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#### **Amelie Kutter:**

### **Re-drawing the Boundaries of the Demos: The Construction of Political Projects in Polish Public Discourse 1989/90 and 2003**

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*“What kind of Poland are we longing for? A Poland that relies on Christian values, that is democratic, pluralist and European? Or a Poland that is a country bumpkin, for ever provincial, narrow-minded, cultivating her complexes? I think this divide is the most essential in today’s Poland, it is where the demarcation line runs through all the ideological camps.”<sup>1</sup>*

*“What type of Europeans were Adam Mickiewicz, Stanisław Brzozowski, Jerzy Giedroyc, Czesław Miłosz or Tadeusz Konwicki? (...) They were all cosmopolites, but Central European cosmopolites. This is exactly what Polish Europeanness is about: we are Europeans of a somewhat different type than the French, the Germans, the Italians or Spanish. This particularity is our originality and the potential of our message.”<sup>2</sup>*

## Abstract

The stabilization of democracy in post-communist societies is closely linked to nation-building.<sup>3</sup> In the beginning of the 1990es, it was feared that renewed nationalisms could disrupt multi-national communities and would outweigh reconciling and re-integrating functions of nation-building. At the same time, the prospect of integration into the European Union was expected to foster the construction of a European identity that was positively linked to democratic values and open societies.<sup>4</sup> Poland has long been regarded as a positive example for the tackling of ethno-nationalisms, given the favourable conditions (no border or secession conflicts, little minority problems) and the broad commitment of political elites to values promoted by the EU (anti-discrimination and multi-national compromise). However, recent shifts in politics directed both against people who do not fit the image of the ‘polak-katolik’, as well as against cooperation within the EU point to a more complex situation. They raise the question, whether Poland is facing a ‘velvet restoration’ and a strong anti-EU movement.<sup>5</sup>

Drawing on concepts and methods of Critical Discourse Analysis, the following paper explores changes in a segment of Polish public discourse both with regard to the political projects and to the in- and out-groups constructed. The analysed corpus consists of newspaper articles on the foreign policy of the Mazowiecki government (‘return to Europe’, Sept. 1989–May 1990) and commentaries on the Polish negotiation strategy during the consultations about the EU draft constitution (March 2002–June 2004).<sup>6</sup> The analysis reveals that, between the analysed periods, a major shift has taken place. The hegemonic discourse of the EU-oriented (neo-)liberal reformers, that deconstructed any positive reference to history/tradition and, at the same time, excluded nationalist and leftist projects, is replaced by discourses of national singularity drawing on ‘lessons learnt from the history of foreign rule’. These trends do not necessarily endanger an open and liberal projection of Polish democracy. However, their predominance impedes the emergence of positions other than populist nationalism/neo-conservatism that would take up demands of the losers of the neo-liberal course of the 1990s.

1 Adam Michnik: What kind of Poland we are longing for. Poland’s today’s independence, in: GW, Nov. 10th, 1989, p. 3.

2 Adam Michnik: What kind of Europe Poland needs, in: GW, Dec. 28th, 2002.

3 Offe, Karl: Der Tunnel am Ende des Lichtes. Erkundungen der politischen Transformation im Neuen Osten. Frankfurt a.M., New York: Campus, 1994.

4 Batt, Judy: Introduction: Defining Central and Eastern Europe, in: J. Batt, S. White and P.G. Lewis (eds.), Developments in Central and East European Politics. Houndsmill, New York: Palgrave, 2003, pp. 3–22.

5 Adam Michnik used the term ‘velvet restauration’ to indicate anti-intellectual, illiberal trends, cf. Tismaneanu, Vladimir: Discomforts of Victory: Democracy, Liberal Values and Nationalism in Post-Communist Europe, in: Zielonka, Jan/Mair, Peter (eds.): The Enlarged European Union: Diversity and Adaptation. London: Frank Cass, 2002, pp. 80–100, here: 85.

6 The analysis merges a) the corpus analysed in my diploma thesis: 500 articles that were published on European politics in the former oppositional newspapers (Gazeta Wyborcza, Tygodnik Powszechny, Res Publica) and in the state run paper Rzeczpospolita (1989–90); and b) a sub-corpus of my ongoing dissertation: 90 articles that were published in the opinion sections of the dailies Gazeta Wyborcza and Rzeczpospolita (2003).

