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*Populist and Nationalist Trends in the Polish Influential Press:
Pro-European or Euro-Skeptical?*

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to determine the level of populist and nationalist trends in the Polish influential press articles related to the global financial crisis triggered on 15 September 2008 by the collapse of the Lehman Brothers investment bank. The result of the Polish presence in the European Union and NATO structures is that the crisis situations in Western Europe and the USA constitute an important topic for Polish media, and allow for the assessment of the level of approval/criticism towards the Western world. The author assumed that the domination of populist and nationalist trends is a sign of Euro-skepticism, while their presence that is not more than incidental – a sign of pro-European attitude. The paper versions of the most influential Polish press titles constitute the research material, namely daily papers: “Rzeczpospolita” and “Gazeta Wyborcza” and weekly magazines: “Newsweek Polska” and “Polityka”.

Key words: populism, nationalism, pro-European attitude, Euro-skepticism, influential press

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The Polish presence in the European Union (EU) is connected with social and political changes after the fall of communism in 1989 and democratization, which resulted in accession of Poland to the European structures in 2004 [Sztompka 1996; Ekiert 2003; Židek 2011; Szalkowski, Jankowicz 2004; Copsey, Pomorska 2014]. Also the close relationship between Poland and the United States of America (USA) resulted in Polish accession to NATO in 1999 [Osica 2002; Steves 2001]. The first decade of the 21st century saw an increase in the coverage given to economic, political and social issues of the EU and the USA in the Polish media discourse, particularly

to crisis situations with European and global reach [Klaus 2004: 56, 63; Drag 2004; Kaca, Szczepanik 2013].

The important crisis situations of the first and second decades of the 21st century include the financial crisis connected with the fall of the Lehman Brothers American investment bank (15 September 2008) [Von Hagen, Schuknecht, Wolswijk 2011]. The author of this paper conducts research on the press image of populist and nationalist trends in the Polish opinion press within the period directly following 15 September 2008, assuming (as a result of extensive research) that there exist interaction and dependence between the media and political focus [Walgrave, Van Aelst 2006; Tan, Weaver 2007; Nowak 2013].

The aim of the article is to determine the level of the positive attitude of the Polish press towards the actions of political and financial institutions of the EU and the USA by means of diagnosing the presence of populist and nationalist trends in the press articles, as well as attempting to assess their stance (approval or criticism) in view of the Lehman Brothers fall. The result will allow the author to verify whether Euro-skeptical or pro-European attitudes dominated in the Polish media. The research material includes the most important representatives of the dominant reference Polish press – daily papers “Gazeta Wyborcza” (“GW”) and “Rzeczpospolita” (“Rz”),¹ as well as weekly magazines “Polityka” and “Newsweek Polska” (“NP”).² The press titles selected for analysis represented the following ideological options: liberal – “Polityka”, “NP” and “GW”; conservative – “Rz” [Smolińska-Theiss 2017: 172].³

The analysis was conducted with regard to all press articles related to the financial crisis of 2008 and published within the two weeks following the date of this event in the case of daily papers, and within a month after this event in the case of weekly magazines. The presence of one of the following keywords: “Lehman Brothers”, “investment bank”, “banking crisis”, “bank collapse” and the fact that the press article containing one of the keywords was indeed devoted to the banking crisis constituted the criterion for selection of press articles in the case of this press study analysis of the Lehman Brothers fall. The research included all-Polish printed versions of daily papers “GW” and “Rz” in the period between 15 September 2008 and 30 September 2008, and of weekly magazines “Polityka” and “NP” – the last two issues from September and first three issues from October 2008. The weekly

¹ In the case of “Rzeczpospolita” and “Gazeta Wyborcza” the author did not include in the analysis the pages that are entirely devoted to economic issues.

² According to the data of Media Monitoring Institute of August 2017, “Rzeczpospolita” and “Gazeta Wyborcza” are among the most influential opinion-forming Polish daily papers, and “Polityka” and “Newsweek Polska” – among the most influential opinion-forming Polish weekly magazines, cf. Media Monitoring Institute [IMM 2017, September]. The local issues and local websites of the aforementioned press titles were not included in the research.

³ The liberal-conservative dichotomy of press titles does not clearly mean support or negation of populist and nationalist tendencies [Maddox, Lilie 1984: VII–XVI]. The literature on the subject notes the terminological ambiguity of the terms “conservatism” and “liberalism” as well as different typologies of the division of ideology [Kukathas 1987: 30–44; Szczepański 2011: 114–116].

magazines were subject to prolonged period of analysis in order to avoid the risk of omitting significant, the most important overtones of Lehman Brothers fall in the press. In the case of weekly magazines, news are discussed for a longer period than in daily papers. The research method selected for this study is the analysis of the press content [Krippendorf 2004: 18–43; Wimmer, Dominick 2008: 209–247]. The unit of analysis is a single journalistic article devoted to the financial crisis and its consequences. The author also uses sentiment analysis.⁴

The analysis undertaken in this study aims at verifying the following research hypothesis: The Polish press took up the topic of the financial crisis following the fall of the Lehman Brothers investment bank. The pro-European attitude dominated in the influential daily papers and weekly magazines subject to the analysis. The context of the crisis did not reveal lack of trust on behalf of the Polish press with regard to the activities of the political and financial institutions of the EU and the USA.⁵

The author formulated the following research questions:

1. Do (and to what extent) the analyzed media articles refer to the issue of the financial crisis?
2. Is the presence of populist and nationalist trends visible in the analyzed press articles? How were the trends assessed in particular daily papers and weekly magazines (in a criticizing or approving way)?

