the case of immigration? In concord with David Rueda, Wolfgang Streeck has recently argued that under the pressure of mass immigration of outsiders, the insiders and bodies encouraging the similarity concept reduce their support for solidarity.²¹ The more heterogeneous a society is, the lesser is its willingness to pay for solidarity. Streeck points to Swedish research findings that a solidary transfer system always includes silent presuppositions about how recipients of social benefits must behave. In other words, how to prove a noticeable similarity by sending customary signals of gratitude. His conclusion is that the increasing heterogeneity weakens the similarity-based solidarity.

Hondrich draws attention to this argumentation saying that the uncontrolled mass immigration into democratic societies is a big challenge to their basic cohesive morality based on similarity. "As long as democracy is based on majority decisions, the majority must be certain that they remain in control, that in spite of immigration issues, they are the majority and their collective feelings, interests, and values are a priority. In this way the fear and xenophobia, which are the traditional and everlasting companions of immigration issues, cannot be eliminated but may be banned".²² Facing the rising immigration from Turkey due to family reunion and by

²¹ W. Streeck (2016), *In jedem Einwanderungsland entstehen Enklaven*, „Wirtschaftswoche“ 11.3.2016. <http://www.wiwo.de/politik/deutschland/wolfgang-streeck-...> (19.4.2016).

²² K.O. Hondrich (2006), *op. cit.*

importation of Muslim brides and double citizenship naturalization of Turkish immigrants, Hondrich already in 2006 noticed that “the concept of integration by assimilation stretches to its limits if a minority, the Turkish, increase their self-weight by permanent replenishment. Then the elementary principles of *Gemeinschaft*, of reciprocity and of long co-habitation tend to strengthen cultural differences and disconcertment rather than be able to mitigate the problem”.²³ Integration of immigrants needs a dominant majority culture or the culturally enrooted power of the above mentioned elementary moral principles. He adds: “This power will be understood anywhere, most likely where the migrants come from.” But in for a penny, in for a pound, it is worth the effort as Hondrich would argue. If a new self-confidence in our western majority culture could include more willingness to make the above mentioned liberal and enlightened counter morality the basis of social coexistence, i.e. to accept more dissimilarity, then the next step from mechanical to organic solidarity in the sense of Durkheim could indeed be possible. The awareness of being a member of an internally differentiated whole sharing some basic common rules and principles would then encourage the approval of heterogeneity. It is a postulate which needs to be advocated by those who are in and outside. The transformation of a stranger to a loyal fellow citizen entails the acceptance of the principle that dissimilarity which can to be tolerated must be negotiated to reach a consensus about tolerated dissimilarity and the willingness to accept necessary assimilation. However, new populism does not trust the political and cultural elite’s consensus reached in the course of negotiations.

POPULISM

There are at least two ways how to approach populism. One is its condemnation by the enlightened liberal political, academic, and cultural elites. Self-assured and convinced to follow the right way, they pursue their cultural hegemony “project” of Europeanisation, a gigantic realisation of Immanuel Kant’s project of “a rational idea about a peaceful community of all nations”, as Romain Leick has recently described it.²⁴ And they are right. Seventy years of peace and peaceful trade and cooperation, youth exchanges, town twinning and of trans-border Euro-regions, etc. have strengthened mutual understanding and a non-chauvinistic perception of cultural diversity. In this way Europe’s old nationalism and chauvinism have been overcome. The project was so attractive that after the fall of communism, nearly all post-communist states wanted to join this project, including Russia’s and Turkey’s attempts. However, this willingness on the part of non-EU states had its limitations. The EU faced the threat of overstretching. Europe has become more and more well-meant instead of well-made by its political and economic elites.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ R. Leick R. (2016), *op. cit.*

The other way to approach populism is to see the grain of truth in populist arguments. Professional European politicians have lost their cultural hegemony – as advocated by Antonio Gramsci – over the simple lower working classes the members of which supported them until the project of Europeanisation embraced social progress, freedom, justice, and solidarity.²⁵ Today, the rising populism indicates that there is a growing number of people not willing to take part in one of the most important hegemony supporting mechanisms, i.e. the voting in national elections for the biggest people's parties, usually two per country and both pro-European.

The ugly populism

Today, Europe from the north to south, from the west to east is full of populism. What are the characteristics of this movement?²⁶ It is anti-elitist. Common people, their silent majority does not approve of the ruling elites. These common people see themselves as true, unerring, and authentic representatives and executors of the people's will although they can hardly prove their democratic legitimation. Jan W. Müller argues that their legitimation is derived from popular assemblies where demagogic rhetorical techniques are not questioned, and cheap and hollow common-sense phrases are propagated. The common people claim to be the mouthpieces of common sense knowledge which they value superior to reflection knowledge of intellectuals. For them the elected representatives of the people are traitors whom they accuse to have abused people's trust and disregard the "true" will of common people. They are not against representative democracy as such but against its wrong doings. In fact, their mock plausible argumentation does not reveal how the "real" representation of the "true" people shall be ascertained beyond public election outcomes.²⁷ Their explanations of the breach of real people's expectations and policies implemented are conspiracy theories, e.g. the "mendacious press" and conspiracy cartels of other political parties and the like. They claim a higher morality standard as their own legitimacy stands against a minor and misguided legitimacy of all others. Populism needs a morally loaded dividing line between "we" (the authentic people) and "them" (aloof, corrupt, duplicitous, and selfish functional elites who live "in a world of their own"), as Karin Priester – one of the leading German populism experts – argues.²⁸

²⁵ Cf. *ibid.*

²⁶ Following arguments are mainly taken from: J.W. Mueller (2016), *Was ist Populismus. Ein Essay*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main. Summery version as: *Woran man sie erkennen kann*. "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" 6.5.2016, p. 11.

