

SMOKE, MIRRORS AND THE OTHER

Anti-refugee discourse in (largely)
refugee-free zones.
The case of Poland.



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SMOKE. 2015-2017.

As viewed from the outside:
Poland in response to the
European crisis of solidarity:

1. **No** to the relocation of refugees. (We have 1 million!)
2. **No** to Multiculti
3. **No** to Islam

STATISTICS. LARGELY REFUGEE-FREE BUT MIGRANT NUMBERS RISING

TYPE	NUMBER	YEAR	NOTES
refugee /humanitarian protection / tolerated stay / subsidiary protection	6286	2010	Mostly subsidiary protection / Russian Federation / Ukraine
asylum seekers (applications)	6539	2010	
All other categories (long/short term, EU/non-EU)	85 513	2010	Mostly short-term permits/ 48% Ukraine / 6% Germany / 5% Belarus / 3% Vietnam

Source: migracje.gov.pl

STATISTICS. LARGELY REFUGEE-FREE BUT MIGRANT NUMBERS RISING

TYPE	NUMBER	YEAR	NOTES
refugee /humanitarian protection / tolerated stay / subsidiary protection	5682	2018 TO DATE	602 less than 2010
asylum seekers	3760	2018 TO DATE	majority from Chechnya (Russian Federation)
All other categories (long/short term, EU/non-EU)	369 513	2018 TO DATE	284 000 more than 2010 (has gone up three-fold)



PARADOX 1: TOO MANY WHILST TOO FEW

1 million refugees? Not exactly (1 million Schengen visas issued 2016).

- problem of definitions (economic migrant, illegal migrant, refugee, terrorist, Arab)
- prejudice rises in the absence of **contact**, (*contact hypothesis, Allport 1954*)
- the imagination is fueled by fear, which in turn fuels moral panic fueled by media for political purposes



STRANGERS

- cause anxiety because they are 'strange' – unknown to us
- because they are unknown, they are fearsomely unpredictable
- These nomads/ strangers “remind us, irritatingly, infuriatingly and horrifyingly, of the (incurable?) vulnerability of our own position and of the endemic fragility of our hard-won well-being (Bauman 2016: 16).