POPULISM AND NATIONALISM AS SYMPTOMS OF THE EURO-SKEPTICAL ATTITUDE

The author understands populism as political movements and parties that declare to support average citizens in contrast to “corrupted” political elites [Schattschneider 1960: 71]. In populism, social instincts and desires are considered as the primary and

⁴ Each press article which met the analysis criteria was classified under one of the following categories: “pro-European”, “Euro-skeptical”, “approving and criticizing at the same time”, “difficult to say”. The negative attitude towards the political and financial institutions of the EU and the USA as well as their activity is expressed in the press articles by means of emotional words and phrases such as: “unfavorable”, “bad”, “dangerous”. Such press articles supported the Euro-skeptical attitude, as well as populist and nationalist trends. On the other hand, the positive attitude towards such institutions of the EU and the USA as well as their activity is expressed by means of emotional words and phrases such as: “favorable”, “good”, “safe”. The press articles which presented the EU and the USA in a positive way supported the pro-European attitude. This means that they did not legitimize the populist and nationalist trends. The publications classified into the “approving and criticizing at the same time” group presented positions supporting both the Euro-skeptic and pro-European attitude. The “difficult to say” category referred to publications which were purely informational and did not express any sentiment towards the political and financial institutions of the EU and the USA and their activities.

⁵ The research hypothesis was formulated on the basis of the results of the survey conducted by Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) in 2017, according to which, about 80–90% of the respondents belong to the group of advocates of Polish membership in the EU. CBOS surveys also indicate that the advocates of Polish membership in the EU dominate in all social and demographic groups, as well as in the electorate of all parties with the highest level of social support (PO, PiS, Kukiz’15), cf. Public Opinion Research Center [CBOS 2017, August].

most appropriate clue for political actions [Heywood 2009: 435]. The author assumes that populism is based on “appeal to fear”, with the aim to influence a person and to encourage this person to make such a decision which would eliminate the said fear from consciousness [Lasoń 2011: 188–189; Chevigny 2003; Rico, Guinjoan, Anduiza 2017; Klimowicz 2016: 43], and that it is an exponent of the deepest hopes of ordinary people, so it undermines trust in all intermediary institutions. It is also perceived as an authoritarian trend and enemy of “pluralistic” democracy [Ottaway 2003: 131–189]. Populism is a tool which facilitates election success, gaining and maintaining power, as well as legitimizing actions conducted by political leaders and parties, advocacy groups taking advantage of the public mood and particularly of the less wealthy and less educated electorate [Lasoń 2011: 188]. In order to gain social support, populists propose unusual solutions, promise rapid socio-political changes, use language mechanism of persuasion and manipulation, and proclaim the transition from protections to neoliberal opening [Cichecka 2018: 11]. Populism may also reflect the actual social problems and may be useful for their consolidation. This is particularly present in the countries with unsettled democracy [Whitehead 1992].

The author differentiates between liberal and conservative nationalism. Liberal nationalism is based on an assumption that the humankind is naturally divided and constitutes a collection of nations with separate identities. The idea of a nation is connected with the belief concerning people’s independence and the related principle of each nation’s self-determination. Liberal nationalism assumes that the interest of any nation is just as important as the interest of other nations, because they all have the right to freedom and self-determination. This concept is about the strength promoting the unity of all nations and brotherhood between them based on mutual respect for rights and national differences [Tamir 1995: 117–139; Heywood 2009: 139–141]. Therefore, the liberal version of nationalism corresponds with the pro-European attitude.

For the purposes of this paper, its author understands the notion of nationalism as conservative nationalism, which is based on the belief that the nation is in danger, either external or internal. This is a result of preferring the interest of one nation to the other. Class antagonism and the threat of social revolution constitute traditional internal enemies, whereas immigration and supranationalism are seen as external enemies [Heywood 2009: 143]. In principle, conservative nationalism reflects the Euro-skeptical attitude.⁶ A fairly narrowed definition of nationalism and populism can reduce the quality of scientific argument, on the other hand, the author avoids ambiguity in the understanding of the categories analyzed in press studies.

⁶ The author takes with a today’s political lens the meaning of nationalism and populism. Those are rather political labels much present at the end of the second decade of the 21st-century political debate, but were very much absent in Europe in 2008, when the financial crisis exploded. Euro-skepticals were almost politically irrelevant in Western Europe and Eastern Euro-skepticals were unnoticed by the media mainstream in Western Europe.

