

**The Transformation of Nationalism
in Central and Eastern Europe**
Ideas and Structures

University of Warsaw
Faculty of Journalism and Political Science

**The Transformation of Nationalism
in Central and Eastern Europe**
Ideas and Structures

edited by Karl Cordell & Konrad Jajecznik

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Für Tante Dore

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Contents

Acknowledgments	9
Introduction	11
Karl Cordell	
Germany and Poland: Strangers on a Train or Participants of a Common Destiny?	17
Konrad Jajecznik	
The Nationalist Movement in Poland: the Third Evolution Phase of Polish Nationalism after 1989?	35
Peter Smuk	
Combating Nationalist Hate Speech by Legal Means – European Standards and Selected Case Studies from Hungary	63
Gergely Egedy	
Nation-Building and Kin-Minorities: the Strategies of Hungarian Conservatism	79
Ágnes Vass	
Whose Citizens? The Development of Hungarian National Policy Towards Kin-Minorities after 1989 – With a Special Focus on Ethnic Hungarians Living in Slovakia	95
Justyna Polanowska	
The Swedish-Speaking Minority in Finland: Identity, Ethnolinguistic Vitality and Upcoming Challenges in the Preservation of Official Language Status	117

Jiří Čeněk & Josef Smolík

Nationalism and Its Manifestations in Sport: the Case of Football Hooliganism
in the Czech Republic 137

Miroslav Mareš

The Radicalisation of Slovak Separatism after the Fall of Communism
and its Impact on Czech – Slovak Relations 155

Andrzej Wierzbicki

The ‘New Russian Nationalism’ as a Challenge to Modernization in Russia 171

Katharina Buck

Limitations to the Nationalising State: the Case of Kazakhstan 189

Notes on contributors 211

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Konrad Jajecznik

The Nationalist Movement in Poland: the Third Evolution Phase of Polish Nationalism after 1989?

1. Introduction

1.1. The Nationalist Movement – Case Study and Comparative Perspective

In contemporary Poland, in contrast to the inter-war period when it was the most significant political camp, until fairly recently nationalist groups barely existed. After 1989, numerous parties representing this ideology, mutually conflicted and completely powerless, operated at the fringes of the political system. However, in the last five years, nationalism – or more precisely its newest variation, has aspired to become a permanent feature of the Polish political landscape. Since its inception, on Independence Day (11 November) 2010, the March of Independence (MI) has attracted mass attention and public interest. There was rioting during the rally, as the mainstream media, which is unfavourable of the entire far right, unintentionally provided valuable air-time to anti-government activists and their slogans (Rukat 2013: 283–284). This is how the nationalists, or more precisely this ‘new wave’ of its ideological adherents, returned to prominence in the public discourse. This situation is really significant for the condition of democracy in Poland because the essence of its liberal variant is plurality, meant as a multiplicity of contradictory opinions. The substance of liberal democracy is not a compromise, but a permanently unsolvable dispute. The existence of numerous pro-establishment parties that share fundamental liberal ideas does not in itself guarantee ideological pluralism. The participation of explicitly illiberal political actors within the political system is indispensable to the implementation of a *modus vivendi*-style liberalism (see: McCabe 2010; Krawczyk 2011: 110–113, 118–122). Paradoxically, anti-liberal orientated political groupings contribute to the consolidation of liberal democracy.

Mass attendance at this annual political rally slowly became the most identifiable part of Independence Day celebrations in Poland. As such, it requires a thorough examination of the origins, essence and the prospects for this phenomenon.

It is necessary to remember that MIs are only the most visible symptom of Polish nationalism's profound transformation. In fact the MI constitutes a prelude to the formation of the Nationalist Movement (NM)¹.

The following facts and indicators have to be considered when assessing whether the NM represents a 'new wave' of nationalism in Poland:

1. a forthcoming generational change – understood not simply as younger activists taking over from their older counterparts but as a crucial turning point in all aspects – from political thought through to organisational models and political strategy;
2. a challenge to other political leaders – two marginal youth associations organising the MI unexpectedly set the agenda for celebrating the main public holiday. This means they challenged both established nationalist activists as well as all the post-1989 parliamentary and ruling parties;
3. an open formula – young leaders making significant efforts to renew nationalism in the abovementioned aspects: a transition from ideological orthodoxy using modern social communications channels and revisiting the idea of a Central-European system (confederation) of nation-states.
4. a socio-political project – instead of small-scale authoritarian parties created by older activists in the last decade of the 20th century, young nationalists sought to initiate a mass, multi-stream political movement.

There are two types of post-1989 nationalist concepts based on the three-stage evolution of this ideology. Analysis of this development will extract the key differences necessary when comparing adaptations of old-type nationalism of the 1990s with its moderate formula that came into existence in the second decade of the 21st century.

Apart from internal factors – for example a leadership crisis, or doctrinal revision – it is also necessary to consider the formation process of the NM in a broader context. On the one hand, its role and position in the Polish political system, and on the other, the condition of similar, in the sense of illiberal and anti-establishment oriented, political groupings in some other European countries.

Throughout the 20th century, Polish nationalism constituted a comprehensive antithesis of liberalism. In the 1990s, older activists struggled to convert doctrines formulated in the 1930s whilst preserving the authoritarian style of political

¹ A literal translation of the original name of the Ruch Narodowy – which means the National Movement – is misleading, because it suggests nationwide status or nation-building character. In fact, this is a major political grouping only in the framework of the nationalist party subsystem, but in terms of the entire party spectrum it is a merely small proto-party at the fringe of the Polish political system. So it is a 'nationalist' grouping, and not a 'national' movement.

thinking. Moreover, adherents of this ideology did not take a part in the “Solidarność” opposition movement and in the ‘Round Table’ Agreements. Consequently, after 1989 they found themselves outside the political mainstream and they did not participate in the debate on the direction of the transition. Finally, in all crucial fields of domestic, foreign and economic policy nationalists present an alternative point of view to all parliamentary parties.

A complementary aspect of the Polish nationalism transformation is the current revival of an anti-establishment orientation throughout Europe. Despite such uncompromising opposition not being homogeneous, all parties belonging to this trend are oppose European integration. The growing importance of this issue is proven by the European Parliament (EP) elections held in May 2014, with gains for anti-immigrant parties demanding withdrawal from the European Union in France and UK (Results of European elections 2014). The sudden growth of highly diversified versions of Euroscepticism, both purely liberal (like the United Kingdom Independence Party or the New Right Congress party in Poland) or openly anti-liberal (such as the National Front in France), indicates in fact that we are witnessing is a noticeable legitimacy crisis among mainstream parties throughout the European Union (The Eurosceptic Union; European elections 2014). To illustrate the increasing relevance of nationalism in Central Europe, it is sufficient to draw attention to radical groupings from Hungary and Slovakia. Both combine populism with extreme right features: manifestly anti-governmental attitudes and the promotion of authoritarian traditions from before 1945, whilst appealing to anti-Roma sentiment (Kluknavská 2012: 7–8, 11–13, 20, 29; Varga 2014). Despite substantial similarities there are also significant differences between the cases. Regularly gaining several percent of votes (around from 900,000 to one million in total), the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) has become a permanent feature of the Hungarian political landscape (Hungary, National Election Office). By way of contrast the Peoples Party Our Slovakia (Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko, LsNS) is marginal, receiving only around 1 percent of votes at elections. It gained over 5 percent of votes in only three regions, coincidentally those with the most numerous Roma population (Kluknavská 2012: 19–21, 24–28).

