IASPM JOURNAL
ISSN 2079 - 3871

Negotiating national identity against right-wing nationalism: sonic (re)narrations in Poland

Joanna Zienkiewicz
University of Groningen
j.z.zienkiewicz@rug.nl

Abstract

This article discusses a set of approaches to national identity that subverted dominant nationalist discourse in Poland during the rule of Law and Justice (2015–2023). Based on a sonic, lyrical, and visual analysis of three popular music case studies, it explores how the populist-enabled mainstreaming of "turbopatriotism" (Napiórkowski 2019) has been criticized and what alternative visions of Polishness have been put forward. I argue that cultural narrations of Polishness as [1] plural, diverse, and cosmopolitan, [2] peripheral, flawed, and complicated, and [3] bygone and mourned, all have unique affective strengths for the continued negotiations of collectivity in post-communist and populist contexts.

KEYWORDS: National identity; (Re)narration; Nationalism; Populism; Affect; Withdrawal.

Introduction

In Eastern Europe (1), nationalism is a complicated phenomenon. Reviewing the area's nation-building histories, US-based historian John Connelly (2020) made this much clear. The numerous struggles for independent states have left the region with a "particular sensitivity about identity" (2020: 27), whereby nationalism emerged as an ideological winner, continuously asserting itself through stimulating historical traumas and anxieties about disappearance of nations – anxieties unknown in Western Europe (2020: 24). "At every political turning point," Connelly writes, "those wanting to make politics in East Central Europe portrayed themselves as somehow freeing their nations from foreign tyranny" (2020: 788). When the Soviet influences in the region began collapsing, political scientists Keith Darden and

Anna Grzymala-Busse similarly claim that narratives of "rescuing the nation from the grasp of an alien, imposed, and illegitimate communist regime" (2006: 89) were paramount. The power of nation-state imagination that inspired liberation, however, did not come without a price, ranging from institutionalized chauvinism to ethnic cleansing (Connelly 2020: 20). "While nationalism might have helped Eastern Europe expels a foreign, repressive regime," argue political scientist Iza Ding and Marek Hlavac, "it has also brought right-wing populist politicians to power" (2017: 434).

Indeed, in recent years, political leaders not limited to Orbán and Kaczyński have garnered widespread support by claiming to stand up for a threatened national sovereignty. Constructing enemies (be it Brussels, Germany, immigrants, or supposed elites) and disseminating conspiracies (Scheibner 2020), they mobilized national identity and the anxieties that Connelly described in order to justify authoritarian takeovers of the judiciary and the media. The rise of parties that are nationalist, populist, and authoritarian – or populist radical right, to use Dutch political scientist's Cas Mudde's term (2007) – is not limited to post-communist Europe. However, it is in Poland and Hungary that they stayed in power for longer; managing to significantly influence mainstream discourses about national identity through platforming nationalist groups (Lipiński and Szabo 2023), adopting their language, (Napiórkowski 2019) as well as spreading narratives of militant heroism, pride, religion, and victimization (Lipiński and Szabo 2023): in schools, (Żuk 2018) museums (Radonić 2020), and the media (Połońska 2019). Two even more extreme cases of such developments could be observed in Belarus and Russia, where nationalist discourse has been employed to consolidate authoritarian regimes (Burkhardt 2016; Cannady and Kubicek 2014) or justify imperialism culminating with the full-scale invasion of Ukraine (Kuzio 2022). Arguably, those cases best exemplify the urgency for discussing Eastern European nationalism. However, the case of Poland represents a full temporal scope featuring [1] the rise of a populist radical right party to power, [2] its subsequent authoritarian backsliding, [3] the resulting development of mass protest movements, and finally, [4] a successful removal of the party's unhindered power. As such, through this case I address this article's central question – with the populist radical right in power, how can their claims for a monopoly on narrating national identity be challenged?