²⁷ The hasty generalised arguments of this populism "expert" from May 2016 proved to be obsolete only 3 months later as in the German and French cases (do not forget the Brexit vote!) the legitimized basis of elections is increasingly approved.

²⁸ K. Priester (2012), *Wesensmerkmale des Populismus*, "Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte" no 5-6, p. 5.

Still, it does not help to denounce populism as insubstantial, to include a “tenuous ideology” in a “host-ideology”²⁹ and the anti-political romanticism of a retrograde utopia in the populist “heartland”. Priester admits that populist parties and movements (“anti-parties”) articulate a widespread uneasiness about the “political party rule”, the EU bureaucracy, and about immigration policies in particular.³⁰

Jan W. Mueller makes a good point concluding that “Populists force citizens to identify a common understanding of symbolic and moral foundations of society”³¹. In other words, populists push to identify one’s similarity feelings and limits of dissimilarity tolerance.

Self-bred populism

Let us return to the possible grain of truth question in populism. In her essay Priester - in some more self-critical paragraphs - approaches populism as a “crisis symptom” which might be advantageous. “Populists appear to be agenda setters, who pick up tabooed, unpleasant, or neglected topics and insofar they may not only be a threat but also a fertile challenge with the positive function of a useful corrective”³². “Populism does not emerge out of nowhere, but always in the wake of social crisis and common disillusionment”³³. Populism reacts to the limiting of policy to technocratic governance, to deliberative arrangements between political decision makers and a democratically non-legitimised lobby and pressure group experts and to the alleged lack of alternatives to policies of people’s parties. Priester also has to admit that populism appears to be justified if the closeness of MPs and public institutions to citizens is increasingly replaced by the nuisance of communication expertise and media spokespersons. In this situation populism is the reaction to the fact that people feel degraded by spin doctors and communication experts and obtuse if they do not accept disguising wordings. Taken this way, populism may have a positive function. It challenges political sclerotization, queries political class cartelization and reactivates apathetic constituencies which happened in four German Länder elections in 2016. “The feeling of powerlessness in transparent processes was and still is a favourable hotbed for populism”³⁴.

Hondrich in his essay added another aspect, namely a predisposition of post-communist societies to populism. “Indignant minorities do not speak themselves but produce radical minorities who articulate brutally what political correctness sweeps under the carpet”³⁵. In East Germany as well as in other Visegrad states

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4. Terms are taken from Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, Oxford 1998, quoted from Priester, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

³⁰ K. Priester (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 3-7 *passim*.

³¹ J. W. Mueller (2016), *ibid.*

³² K. Priester (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 7

³³ *Ibid.* Quotation taken from the German party system expert Jürgen Falter (2002).

³⁴ K. Priester (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 8.

³⁵ K.O. Hondrich (2006), *op. cit.*

there might be a feeling that the new bosses and their consultants from the IMF, Brussels, and Berlin have not left a stone standing, rejigging nearly everything familiar from the past. At the same time people there had to recognize that the EU accession conditions abided strong labour market protection rules but the four basic free movements of goods, capital, services, and labour in industry and agriculture had to be accepted by new EU member states. It seems as if the imposition from Brussels and Berlin to accept unlimited immigration³⁶ and the unilateral breach of the Dublin asylum regime by the German government in August 2015 without any consultations was the last straw that broke the camel's back. Hondrich focussed on the East-German case but to an extent his observation could be extended to other Eastern European states, too. A feeling of resistance against the new bosses was born. The new bosses flooded or tried to flood their old countries with asylum seekers and migrant strangers about whom they seemed to care more than about their own compatriots with older *Gemeinschaft's* claims. Hondrich therefore continued: "All this is not self-evident if one does not recognize an elementary moral rule: priority of one's own over the strange, of *Gemeinschaft* over minority, of seniority relations over younger ones. Immigration and integration issues in Germany were managed as if there were no or only wrongfully basic sociomoral rules the adherence to which should be punished retrospectively for what collectivist ideology had done with them. Only counter morality was given the right to speak".³⁷ Therefore and unsurprisingly the populist rhetoric and arguments met with the governmental and even presidential support and gave birth to a new strong official chauvinism in former USSR satellite states while in eastern Germany a new anti-immigration populism boomed to an extent unknown since the racist incendiary riots in the early 1990s in Rostock-Lichtenhagen and Hoyerswerda. The illusionary open-door policy and insensibility of the overchallenged authorities produced timid resistance even in western Germany.³⁸ There were positive developments too. The famous welcome culture events in both parts of Germany in summer 2015 were an example. At that time 15 percent of the whole population, i.e. 9.5 million people, were engaged in helping and supporting refugees. The majority agreed to accommodate refugees in their neighbourhoods while at the same time a timid but rising minority began to express concerns that the country could reach limits of its accommodation capacities.³⁹ The capacity question became the ostensible symbol for a more fundamental concern with superalienation, not of all but of a growing minority. Hon-

³⁶ Cf. Chancellor Merkel's improvident dictum from September 2015: "The fundamental right for asylum doesn't know any ceiling".

³⁷ K.O. Hondrich (2006), *op. cit.*

³⁸ An example of a small village with 400 inhabitants was given. This community would have been transformed into a minority in their own birthplace within a few weeks if the authorities' plans to accommodate 1000 refugees and immigrants would have been realised. Cf. below: empiric data about the increase of people's concerns with growing numbers of immigrants at the turn of the year 2015-2016.