These cases, despite their uniqueness, determined by the specific nature of the political systems, demonstrate a significant increase of the relevance of nationalist groupings as a part of a growing demand for an anti-establishment opposition. Considering that the NM seems to be part of this tendency and the earlier shock to mainstream public opinion by the sudden rise² of the League of Polish

² First in 2001, because the newly created party gained parliamentary seats, and secondly in 2006, when its leaders entered into the government coalition (Jajecznik 2006: 110–111, 123–124; Koziello 2014: 51).

Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin, LPR), a detailed analysis of its formation process is required. The main aspects of this phenomenon – (1) mass support, (2) a new formula and (3) a context of the revival of anti-establishment groupings in other states – define the three research fields covered by this chapter.

1.2. Research Questions

Firstly, the author intends to verify the thesis that the NM is not a continuation of mainstream post-1989 Polish nationalism but rather that it constitutes a new type of nationalism altogether. Since 2010, we have been able to observe efforts to initiate a modern political doctrine aimed at providing solutions to contemporary challenges and at bringing about a more effective formula of political activity.

Secondly, the NM is generally composed of two main organisations. An important question is to identify which of its political wings – moderate or radical – will emerge as dominant in the near future. Consequently, could the NM pose a threat to democracy or is it a mere protest party operating in the legal framework of the political system?

Thirdly, it is difficult accurately to assess the NM's popularity and electoral potential. This is illustrated on the one hand by the immense success of the Independence March, and on the other by the low number of votes cast for the NM (less than 2 percent in total) in the elections of 2014 and 2015.

The final task is to diagnose whether the NM is a symptom of a legitimacy crisis of the political establishment in Poland. Taking this into account, the author intends to examine whether this grouping is able to call into question the political legitimacy of the parties that – during the last quarter of a century – determined the transition of the Polish political system.

For the above reasons, the most significant contribution of this chapter is analysis of factors that have brought about an increase in the social popularity of nationalism in Poland in the second decade of the 21st century. Diagnosis of the factors that determine the younger generation's demand for nationalists ideas, political events, social networks and organisations is an interesting issue, especially in the context of elections, both held in 2014 (to the EP in May and to local government in November) and the presidential and parliamentary polls in 2015.

2. The Nationalist Movement as a New Type of Nationalism?

First, it is necessary to distinguish four aspects of the innovative character of the NM. A primary issue – but despite appearances not the easiest to define – is generational change. This is an important factor, because the young leaders

challenge both the establishment and the old-type nationalists by promoting alternative points of view in both the ideological and organisational fields. Furthermore, their vision of their contemporary role in the political system is significantly less opaque than in the 1990s, when nationalist parties fell into disarray unable to decide between choosing fundamentalist opposition and repeated efforts to enter into a coalition with some right-wing parliamentary parties (see: Maj & Maj 2007). The new generation of Polish nationalists aspires to gain an independent position within the party system and, what is more, to become the leaders of potential coalition of an anti-establishment right.

2.1. A New Image or New Forms of Political Activity?

To appreciate the innovative character of the NM it is necessary to consider the specific position of nationalism in the Polish political system. During the inter-war period, the very diverse political camp inspired by this ideology was the largest in terms of popular support. After the Second World War, the communist authorities did not allow its revival as a satellite movement, such as peasant party or social-democratic party. In the second half of the 20th century, overt nationalism barely existed in Poland. From the autumn of 1989, older activists – called ‘seniors’³ – tried to re-establish political parties referring to the pre-1945 tradition. As a consequence, in the 1990s a dozen small-scale, mutually conflicted and completely powerless nationalist parties existed at the fringe of the political system (see: Tomaszewicz 2003; Maj & Maj 2007). The generation gap caused by communist rule brought about a leadership crisis, a deficit of efficient organisations and funds, and out-dated political thought. Reference to the heritage of historical parties resulted in the adoption of archaic forms of political activity – authoritarian doctrines based on anti-Semitism and the imperative of unification within a single political party. As a result, in the first evolution phase of contemporary Polish nationalism the older politicians were not able to either create modern parties or political thought, and finally were unable to gain social acceptance.

The second formative phase among the partisans of nationalism began in the first decade of the 21st century, when the relevance of its moderate wing increased significantly. The middle generation leaders⁴ substantially reformed their

³ The older activists (‘seniorzy’ – the ‘seniors’) began their involvement in the nationalist political camp before Second World War. After 1989, they were treated as the repositories of the ideological heritage and claimed the legitimate right to re-establish the historic Nationalist Party. In 1990s they shaped the belief systems middle generation of activists.

⁴ This group was led by Roman Giertych and Wojciech Wierzejski (see: Wierzejski 2008a: 8; Wierzejski 2008b: 147).

political strategy. Employing the imperative of solidarity – included in Catholic social teaching as well as being a constitutive ideological component of nationalism (Freedon 1998: 753) – they turned to populism. The League of Polish Families was established in 2001 taking advantage of a public demand for a Eurosceptic voice during the pre-EU accession referendum debate. The party combined a democratic type of nationalism with strong Catholic inspiration and right-wing populism. Despite the mainstream media and commentators – generally being ill disposed towards nationalists – the LPR surprisingly gained over a million votes and parliamentary seats in the national elections of 2001 and 2005 (Jajecznik 2006: 109, 121, 132). Firstly the LPR abandoned ideological orthodoxy for a populist strategy. Secondly it unified many small-scale political groupings rather than competing for exclusivity, and thirdly, it exploited the opportunity for the anti-EU opposition giving LPR temporary relevance⁵. Roman Giertych served as the Minister of Education and deputy PM⁶, which served as the high-water mark for medium generation leaders. The greatest weakness of the moderate wing of Polish nationalism at this time was lack of a modern doctrine – populist slogans⁷ and Euroscepticism were only a substitute.

It is now clear in retrospect that a crucial element of this phase of the evolution of Polish nationalism was the involvement of young activists as assistants to parliamentarians, MEPs and ministers (Jajecznik 2006: 113, 132). Substantive support by first-rank LPR politicians on the part of students or graduates was indispensable because of the post-Second World War generation gap. Young generation activists⁸ were mostly alumni and executive board members of the All-Polish Youth association (*Młodzież Wszechpolska*, MW). From observation of their leaders they evaluated the reasons for political success or failure. At the end of the day, this solution was a double-edged sword. In the short term, the young reinforcements

⁵ The LPR successfully took part in the local government elections of 2002. Two years later in the first EP elections in Poland, they gained ten seats. In 2005 they again received over 940,000 votes in the lower chamber of parliament election and, in 2006, entered into the government coalition with the Law & Justice (PiS) and populist the Self-defence party (*Samoobrona RP*) (see: Jajecznik 2006: 111, 133; Kozięłło 2014: 48–50).