In the first section, the approach enabling such insights will be outlined very briefly. The second and third sections summarise the main findings.<sup>7</sup> Finally, conclusions will be drawn regarding possible explanations and implications of the study.

## Constructing political projects and identities

In highly mediated democracies, different options of political action are constituted through public struggles for the power of definition of the ‘vision and division’ of a society.<sup>8</sup> Constructing a political project, which suggests a certain societal organization and mobilises public support, implies defining the (ideological) subject position of the collective actor in the name of which the project is implemented.<sup>9</sup> In late modern societies, such representative claims relate to particular groups and/or to the ‘demos’ – the national (and EU) sovereign that provides democratic legitimacy. The emergence of a new collective political actor depends on whether its representatives are able to establish and maintain a partial hegemony of definition in public discourse, a ‘nodal point’ that puts several problems of a given social reality in a meaningful perspective.<sup>10</sup> Discursive struggles aiming at the establishment of such a ‘nodal point’ draw on powerful discursive configurations at the given time (e.g. socialism, liberalism, human rights). Most often, they also involve a re-definition of national and European identity.<sup>11</sup>

Such struggles for the definition of the legitimate boundaries of politics can be studied with the help of two concepts taken from Discourse Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis – the concept of ‘discursive strategies’ as suggested by the Discourse-Historical Approach<sup>12</sup> and the concept of ‘hegemonic articulation’ as defined by Laclau and Mouffe.

The notion ‘discursive strategies’ indicates the (more or less intended) strategic use of language that has semantic, pragmatic, and ideological implications. These implications can be studied, first, by tracing back the *representation of objects and actors*: which actor/object is fore-grounded or backgrounded, how he/she is named (nomination), specified (predication) and assigned to something/someone (reference, e.g. ‘pars pro toto’). These strategies will show us how the author evaluates the given object or actor and how he/she constructs in- and out-groups. Second, by analysing the different linguistic means of *argumentation* (e.g. rationalisation through definition or reference to experience), the author’s position towards the legitimacy of the given actor or object can be retraced. Third, by studying *topoi*, metaphors, personification etc., persuasive means can be identified that do not appeal to logic, but to ‘common sense’ (*plausibilisation*).<sup>13</sup> Drawing on these discursive-strategic means, authors construct claims that transform, perpetuate, or deconstruct the status quo of a political project and/or collective identity.<sup>14</sup>

7 For more details see Kutter: *Petitioner or Partner? Constructions of European Integration in Polish Print Media Debates on the EU Constitutional Treaty*, in: Fairclough, Norman and Cortese, Giuseppina (eds.): *Discourse and Social Change*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2007, pp. 433–457 and Kutter: *Polens „Rückkehr nach Europa“ unter der Regierung Mazowiecki*. Diploma thesis FU Berlin (manuscript), 2001.

8 Bourdieu, Pierre: *The Political Field, the Social Science Field, and the Journalistic Field*, in: R. Benson and E. Neveu (eds.), *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*. Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press, 2005, pp. 29–47.

9 Laclau, Ernesto and Mouffe, Chantalle: *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. London: Verso, 2001/1985.

10 Laclau, Ernesto and Mouffe, Chantalle: *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. London: Verso, 2001/1985, p. 111.

11 Wodak, Ruth: *Fragmented Identities: Redefining and recontextualising national identity*, in: P. Chilton and C. Schäffner (eds.): *Politics as text and talk: Analytic approaches to political discourse*. Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 2002, pp. 143–170.

12 Wodak, Ruth: *The discourse-historical approach*, in: R. Wodak and M. Meyer (eds.): *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage, 2001, pp. 63–94.

13 I added the ‘strategy of plausibilisation’ as it turned out to be especially salient in media texts. For the remaining strategies see van Leeuwen, Teun and Wodak, Ruth: *Legitimizing immigration control: a discourse-historical analysis*, in: *Discourse and Society*, 1999 (vol. 1), No. 1, pp. 83–118; van Leeuwen, Teun: *The representation of social actors*, in: C.R. Caldas-Coulthard and M. Coulthard (eds.): *Text and Practices. Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*. London, New York: Routledge, 1996, pp. 32–70.