³⁹ Cf. Allensbach FAZ survey 10/2015, p. 3.

drich's observations proved to be right.⁴⁰ Only if the majority is sure to remain the majority on the basis of sociomoral similarity, immigration will be accepted. But if a considerable part of this majority loses the confidence that the policy makers can keep control over the immigration inflow then public attitudes will suddenly change to scepticism and resistance.

Thus our arguments return to their starting point. Loss of trust due to fearing the loss of control over immigration and being afraid of foreign superalienation have become the prime reason for the actual rise of populism all over Europe. In what follows, this will be illustrated with opinion poll data from Germany and Poland and their comparison.

TRUST AS AN OBJECT OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Trust is a concept with different dimensions. It encompasses attitudes and beliefs, which are essential for social systems to function optimally. According to Rothstein and Uslaner, people who think that most other people can be trusted believe in democratic institutions more strongly than those who do not share this view. They also tend to participate in political life more frequently and they are more active in civic organisations. Furthermore, they are more involved in charity work and more tolerant towards minorities and to people who are not like themselves⁴¹. At the macrostructural level, the presence of trust results in efficient democratic institutions, a well-functioning economy which in turn entails economic growth, as well as in lower crime and corruption rates.⁴²

Centuries of changes in the perception of foreigners resulted in the modern differentiation across countries and nations. The perception of "the stranger" can be seen as a continuum from the full acceptance of otherness to its rejection or negation. In such a categorisation, the first attitude is typical of highly developed systems, including Western European countries and the United States, whereas the latter is characteristic of the Third World countries with low national income, serious internal conflicts and numerous dysfunctions of the state. Analyses have shown that ca. 60 percent of the Norwegian, Danish and Dutch populations believe it is worth trusting others, whereas in Brazil, the Philippines and Turkey this opinion is shared by 10 percent of the population only.⁴³

⁴⁰ Hondrich died in 2007.

⁴¹ B. Rothstein, E. M. Uslaner (2005), *All for All: Equality, Corruption, and Social Trust*, "World Politics" Vol. 58, No. 1, October.

⁴² S. Beugelsdijk, L.F.H. de Groot, A. van Schaik (2004), *Trust and Economic Growth: A Robustness Analysis*, "Oxford Economic Papers" New Series, 56; R. Putnam (1993), *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton; P. J. Zak, S. Knack (2001), *Trust and Growth*, "Economic Journal" 111, April.

⁴³ B. Rothstein, E. Uslaner M. (2005), *All for All: Equality, Corruption, and Social Trust*, "World Politics" Vol. 58, No. 1, October.

The research on trust in European countries has a tradition, the modern roots of which undoubtedly are the analyses by Robert Putnam⁴⁴. Trust research is conducted both in the form of systematic analyses (see the series of analyses carried out by Eurostat) and individual projects.⁴⁵ The analyses focus on comparing social systems with high social capital to those with low social capital.⁴⁶ An important research question is whether social capital is strengthened or weakened under the influence of welfare state institutions. Despite the tendency to focus mainly on the first alternative, Kääriäinen and Lehtonen claim that different forms of social capital are related to components of welfare state regimes in different ways.⁴⁷

While analysing social trust, it should be considered that social trust is generated by two types of equality: economic equality and equality of opportunity. The latter is understood as a situation where the social system creates right conditions for citizens "regardless of their income, ethnic /religious background, sex, and race in areas such as health care, education, and social security and legal protection"⁴⁸ (which does not mean equal chances for all).

Rothstein and Uslaner argue that especially countries with low level of social trust can be caught in a social trap. Moreover, public policies cannot be used effectively when there is a lack of trust. It means that the social trust issue concerns both people and government institutions the role of which is to implement policies.⁴⁹

It is not an easy task to compare Polish and German attitudes towards immigrants because attitudes to 'strangers' are an important component of the broad issue of social trust. The situation in both countries is different, despite some objective similarities such as the impact of the European context. Since the beginning of the migration crisis, there have been strong dissenting voices, documented by public opinion research in both countries, raised against pro-migrant policy and taking in refugees. Furthermore, in both countries there are active far-right groups, which firmly oppose accepting refugees and take to the streets to demonstrate their dissatisfaction. On the Internet, too, a growing wave of aggression and hate speech can be observed in connection with refugees. However, besides all these similarities, there are numerous differences between Poland and Germany.

⁴⁴ R. Putnam (1993) *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton; R. Putnam (2000) *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*, Simon & Schuster, New York.

⁴⁵ Cf. T. Reeskens, M. Hooghe (2008), *Cross-cultural measurement equivalence of generalized trust. Evidence from the European Social Survey (2002 and 2004)*, "Social Indicators Research" Vol. 85, Issue 3, p. 515-532.