The author assumes that the tone of approval in press articles towards populist and nationalist trends in their conservative version will, in principle, evidence the Euro-skeptical attitude of the media. On the other hand, criticism towards such trends shall be interpreted by the author as the pro-European attitude.⁷ However, from the semantic point of view, populism and conservative nationalism cannot be equated with Euro-skepticism. Not every Euro-skeptical opinion is based on or directly connected with populist or nationalist trends [Lasoń 2011: 189]. Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart made a distinction between two close terms: “hard Euro-skepticism” (understood as the anti-European attitude) and “soft Euro-skepticism” (Euro-realism) [Szczerbiak, Taggart 2003: 6]. The first term is a protest against the idea of European integration, and the second one means an attitude expressing a series of reservations with regard to different areas of EU actions – quality-based attitude towards some of the current EU policies which are not coincident with the national interest of one’s own state, without undermining the very principles of the EU existence and membership of one’s own state in its structures [Sondel-Cedarmas 2015: 396]. It is this latter interpretation, which can be defined as “soft Euro-skepticism”, that is assumed by the author as the explanation of the term “Euro-skepticism” in this paper.

The author of the article treats the EU and the USA as one organism. That is why the approving or criticizing attitude towards the political and financial institutions of the EU and the USA is referred to in this study with the terms “pro-European” or “Euro-skeptical”.⁸

THE PRESS IMAGE OF THE POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONAL
STRUCTURES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE UNITED STATES
IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE RESULTS OF QUANTITATIVE
AND QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The results of the press analysis of daily papers and weekly magazines are as follows: the author found 58 articles which meet the analysis criteria – 27 articles in “GW” (an average of 2.08 articles in one issue of “GW” within the analyzed period),

⁷ It is worth mentioning here that the aforementioned assumption made by the author is substantiated in the political science literature. Aleksandra Moroska presents an important academic voice in a discussion confirming the relations between populism and Euro-skepticism based on the example of two populist, Euro-skeptical parties: the Dutch *Lista Pima Fortuyna* (LPF) and the Polish *Liga Polskich Rodzin* (LPR) [Moroska 2010]. According to Aleksandra Pleśniarska, Euro-skepticism may be perceived as a sign of anti-European views which influence in a democratic way the change of political forces in some of the member states. In her opinion, Euro-skepticism may be a threat to the EU if used in order to enhance the negative mood, particularly by populist or nationalist parties [Pleśniarska 2017: 41].

⁸ The USA is treated as a part of the EU. When the “EU image” is mentioned, the image of the political and financial institutions of the EU and the USA is meant.

12 articles in “Rz” (0.92 article in one issue of “Rz”), 8 articles in “NP” (1.6 articles in one issue of “NP”), 11 articles in “Polityka” (2.2 articles in one issue of “Polityka”).⁹

The categorization key was used in the research, which allowed for the verification of the presence of populist and nationalist trends in the press articles and their assessment made by the representatives of Polish press. The categorization key for all analyzed press titles consisted of two features examined: POPULISM and NATIONALISM.

I. Feature examined: POPULISM

Categories within a given feature and their definitions:

1. Approving (Euro-skeptical) – the authors of the press articles who take up the issue of populism and its symptoms use in relation to it words and phrases which express positive sentiments, e.g. “good”, “favorable”, “safe”, “needed”, “proper”. This category features articles where the attention is paid to the problems of an average citizen resulting from the financial crisis. The articles express disapproval of actions undertaken by political and financial elites and they actually analyze the reasons which led to the fall of Lehman Brothers – in such a case the words and phrases expressing negative sentiments towards such elites are used. It is the problems of an average citizen that constitute the focus of attention for the authors of those press articles;

2. Criticizing (pro-European) – the authors of the press articles who take up the issue of populism and its symptoms refer to it by using words and phrases which express negative sentiments, e.g. “bad”, “unfavorable”, “dangerous”, “unnecessary”, “improper”. This category features articles which approve of the actions of financial elites, banking environment, officers of the EU and the USA in view of the financial crisis. At the same time, the problems of an average citizen are marginalized or omitted;

3. Approving and criticizing at the same time – the presence of both categories can be seen in the press article: approving and criticizing;

4. Difficult to say – the press article contains only information on the financial crisis, but it did not express any sentiment towards the political and financial institutions of the EU and the USA and their activities in the view of the financial crisis.