14 Wodak, Ruth: *Fragmented Identities: Redefining and recontextualising national identity*, in: P. Chilton and C. Schäffner

On a more abstract level, and with the help of the heuristic tool of the analysis of ‘hegemonic articulation’, one can identify, how, through these discursive strategies, authors try to establish a hegemony of definition that co-opts and thereby disables alternative articulations. According to Laclau and Mouffe, such ‘hegemonic articulations’ consist of (a) dispersing certain elements that were subordinated before to one entity of meaning or of collective identity; (b) integrating some of those elements into a new entity; (c) juxtaposing them to elements, which seem to oppose any integration (antagonisms) and in face of which the integrated elements appear to be equivalent.

In the following sections, I will show, which hegemonic articulations were constructed in Polish public discourse in 1989–90 and 2003.

## 1989–90: Deconstructing alternatives to EU-oriented transition

As a result of the first semi-democratic elections in June 1989 and the Round-Table agreement between representatives of the oppositional movement *Solidarność* and representatives of the communist Polish United Workers’ Party, a coalition government was established: Mazowiecki (an outstanding oppositional intellectual) was nominated as prime minister and Jaruzelski (the head of communist government since the military coup d’état in 1981) as president. Mazowiecki used this transitional arrangement for introducing radical economic liberalisation and democratisation. He fostered disintegration with Soviet structures (COMECON; Warsaw Pact) and integration with Western institutions (Europe Council; NATO; European Communities). This policy had to rely on the toleration by the communist party and was based on the so-called ‘thick line’ drawn between the communist past and the post-communist present.

While this policy was supported by large parts of the population, it was questioned by competing ‘ethos’ groups within the *Solidarność*. These were mainly trade-unionist groups (who opposed the neo-liberal restructuring), but also radical anti-communist and national-conservative groups (who opposed the ‘thick line’). The struggle for the legitimate succession of *Solidarność* and the interpretation of its heritage has structured the Polish political competition ever since.<sup>15</sup> However, the overall liberal and EU-oriented projection of the Polish transition remained untouched throughout the 1990s, even after the reformed communists had re-gained power. In the literature, the stability of the ‘liberal path’ was explained mainly by incentives for (neo-) liberal reforms by the conditions of EU accession.<sup>16</sup> The following discourse analysis of commentaries on European politics reveals that the stability of the ‘liberal path’ also goes back to a ‘transformative’ hegemonic articulation that was established by the very first liberal government and, until recently, kept its persuasive power in public mainstream.

In the course of the seven months of coverage (Sept. 1989 up to May 1990), a shift occurred in the most frequently evoked meanings of ‘Europe’. Definitions of Europe as a cross-bloc unit of independent democratic states that drew on stipulations and structures of the CSCE/OSCE were superseded by an understanding of ‘Europe’ as a Western model of societal organization (free market, human rights, rule of law and representative democracy) and its international institutional embedding (NATO, EC). The slogan ‘back to Europe’ increasingly implied an adaptation to the ‘civilisational’ centre of the West rather than the foundation of a new ‘European house’.

This shift in nomination and reference was accompanied by a strong devaluation of certain elements in the meaning of ‘Central Europe’. During the 1980s, anti-communist dissidents used to refer to this concept in

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(eds.): *Politics as text and talk: Analytic approaches to political discourse. Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 2002, pp. 143–170.

15 Tatur, Melanie: *Identität und Integration – der polnische Diskurs zu Beginn der neunziger Jahre*, in: *Forschungsstelle Osteuropa an der Universität Bremen* (eds.): *Kollektive Identitäten in Ostmitteleuropa – Polen und die Tschechoslowakei*. Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1994, pp. 15–72.

16 See, for instance, Schimmelpfennig, Frank, Stefan Engert, and Heiko Knobel: *The Impact of EU Political Conditionality*, in: Frank Schimmelpfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (eds.): *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*, Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2005, pp. 29–50.

order to underline their distinctiveness both with regard to Soviet and to Western politics.<sup>17</sup> Now, negative attributions of ‘Central Europe’ were emphasised, such as the elitist character of the Central European intellectual community, ethno-national conflicts, and competition for attention and financial help from the West. Two issues that used to be part of the dissident ‘Central Europe’ became entirely devalued: ‘Third Way’-ideas of a ‘socialism with a human face’ and of corporative self-management were now depicted as doomed to failure, completely irrational, and equivalent with ‘Third World’ scenarios. Instead, and very much in accord with discourses of Western (financial) institutions, radical “marketisation” was seen as a recipe for ‘catch-up modernisation’ that would allow Poland to become a ‘normal’, wealthy Western/European state. The deconstruction of the previous political and economic concept was closely linked to struggles over the political competences of Solidarność and the unions’ share in privatisation.<sup>18</sup> It was made plausible with the help of the topos of inevitability and of dichotomous rhetoric of the rational/normal vs. the irrational/abnormal.