⁴⁶ J. Kääriäinen, H. Lehtonen (2006), *The variety of social capital in welfare state regimes – A comparative study of 21 countries*, "European Societies" Vol. 8, No. 1, 1/March 2006; P. Scheepers, M. T. Grotenhuis, J. Gelissen (2002), *Welfare States and Dimensions of Social Capital: Cross-national Comparisons of Social Contacts in European Countries*, "European Societies" Vol. 4, No. 2, Juni 2002; T. Saltkjel, I. Malmberg-Heimonen (2014), *Social inequalities, social trust and civic participation – the case of Norway*, "European Journal of Social Work" Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2014.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, *ibid.*

⁴⁸ B. Rothstein, E. M. Uslaner (2005), *All for All: Equality, Corruption, and Social Trust*, "World Politics" Vol. 58, No. 1, October, p. 42.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Table 1

Factors contributing to the differences between Polish and German attitudes towards immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa (2015-2016)

Differentiating factor	Poland	Germany
state policy, rhetoric of public speeches about migration	oblique, anti-immigrant	pro-immigrant
government's reactions to the migration crisis	border closure, no infrastructure for refugees, no support system	open borders, creation of refugee centres, creation of a support system
earlier contacts with Arabs and Muslims	no contacts, very rare	rare and average
public beliefs	negative	diverse and moderately negative
support offered by nongovernmental organisations, volunteering (in the country)	no	yes
reactions of religious hierarchs to aversion to immigrants	process of change: from no reactions or "neutral" reactions to negative (at present)	negative

Source: authors' research.

The problem of huge numbers of refugees from Arab countries (especially from war-torn Syria), which affects the whole of Europe, met with considerable reservations and even fierce opposition in Poland. The opposition came both from right-wing politicians in the government and from public opinion. The discussion was dominated by those who were clearly reluctant to accommodate even a small number of refugees in Poland. The right-wing government, when announcing their objections, suggested that refugees would pose a threat to the state and put the country at risk of terrorism. It was implied that there were terrorists among those fleeing war. A prominent politician even argued that people should be afraid of bacteria and viruses unknown in the country, which could be brought by the refugees. Negative opinions voiced by the government contributed to widespread opposition to giving shelter to refugees, visible especially on online discussion boards. The language used by those against providing support fulfilled the criteria of hate speech. However, public prosecutors have taken no legal action against the authors of hateful comments. Considering the differences between Poland and Germany presented in Table 1, it appears that Poland experiences *a systematic dystrophy of trust*.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE MIGRANT CRISIS: POLAND

The problem of accommodating those escaping war or persecution in their countries of origin is not a recent one. On the contrary, its genesis goes back quite a long way. In Poland, the research on this topic began at the beginning of the transition pe-

riod. The first studies were carried out by the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS, Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej)⁵⁰. In 1992, a negative attitude towards foreigners was already widespread in Poland. At that time, however, the foreigners were mostly citizens of former Soviet Union countries, Yugoslavia and Romania. More than half of Poles (55 percent) were in favour of refugees being granted temporary residence in Poland, but only 3 percent would accept their permanent residence. At the same time, one in three Poles (34 percent) remained indifferent or opted for sending refugees to other countries or back to their countries of origin. Unfavorable attitudes were manifested mostly by the elderly, people with little education and low income.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the European Social Survey of 2002 demonstrated that in Poland the attitude towards refugees was more positive than in other European societies.⁵²

Surveys in the following years confirmed a slowly growing aversion towards refugees in Poland. It seems likely that in the 1990s, in the climate of openness to Europe, the foreign policy of that time and the desire to integrate with the European Union led to an increasingly positive perception of immigrants. Therefore, in 1997 the attitude to refugees started to improve. In the CBOS study of 2004, more than one in four respondents (27 percent) agreed that refugees should have the right to come to Poland and settle there, whereas almost half of Poles (48 percent) were willing to grant them temporary residence permits.⁵³ In 2015, these numbers were only slightly different (22 percent and 54 percent, respectively). In both surveys, the percentage of those refusing refugees the right to stay in Poland was similar (14 percent and 15 percent, respectively).⁵⁴

After 2014, the attitude changed noticeably. The public became increasingly critical of the idea of Poland taking in refugees.⁵⁵ The growing fear of refugees manifested itself in the growing number of Poles opposing their admittance. In the end of 2015, such an opinion was shared by more than half (57 percent) of Poles.⁵⁶ The rising problem of refugees and attitudes to them was also reflected in the increasingly heated public debate. As a result, the attitudes became more polarised. In February 2016 nearly four in ten respondents were in favour of Poland providing shelter and assistance to refugees.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ CBOS (1992) *Spoleczne postawy wobec uchodźców i migrantów zarobkowych*, komunikat z badań, BS/403/100/92, Warszawa.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² K. Andrejuk (2015), *Postawy wobec migrantów w świetle wyników Europejskiego Sondażu Społecznego 2014-2015. Polska na tle Europy*, "Working Paper" 2015, No. 2.

⁵³ CBOS (2004) *Obcokrajowcy w Polsce*, Komunikat z badań, BS/141/2004, Warszawa.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*; CBOS (2015) *Polacy wobec problemu uchodźstwa*, Komunikat z badań nr 81/2015, Warszawa.

⁵⁵ CBOS (2015) *Polacy wobec problemu uchodźstwa...*

⁵⁶ In May 2015, CBOS started to distinguish between refugees from Ukraine and those from Arab countries (Middle East, Africa) in its surveys. CBOS 2016

⁵⁷ CBOS (2016) *Stosunek Polaków do przyjmowania uchodźców*, Komunikat z badań nr 24/2016, Warszawa.