⁶ The second government member from the LPR, as the Minister of Maritime Affairs, was a young lawyer – Rafał Wiechecki.

⁷ By adopting a law granting a child allowance regardless of parental income and the so-called “secondary school amnesty” allowing graduation without passing only one of exams, the Minister of Education convincingly proved the well-known populism of the LPR period in the government coalition.

⁸ The youngest activists were politically shaped by their experiences in the 1990s, not directly by the ‘senior’ activists but by the middle generation. They graduated from university and gained local government, government and parliamentary political experience – both national and European.

provided the existing leadership with expert knowledge, which was not at the disposal of the middle generation. However, eventually the MW's members become aware of their own political potential and the differences between them and current mentors and leaders.

The transformation period occurred in the four years leading up to the early parliamentary elections in 2007, caused by the governing coalition's disintegration due to conflicts within and between the coalition parties. The election results, in which the LPR gained only 1.3 percent of the votes (Electoral Committee of the LPR 2007, Koziello 2014: 52–53), accelerated the generational leadership change⁹. It was not only a disaster for the party, but first of all a defeat of the old-type nationalism and – what is important in the context of this analysis – also the end of the hegemony of middle and old generation politicians, who had no political and ideological offer acceptable to wider society.

The transformation process, apart from leading to the (electoral) marginalisation of the LPR, consisted of two complementary components. Firstly, Wojciech Wierzejski, one of the most recognizable LPR figures and most loyal partner of Maciej Giertych and his son Roman¹⁰, returned from the political margins. In 2008, Wierzejski funded the journal *Polityka Narodowa* (PN, *National Policy*). Contrary to his intention of promoting the LPR's achievements in the field of legislation and public discourse, from the first issue it became a forum for debate on the condition of nationalism after 1989. The formation process of a new group of aspiring leaders began instantly. They pointed out the faults and persistent weaknesses their own political camp – faith in archaic points of views both in the field of ideology and political strategy. This attitude, understood as a continuous recalling of the heritage of the National Party (Stronnictwo Narodowe) from the first half of the 20th century, was considered proof of political infirmity. They refuted the 'seniors' and their direct successors, emphasizing the lack of real political achievement during almost twenty years and the party's complete inability to reform organisational structures or offer an attractive political programme. The most die-hard critics

⁹ The fall in the LPR's popularity was the result of internal leadership conflicts between Giertych's faction and regional party leaders, as well as the disintegration of the PiS–LPR–Samobrona government coalition due to corruption scandal in the Ministry of Agriculture led by Andrzej Lepper, the undisputed leader of the Self-defence party (see: Koziello 2014: 51–53).

¹⁰ Giertych's family has deep roots in the history of Polish nationalism in the 20th century. Jędrzej Giertych – Roman's grandfather – was the one of the most famous representatives of the radical doctrine created by the young nationalists in 1930s. As one of the few nationalists leaders who survived the Second World War, he and, his son Maciej, had a decisive influence on shaping the attitudes of generations of activists dominating during the 1990s.

were former MEP's and parliamentarians Krzysztof Bosak and Daniel Pawłowicz elected respectively in 2004 and 2005 (see: Bosak 2008: 15–16; Pawłowicz 2010: 367). Krzysztof Bosak's polemics with Wojciech Wierzejski amounted to a repudiation of allegiance to the mentors and recent political management of the moderate-wing of Polish nationalism, which in the 21st century consisted of the LPR and the MW.

At the same time, there was a parallel evolution of some radical groupings. Hitherto separate regional groups unified into one association under the historical name National Radical Camp (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny, ONR). The adherents of the ONR maintained that organisational unification be supplemented by the adoption of traditional values borrowed from Catholicism and conservatism and abandoned a skinhead subculture (Witczak 2012: 330).

The gradual co-operation between groupings representing competitive wings of nationalism arose from contrasting internal transformations. The MW's alumnus, after losing the status of a parliamentary party's youth organisation, again became interested in radical types of nationalism. Meanwhile the ONR strove to moderate its own image.

The third phase of the evolution of Polish contemporary nationalism began in 2010 with the young leaders' takeover of the editorial board of *Polityka Narodowa* and starting organisation of the MIs. Symptomatically, new political brands were employed in both cases. They built their image from the ground upwards to distance themselves from their predecessors' inefficiency and associated negative stereotypes. However, in fact both these projects were guided by long-standing nationalist activists. Wierzejski appointed his deputy Konrad Bonisławski as acting editor-in-chief of the PN for the duration of the 2010 electoral campaign. In so doing Wierzejski paradoxically opened the door for the internal opposition. Soon young activists joined the editorial board, including four former chairmen of the MW (Jajecznik 2013a: 362). Thus the PN became not only a platform of an ideological debate, but also one of the major centres of an emerging political movement. Also, the nationalist demonstration held on Independence Day was nothing new – similar events had been held for many years in different cities and towns, separately by each of competing groupings. Meanwhile, the main organisers of the MIs refrained from emphasising the role of their groupings, because the MW and especially the ONR had been unable to attract backers. Therefore the MIs were held by an association established to be independent of existing groupings¹¹, though its executive board consists of the former leaders of the MW and the ONR¹².

¹¹ The March of Independence Association was registered in 2011.

¹² The chairman of the association is Witold Tumanowicz. One of the executive board members is Krzysztof Bosak.

This solution proved to be apposite. Employing a new political brand allowed the merging of nationalist groupings and unorganised nationalist circles (the first MIs were attended also by the Autonomous Nationalists) who had been in prior conflict with one another. Also, until then nationalists used different organisational models. In 1990s the old activists established small-scale parties, competing for exclusive legitimacy to represent the traditions of Polish nationalism. They were as numerous and as they were insignificant until united by the middle generation of Roman Giertych and Wierzejski in one umbrella party, the LPR¹³. Furthermore, the new image facilitated the attraction of right-wing anti-establishment opposition. Politicians from small right-wing groupings¹⁴, some famous columnists, researchers sympathising with Polish nationalism, the National Armed Forces Association members and veterans joined the Honorary Committee of the first MI. Backers of the *Gazeta Polska* and the *Solidarni 2010* association, both paradoxically closely connected with the establishment party, Law & Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS), also attended the MIs in 2010 and 2011. The freshness of the initiative contributed to several thousand participants assembling at the MIs, which were in fact led by widely unknown leaders. Acting under their own political brands (of the MW and the ONR) the MIs organisers had been unable to gather mass social acceptance.

Criticising the command style of political leadership and deficit of programmatic and political strategy debates, the protesters restored the formula of a wide and informal socio-political movement applied by Polish nationalists one hundred years ago. Krzysztof Bosak, the leader of the moderate wing of the NM, maintains that

(...) a movement consisting of large and hierarchical organisations is much less effective, less stable, and in the end less useful than one consisting of a network of numerous and independent entities, grassroots initiatives and associations connected by ideological bonds (Bosak 2008: 16).