Poland’s similarity with the West was strongly emphasised, its historic fight for ‘Western’ freedoms and its European cultural belonging. Even the memory of being excluded from the Western post-war project (‘Yalta’) that was actualised at the anniversary of World War II events and during the 2+4 negotiations about the German unification turned into a statement of belonging to the West. Western politicians who previously had neglected the former Polish allies for the sake of geopolitical stability were now urged to support Poland on her way back to ‘normality’.

The transformation of the memory of foreign rule into an integrationist stance is especially true for the commentaries on the Polish-German relations of the time: Poland was only tardily admitted to the 2+4 negotiations as an observer, and the German chancellor Kohl had refused to confirm the post-war German-Polish border for a long time. However, discussants relativised the threat of a ‘new Yalta’ (in terms of decisions made by big powers on the cost of Poland). While the newly founded national-Catholic party ZChN and the Confederation for Poland’s Independence launched protests against Germany, commentators in the former oppositional media interpreted the border dispute as a test of Germany’s ‘Europeanness’ rather than a threat to Polish territorial integrity. Criticism of Kohl’s behaviour on behalf of Western politicians was taken as proof for a ‘European control’ of German predominance, and historic events such as Willy Brand’s visit to Warsaw in 1970 were taken as proof of a benign German ‘Ostpolitik’.

The former domestic adversary, the communist regime, was subject to similar ‘domestication’. Discussions centred on the Katyń massacre,<sup>19</sup> a topic, which recapitulated the crime of Soviet hegemony, but did not threaten the Polish communists still in office. In the former oppositional media, coming to terms with the past and turning to models of the Second Republic (1918–1939) were non-issues. In various publications, Adam Michnik drew, instead, a picture of Europe at a crossroads that had to choose between the ‘nationalism trap’ and the ‘return to Europe’, between “those defending democracy and humanism and those participating in xenophobic excesses, advocating the national resurrection state or anti-Semitism.”<sup>20</sup> Together with other influential intellectuals, he pleaded for a critical reflection on the national romanticism of Polish historiography and its role in anti-communist resistance. Thus, the liberal project of transition was built on discontinuity, a rupture with both the communist and the pre-communist past, on a progression ‘back to the future’, that had its founding moment in the legalisation of Solidarność in 1980, the Round Table agreement and in the first semi-democratic election in June 1989.<sup>21</sup>

17 Steinbach, Peter: *Mitteleuropa – Mythos und Idee*, in: *Universitas*, 1993, No. 1, pp. 1085–1097.

18 For more details on the disempowerment of the unions’ discourses cf. Tatur, Melanie: *Politik im Transformationsprozess. Aspekte des politischen Diskurses in Polen 1989–1992*, in: K. Mänicke-Gyöngyösi (ed.): *Öffentliche Konfliktdiskurse um Restitution von Gerechtigkeit, Politische Verantwortung und Nationalidentität*. Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1996, pp. 39–56.

19 In 1940, the Soviet secret service had murdered 15 000 to 20 000 Polish soldiers and civilians in the forest of Katyn. Only in 1990, Michail Gorbatchev conceded officially that the murders had not been committed by the Nazis.

20 Adam Michnik: *The decisive clash*, in: *GW*, Jan. 29th, 1990, p. 6

21 Król, Marcin: *Revolution, Restauration, Amnesie. Über das Gedächtnis in der postkommunistischen Zeit*, in: *Transit. Europäische Revue*, 1991, No. 2., pp. 27–35.

Overall, there was a discursive re-composition of the *Solidarność* movement, which can be interpreted in terms of a 'hegemonic articulation': only those parts of the *Solidarność* movement that 'acknowledged' that there was no alternative to an open society and to radical restructuring in accordance with Western stipulations were accepted as legitimate participants in the Polish transformation. Those who stuck to ideas either of socialist reforms or of a nationalist and religious counter-identity were branded as irrational and dangerous (*dispersion*). Neither communists nor Germans or Russians but ethno-nationalists and revanchists were depicted as adversaries of Polish national recovering, democratic freedom, and catch-up modernisation (*new antagonisms*).