The attitudes towards immigrants changed which was reflected in a drop in trust in them after 2014. This process was accompanied by another important phenomenon, i.e. the change of socio-demographic features of those strongly critical of migrants. In the past, the aversion to foreigners was typical of farmers and senior citizens. If other criteria were used, the aversion was typical of people with low education and economic status.⁵⁸ However, the migrant crisis in Europe, subject to the scrutiny of media including the Internet, activated and antagonised mostly young people: a phenomenon that can be described as a 'media efficiency hypothesis'. In view of the earlier discussion, it is not surprising that people with right-wing sympathies prevailed in the heated discussions.⁵⁹ An online study carried out by the Polish Center for Research on Prejudice (CBU, Centrum Badań nad Uprzedzeniami) published in 2015, revealed an already high level of prejudice and negative attitudes towards Muslims. Two thirds of young people (65.8 percent) declared they would feel uncomfortable in the presence of Muslims.⁶⁰ These feelings had to do with three kinds of risk: the threat of terrorism, symbolic risks resulting from a different culture, and the risk of losing livelihood when competing for jobs. Significantly, a large majority of young Poles refused to describe newcomers from the Middle East and Africa as 'refugees', which shows that the recognition of one's different cultural origin (like Islamic religion and Arab culture) is yet another evidence of the lack of trust. The difficult (or even tragic) situation in the countries of refugees' origin has been questioned. Many Poles are convinced the newcomers are not victims of war and all they want is to improve their economic status thanks to European social benefits.

Poles do not base their beliefs about the refugees on their real life experience with recent refugees due to the lack of it. Their 'knowledge' comes from stereotypes, old prejudices and media reports on terrorist attacks. The CBOS conducted a research study on Poles' knowledge of Arab countries and Islam⁶¹ which showed that only 13 percent of respondents knew at least one Muslim person. An analysis performed by the Center for Research on Prejudice (CBU) largely corroborated this result, as only 12 percent of adults responded positively to the question: 'Do you know any Muslims personally?' Such percentages were also confirmed in the analyses made by the CBOS in 2015.⁶² Furthermore, in an online survey on Poles' attitudes towards followers of various religions, carried by the CBU in September 2015, Muslims were the least positively perceived religious group as nearly two thirds of respondents (65.4%) declared they would prefer to distance themselves from Muslims.⁶³

⁵⁸ CBOS (2012) *Spoleczne postawy wobec wyznawców innych religii*, Komunikat z badań, BS/130/2012.

⁵⁹ CBOS (2016) *Stosunek Polaków do przyjmowania uchodźców...*

⁶⁰ A. Stefaniuk (2015), *Postrzeganie muzułmanów w Polsce – raport z badania sondażowego*, Centrum Badań nad Uprzedzeniami, Warszawa, p. 16.

⁶¹ CBOS (2012) *Spoleczne postawy wobec wyznawców innych religii*, Komunikat z badań, BS/130/2012.

⁶² CBOS (2015b), *Postawy wobec islamu i muzułmanów*, Komunikat z badań nr 37/2015, Warszawa.

⁶³ Other religions included in the survey: Catholicism, Orthodox Church, Protestantism, Buddhism, Judaism, Jehovah's Witnesses. An additional option: atheism.

The analyses made by the Institute for Market and Social Research (IBRIS, Instytut Badań Rynkowych i Społecznych) in 2015 confirmed the thesis that the degree of aversion to Muslims correlates with a young age of respondents. In October 2015, the fear of a growing Islamisation of Poland due to the influx of migrants was reported by 77 percent of respondents in the age of 18 to 24. Interestingly, this fear was clearly weaker in the group of slightly older people (25-34 years old, 43 percent).⁶⁴ Notably, half of respondents (51 percent) in this age group said they were not afraid of the Islamisation of their country. If these results were to be interpreted in the light of the media efficiency hypothesis introduced above, it could be concluded that the long exposure of young people to online material accompanies their low level of criticism and limited competence in independent judging of the information available. This younger generation is much more skilled in searching for information in different sources, but little critical. Besides, there is yet another empirically proved way to explain strong negative beliefs of young people. An experiment performed by the Center for Research on Prejudice has shown that high levels of islamophobia are related to reading anti-Islamic comments posted on online discussion boards. This is true even in the case of people who held no prejudice of this kind earlier.⁶⁵

The observers of political life in Poland have been surprised by the levels of aversion and aggression towards potential asylum seekers. Negative and insulting comments continue to be voiced, even though only one group of refugees has arrived in Poland under EU internal agreements. Therefore, online opinions do not result from direct contacts and experience but only from beliefs and prejudices. A study conducted by the CBOS in cooperation with the Newspoint firm specializing in e-monitoring⁶⁶ provided additional interesting data.⁶⁷ Positive comments on the issue constituted only 6% of all comments, and neutral ones were only twice as common (13 percent).

In the same year (2015), another online research study on the social distance towards Muslims was carried. It was an opinion poll.⁶⁸ As in the earlier analyses, the research showed a significant distance, this time measured by the readiness to accept Muslims in the social roles of co-workers, neighbours and family members. In

⁶⁴ IBRIS (2016), *Obawy przed islamizacją Polski w wyniku napływu imigrantów z Bliskiego Wschodu*, http://www.ibris.pl/Obawy_przed_islamizacja_Polski_w_wyniku_naplywu_imigrantow_z_Bliskiego_Wschodu, (15.04.2016).

⁶⁵ P. Wiczorkiewicz (2015), *Bilewicz: Wszyscy jesteśmy terrorystami*, "Dziennik Opinii" 11 grudnia 2015 (<http://www.krytykapolityczna.pl/artykuly/opinie/20151209/bilewicz-uchodzcy-polska-islamofobia>), (15.04.2016).