ybierz #BezpiecznySamorząd

Watch later

EOS TV48
PROGRAMU PORTALU

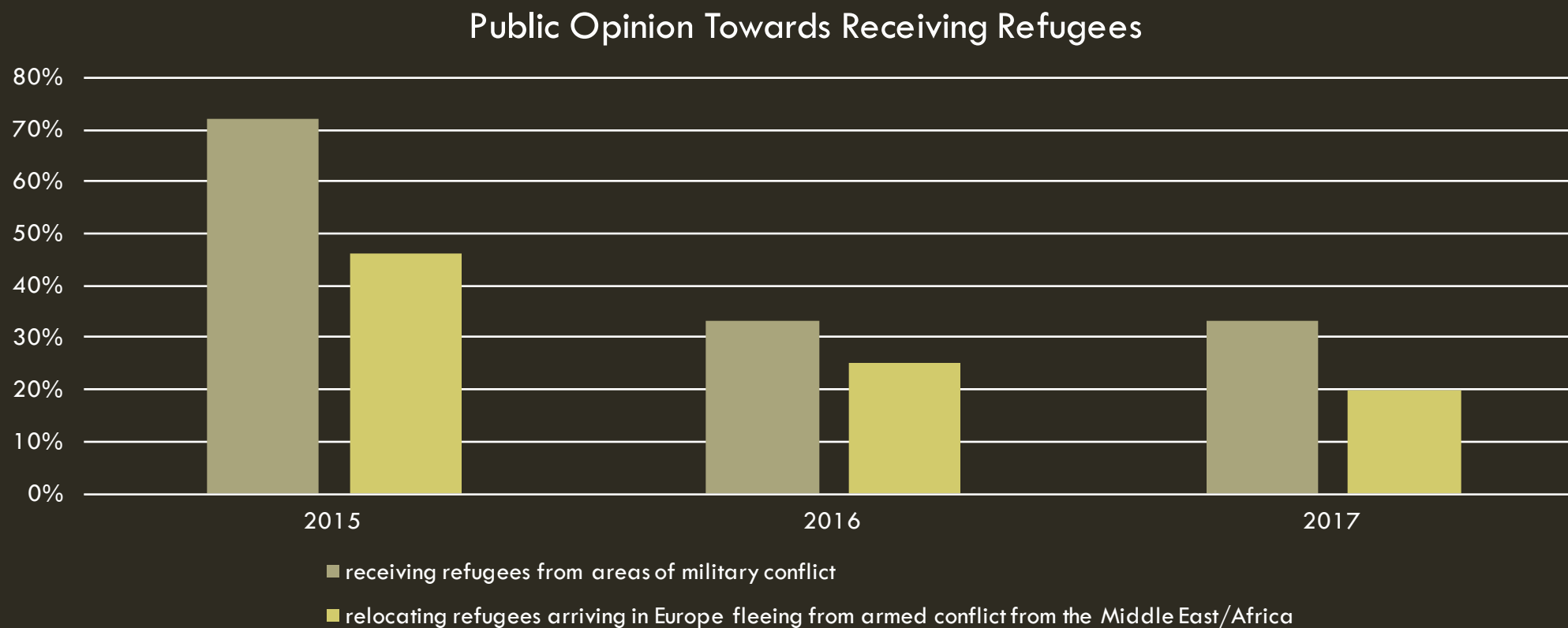
KRYZYS Z UCHODŹCĄ

MORAL PANIC

“a feeling of fear spread among a large number of people that some evil threatens the well-being of society” (Cohen 1971 in Bauman 2016:2).