Against this background, it seems plausible that free-market advocates from the West have a lot in common with the Polish cosmopolitan democrats (*equivalence*). Such operations of signification link the success of Polish democratisation / marketisation directly to the integration with the West. They constitute a hegemonic articulation that integrates several aspects of Polish transition meaningfully and that justifies both an alignment with Western recommendations as well as the huge adaptational effort.

### 2003: Re-establishing natio-centrism

In 2003, i.e. on the eve of Poland's EU accession, this hegemonic articulation was still valid. It provided justification for the official EU accession policy of the governing post-communists. However, sovereignist and anti-EU arguments co-occurred, sometimes even employing radical anti-communist arguments that advocated de-communisation and hate-speech against the French, the Germans, the Russians, and the EU. Up until the accession referendum in June 2003, such elements circulated in the nationalist-conservative media that promoted claims of the new right wing parties against the EU-accession (the daily *Nasz Dziennik*, the fundamentalist-Catholic *Radio Maryja* and *TV Trwam*). They stood in opposition to the press in favour of the EU-accession, represented by the liberal-centrist *Gazeta Wyborcza* (GW), the by now liberal-conservative *Rzeczpospolita* (RP) the post-communist *Trybuna* (TB) and various weeklies.

However, the argument about the EU constitutional treaty split the pro-European camp in a rather integrationist (GW, TB) and a strongly sovereignist part (RZ), the latter taking up elements of the anti-EU discourse. The debate took place against the background of tough negotiations about Poland's accession treaty, the Iraq crisis and Jacques Chirac's 'blackmailing'<sup>22</sup>, the repeated rejection of Polish proposals for an 'invocatio Dei' in the preamble of the EU constitution and for a preservation of the voting system of the 'Nice treaty'.

In this discussion, the integrationist position emphasised the benefits of international cooperation and of a centralised EU government. Commentators arguing for the adoption of the EU draft constitution pointed to the positive consequences the pursuit of 'European interests' would have for Poland and criticised the 'phraseology of national interest'. They suggested to deal with the problem directly and to promote European integration in cooperation with Germany and France. This would not only guarantee Polish influence on new EU arrangements and would control the bigger member states, but would also secure the most favourable conditions for catch-up modernisation and, hence, for augmenting the material, bargaining and regulation power of the Polish nation state.

The major integrationist argumentation strategy drew on rationalisation by definition: Poland = poor and backward; nation state sovereignty = outdated in times of globalisation; integration = a just compromise among powerful and weaker states. Rationalisation by reference to 'lessons learnt from history' occurred less frequently and related to bad Polish experiences with bilateral alliances. The topos of threat (of being isolated and therefore overruled), images of the uncoupled wagon, and the opposition of the rational vs. irrational were used for plausibility.

22 He threatened to obstruct Poland's EU accession and participation in structural funds after the Polish government had declared support for the US-American intervention in Iraq in January 2003.

Hence, on the one hand, integrationist positions kept to the *transformative strategy* of the hegemonic liberal position of the 1990s, i.e. they pleaded for a transformation of the supposedly backward Polish or Central European identity into an EU-identity, defined by wealth and cosmopolitanism. On the other hand, they supported power politics narratives and the topos of threat.

In this respect, integrationist positions were very similar to sovereignist positions. The latter argued for conditioned cooperation, for a halt in European integration, and for a predominantly cultural (ethnic/religious) mission of Poland within the enlarged EU. Similar to the sovereignist argumentation in other EU member states, the rejection of the EU draft constitution was often rationalised through definition, stating that there is no European demos, no constitutional moment, and only a fake constitutional assembly – the Convention on the Future of Europe. If at all, only cultural ties in the sense of a shared Christian heritage could form a European community. Consequently, there was no justification for political integration, let alone for a supranational constitution.