II. Feature examined: NATIONALISM

Categories within a given feature and their definitions:

1. Approving (Euro-skeptical) – the authors of the press articles who take up the issue of nationalism and its symptoms use in relation to it words and phrases which express positive sentiments, e.g. “good”, “favorable”, “safe”, “needed”, “proper”. This category features articles containing approval for those political thoughts and actions which in view of the financial crisis prefer the particularistic interest of Poland (or other country to which the press article is devoted) to the *bonum commune* of the EU and the USA. The articles where the EU and its actions were presented as

⁹ The average number of articles is a result of dividing the overall number of articles in a given magazine by the number of issues within the analyzed period – 13 in the case of daily papers and 5 in the case of weekly magazines.

a threat to Poland (or other country to which the press article refers), which weakens its culture and national identity and constitutes a source of other forms of internal or external risk, are also classified under this category;

2. Criticizing (pro-European) – the authors of the press articles who take up the issue of nationalism and its symptoms use in relation to it words and phrases which express negative sentiments, e.g. “bad”, “unfavorable”, “dangerous”, “unnecessary”, “improper”. This category features articles containing approval for those political thoughts and actions which in view of the financial crisis prefer the *bonum commune* of the EU and the USA to the particularistic interest of Poland (or some other member state). The articles where the EU and its actions were presented as the guarantor of security for Poland (or some other member state), which respects its culture and national identity, are also classified under this category. Moreover, the category also features press articles where the EU is not presented as an internal or external threat;

3. Approving and criticizing at the same time – the presence of both categories can be seen in the press article: approving and criticizing;

4. Difficult to say – the press article contains only information on the financial crisis, but it did not express any sentiment towards the political and financial institutions of the EU and the USA and their activities in the view of the financial crisis.

Table 1 contains quantitative results of the analysis and the number of press articles in “Rz”, “GW”, “NP”, “Polityka”, which were classified under particular categories in the POPULISM feature.

Table 1. Feature examined: POPULISM

	“Rz”	“GW”	“NP”	“Polityka”
approving (Euro-skeptical)	8	4	3	3
criticizing (pro-European)	0	15	3	4
approving and criticizing at the same time	0	5	2	4
difficult to say	4	3	0	0

Source: Author’s own study.

Table 2 contains quantitative results of the analysis and the number of press articles in “Rz”, “GW”, “NP”, “Polityka”, which were classified under particular categories in the NATIONALISM feature.

Table 2. Feature examined: NATIONALISM

	“Rz”	“GW”	“NP”	“Polityka”
approving (Euro-skeptical)	7	3	0	0
criticizing (pro-European)	2	21	4	8
approving and criticizing at the same time	0	3	2	3
difficult to say	3	0	2	0

Source: Author’s own study.

The greatest number of press articles devoted to the problems tackled in this work per one paper issue of a given press title was found in "Polityka" and "GW". The authors of "Rz" dealt with the problem of the financial crisis least frequently. It also ought to be noticed that none of the analyzed opinion-forming daily papers and weekly magazines omitted the issue of the image of political and financial institutions of the EU and the USA after the fall of Lehman Brothers.

POPULISM

As far as the examined feature of POPULISM is concerned, the greatest number of publications classified as "approving" can be found in "Rz" – 8 among 12 (which accounts for 66.67% of the articles published in "Rz" and meeting the research criteria). The lowest number in this category was found in "GW" – 4 among 27 articles (14.81% of "GW" articles). In magazines, the number of "approving" articles was: for "NP" – 3 out of 8 articles (37.5% of "NP" articles), for "Polityka" – 3 out of 11 articles (27.27% of "Polityka" articles).

For the sake of comparison, the number of press articles classified as "criticizing" is the following: for "GW" – 15 articles (55.56% of "GW" articles), for "NP" – 3 articles (37.5% of "NP" articles), for "Polityka" – 4 articles (36.36% of "Polityka" articles). The author did not find a single article in "Rz" which could be classified as "criticizing".

The presence of both categories in one press article ("approving and criticizing at the same time") could be a confirmation of the fact that unambiguous assessment of the financial crisis from 2008 is difficult for the author of the article or that this issue is extremely complex and many perspectives concerning the political consequences of the Lehman Brothers fall are present in the public discourse. The author found this category in "GW" (5 articles), "NP" (2 articles) and "Polityka" (4 articles). It was not found in the press articles in "Rz".

The author of this paper concluded that the "difficult to say" category for the POPULISM feature contains 4 articles in "Rz" and 3 articles in "GW". No article in this category was found by the author in "NP" and in "Polityka".

"RZECZPOSPOLITA"

Eight articles in "Rz", classified under "approving" category, are characterized with realism regarding the presentation of reasons and the real consequences of the financial crisis of 2008, as well as the presentation of the actions of political and financial institutions of the EU and the USA:

– "The consequences of the loss of trust in financial institutions may have a negative influence on Europe" [Adamczyk, Walewska 2008].

– “(...) the mood around the financial sector will continue to be negative. I believe the market situation may not improve until the end of the year” [Monson 2008].

– “The global credit frenzy ended up in a disaster. The future will bring more regulations, limitations and state interventions” [Adamczyk, Kurasz 2008].

The author related the “difficult to say” category to the article presenting the American presidential campaign of John McCain and Barack Obama, the article concerning the financial balance for the investment funds savings of Poles, as well as to columns of Marek Magierowski [Gillert 2008b; Adamczyk 2008; Magierowski 2008a; Magierowski 2008b]. The author did not find concrete assessment of populist trends in these articles. They lack distinct indication from the authors whether they focus readers’ attention on political and financial elites or the lives of ordinary citizens.