In other words, they abandoned the ineffective and controversial attempts to create a single centralised party aiming for a monopoly in the field of the ideology, as sought after by the senior activists of the last decade of the 20th century. The young

¹³ Officially the LPR was a uniform party, but in fact it was the product of an electoral alliance of right-wing populists, Eurosceptic, orthodox Catholics and nationalists. The PN editors estimate that only 10 percent of the party members held nationalistic beliefs (Pawłowicz 2010: 367).

¹⁴ Janusz Korwin-Mikke, was the leader of New Right Congress party (Kongres Nowej Prawicy). Professor Jacek Bartyzel formed the Conservative-Monarchist Club (Klub Zachowawczo-Monarchistyczny).

activists announced a model opposed in terms of a political strategy to that practiced by the 'seniors'. The differences included:

1. post-2010 new-wave leaders preferred informal network structures based on common ideological beliefs and including political adversaries instead of exclusive parties;
2. existing structures for enforcing party discipline and subordination were replaced by a multi-stream structure associating political groupings that previously acted autonomously, or even in mutual competition, together with the incorporation of local grassroots initiatives;
3. rather than uniform party structures, the movement is composed of different types of units – associations, editorial boards of journals and newspapers, internet portals¹⁵ and sub-cultures¹⁶.

Parallel to the political efforts, the annual political rallies and journals as programme creation centres, they endeavour to develop numerous and stable social bases for the movement. In contrast to their predecessors, who used traditional methods of communication and support networks¹⁷, the new leaders opted for permanent contact with supporters as they could not rely on paid-up members. Aiming to create a social network, they used new channels of a social communication. It is no surprise that the youth movement, as opposed to other Polish political groupings, founded one of the most popular political web pages¹⁸. To gain information independence from mainstream media – perceived by nationalists as sympathizing with the political establishment – they also launched the web portal (*narodowcy.net*) providing followers with daily news and ideologically committed publicity. Moreover, the use of pop culture ('patriotic' hip-hop or rock music, and comic books) to popularise the nationalist point of view (particularly modern political history) is also a novelty (Jajecznik 2013a: 363–365), especially given the very old-fashioned background of nationalist parties in the 1990s.

¹⁵ The newspaper *Polska Niepodległa (Independent Poland)* – since 2013, the journals PN and the *Mysł.pl* and *narodowcy.net* web portal.

¹⁶ Autonomous Nationalists, some football hooligan groups and 'patriotic oriented' music fans both rap and rock style.

¹⁷ The 'seniors' organised party meetings, and celebrations of national and religious holidays (see: Tomaszewicz 2003; Maj & Maj 2007).

¹⁸ The NM's page is liked by 154,000 users, what is one the best result of a single political Facebook fan page. The New Right Congress party (216,000) has the greatest number of 'likes'. J. Korwin-Mikke's party, new grouping – the Korwin party – gained 154,000 of likes. By comparison, all parliamentary parties fan pages gained around 200,000 'likes'. It is necessary to remember that a large number of political fan page subscribers are not followers, but merely observers who receive newsletters and similar communications.

This organisational model has not been thoroughly implemented. Growing attendance at MIs might seem promising for fragmented right-wing non-parliamentary groupings, but despite initial declarations of uncompromising opposition, the MIs appearance of being a cross-party political rally has disappeared since 2012. The conversion of a socio-political movement project to a proto-party was caused equally by external and internal factors. In fact, the withdrawal of many well-known figures from the honorary committee – politicians, journalists, scholars sympathizing with right-wing or even celebrities – and declining support for the MI by representatives of various right-wing groupings (conservative liberals, monarchists and right-wing populists) derived from the new leadership's faults (see: Szymanik 2012).

Above all, the inexperienced leadership aimed to take advantage of the MIs' participatory success in order to gain political backers. Therefore, immediately after the MI in 2012, which was as usual addressed to a variety of right-wing anti-establishment circles, they organised another political rally, gathering mainly a young activists of the MW and the ONR, to officially announce the formation of the Nationalist Movement¹⁹ (Winnicki 2012). Winnicki and Bosak did not define whether it would be a kind of proto-party or remain a political movement, composed of various groupings and grassroots local groups. During the first NM congress, held in May 2013, several organisations²⁰ signed the programme declaration. Repeated declaration that both initiatives – the MI and the NM – do not aspire for party status but rather represent a broad anti-establishment front (Bonisławski & Siemiątkowski 2014: 254), turned out to be false. Despite two electoral defeats in 2014 Winnicki announced the registration the NM as political party in November 2014 (Majewski 2014).

To recapitulate, as an organisation, the NM evolved in three phases. In 2010–2012 the new leaders declared the initiation of a socio-political movement project. In practice they sought to gain recognition and social acceptance for a new political brand by means of the MIs. Thereafter in 2013, they officially announced

¹⁹ First signal of plans to establish the NM The initial signal to establish the NM were published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, unfavourable towards nationalists, after the MI in 2011 (Szymanik 2011). Than leaders immediately denied (Winnicki & Holocher 2011).

²⁰ Despite the reservations of the main players – the MW, the ONR and the MI Association – the declaration was accepted by: two journals (PN and *Mysł.pl*), 'narodowcy.net' web portal editors, two very small-scale parties: the Real Politics Union party (Unia Polityki Realnej) and The Freedom Movement party (Ruch Wolności), several local grassroots groups (for e.g. Koszalin Town's Nationalists (Narodowy Koszalin), assorted other community activist groups and – paradoxically – some Catholic organisations (e.g. Civitas Christiana association, as well as the neo-paganist association "Niklot" (see: Bonisławski & Siemiątkowski 2014: 255–259; The NM 2nd congress 2014).

the creation of the NM without specifying its legal forms, thus converting the emerging political movement into a proto-party. They rebutted initial declarations that the movement would be composed of many separate groupings acting independently and connected only by ideological beliefs. The NM began turning into a single grouping. The third phase began in 2014 with participation in local government and EP elections. The registration of the party only confirms this tendency²¹. The frequent turning points are no surprise considering the newness of the political brands and the MI and NM were indispensable in order to attract thousands of followers. Essentially, both initiatives are not the beginning of a political movement but camouflage for the MW and the ONR coalition, because these associations would never have been able to attract even a fraction of this support acting under their proper names.

2.2. The Origins of the New Doctrine

The new generation leaders realise there will be no revival of nationalism without ideological modernisation. They openly criticise the ‘seniors’ as epigones who unsuccessfully attempted to adapt archaic ideas, which resulted in the use of inadequate and unpopular slogans. Therefore, the main challenge is to fill the “conceptual emptiness” inherited from their predecessors. In order to re-connect with their followers they call for a broad discussion about the basis of modern nationalist political thought. Thus the editorial boards of the PN and *Myśl.pl (Idea.pl)* are major components of the nascent socio-political movement. The journals’ editors strive to build an ideological platform uniting fragmented nationalist groupings (Jajecznik 2013a: 366, 372).