More frequently, however, the sovereignist commentators drew on *perpetuating strategies*: They portrayed the EU constitutional treaty as a matter of tectonic change threatening proven models of integration. Germany and France caused these troubles not only by promoting the constitutional treaty. They also violated a row of fundamental principles: 1) the European stability pact; 2) the solidarity principle (with regard to structural funds and majority voting in the European Council); 3) the unconditioned commitment to transatlantic cooperation (during the Iraq conflict) and 4) Catholic-Carolingian founding myths (rejecting reference to Christianity in the preamble of the draft constitution). Poland, instead, appeared to defend these values by rejecting the constitutional treaty and by supporting the US. This argumentation was rationalised referring to norms (solidarity, ‘good European manners’), but also to ‘lessons learnt from history’ such as Poland having always suffered from badly balanced international power-arrangements and having successfully taken over the responsibility for the Roman-Catholic heritage for other nations’ struggle for self-determination.

The antagonism between Poland on the one hand and France and Germany on the other was rendered plausible by the dichotomy of the disadvantaged smaller states (supposedly including Poland) vs. dominating big states and by the dichotomy of the true vs. the false (values, order, Europeans). Both dichotomies (small vs. big; good Europeanism vs. bad national egoism) were stereotypical and widespread in the media within the EU in general. However, in Poland they were re-contextualised within the collective memory of foreign rule and its solidarity with other nations suffering from the same fate, as well as the rhetorics of the anti-communist struggle of the 1980s. This argumentation allowed both for a positive reference to European integration in general *as well as* a clear rejection of the draft constitution. Most of the commentators in the pro-European GW and RP employed this strategy.

Euro-sceptical authors equated European integration (as projected in the draft constitution) either with great-power imperialism, with an international complot, with depraved hedonism or with communist totalitarianism.<sup>23</sup> Parallels with the latter were stressed especially with regard to the supposedly centralist imposition of law, the democracy deficit, the bureaucratic intervention in peoples’ private lives,<sup>24</sup> with ideological distortion, censorship of Catholic beliefs, social technology and with the so-called European newspeak (‘eurofrazologia’).

These equivalences, as well as the anti-communist rhetoric of the moral vs. the immoral, suggested that not only Polish independence and cultural integrity, but also fundamental freedoms were threatened once again – this time by the EU. Commentators conjured up an imagery of suppression (especially of Christians), of martyrdom etc. It implied categorical resistance to any form of shared sovereignty as a matter of moral integrity and as an example of true patriotism. The French and German EU-politics as well as the

23 The Polish term ‘totalitarianism’ is less related to Hannah Arendt’s theory of totalitarianism and the central element of ‘terror’ than to Leszek Kołakowski’s notion: totalitarianism conceived as a levelling of social differentiation and of independent public life.

24 For instance, the anti-discrimination directive and the mentioning of women’s and children’s rights in the European Charter of Human Right were considered such intervention.

European integration in general were constructed as antagonistic to Poland's *raison d'être*. This strategy aimed at *deconstructing* the link between a European and a Polish identity established by the liberal-integrationist political project.

The three basic positions illustrated above – transformation, perpetuation, and destruction of a certain identity – differ diametrically in their political claims and in the macro-strategies applied. However, they all share the same rhetorical means: First, they employ a dichotomy that used to form pro- or anti-integrationist positions during the 1990s: they either advocate the subordination of supposedly inferior Polish specifics under EU/Western standards, or they advocate the priority and protection of those specifics. The only choice available seems to be the choice between shameful subordination and fearful, but proud balancing.<sup>25</sup> Second, they use *power politics narratives* that emphasise the positive or, respectively, the negative consequences for Poland's bargaining power within the EU. Third, they suggest an *essentialist notion of national history* that 'naturally' instructs one or the other position.

This has two implications: On the one hand, EU politics are conceptualised in neo-realist terms: as insecure politics of arbitrary alliances and as the 'survival of the fittest'. On the other hand, almost all positions claim to represent a group that is constituted through a distinct and uniform collective memory and that is threatened by big powers, be it Germany, France or the EU-15 as a whole. By overemphasising history, culture, and an existential threat, central elements of anti-communist counter-identity from the 1980s that the liberal camp had initially decomposed for the sake of a cosmopolite identity are renewed.

## Conclusions

The analysis suggests that, between the analyzed discursive events, a major shift has taken place – in the discourses defining the legitimate political project, in the supposedly represented demos, and in the settings of mediated public discourse. In 1989/90, speakers of the liberal *Solidarność* camp dominated the media, merging the roles of dissident intellectuals with the roles of politicians. They fortified a justificatory discourse legitimising an EU-oriented transition and identity. This discourse excluded groups that stressed the continuity of national(ist) traditions or the workers'/ordinary peoples' self-determination from the legitimate discussion. If at all, reference to history was used for underlining integrationist claims.