⁶⁶ Over eight thousand Polish websites were analyzed (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, NK, Golden Line, Instagram), along with smaller platforms, discussion boards and blogs: 13 million sources in total. The basic unit of analysis was one post which included one of the following keywords (in Polish): refugee, immigrant, asylee, asylum seeker (in the context of: Syria, Eritrea, the Middle East, Africa, Islam), Muslim, Syrian, Arab, Ukraine, Donbas, Ukrainian.

⁶⁷ CBOS (2015a), *Stosunek do imigrantów w krajach Grupy Wyszehradzkiej*, Komunikat z badań, 178/2015, Warszawa.

⁶⁸ A. Stefaniuk (2015), *Postrzeganie muzułmanów w Polsce – raport z badania sondażowego*, Centrum Badań nad Uprzedzeniami, Warszawa.

the case of every social role, the respondents declared a stronger aversion to men than to women. Paradoxically, Poles are more eager to accept a Muslim as a family member (55 percent of respondents objected to a Muslim husband in their family and 46.1 percent to a Muslim wife) than as a co-worker, which strengthens the thesis that stereotypes play a prominent role in the perception of Muslims.

In the context of mass opposition to the acceptance of a small group of refugees in Poland, it is essential to determine what the main fears expressed by young Poles are. Four categories of fear have been identified. The first one is the fear of a different religion: Islam, associated with hatred towards the others. The second category of fear results from the comments of a prominent politician who said that he was afraid that unknown diseases could be brought to Poland. The third objection relates to the negative phenomena already observed in other countries. This is the fear of a growing crime rate. Last but not least, Poles predict that refugees would come to Poland only to take advantage of social benefits.

In the light of research results cited in this paper, it is not clearly evident that Poles are decidedly against immigrants. However, similarly to Germany and other European countries, critical opinions about immigrants are more common than favourable and neutral ones. The assessment of chances of assimilation, the problem of current acts of violence and terrorism are among issues influencing the attitudes to immigrants. When asked whether most Muslims are intolerant to habits and values different from their own, almost two thirds of Poles (65 percent) have responded positively. Most respondents (57 percent) have also accepted the view that 'Islam encourages violence to a larger extent than other religions'. The study has shown that opinions on this issue are polarised. Thirty-nine percent of respondents have said that the majority of Muslims are not hostile to non-Muslims. Furthermore, half of Poles agree that most Muslims condemn terrorist attacks carried out by Islamic fundamentalists. Half of the Polish population is also convinced that the attacks of fundamentalists in Europe result from the poor educational and economic situation of Muslims and not from the influence of their religion as such. Most Poles also agree that Muslims can feel offended by some publications, including satirical comments about Muhammad (44 percent).⁶⁹

BELIEFS ABOUT THE MIGRANT CRISIS: GERMANY

The research on the evolution of attitudes towards the migration crisis constitutes an important part of social analyses in Germany. In the first half of 2015, there was a fairly even split in opinions on the issue of refugees. The German government's policy, which resulted in the influx of over one million refugees to Germany, has influenced public opinion to a large extent. Furthermore, the media, which tend to expose events of exceptional nature (including terrorist attacks), also shaped many beliefs. In the light of the public opinion research so far, a thesis can be offered that the arrival

⁶⁹ CBOS (2015b), *Postawy wobec islamu i muzułmanów*, Komunikat z badań nr 37/2015, Warszawa.

of new groups of refugees in 2015 polarised the attitudes and beliefs popular earlier. This polarisation was accompanied by a rising level of caution of German citizens.

The beliefs, which mirror concerns resulting from the influx of refugees rather than distance or hostility towards them, come in many different forms and shapes. Many people are afraid that as a result of the mass arrival of refugees, xenophobic attitudes will spread widely (64 percent).⁷⁰ The polling data show that the majority of Germans opt for a relentless fight against crimes committed by immigrants. In a survey carried out by the Allensbach Institute, Germans were asked about how to react to the influx of refugees to Europe. Most respondents (81 percent) chose the option 'fight stronger against facilitator gangs'. Among popular solutions, indicated by more than two thirds of survey participants, there were also those suggesting giving more development aid to countries of immigrants' origin (70 percent), including providing support at sea for those whose lives are in danger ('send more ships to prevent high seas refugee catastrophes' – 66 percent).⁷¹ Furthermore, two thirds of respondents (65 percent) expressed their concern that the European Union might not be capable of handling the constant influx of the refugees ('I'm concerned that Europe doesn't cope with refugees inflows if this continues'). In this situation, it is not surprising that those in favour of granting asylum to all refugees who ask for it were clearly in minority ('to take them all in and give them permanent asylum' – 8 percent), even though the option of sending refugees back was accepted only by one in five Germans ('to head off and send back refugees' – 18 percent). This is mainly because half of Germans (52 percent) are afraid that many refugees will abuse social benefits. The belief that 'many refugees import their home conflicts and will decide upon them here' is another source of concern. It was shared by the same percentage of respondents. Moreover, 43 percent of respondents said that the issue of sending refugees back to their countries of origin was a complex one once the refugees were already in Germany.⁷²

In general, Germans attitude towards refugees has softened which is reflected in less people accepting purely negative beliefs about the refugees. The 'less' is a smaller group of people composed of radical right-wing followers. The xenophobic view that 'refugees often commit crimes' expressed by slightly more than a quarter of respondents (28 percent) is another example here. Moreover, only one in five Germans (21 percent) agrees that 'many refugees are a threat to our culture', which also suggests a climate of tolerance. Responses to the question 'For some time more refugees from crisis countries of Syria and Iraq come to Germany. How should Germany respond to their accommodation issue?' reveal that there is a balanced spectrum of beliefs about refugees in Germany. Nearly one in three respondents (31 percent) said that Germany should accept as many refugees as could be possibly accommodated and provided for. The opposing view (accepting as few as possible) was expressed by a similar percent-

⁷⁰ T. Petersen (2015), *Zaghafte Schritte auf dem Weg zur Willkommenskultur*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" No. 116, 21.05.2015, p.16.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 17

age of respondents (33 percent). The remaining one third of Germans had no opinion on this matter (36 percent).