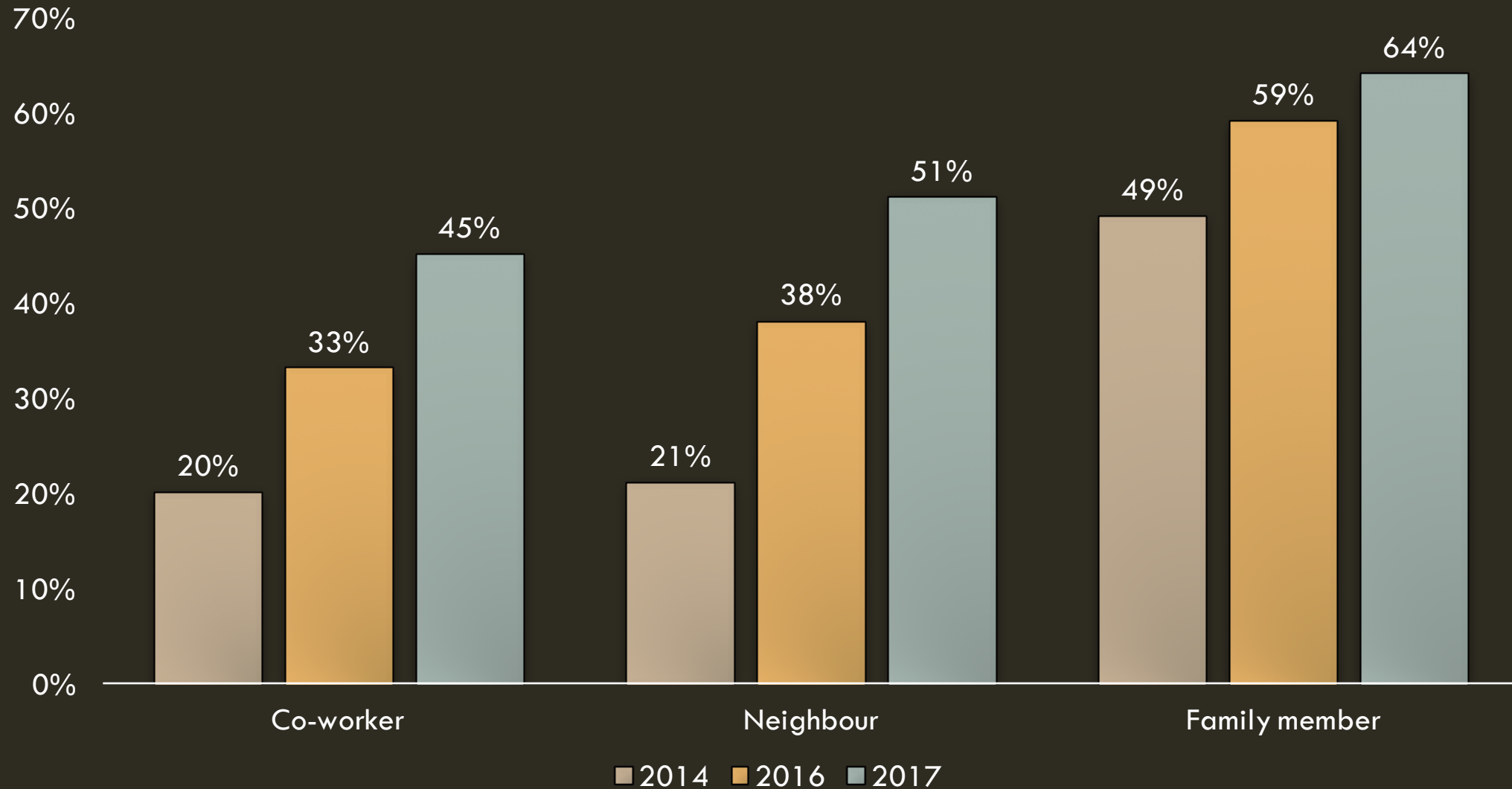
- the panic is propagated by the mass media - ‘moral entrepreneurs’ – and the threat depicted in a simple, simplistic symbolic way
- the authorities intervene – a mechanism of social control