Focusing on Poland, this article zooms in on discourses that subverted the dominant populist-nationalist narratives about the nation during Law and Justice's (PiS') rule (2015–2023), by analysing three popular music case studies: "Moja Polska" by Księżycowy Terrorysta (2020), "Polskie Tango" by Taco Hemingway (2020), and "Nic o Polsce" by Maria Peszek (2021). Popular music articulations serve here as symptomatic of discursive trends, but also allow the examination of their multimodal dimensions. Following Lyndon Way's (2021) approach, I critically analyse – successively – the sonic, linguistic, and visual choices in the chosen songs to understand how national identity, ways of seeing the world, and relations of power are communicated. Furthermore, I reflect on their affective power – the bodily sensation, emotion, mood and motivation that music can stimulate (Garratt 2018: 18) – and subsequently, I trace connections between the patterns seen in the songs and across broader Polish discourses.

As I argue, in PiS' Poland, these songs proposed three new alternatives to the dominant narratives of Polishness which relied on threatened sovereignty, martyr heroism, proud ethno-state, and the fear of Other. Their approaches to national identity can be viewed as positioned on a spectrum between [1] active rearticulation, imbued with hope, [2] critical disinvestment, imbued with exhaustion, and [3] (radical) withdrawal, imbued with grief. Respectively, they put forward visions of the Polish national identity [1] as plural, diverse, and cosmopolitan, [2] as peripheral, flawed, and complicated, and [3] as bygone and mourned; visions that all have unique affective strengths for the continued negotiations of collectivity in post-communist and populist contexts.

From national identity to turbopatriotism

National identities are not fixed, but emerge in processes of retelling and reinterpretation – this argument of the Indian post-structuralist Homi Bhabha sets the scene for understanding the significance of the musical expressions described in this article (1990: 1–2). Constantly moving between a "pedagogical" past of shared traditions or histories and a "performative" present (1990: 297), within which everyday practices can destabilize boundaries (Schiller 2017), narrating nations unfolds as a negotiation. Within it, nationalist discourses tell stories of a monolithic "national people" (1990: 310); while counter-narratives permit plurality, "without immediately identifying it [the nation] with the historical institution of the state" (1990: 303).

Despite their constructed nature, ideas of nation-ness possess a "profound emotional legitimacy", which, in his seminal book on nationalism, Irish political scientist and historian Benedict Anderson describes as the feeling of a "deep, horizontal comradeship" that the nation can invoke. (2006: 6–7). Nationalism, he claims, finds its unique mobilizing power in family-like belonging and "love, often profoundly self-sacrificing love" (2006: 141) that come with national identification, not in fear and loathing. These latter, negative emotions are the domain of racism, which often ties itself to nationalism but is not necessarily its consequence (2006: 141–142). Either way, constructed national identities have historically been strong enough to motivate countless "exemplary suicides, poignant martyrdoms, assassinations, executions, wars, and holocausts" (2006: 206); leading some to argue that nationalism is simply too powerful (Maxwell 2013), too mobilizing (Gest 2022) to let the right monopolize it. This, I argue, is why we should pay attention to discourses that challenge the right's ways of seeing the nation – especially in Eastern Europe, where post-communist contexts and the nationalist authoritarianism on the rise generate ongoing discussions on nationhood.

One does not need to look far back to find cases of reinterpreting the nation within Poland. According to Polish sociologist Helena Chmielewska-Szlajfer, following the 1989 post-communist transitions, the national community of Poland faced the necessity of redefining its social imaginary, especially in relation to the West; as "a multitude of interpretations of Poland has become not only thinkable, but also freely practiced" (2019: 184). Studying varied expressions of the new Polish community, Szlajfer painted it as pluralistic, full of dualities, and still undergoing negotiations: between "the narratives on Poland's painful past (…) and new interpretations coming from the democratic present" (2019: 13), between "religion

and state" (2019: 13), between Western aspirations and the fear of external influence. "Whose Poland is it to be?", ask Polish studies scholar Bill and political scientist Stanley (2020: 378) similarly, acknowledging that when PiS came into power, it became clear that the dispute about what post-communist Poland should be, is far from over.