“GAZETA WYBORCZA”

The “criticizing” category for the POPULISM feature dominated in “GW”. The magazine expressed understanding and approval for the actions of political and financial elites aiming at minimizing the consequences of the crisis. The publications classified under this category present the USA and the EU as guarantors of the global economic order:

– “The USA is still an economic giant producing 55% of the global GDP together with the EU. It is the most innovative economy in the world” [Lewandowski 2008].

– “Despite all these current problems, the United States together with Europe will keep primacy in the world for a long time” [Luttwak 2018].

Many publications do not mention the way in which the ordinary citizens perceive the crisis, and relate only to the financial performance of the companies [Hałabuz 2008]. Some of the publications classified under the “approving” category focused the readers’ attention on the actual condition of financial markets following the fall of the Lehman Brothers, the real risk of the fall of other investment banks and the risk which accompanies the activity of modern financial institutions [Samcik 2008; Stiglitz 2008; Kuźmicz 2008].

“NEWSWEEK POLSKA”

Among the “NP” articles classified as “approving”, the author indicates certain selected fragments of the press articles which focus readers’ attention on poor functioning of the financial institutions and the reasons for the crisis. Marek Rabij describes the unethical conduct of people managing the huge financial institutions:

– The customers and shareholders entrusted hundreds of billion dollars to a few gentlemen who demonstrated alarming incompetence and nonchalance, claims Professor

Anthony Atkinson (management expert from Columbia University) in CNN. – The worst thing is that not a single employee in the companies with thousands of experts was able to put them right. (...) The financial corporations under their management pursued a very dangerous path, namely the one of getting profit at all costs [Rabij 2008b].

Miłosz Węglewski describes a desperate attempt to rescue the US economy after the fall of the Lehman Brothers: “It is possible that the woeful tidings concerning huge losses, bankruptcy, nationalization and takeover, which we encountered in the financial sector, will start to reach us next week from the industries which so far have been far from the front line of crisis (...)” [Węglewski 2008a].

Tadeusz Zachurski presents a strong voice of opposition on behalf of the American citizens towards the actions of the financial elites:

Only 14% of Americans are of the opinion that their country is on the right track. The demonstrations that push for “getting rid of the scoundrels” seem to be a part of the agenda in front of the Congress, where the lights in the conference rooms are always on, and in front of the Wall Street offices of former giants in the world of finance, (...). The care for the economy and belief of some of the voters that Obama may offer something new and tame corrupted financial tycoons are a key here [Zachurski 2008].

Two press articles from “NP” were classified under the “pro-European” category. The first one – entitled *To tylko kryzys* – is an interview with Stanisław Kluza, Chairman of the Polish Financial Supervision Authority, where the economist assures us of the security of Polish financing system, stable economy and the backup plan of the Polish Financial Supervision Authority, Polish government and NBP. Various economic indexes are mentioned in the article to mitigate any emotions connected with the doubt regarding the quality of bank portfolios and the liquidity in the interbank market [Kluza 2008]. The second article titled *Inwestor po byku* presents the character of Warren Buffett, a well-known economist with the ability to manage securities, make accurate investment and get proper insight into the economic situation of the companies in the context of financial crisis [Rabij 2008a].

The different points of view which support the financial elites of the USA and defy their decisions at the same time were noticed by the author in two press articles in “NP”. The first one, *Finansowa apokalipsa*, presents the situation of both economic institutions of the EU and the USA, and the ordinary European and American citizens after the fall of the Lehman Brothers [Węglewski 2008b].

The other article, *Jak przechrzyć kryzys*, is a guide for the investors during the time of crisis. Węglewski emphasizes the following tips, which take the form of slogans: “Delay serious purchase, it will be cheaper”, “Overcome the temptation of living on credit”, “Wait for the end of stock exchange drops”, “Common sense is the best adviser with regard to money management”, “Do not be afraid of entrusting your money to the bank. Make use of their interest rate war” [Węglewski 2008c].

“POLITYKA”

The authors of the articles in “Polityka” presented various perspectives with regard to the activity of political and financial elites of the USA and EU after 15 September 2008. Both categories, “approving” and “criticizing”, were revealed in those articles. The “approving” category includes the article written by Daniel Passent with an ironic reference to the crisis: “The secret of those experts and advisors is simple: After the night, there comes a day, what goes up may go down (and the other way round), do not keep all your eggs in one basket (but be careful not to make scrambled eggs), it’s better to earn money today than to lose it tomorrow, etc.” [Passent 2008]. The author classified as belonging to same category an article by Cezary Kowanda, who criticizes exuberant salaries of the CEOs of American banks: “The deep crisis of the American financial system is still in progress. The time will come when those responsible for it will be punished, says Barack Obama. However, for the time being, the light-hearted CEOs of financial companies going bankrupt cannot complain that their fate is difficult” [Kowanda 2008].