In 2003, the media are pluralized and professionalized, with different outlets representing different editorial lines (among them, e.g. the nationalist *Nasz Dziennik*). Different political projects that potentially undermine each other are constructed: the integrationist-liberal, the sovereignist-liberal-conservative and the anti-EU national-conservative position. This indicates that different ideological positions have been developed with regard to European integration that are similar to those developed in the 'old' member states. They help to formulate concrete policies. They follow a pro-modernisation/anti-modernisation scheme. However, they all draw on power politics narratives, the topos of either threat (of being overruled) or shame (of not being at the front of integration), and on an essentialist notion of national history.<sup>26</sup> In 2003, the Polish public debate is trapped in a discourse that couples political claims with an ethno-national vision of Polish society and with foe images inherited from the anti-communist struggle.

There are two explanations as to how this situation could emerge. First, one might point to the high market-pressure that is present in the Polish newspaper market. Because of the media's competition for the most controversial and most selling 'scoop', news representation tends to draw on simplifying means that are understandable to a broad public, such as the topical reference to the memory of foreign rule and Poland's fight for independence. The strengthened right-wing and populist parties (Citizen's platform, Law and Justice, League of Polish Families, Self-defence) exploit these mechanisms, they become the major news-giv-

25 The argument that Polish EU discourse oscillates between the topos of fear/threat and shame is developed in Horolets, Anna: Pulling Europe Closer: the Strategy of Shame in Polish Press Discourse on Europe, in: A. Kutter and V. Trappmann (eds.): *Das Erbe des Beitritts: Europäisierung in Mittel- und Osteuropa*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2006, pp. 155–169.

26 For a similar observation regarding political discourse cf. Krzyżanowski, Michał: *Becoming European: Discourses of Identity and Social Change in Polish Politics After 1989*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2007.

ers, criticising the stumbling post-communist government for a betrayal of national interests and pushing the issue of de-communisation and of a 'moral national renaissance'. Hence, Polish domestic politics and the media offer favourable conditions for the formation of a majoritarian neo-conservative political movement that (partially) opposes liberalism and internationalism / European integration.

The second explanation could be that the pre-accession process contributed to this development. The EU accession conditionality obliged the governments in the accession countries to stick to the modernisation programme and to adjust national politics to the post-national constellation of European integration. In doing so, the EU gave strong incentives that prevented anti-modernist forces from entering governments. At the same time, the EU-15's asymmetric enlargement policy followed a logic of 'sink or swim' that gave no room for a 'Polish' vision of European integration but only left a choice of subordination or rejection.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, by preserving their status quo at the cost of the new members, e.g. in the field of agriculture subsidies, structural funds, energy politics and interim regulations, the 'old' member states damaged trust in intra-European solidarity.

However, it is 'political work'<sup>28</sup> (in the sense of establishing a partially hegemonic articulation) that allows certain actors and their political projects to benefit from the given media constellation and the domestic political and geopolitical setting. These actors have to prove persuasiveness and plausibility in argumentation in order to create an 'idée force' that mobilises peoples' support. In the 1990s, this was reached with reference to the 'imperatives of liberalism'. In the early 2000s, it is the memory of foreign rule that proves to be the nodal point needed for any plausible argumentation.

Discussants, who adhere to a liberal conception of Polish democracy, have not yet found effective ways of discursive re-composition that could dismantle the essentialism of this argumentation based on national history. They lack persuasive means that would allow them to reclaim liberalism (in terms of human and civil rights) in a way that includes those who suffered from radical modernization. A political identity that is situated in historic continuity, but that relates to the heritage of civic emancipation developed by the Solidarnosc movement rather than to the national-religious counter-identity still awaits re-invention. Obviously, less asymmetric and more trustful international relations would facilitate such a re-definition.

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27 Raik, Kristi: EU accession of Central and Eastern European Countries: Democracy and Integration as Conflicting Logics, in: *East European Politics and Societies*, 2004 (vol. 18), No. 4, pp. 567–594.

28 Bourdieu, Pierre: Social Space and Symbolic Power, in: *Sociological Theory*, 1989 (vol. 17), No. 1, pp. 14–25, here p. 17.