The populist radical right elements of PiS – their populism, nationalism, and (semi-)authoritarianism – can all be traced back to the party's vision of the national people, demarcating Poles from their Others. As argued by Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, populism is a "thin-centered ideology" that bases itself primarily on constructing two camps – the "pure people", possessing a collective "general will", and the "corrupt elites", seen as enemies (2017: 6). Further explained by a Belgium-based populism scholar de Cleen, populism can be distinguished from nationalism as discursively producing a "down/up" antagonistic binary based on supposed power (the people-as-underdog/the unjustly powerful elites), while nationalism would create an "in/out" one (the national folk/the foreigners) (2017: 358). In PiS' discourse, both coexist: as Bill and Stanley recount, the party's rhetoric consistently accuses "false domestic elites" (2020: 382) (the opposition) of being traitors to the true Poles, in league with "the advocates of [hostile] foreign ideology" (2020: 389) such as multiculturalism or "gender" ideology' (2020: 382). As such, the vision of national people that the party proposes is an anti-thesis to liberal values, pluralism, and multiculturalism; seeing traditional family and (Catholic) Christianity as inescapable elements of Polishness (Nimu and Volintiru 2017: 16). Since 2015, this vision would become an excuse for the party's illiberal actions – their captures of public institutions were often framed as emancipatory acts, centering "true people" (Blokker 2019: 384), after years of dominance of foreign-aligned elites. Usually, PiS' political opponents were accused of conspiring with the German government, although anxieties of a possible Russian influence, drawing on memories of the Soviet times, were similarly expressed; as Russian imperialism expanded, the party's discourse linked Germany to Moscow, representing them as connected in a grand plot to subdue Poland (Kazharski 2023), to which PiS would be the only alternative. Even now that PiS lost its parliamentary majority, this vision remains potent – during their "March of the Free Poles", protesting the new government, the party members and supporters mobilized by singing patriotic songs and claiming that they were "protecting Poland from an ideological disaster and German imperialism" ("bronimy Polski, przed tym ideologicznym nieszczęściem i niemieckim imperializmem") (Telewizja Republika 2024), a conspiracy that the other parties were complicit in.

This populist-nationalist narrative, as Polish cultural studies scholar Marcin Napiórkowski observed in 2019, is largely built on the far-right rhetoric – with words like *antypolonizm* (anti-Polishness) or *ojkofobia* (hatred towards own nation) becoming regular vocabulary used against PiS' opponents. Mainstreamed through educational reforms, the media, and new museum offers; but also, through music (Jaskulowski and Majewski 2022), *turbopatriotyzm* (turbopatriotism), as Napiórkowski calls it, prevailed over its anti-thesis, *softpatriotyzm* (softpatriotism) (2019: 26). In other words, an antagonizing vision of Polishness as homogeneous, grounded in past greatness, traditions, and heroic narratives, but constantly under siege, has moved from the fringes towards legislature. It has done so, Napiórkowski

argues, largely due to the failures of softpatriotism. This (opposition's) vision attempted to conceive Polish belonging as progressive, cool, and European, grounded only in citizens' obligations; however, having failed to acknowledge the not-so-joyful realities of Poland's working class, it often read as fake, and without an adversary established, it was hardly mobilizing (2019). A better anti-thesis to mainstreamed turbopatriotic nationhood, Napiórkowski concluded, was still pending; culture and especially music (by which the term turbopatriotism was inspired (2)) would be the key stage on which new approaches could unfold (2019).