In Krzysztof Bosak’s opinion, comprehensive doctrines are obsolete. Today ordinary citizens demand single ideas that solve concrete problems. Thus he recommends giving up on reviving nationalistic solidarity and ideological rhetoric in favour of particular ideas. The ‘new wave’ of nationalists declare their strong ideological identity but are attracted to pragmatic and flexible solutions. Furthermore, an individual approach to selected contemporary challenges could strengthen their position in public discourse (Jajecznik 2013a: 367).

The editors of PN held to the belief that the long-term hegemony of liberal axioms to be nearing exhaustion. As a consequence, they believe that there will be a resultant rise in demand for alternative visions. From this point of view, civil unrest caused by a demographic crisis, the collapse of multiculturalism

²¹ On 11 February 2015 the NM entered into the political parties register (Małyśzek 2015).

or a deepening of European integration fully express the nationalists' position (Jajecznik 2013a: 367). The contestation of selected components of liberal belief provides them with keynotes for the draft of the new doctrine and allows them also to adapt some elements of the anti-liberal heritage of Polish nationalism. In fact, the editors of PN did not create their doctrine from scratch but attempted to connect old and new threads – in other words, the ideological identity is connected to responses to current challenges. Moreover, the contemporary polemic with liberalism is not a simple repetition of convictions from the inter-war period. The common threads of heritage and current nationalist thinking are connected in a polemic with liberal democracy and an anti-establishment orientation. Liberalism is continuously perceived as threat to national and religious identity.

They diagnose the sources of the demographic crisis – in Poland as well as throughout Europe – as individualism, consumerism and the permissive society. They attribute the collapse of the traditional model of life to – in simple terms: an expectation of comfort and prosperity instead of nuclear family duties – resulting in not only depopulation but also social disintegration. From this point of view, non-European migrant workers do not supplement the labour shortage but, above all, transform the cultural structure of society. The mass scale of the phenomenon is regarded as a reason for the crises of both national identity and European civilisation (see: Jajecznik 2013b: 446–447). In opposing multiculturalism and immigration, the contributors to *The Handbook for Nationalists: The ABC of Contemporary Nationalism* sought to promote the repatriation of Poles deported during the Second World War from post-Soviet states (Bonisławski & Siemiątkowski 2014: 179). This option would apparently compensate for the mass migration of (young) Poles to Western Europe and the fall in the birth rate and so protect the nation state's composition.

The 'new wave' of Polish nationalists contests multiculturalism but does not yield to xenophobia. The old and middle generation nationalists were concerned primarily with domestic matters. The young leaders gave up national egotism as an integral component of old-type nationalism. A narrow-minded perspective was replaced by international co-operation. The implementation of this idea comes through the annual participation of foreign nationalist group representatives in the MIs. The NM's activists exclude co-operation only with Lithuanian and German nationalists, accusing them of chauvinism (Bonisławski & Siemiątkowski 2014: 131–133). It is expressed by two separate factors – the search for inspiration with which to refresh the doctrine as well as observation of attempting to create an alliance of anti-establishment opposition in different countries. The contributors to *The Handbook for Nationalists* argue that a hypothetical nationalist government in one country will

be isolated, as evidenced by the international pressure of liberal states on Victor Orbán's government. So, in their draft of doctrine the contributors present themselves as moderate politicians. They emphasise the rejection of antithetical orientations such as national egotism and chauvinism on the one hand, and imperialism on the other, which they attribute to universal ideologies of a liberal or socialist nature (Bonisławski & Siemiątkowski 2014: 131, 134–135).

Anti-imperialism was a traditional component of the ideology but in the last decade of the 20th century this idea not been pursued. The older and middle generation politicians mainly agitated fears of alleged German political and economic hegemony (see: Giertych 2009: 8–25). Promoting a strategic partnership with United States or Russia was equal to acceptance of Poland inside either sphere of influence (Jajecznik 2013b: 465–467, 475). Essentially, this point of view was supposed to counter anti-imperialism. Old-type nationalists confined themselves to stressing fears of deepening European integration as a threat to national sovereignty. 'New wave' leaders offer an alternative vision of Poland's position in Europe, reviving the Central European confederation project²², taken from the middle 20th century and meant as an alliance of nation-oriented states (Brubaker 1998). Essentially it is return to the "Great Poland" concept – a vision of "cultural imperialism". The idea of Polish leadership Central Europe was based on the assumption that a strong and vital identity – both national and Catholic – is an attractive alternative to liberal and unified West. Realising that single states are powerless against global challenges, they accept the necessity for permanent, voluntary economic and security co-operation between nation-states. The confederation project includes the following countries: Belarus, the Czech Republic, Hungary (if they respect a minority rights to avoid conflicts with neighbouring countries), Lithuania (only on the condition of autonomy for Poles in the Vilnius region), Slovakia and Ukraine (regardless of the unresolved issue of accountability for Second World War crimes in the Volhynia region) as confederation members. Strengthening co-operation on the north–south axis – with Nordic states for economic reasons was also considered. Similar plans were also touted with regard to the Baltic states (Estonia and Latvia) and with Romania due to its location and positive sentiment with regard to the inter-war alliance between Poland and Romania (Bonisławski & Siemiątkowski 2014: 97–104).

In summary, the draft of the Central European nation-states confederation project is an alternative to the EU, which is understood by nationalists to be

²² The 11th number of the PN was devoted to reviving the concept of the CE confederation project, the original name of which is *Międzymorze*, which means *Intermarum* (isthmus) – an area between the Baltic, Adriatic and Black Seas.

an instrument of German hegemony in Europe. It is also a rejection of strategic partnership between Europe and the United States as in the LPR's programme, or with Russia as advocated by some older activists (Bonisławski & Siemiątkowski 2014: 89; see: Jajecznik 2013b: 470; Maj 2011). Paradoxically, they seek to legitimise the Polish imperial project as an anti-imperialist alliance of the nation-states of the region.

A novelty is also the distance of the 'new wave' nationalists to Catholic inspiration (Bonisławski 2011: 179–189; Pawłowiec 2010: 368). Recognising the fact that since the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church generally refrains from directly supporting specific political parties, or movements, the new-wave nationalists do not expect direct backing from the church. They also are aware of the difference of opinion within the Polish church hierarchy on European integration and indicate some bishops' involvement at the side of the political establishment in this case. However, the keynote of the contestation is the blurred boundary between Catholic values and liberal axioms – that is in other words an obligation to care for one's own family or private sphere. They maintain that a "familial egoism" is not identical but tantamount to liberal individualism. However, Catholic social teaching is still respected as a source of inspiration but is not a guide for the drafting of the new doctrine (Bonisławski & Siemiątkowski 2014: 227–228, 231, 234, 236).