The “criticizing” category is represented by Joanna Solska and Wawrzyniec Smoczyński’s article entitled *Krok po krachu*, where the crisis is presented as an advantage – a chance for an economic boom:

(...) someone else’s problems may paradoxically become our assets (...). It is difficult to foresee the end of the crisis, as well as its consequences. However, apart from threats, it offers our economy the opportunities we could not have predicted. We shouldn’t be in despair because of the fact that the prices in the stock exchange will not return to the level from the last year in the next five years. On the contrary, we should take advantage of this opportunity [Solska, Smoczyński 2008].

In the case of four articles classified as “approving and criticizing at the same time”, the author encountered fragments which both justified and criticized the actions of the government and political elites aiming at financing the banks which gave rise to the crisis: In the article titled *Banki do kontroli* we can find negative ethical assessment with regard to helping the indebted financial institutions, but we can also identify the emphasis put on the necessity to undertake such an action [Orłowski 2008].

NATIONALISM

The analysis proved the fact that the varied press image of the political and financial institutions of the EU and the USA after the fall of Lehman Brothers can be also noticed in the case of the NATIONALISM feature. The following number of articles was classified as “approving”: 7 out of 12 in “Rz” (58.33% of “Rz” articles

which met the research criteria), and 3 out of 27 in "GW" (11.11% of "GW" articles). No article in "NP" and "Polityka" was classified under this category. For the sake of comparison, the number of press articles classified as "criticizing" is the following: for "GW" – 21 articles (77.78% of "GW" articles), for "Rz" – 2 articles (16.67% of "Rz" articles), for "NP" – 4 articles (50% of "NP" articles) for "Polityka" – 8 articles (72.72% of "Polityka" articles).

The presence of both categories in one press article ("approving and criticizing at the same time") was found in "GW" – 3 articles, in "NP" – 2 articles, and in "Polityka" – 3 articles. This category was not present in the articles published in "Rz". The "difficult to say" category for the NATIONALISM feature is found in "Rz" – 3 articles, in "NP" – 3 articles, but is not found in "GW" and "Polityka".

"RZECZPOSPOLITA"

The articles in "Rz" clearly promote looking at the financial crisis from the perspective of Poland and its citizens. According to Konrad Szymański, the EU is a community where Poland will not get anything for free and has to fight for its rights:

Poland will not be successful in the European Union if we are not aware of the fact that the integration is a hard political game (...). We need to realize that the European integration has its limits and that the EU cannot solve every problem (contrary to the mood of the 2003 referendum campaign). (...) I do not wish the European Union ill. After all, it is about the matters which are important for Poland. However, due to this very kind of experience, I would recommend paying greater attention to the attitude of certain specific European and global capitals when designing Polish policies [Szymański 2008].

Moreover, the press articles do not ignore the situation of Polish stock exchange and banks in view of the financial crisis [Jabłoński 2008; Szymański 2008; Krześniak 2008]. "Rz" also presents a critical opinion of the Austrians with regard to their membership in the EU. Andrzej Niewiadowski emphasizes deterioration in living conditions, increase in the prices of the basic products, immigration and other related problems:

The Austrians are frustrated. The Euro-skeptical tendencies are used not only by the far right wing. (...) Obermayer [IT specialist from TU Wien – R.L.] lives in Favoriten, the 10th district of Vienna. 30% of its inhabitants are Turks, Serbs, Montenegrins and Romanians. Young people are arguing in the staircase covered with spray paint. A stereo is wailing. – It is rumble, dirt and stench. I lose my cool when I see the Turkish families reserving parking spots. I do not have a place to park my car. They shout at the shop assistants. They spit and litter the streets. They use our social security benefits system. Do you know what Vienna looked like ten years ago? Peace, cleanness, stability. (...) Only 36% of the Austrians are satisfied with the membership in the European Union, even

though 67% voted in favor of accession to the EU in 1994. The politicians promised us the moon. The food, medicine and rents are now more expensive. People are not stupid [Niewiadowski 2008].

Aleksandra Fandrejewska also presents the feelings of various nations evoked by the financial crisis: “The Americans are terrified, the Germans are depressed, and the Poles are worried. (...) Are we really safe? Can the turmoil of the global economy influence Poland? Are our savings safe?” [Fandrejewska 2008].

The “criticizing” category is represented by only two columns by Magierowski, where the author expresses approval for the free market economy of the USA and the benefits it brings for the EU countries [Magierowski 2008a; 2008b].

The articles which describe the topic of the presidential campaign in the USA [Gillert 2008b] and the actions of the American government with regard to fighting the crisis [Adamczyk, Kurasz 2008; Gillert 2008a], but contain no reference to nationalism, were classified by the author under the “difficult to say” category.