POLISH PUBLIC OPINION TOWARDS RECEIVING REFUGEES



Source: CBOS Stosunek do przyjmowania uchodźców ("Attitudes towards accepting refugees"), no. 9/2016, 12/2017

PEOPLE DECLARING LACK OF ACCEPTANCE OF MUSLIMS



MIRROR 1: NO THANKS, MULTICULTI

Poland 'getting up off its knees' and protecting European civilization from decadence of liberal multiulti ideology (which will lead to its demise). Finally, we can say 'we told you so'.

Deep instability of collective identity, the feeling at once of inferiority complex towards the West and on the other, "collective narcissism" (Cichocka 2016), leading to prejudice against (threatening) Others.

EU as an 'imagined community' (not in Benedict Anderson's terms, but in President Andrzej Duda's.) Fear of the unknown.



PARADOX 2: WE CAN MIGRATE, BUT YOU CAN'T

- Long history of Poles migrating to the West (19th century, WWII, under communism, Europe 2004).
- Strength of Polish diaspora abroad
- When we experience something, we can better understand others who are in the same shoes, right? (Contact hypothesis)

CONDITIONS OF INTERGROUP CONTACT THEORY

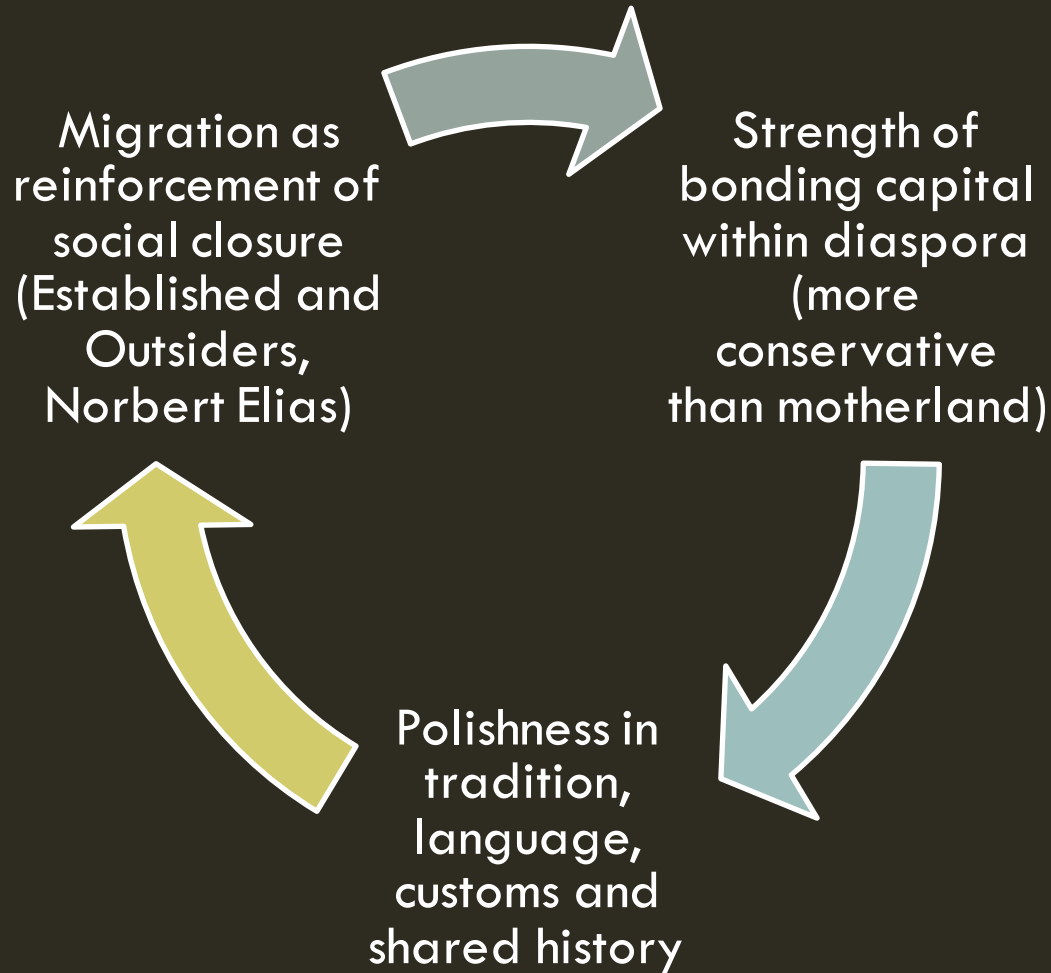
There will be a decrease
of prejudice in a situation
of intergroup contact IF:

1. there is an equal status
between groups

2. there are common goals

3. There is intergroup
cooperation

4. There is an
acknowledgement of
support from authorities,
law, institutions which
regulate intergroup
relations.



MIRROR 2: POLAND AS ETHNIC NATION



PARADOX 3: CHRISTIAN CHARITY, BUT FOR CHOSEN ONES

- Christian charity for those in need
- Catholic church organizations as strong civil society actors for inclusion
- 'native' Muslim population (Tartars)
- Non-issue of Chechen refugees in large numbers in 1990s

Vs.

- Religion as a tool for emotive national identity building, social control and exclusion
- narrative of suffering

MIRROR 3: MARTYRDOM IDENTITY

- History: staved off the Turks at Vienna in 1683
- Protection of European borders against Islam
- *Imaginarium* of martyrdom, Christ of nations
- Narrative of suffering/victimisation too strong to relativize 'our' suffering in the context of others (Leder 2015)





Anti-immigrant rhetoric is largely instrumental (ex. Chechen refugees in 1990s not noted as a 'problem')



Changing face of Polish society – indeed becoming (more) multicultural (positive net migration flows)



Migrant Poles returning with **social remittances** – changes in social values, Europeanisation



Revitalization of narrative of multiculturalism in Poland (ie Wrocław, Kraków)



Decline in trust in the Catholic church, decline in religiosity, a church divided



Strength of localism, municipal governments, social activism from below. Anti-discrimination campaigns

HOWEVER... OPPORTUNITIES FROM BELOW AND BEYOND

FROM EMIGRATION TO IMMIGRATION? NET MIGRATION FLOWS

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
-4.334	-6.617	-19.904	-15.750	-15.750	1.500	1.400

Source: Central Statistical Office 2011-2017 in Monika Szulecka et al. (2018) Global Migration: Consequences and Responses. Poland Country Report. Legal & Policy Framework of Migration Governance, RESPOND Working Paper 2018/09, May 2018