The problem of refugees in Germany concerns not only refugees from the Middle East but also those coming from Africa. The proportions of the respondents, answering the question about granting the later asylum, were similar. Thirty-one percent of respondents believed it was possible to continue accepting refugees and 39 percent thought this was no longer possible. The rest of respondents remained undecided.⁷³

Further analyses indicate there was a gradual change in social moods. In the second half of 2015, the interest in the issue of migration to Germany grew markedly. Forty percent of respondents answered the question 'Are you concerned about the actual development of refugees' situation?' with a clear 'Yes', whereas in September this percentage grew to 44 and in October to 54 percent.⁷⁴ Germans' expectations in connection to such a mass arrival of newcomers left no doubt about their sullen moods. Only 6 percent of respondents expected that positive effects would prevail, whereas ten times more people (64 percent) predicted increasing threats. Sixteen percent of participants believed benefits and drawbacks would balance out.

The survey carried out in October 2015 included the question: 'Does the accommodation of refugees cause more problems in your region?' Back then, almost three fourths of respondents (72 percent) noticed problems generated by the refugees, while only 16 percent did not. According to the survey described by R. Köcher the views were polarized, as the percentage of the undecided was almost three times lower than in the case of the survey results discussed earlier (12 percent). Another question focused on views and beliefs of other people from the same community. Respondents were asked: 'What you have heard in your personal conversations: are most people willing to accommodate more refugees or rather not willing?' The responses essentially coincided with the responses given to the first question. About 70 percent of participants reported that most people they knew were reluctant to accept more refugees, while only 17 percent expressed the opposite view.⁷⁵

The potential impact of the place of residence on the opinions about the migration crisis was also investigated. A division into the old and new German states was introduced in the analysis. The question asked was: 'Would you agree with the feeling that you should not freely share your opinion about the refugee situation in Germany and be cautious what to say or not?' The answers revealed that opinions about migration were indeed influenced by the place of residence. Of those living in the former East Germany 54% said that one had to be cautious while talking about migration, whereas only 41% of West Germans expressed this opinion⁷⁶. Certainly, it is the 'geography' of locating immigrant centres (mostly in the less populated, eastern lands) that largely

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷⁴ R. Köcher (2015), *Kontrollverlust – die Besorgnis der Bürger wächst*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" Nr. 244, 21.10.2015.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

contributed to this difference. However, that is not the only relevant factor as socio-demographic features of local inhabitants and their professional status are also of importance.

For Germans, a nation in constant contact with newcomers from other countries, media are an important agent shaping attitudes and opinions. In this respect, the question 'Do you think media reporting is well-balanced or rather one-sided?' is relevant. Contrary to the predictions, Germans are almost evenly split on the issue. Nearly half of respondents (47 percent) think that media reporting is biased, whereas the rest believe the opposite.

Finally, another survey, conducted in December 2015 by the ARD TV station, investigated opinions on the policy of German Chancellor Angela Merkel considered to be the one who agreed to the huge inflow of migrants to Germany. The survey revealed that only 7 percent of Germans were 'very satisfied' and the number of the 'satisfied' was as high as 35 percent. However, most respondents were not content with Merkel's policy: 33 percent of respondents were 'less satisfied' (33 percent) and 24 percent were 'not a bit satisfied' (24 percent).⁷⁷ This means that the German public, afraid of the consequences of an open-door refugee policy, does not support the government in this respect. According to another survey, carried out for the MDR in October 2015, most Germans were dissatisfied with the federal policy on the issue of refugees (69 percent) and only 2 percent were very satisfied.⁷⁸

CONCLUSION: MACROSTRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS OF CHANGES IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS

Thousands of people illegally streaming to Europe have raised reasonable fear about whether it is possible to ensure shelter and livelihoods for them in all European countries. Furthermore, terrorist attacks mounted by Islamic extremists in Paris in November 2015, were a strong factor that strengthened the aversion to refugees. Nevertheless, the determinants of the ongoing change in the attitudes towards refugees, reflected in the decreasing trust to 'foreigners', have different foundations in Poland and in Germany.

In Poland, the crisis of trust, reflected in keeping a distance from refugees, is influenced by two macrostructural factors. Firstly, as early as in the 1970s Stefan Nowak observed the syndrome of a 'social vacuum'. It resulted from Poles focusing on their microrelations (especially on their families) on the one hand, and the mythic idea of the homeland on the other. Secondly, under the current circumstances a growing mis-

⁷⁷ ARD (2016), *Satisfaction with chancellor Merkel's refugee policy*, <http://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/umfragen/> (12.01.2017).

⁷⁸ MDR (2015), *Satisfaction with asylum and refugee policies of federal government: clear majority dissatisfied with refugee policies*, <http://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/umfragen/>. (15.11.2016)

trust is founded not only on the tradition of Polish ethnic and cultural homogeneity but also on the new state ideology propagated by the right-wing government of the Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) party since 2015. The ideology consists in a strong promotion of national ideas and organisations. It also refers to the mythos of a 'homogenous, strong Poland'. Here, symbols are reinterpreted (e.g. celebrations of anniversaries of the Warsaw Uprising) or promoted anew (the mythos of the 'cursed soldiers'). As an effect (probably an unwanted one) of the now Polish official ideology, xenophobia has grown. This has added to the growing atmosphere of tension, not only in connection with the culturally alien refugees from Arab countries. It has also worsened relations with other countries, especially the neighbouring ones.