“GAZETA WYBORCZA”

As many as 21 articles in “GW” were classified under the “criticizing” category. They present the actions of political and financial elites of the Western Europe countries and the USA, which aimed mainly at mitigating the consequences of the crisis for the mutual good of the EU and the USA. On the other hand, the Polish perspective with regard to the events on the global stock exchange after 15 September 2008 and their consequences is omitted or marginalized. Maciej Kuźmicz and Tomasz Deptuła describe the actions aiming at obviating the financial crisis from the perspective of global markets *prosperity*:

The global politicians want to have more control of the markets in order to avoid another crisis devastating the financial system. The investors count on the anti-crisis plan of the American government to rescue the stock exchange (...). The government wants to buy bad mortgage loans for USD 700 billion, relieving the financial system at risk and ensuring its liquidity [Kuźmicz, Deptuła 2008].

The article titled *Buffett łapie nóż na Wall Street* constitutes a praise for the American businessman who bought the shares of the Goldman Sachs investment bank for USD 5 billion during the crisis, and it belongs to the “criticizing” category: “78-year-old Warren Buffett, son of a Nebraska congressman, surprises investors with his bold decisions (...). He supports the recovery plan for the financial sector, which assumes providing the exorbitant amount of USD 700 billion out of American taxpayers’ pocket” [Prusek 2008].

The article by Leszek Baj titled *Kryzys przydusi inwestycje*, where the author presents the perspectives for development of the domestic market in Poland, as well as international market, contains two perspectives (“approving and criticizing at the same time”):

The financial crisis and economic slowdown will weaken the investment plans of international corporations, also in Poland (...). Poland attracts the greatest number of investments as compared with other countries in our region (...). The big internal market is our advantage. According to Paweł Wojciechowski, foreign investors in Poland are attracted by the quality of workforce, lower cost of labor and a good financial system [Baj 2008].

“NEWSWEEK POLSKA”

Four articles in “NP” were classified as “criticizing”, with the dominating perspective of the common good of the EU countries and the USA, e.g. *Finansowa apokalipsa* – an article which analyzes the reasons, course and consequences of the collapse of the financial system on Wall Street in view of the question concerning the common good of the USA [Węglewski 2008b].

On the other hand, the article *Spokojna przystań*, where the CEO of the City Handlowy bank Sławomir Sikora expresses an opinion that the crisis in the USA does not have a direct influence on the banks in Poland, may be classified as approving and criticizing at the same time. The article introduces the readers to the financial situation of both foreign and Polish banks [Sikora 2008].

“POLITYKA”

The “criticizing” category (8 articles) dominated in the NATIONALISM feature. The *bonum commune* of the EU and the USA is presented as the most important, basic issue in such articles. This category includes the article entitled *Gospodarka, John!*, where Tomasz Zalewski discusses the issue of overcoming the financial crisis in the perspective of the election campaign in the USA and the rivalry between Obama and McCain:

Paulson threatened us that the delay in passing the plan by the Congress will result in recession, because the business cannot function without credit. The Congress listened to the voice of the nation – most representatives of the public opinion opposed the plan – and refused to adopt the plan. The Congress argued that it would help Wall Street, but not the ordinary Americans, who would be thrown away from their houses for mortgage debts and would have to pay larger bills [Zalewski 2008].

Another article classified as “criticizing” is *Historia chciwości*, where Smoczyński presents the history of America’s capitalist growth and the following issues: the history of private ownership and free market in the modern times, capitalist revolution and industrialization in Great Britain and France, development of industry and factories in the United States in the 19th century, problems connected with capitalism, and the economic theories of Keynes, Friedman, von Hayek related to the great global economies [Smoczyński 2008].

Three articles classified under the “approving and criticizing at the same time” category were written in relation to the questions concerning the common good of the EU, the USA, but also the common good of Poland itself. The article by Solska and Smoczyński contains detailed presentation of the performance in global stock exchanges after 15 September 2008 and the support measures undertaken by the governments in order to minimize the consequences of the financial collapse:

The governments brought out the big guns in order to stop the panic (...). Friday was another day when George W. Bush himself attempted to calm down the frightened Americans, especially funds shareholders who started to redeem their stock all at once (...). The novelty of the last week was the fact that the world did something together [Solska, Smoczyński 2008].

The same article also tackles the following issues: granting the interbank guarantee by the NBP to Polish commercial banks, forced stoppage of the Opel factory in Gliwice, opinion of the Polish Minister of Finance Jacek Rostowski on the draft budget for 2009: “Polish commercial banks hold a grudge against the NBP for delaying the interbank guarantee (...). The Opel factory in Gliwice has just announced forced stoppage. (...) Jacek Rostowski, the Minister of Finance, claims that the draft budget for 2009 is realistic” [Solska, Smoczyński 2008].

CONCLUSIONS

The Polish press discussed the issue of the financial crisis within the period directly following the fall of the Lehman Brothers investment bank not only on the level of information, but also interpretation.