The new-wave activists and are keenly interested in the condition of European national identities. They also monitor the actions of especially radical nationalists groupings in other countries in search of inspiration for an organisational model, a political strategy, social communication and programme components (Jajecznik 2013a: 351). The most dynamically developing cooperation is with Jobbik, the electoral successes of which demonstrate the potential for nationalism in Central Europe.

Finally, contemporary anti-liberalism is completely different to that presented by the older and middle generation politicians in the first and the second phases of evolution of the ideology after 1989. The older activists invoked an anti-Semitic interpretation of liberalism taken from the inter-war period. The 'new wave' nationalists do not employ anti-Semitic slogans, but identify liberalism as being at the heart of both the European and national identity crises. Moreover, an anti-liberal orientation is a platform to cooperation with nationalists from other countries, because liberalism is considered as a common threat to all nations. Paradoxically, anti-liberalism perceived as being a more inclusive perspective than narrow-minded old-type nationalism.

3. Against “the Roundtable Republic” – the Anti-Establishment Orientation of the NM

3.1. The National Movement Position in the Party System

The nationalist oppositional orientation results from its position in the political system. It did not partake in the “Roundtable Contract” that initiated the formation process of the political establishment in Poland. Taking this into account, the majority of the subsequent parliamentary party leaders deriving from participants of the “Roundtable negotiations” were as a result perceived by nationalists as part of the agreement of the division of political power between post-communists and liberals (The NM General Board statement 2014). Mainstream media, regarded as promoters of the left-wing and liberal parties were also considered part of the political establishment. Robert Winnicki, the frontman of the NM and the honorary chairman of the MW, considers Adam Michnik, the editor-in-chief of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, to be the main founder of the “Roundtable Republic” (Winnicki 2012).

After 1989, they continuously contested the political mainstream’s achievements on the grounds of the ideological contradictions within liberalism. This ideology, they argue, is not accepted by society and has been artificially imposed after 1989 by establishment politicians, which allegedly proves they represent foreign points of view contrary to national interest (Winnicki 2014). So first of all, nationalists question EU accession is the greatest success of the political establishment after 1989. In May 2006, the LPR entered into the government coalition with under the “Fourth Republic” slogan, which was tantamount to openly contesting the political landscape of the Third Republic (the constitutional name of Poland). Yet the nearest future proved this declaration was an illusion. Despite participation in the coalition with Law & Justice (PiS) until early parliamentary elections in September 2007 and further open support of former LPR leaders Maciej and Roman Giertych for the ruling party and the president, they in fact are now struggling to enter into the political mainstream (Giertych 2014). This turning point of political strategy is unsurprising taking into account the attempts of the Nationalist Party led by them (Stronnictwo Narodowe “senioralne”) to enter into a right-wing coalition in the 1990s.

The ‘new wave’ leaders returned to consistently uncompromising opposition though their status as an anti-establishment or an anti-system opposition is less clear. The “overthrowing of the Roundtable Republic”, the slogan employing by the NM leaders²³, is meant to deprive left-wing and liberal parties of

²³ The slogan was firstly used by Robert Winnicki after the MI in 2012, when he announced the creation of the NM (Winnicki 2012).

legitimacy and political power. The declaration of a socio-political movement also differs radically the NM from the professional parties gathering career politicians. The contributors to *The Handbook for Nationalists* undermined selected solutions to the constitutional order, which are, in their opinion, instruments of establishment parties' hegemony. Public budget funding for parties that exceed 3 percent of the electoral threshold and formal/legal immunity explains the blockade on parliamentary status faced by the anti-establishment opposition. In this model, parties did not associate citizens, but are merely a party apparatus subordinate to party bosses, as they maintain. So there is a proposed 1 percent party financing income tax deduction, because this solution will put pressure on parties to create stable connections with their social base. Going forward along this course of reasoning, the handbook's contributors demand the development of direct democracy, arguing the strengthening of citizens' control over government (Bonisławski & Siemiątkowski 2014: 63, 66–71). To recapitulate, there is no doubt the NM position qualifies as an anti-establishment opposition in the political system. The co-authors of NM political thinking accept the democratic regime, proposing only the ruling system's partial reforms.

The self-image of the NM leaders as an anti-systemic opposition is not a diagnosis, only a rhetorical habit. In practice, it is an attempt to authenticate themselves in the eyes of potential supporters as a real uncompromising opposition. They are aiming to be regarded as anti-systemic radicals. The NM's slogan for the EP elections held in May 2014 was "a radical change" (see: narodowcy2014.pl), which intentionally but without being precise means change of ruling party, or the rules of the political system. However, after the announcement of a stricter of law on public assembly as a result of the riots during the MI in 2012, the organisers argued that civil liberties were being undermined by "the system", meaning the establishment parties, and that nationalists were being victimised (Law of Assemblies reform project 2014).

Contrary to its claimed position, in practice the NM is not an anti-systemic political grouping, because it uses the multiple instruments of democracy such as freedom of speech (creating web portals and journals openly contesting the political establishment), freedom of assembly (annual MIs) or freedom of political activity (participation in EP elections). The NM is a radical opposition operating within the framework of the political system, because it does not contest the democratic regime even if it does undermine liberal values, but only the legitimacy of parliamentary parties that, in fact, originated in the "Roundtable Contract" and exchange roles of government and soft opposition. The NM's activity – paradoxically – does not confirm the leaders' declarations on that issue.

Due to the media coverage of riots taking place every year at the MIs, the organisers are regarded as political extremists. This issue is much more complex and the roles of different rally participant sides are ambiguous. At 2010, 2011 and 2013 MIs a part of the participants, supported by a football hooligans, clashed with a radical leftists (anarchists, so-called ‘anti-fascists’ groups and Antifa’s fighting squads²⁴) and objects or symbols non-tolerated by a nationalists were vandalised²⁵. Generally, the mainstream media, as repeated by the radical left-wing, called nationalists “fascists”, supported their opponents²⁶ and approved of the activities of leftist fighting squads, who present themselves as “defenders of democracy” (Rukat 2013: 282). Hence, the first MI organisers did not feel responsible for the clashes taking place along the route of the march. These, the organisers claim every year, were caused by a “police provocateurs” or hooligans not participating in the rally and only taking advantage of the situation in order to have a fight with the police. This well-known opinion changed after the MI in 2014, but this time the clashes were clearly provoked by hooligans²⁷. Even media commentators acknowledged that the militants were not the MI’s participants (MI 2014). Finally, the current NM activity, including the MIs, does not legitimise calling it political extremism because it does not indulge in politically motivated violence.

²⁴ In 2010 marginal radical left-wings groups (anarchists, ‘anti-fascists’, feminists) organised a counter-demonstration to block the march, but – after police intervention – the MI reached its destination. *Gazeta Wyborcza* also joined the call for blocking the MI. In 2011, Antifa’s fighting squads arrived from Germany and attacked members of a historical reconstruction group. In the same year, hooligans set fire to two broadcasting vans belonging to private television stations. One was owned by TVN, which is regarded to be sympathetic to the liberals and left wing (see: Baranowska & Niewińska 2011; Wybranowski 2011b).