Looking at Germany, the data show a gradual change of the political mood up to a widespread concern about a complete loss of control over immigration attributed to the inactivity and ignorance of problems apparent in the official government policy. Simultaneously, there was a growing mistrust in whether politicians and mass media did inform realistically about the actual situation. Toward the end of 2015 there was no sudden change of social mood. However, the reports on public television swung their focus from enthusiastic welcome culture to a more realistic picture of the situation. This was dramatically accelerated by the New Year's Eve 2015 events in Cologne when in few days reporting changed from whitewashing to nearly hysterical detailed reporting with xenophobic traits on Maghrebian North-Africans and massive criticism of the North Rhine-Westphalian police and political authorities. After the terrorist attack at the Christmas market in Berlin in 2016 where 12 people were killed by an illegal Maghrebian asylee under police supervision, political rhetoric changed profoundly, especially when the incredible sloppiness of security services' vigilance was revealed. Political apathy, democratic fatigue or the elite's arrogant contempt were no longer suitable to explain what became decisive for the vote swing in election years 2016 and 2017 in Germany.

Nothing stopped Angela Merkel from insisting on her "We can do it" slogan which basically meant no fundamental changes in her "refugee" policy. Even in her election night statement on 24 September 2017, facing dramatic losses at the polls, she only slightly modified it into the obtuse "I can't see what to do basically different" statement. Until then there was no *real* parliamentary opposition against the completely non-discussed immigration policy of the federal government. A majority in and even beyond the "big coalition" parties still tried to avoid any serious debate about the long term economic, social, and security effects of the uncontrolled inflow of over 1 million immigrants to Germany, the associated annual financial burdens estimated to reach 300 billion Euro in the next ten years. And at the same time millions of underclass citizens and working-class people were told that there was not enough money to subsidise their children in kindergartens, to repair school buildings and employ more staff. All interim (and failed) negotiations within the potential "Jamaica"-coalition (CDU, Greens, Free Democrats) and negotiations on the renewed CDU-SPD "big coalition" (which seemed to be condemned to successfully secure Angela Merkel's

staying in power) tried to divert attention to minor sideshows to avoid any decisive debate on crucial questions about unlimited immigration, internal security issues and integration problems. Again, the challenge of continued immigration was sidelined by the minor family reunification topic. In addition, the mid-level party officials of the SPD believed that their insisting on enlarging immigration quotas would be appreciated by SPD supporters.

It is not that only a few people feel that German authorities are insincere. In this situation the floodgates are open for further successes of the AfD (Alternative for Germany). Recent information that about 300,000 illegal asylees legally obliged to leave Germany have not been deported and that in many cases it is unknown where in Germany they live now, fuels the anger. The recent murder charge against an Afghan "refugee" who killed an Afghan woman for her conversion to Christianity and some recent rape and murder crimes against young German women committed by self-declared "juvenile" Afghan refugees who actually were adults, have added more fuel especially after official crime statistics were published proving an over average crime rate among "juvenile" immigrants.

The AfD was founded in 2013 as the far-right populist party primarily concerned with opposition to the euro. In summer 2015 it nearly faced oblivion due to schism and internal turf war but seized the context-provided opportunity to revitalize itself and won 12.6% of the vote in German federal elections in September 2017. Its many supporters were concerned with and distrustful of the official immigration policy of the "traditional party cartel". The AfD won 94 seats in the German parliament. Now the AfD has to prove if it is capable of playing the role of the biggest parliamentary faction opposing what it calls the "immigration policy cartel" or to remain a populist mouthpiece of xenophobes and demagogues.

There is one decisive difference between Poland and Germany. The recent 10% rise in voter turnout in Germany must be read as a cooptative democratic mobilisation effect induced by the AfD and its anti-immigration agitation. In Poland, the rise of the populist PiS appears to be the tragic downside of a drastic decline in the turnout of urban middle-class voters in the last elections.

Dr. Hans-Peter Müller, Professor UZ retd. and Private Lecturer at Free University of Berlin

Dr hab. prof. UZ Jerzy Leszkowicz-Baczyński, Wydział Pedagogiki, Psychologii i Socjologii, Uniwersytet Zielonogórski (j.leszkowicz-baczynski@is.uz.zgora.pl)

Słowa kluczowe: zaufanie, populizm prawicowy, kryzys uchodźczy w Europie, postawy wobec imigrantów

Keywords: trust, right-wing populism, refugee crisis in Europe, attitudes toward refugees

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to describe reactions to the refugees crisis in 2015, which occurred in most European countries. On the one hand there was a growth of hostile attitudes toward immigrants coming from North Africa and Islamic countries and on the other hand the growth of right-wing populism. In part I theoretical claims referring to trust, immigration, and populism are presented. It is argued that trust as a type of the social capital relations is an essential "glue" for the existence and development of social systems. Moreover, feelings of similarity and dissimilarity are crucial for social cohesiveness. Part II encompasses conclusions from empirical research on attitudes and social beliefs in Poland and Germany and their comparison. It is argued, that the situation in both countries is different in many respects, but one can see a similarity as well, mainly a growing fear of and hostility against immigrants which are a comprehensible social fact, but also a result of populist right-wing agitation.