The greatest percentage of the analyzed articles classified under the “criticizing” category with regard to the POPULISM and NATIONALISM features can be found in “GW”. This daily paper revealed its pro-European attitude to the greatest extent among the analyzed daily papers and opinion-forming weekly magazines. This attitude is fundamentally expressed in the support for the actions of the financial and political institutions of the EU and the USA after 15 September 2008, as well as in the manner of presentation of the financial crisis, namely from the perspective of the *bonum commune* of Western European countries. On the other hand, the author found

that “Rz” contains the greatest percentage of articles supporting the Euro-skeptical attitude with regard to both features analyzed. As far as “NP” and “Polityka” are concerned, the author did not notice any dominating category in the POPULISM feature. On the other hand, when it comes to NATIONALISM, the opinion-forming weekly magazines supported the pro-European attitude and did not publish any article which would support nationalist trends. The research hypothesis is true only with regard to “GW”. In the case of “NP” and “Polityka” it could only be applied in the NATIONALISM feature, whereas “Rz” expressed its Euro-skepticism in both categories examined.

According to the author, the differences with regard to assessment of the financial crisis are connected with the profile of a given press title. “Rz” expressed approval for populist and nationalist trends to the greatest extent. The editor-in-chief Bogusław Chrabota describes the editorial direction of this daily paper in the following way:

“Rzeczpospolita” is a meta-political and all-party newspaper. We are interested in criticizing the phenomena which are disadvantageous for Polish politics and economy. We are not in favor of PiS, *Platforma* or *Nowoczesna*. We look favorably on everything that is good for Poland, and we criticize the political and economic solutions which are harmful for our country. “Rzeczpospolita” will remain an independent newspaper, which is not involved in the conflicts between the political parties, but interested in the economy and development of Poland [Wojtas 2016].

This statement is coincidental with the results of the research, which confirmed that the Polish point of view with regard to the crisis and its consequences for the Polish citizens are the most important issues for “Rz” in the context of the discourse relating to the outcomes of the Lehman Brothers fall. “GW” is distinguished by the liberal character and the criticism of nationalist and conservative attitudes [Litwin 2016: 112]. The results of the analysis are coherent with the profile of this daily. Analogous similarity between the research results with regard to the press image of the political and financial institutions of the EU and the USA under the POPULISM and NATIONALISM features and the editorial direction of the press title was also noticed by the author in “NP” and “Polityka”. This regularity is confirmed by numerous scientific articles [Filas, Planeta 2009: 147; Podemski 2011; Perszon 2016: 40].

The author noticed only several opinions of ordinary citizens, who perceive the crisis as a source of fear or economic problems. The opinions of the representatives of politics and business dominated in press publications, whereas the accounts of demonstrations of those citizens who perceived the crisis as an economic disaster were marginalized.

The research result confirms that the Polish opinion-forming press is interested in the topics connected with the social and political situation in Western Europe. The extension of the democratic public space is a consequence of the membership of new countries in the EU. The increased interest of new countries in the main directions

of the public discourse is something natural [Zielonka 2007; Kevin 2003: 136–137]. However, this does not mean new EU states' unquestioning approval for the actions undertaken by the European political and financial institutions. Formal membership in the EU does not exclude the existence of different perspectives and assessment of the crisis situations by various members of the EU [Sissenich 2007: 77–106]. Poland has retained its own identity and its own point of view on the global issues after the accession to the EU. It would be difficult to expect the press to be one-sided with regard to the assessment of the consequences of the financial crisis. The influential press is a representative of public opinion. The latter one is diversified, but the pro-European attitude dominates.¹⁰ The financial crisis did not influence the attitude of Poles towards the membership in the EU. As of 2008, the number of supporters of accession is quite high: 70–80% [Roguska 2017: 2]. The results of the research concerning the issues that should be subject to independent decisions of each EU member state are also interesting: 51% of the respondents accept the fact that a member state should make decisions regarding the economic policy together with the EU (instead of conducting fully independent politics or handing over the entirety of such decisions to the EU institutions) [Roguska 2017: 14]. The important European political events that followed the collapse of the American investment bank Lehman Brothers, such as: the migration crisis in Europe in the second decade of the 21st century, terrorist attacks (e.g. in Brussels, Manchester, London), economic problems, unemployment or financial deficit, caused social dissatisfaction and electoral success of populists in many countries, e.g. Marine Le Pen in France, Nigel Farage in Great Britain, high support for *Alternative für Deutschland* in Brandenburg and Saxony. These events are instrumentalized by the opinion press and used to support Euro-skeptic or pro-European sentiment [Riedel 2015: 177–180]. The criticism or approval of nationalist and populist tendencies by individual press titles, are determined by the previously adopted editorial line, not by political reality. It should also recognize the importance of mediatization processes of public life for the interpretation of the world [Molęda-Zdziech 2013; Sasińska-Klas 2014: 162–175]. It is also associated with the problem of truth and objectivity in the opinion press, and understanding how to build a media image of reality [Drożdż 2012: 15–28; Leśniczak 2018: 69–86].

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¹⁰ Report on the research conducted by the CBOS in May 2009, concerning the trust for banks at the beginning of the financial crisis, revealed high assessment of the actions of the banks – the positive assessment amounted to 56% and the negative assessment – to 22% [Pankowski 2009: 2].

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