²⁵ At the beginning of the 2013 march, participants clashed with anarchist squatters. Just before the end of the march a guard booth in front of the Russian embassy was set on fire, and then also set on fire a rainbow art installation set up by the city authorities and located nearby the MI route. The rainbow is perceived by nationalists as a symbol of the Civic Platform’s (PO) support for gay rights (Kozubal, Majewski & Blikowska 2013; Majewski 2013).

²⁶ For example, in 2011 the mainstream media promoted a counter demonstration, the Colourful Independent (Kolorowa Niepodległa), organised by a radical left-wing groups (Baranowska & Niewińska 2011).

²⁷ Before the riots, hooligans attacked the March of Independence Guard (Straż Marszu Niepodległości) – a paramilitary formation created in 2013 to protect the MIs (MI 2014). The organisers legitimised its formation by arguing that in previous years riots were provoked by masked police officers.

3.2. The Marches of Independence as a Challenge to the Political Establishment

The MIs are not just a one-day annual political event. Media coverage provides relatively unknown young leaders with recognition and allows them to add ideologically motivated threats to public discourse, thus exerting pressure on mainstream parties, which have to reply to contradictory opinions. Secondly, the marches provide credibility to young activists aspiring to political leadership and strengthen connections between their followers. Furthermore, contributors to *The Handbook for Nationalists* question the use of selected political marketing tools (for e.g. billboards, TV spots) as instruments of the political establishment hegemony. Political communication based on expensive forms in practice excludes the opposition, because it is beyond the capabilities of non-parliamentary parties not reviewing budget subsidies. Moreover, as they maintain, the mainstream media are favourable to the mainstream parties. For this reason, new wave nationalists prefer direct contact between politicians and supporters such as political rallies, leaflets distribution and public meetings with voters. This approach is presented as much more democratic. Nationalists regard this strategy as the implementation of national sovereignty, but essentially they demand ordinary citizens' permanent control of the political establishment (Bonisławski & Siemiątkowski 2014: 66–71). Fourthly, the movement's image, which as we know has not been implemented, is also a form of opposition against the parliamentary parties and career politicians, who prefer communication with citizens via the media. Taking this into account, contributors to *The Handbook for Nationalists* argue that mainstream media, regarded as unfavourable to the non-parliamentary opposition, belongs to one media-political establishment (Bonisławski & Siemiątkowski 2014: 7).

Parliamentary parties, paradoxically confirming the nationalist opinion, because they avoid forms of direct contact with voters beyond the time of pre-election campaigns. During last decade, the largest examples of this form of political mobilisation were the “Solidarity in Poland” march by the Law & Justice (PiS) and the “Blue March” by the Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska, PO) in response, both held in October 2006 (Kaczyński 2006; Tusk 2006). The increasing attendance at the MIs alarmed establishment politicians. In December 2011, right after the second MI, Law & Justice organised the march of “Independence and Sovereignty” (Wybranowski 2011a). Since 2012, the president of Poland has led the march “Together for Poland”. For nationalists, the participants are recruited from state officials and officers – in other words from groups whose professional position in fact depends on the ruling party political position. The sudden increase of major establishment parties and leaders interest in political rallies is the result of the yearly growth in attendance at the MIs.

Concluding, the MI organisers challenge the parliamentary parties and indeed the government. The presidential marches prove that the initiative to organise public holiday celebrations by relatively unknown activists is regarded as a threat to the establishment parties' positions and legitimacy. This is no surprise because in the last five years two small-scale associations, until 2010 acting at the fringe of the political system, have turned the celebration of the Independence Day against the authorities to promote the belief that they do not secure the interests of ordinary citizens and nation-state sovereignty. Taking into account the disproportionate attendance between the indicated marches, it becomes clear that there is the 'new wave' of nationalists aiming to call into a question the political legitimization of parliamentary parties originating from the "Roundtable Contract" in 1989.

3.3. The Nationalist Movement's Potential for Political Mobilisation

A precise, official and – above all – reliable number of public assembly participants is not available. Despite the data deficit, an attempt to estimate the level of social impact and support for the NM is necessary to analyse and predict its position in the political system in the nearest future. All the more so as differing political mobilisation potentials provide apparently contradictory tendencies. MI attendance is increasing annually and clearly exceeds the number of participants at rallies organised by a mainstream parties²⁸. At the same time, the NM suffered defeats both national elections in 2014 – to the EP in May and a local government in November. The disappearance is illusory indeed, because in both elections they gathered a comparable level of supporters/votes²⁹. Attracting numerous followers to an anti-establishment protest is no surprise in the case of a new political grouping. Nevertheless, its leaders are not perceived as responsible politicians offering "serious" and programmatic solutions.

²⁸ Around 8,000 persons took part in the "Solidarity in Poland" march and around 11,000 in the "Blue March" (Kaczyński 2006; Tusk 2006). In 2013, the second presidential march "Together for Poland" attracted over 10,000 participants (Kozubal, Majewski & Blikowska 2013).

²⁹ The MI leaders' claims are usually twice as high as that of the mainstream media. The organisers claimed that in the first there were around 10,000 participants, in the second twice that number; in the next 25,000 or more and in 2013 even almost 100,000. In the EP elections, the NM gained 98,500 votes, or about 1.4 percent of the overall vote (The NM's EP election results 2014). In the local government elections held in November of that year, it received 188,000 votes, or around 1.57 percent (Local election results 2014a; Local election results 2014b). Marian Kowalski, the NM's candidate in the presidential elections held in May 2015, gained only 77,600 votes (Presidential elections results 2015).

Over the last five years, between the first March of Independence and the elections of 2014, the new-wave nationalists' political mobilisation potential reached, but not exceeded 100,000 people. Despite the fact that this constituted a multiple increase in comparison to the previous membership of the NM founding organisations (the MW and the ONR), and notwithstanding the fact that such growth was rapid and significant, the NM's electoral potential remains very limited. This is illustrated by consideration of the 2011 parliamentary election results (see: Parliamentary elections results 2011). In practice a party, or an electoral committee, had to gain more than 750,000 votes in total in order to reach the 5 percent electoral threshold. In its three electoral tests in 2014 and 2015 the NM gained only slightly more than 10 percent of this effective threshold.

In sum, the NM electoral potential is lower than the LPR's almost ten years ago. Employing the same criteria³⁰, the NM's relevance is severely limited, meaning it is a powerless opposition. Any attempt to provide public discourse with new topics and ideologically motivated opinions has only marginal influence on the government. In fact it is only an ideological, and not a political opposition. This is more than the marginal position of the nationalist parties in the 1990s, but there are no indications that predict an increase to a level allowing veto power over a selected reforms implemented by ruling parties. It is too early to evaluate the extent and stability of the social base, not only because of the very limited electoral experience, but above all due to the lengthy process of ideological connection formation between young politicians aspiring to become leaders and their supporters. The NM organisational efficiency, including organised political rallies – not only the MIs³¹ – and created local structures and electoral campaigns, contribute to a further growth in a social acceptance. That scenario is possible only under two conditions – first, if a generational change, seen in terms of the entire party system, takes place, and second, if a moderate-wing will come to dominate the NM structures³². Taking into account the very stable social support for the mainstream parties since the beginning of the 21st century, is clear that no political radicalism is acceptable in Poland.

³⁰ Electoral potential has the following components: 1) level and stability of electoral support; 2) a five-degree relevance scale (marginal, limited influence, effective blocking, one of policymakers, domination); 3) an area of influence (governmental, parliamentary, public opinion); 4) organisational effectiveness (capacity for immediate reaction) and 5) independent initiator of public debates (Jajecznik 2006: 122).

³¹ For example, the MI's leaders support the annual "Anti-Communist March".

³² The undisputed leader of the moderate-wing is Krzysztof Bosak. This group also includes the PN editors. The majority of the leadership belongs to the radical-wing.

Conclusion

Any conclusions are preliminary given that the NM is an unfinished political project that still has not gained a definitive form. Its formation process provides arguments in favour of the thesis that during the last quarter of a century the evolution of Polish nationalism has been composed of three successive stages corresponding to generational changes of leadership. During the adaptation period of the 1990s, the old activists ('seniors') created numerous small-scale, mutually conflicted and completely powerless authoritarian parties and proclaimed archaic and unpopular political thought inspired by doctrines taken from the inter-war period. The second stage, defined by the LPR's relevance in 2001–2007, was a period of the middle generation politicians' hegemony. The direct disciples of the old activists not only established the LPR, an umbrella party for the numerous small-scale organisations, but also combined nationalism with populism. As it is clear in retrospect, this alliance of highly diversified anti-establishment circles turned out to be a one-project party³³. The third phase began in 2010, but essentially the arrival of the MI and was only the most visible symptom of a generational change, which was originated in 2005 (see: Jajecznik 2006: 110). The leadership change took place twenty years after the beginning of the transition, when activists born after 1989 who had benefitted from higher education, which allowed them to rethinking a socio-political processes in Europe and on that basis initiate the 'new wave' of nationalism (Bonisławski & Siemiątkowski 2014: 253; Jajecznik 2013a: 375).

Turning to the first research question posed in the introduction, in essence, the profound transformation of nationalism in Poland is not a generational change, meant as not only a withdrawal of the youngest activists' allegiance to previous mentors and leaders, but first of all a mental breakthrough. The distinguishing features of the new type of nationalism are firstly, the draft of a doctrine in response to current challenges and demands³⁴ and secondly, the declaration of socio-political movement's formation replacing a one 'hegemony' political party model³⁵. The registration of the NM as a political party in February 2015 called into question the leaders' recent commitments that the MIs would not be affiliated to any political party (see: Bonisławski & Siemiątkowski 2014: 96, 254; Jajecznik 2013a: 377). In fact

³³ The author's prediction that the LPR would be a permanent feature on the Polish political landscape has proved to be incorrect (see Jajecznik 2006: 120, 129–130).

³⁴ Instead of the adaptation of archaic points of view as in the first phase, or abandonment of ideology in favour of populism as happened in the second phase.

³⁵ In the first phase – numerous and conflicted, or in the second phase – through the creation of an umbrella party, which is in fact an alliance, hiding its member organisations rivalry from external observers.

this solution negates the model of a broad socio-political movement consisting of many independently acting groupings, connecting only by ideological beliefs and an anti-establishment orientation. Employing “movement” as part of the party name – even if, journals’ editorial boards and other associations cooperate with the party meant as a main centre – is indeed misleading. The new leaders, more precisely the fraction led by Robert Winnicki, have returned to the old political strategy of hegemony within the nationalist party sub-system. Withdrawal from the socio-political movement creation project undermines the thesis of the third evolutionary phase of Polish nationalism.

Despite its self-identity, the NM is not an anti-system grouping but, in essence, an uncompromising anti-establishment opposition. Its participation in the national elections held in 2014 and in the presidential election in May 2015 proves that the NM is not an anti-systemic grouping. In practice, despite its leaders’ declarations, it respects the rules of the democratic regime and benefits from constitutionally guaranteed political freedoms. In light of the above and of course of the MI in 2014, when for the first time hooligans clashed with police and were clearly separate from the rally participants (MI 2014), at present there are no facts or reasons to qualify the NM as an extremist grouping or a threat to democracy. The NM image is intentionally ambiguous because radical rhetoric attracts young followers disillusioned by the powerlessness of other nationalist groupings, and paradoxically moderate-wing leaders promote it as a serious alternative to mainstream parties, which is indispensable during pre-electoral campaigns. Finally, it is necessary to note that this diagnosis may become out-dated if the radical wing becomes dominant.

When combining the third and fourth research question responses, we notice that the social support for the NM reaching up to 100,000 supporters or voters. It is a level nine to ten times lower than the electoral results of the LPR from ten years ago or to Jobbik electoral results of the last five years. The social acceptance of the NM is similar to that of the LsNS. The NM leaders did not impugn the political legitimisation of the mainstream parties because of their inability to increase social support but because they cannot undermine the consensus concerning the success of political transition after 1989. The present immaturity of the NM’s political doctrine is the source of this. In order to solve modern problems such as the challenges posed by mass migration, it is necessary to disseminate modern ideas. The scale of the NM’s powerlessness is illustrated by anti-establishment yearnings, upon which they cannot capitalise, as was demonstrated by the support for Paweł Kukiz in presidential election of May 2015, who received more than 20 percent of the vote (Presidential elections results 2015). The second of major factors that determines the groupings’ current position is its abandonment of a long-term strategy aimed at creating a broad socio-political movement, composed

of many independent organisations, in favour of the rapid establishment a single political party. In turn, this state of affairs is the result of the dominance of the radical fraction in the NM's leadership.

It is not clear how the NM will evolve. The radical rhetoric symbolised by the slogan of overthrowing the "Roundtable Republic" is in contrast the attempt to incorporate the party within the political system, coupled with the unambiguous dissociation from the violence that occurred during the MI in 2014. The path taken by the moderate leadership does not preclude the NM from becoming will be a permanent feature of the Polish political landscape. On the contrary, evolution towards radicalism prevents any return to the fringe of the political system.

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The Transformation of Nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe

Over a quarter of a century has passed since the initiation of political transition in Central and Eastern Europe. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the area was a veritable kaleidoscope of peoples, with the politics of nationalism being both virulent and dominant in this part of the continent. One of the most significant components of the contemporary transformation process is nationalist revitalisation throughout the continent, not least in the countries covered in this volume. The result of this experience and more importantly the memory of this experience, is that it has become commonplace to assert that in post-communist Europe, questions surrounding the idea of nation and state and minority protection are more germane to everyday discourse than are similar questions in Western Europe. The lessons drawn from the case studies presented in the volume are intended to provide valuable lessons for those engaged in the study of nationalism in the central and eastern part of the continent.

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