Since 2015, music has indeed become an important vehicle for challenging PiS' dominant discourses. At least 100 songs have been written in protest against the party (3); simultaneously, many more were used in mobilization against its government's actions, from the mass Women's Strike to smaller but weekly or even daily protests underneath the public media and court buildings (4). While often triggered by a particular issue, the protests usually contained critiques of PiS' illiberal populism as a whole (Grzymala-Busse 2018). During my participant observation in 2023, I could spot national symbolism – Polish flags, emblems, the Polish colors – at most protests, regardless of their size. Notably, the mass pro-democratic, anti-PiS protests of June 4 ("March of the 4th of June") and October 1 2023 ("March of a Million Hearts") – attended by leaders of oppositional parties, but also the self-described street opposition – have seen their participants carrying Polish flags connected with European ones and chanting "Tu jest Polska" ("Here is Poland"). The Polishness expressed by those two protests in particular could appear to be a reiteration of softpatriotism – the speeches, visuals, and music at the march emphasized a Poland of the future, liberal, open, European, and smiling – yet this time, it *mobilized* the crowds attending, until the elections during which turnout proved to be the highest since 1919 (Rolski 2023).

National identity, from being at the forefront of PiS' rhetoric, also became an important motif for the party's opponents. The case studies analysed in this article aim then to shed light on approaches to national identity that responded to the populist radical right in power without succumbing to the mistakes of softpatriotism. Not claiming to be exhaustive, my analysis starts a discussion, using musical case studies to consider broader discourses about national identity.

Active rearticulation: Hope of "My Poland" ("Moja Polska") (2020)

Released in 2020, the song "My Poland" ("Moja Polska") by the Polish artist Księżycowy Terrorysta emerged at the height of the Women's Strike activity, during which hundreds of thousands of Poles protested a new abortion law restriction (and PiS' actions more broadly). Although the artist was mostly unknown at the time, the song has been streamed nearly 70,000 times on YouTube and received mass feedback from commenters (Kreczmer 2020). While by no means the most popular protest song, Księżycowy Terrorysta's affirmation of "his Poland" was among the most detailed musical responses to PiS-mainstreamed turbopatriotism. Alongside its rebuttal, it presented a reinterpretation of Polishness as plural and diverse; but worth

fighting for, and no less grounded in history than the monolithic vision of the nationalists.

Drawing on the melody of the French protest-chanson "Mon Européenne", Księżycowy Terrorysta adapted it to the Polish situation, presenting a multifaceted critique of the nation, as well as an alternative vision of what his Poland is like. "My Poland" is faster than the original tune, with a brighter vocal timbre, and more expressive delivery. In the lines of the song that express future visions of Poland, an energetic choir of male voices joins the main singer, evoking a sense of collectivity. With only acoustic guitar strumming and (later) drums accompanying the (often slightly dissonant) vocals, the song remains simple, punk-like, foregrounding the lyrics; simultaneously, its musical qualities bring forth a sense of energy, community, and bottom-up action. Even as its lyrics express serious social critiques, "My Poland's" energetic tempo and bright melody make it ultimately sound more positive than melancholic: leading to a sense of hope. The hope is one of self-determination, freedom, and strength of the underdog – lyrically, the artist affirms that his Poland (and the Poland of many more, as implied by the plurality of heterogeneous voices) is different than the dominant vision promoted by PiS.

Consisting essentially of three parts, the song's lyrics discuss the problems of PiS' Poland, what Poland should not be, and what real Poland is. An explicit criticism of turbopatriotism is the starting point of the song, as all of its building blocks (tradition, religion, national symbols) become described as a propagandistic vision, connoted with blood, melancholy, and put forward by an undefined *them*. This said them is soon specified as an alliance of politicians (PiS' leader is referred to personally), police, priests, and "faszystowskie hordy wilków" ("fascist hordes of wolves") (Kreczmer 2020: 0.24–0.27). Characterizing this alliance in overwhelmingly negative terms, the song accuses it of lying, hypocrisy, and ruling through fear, greed, and violence. Each of the song's first several verses condemns it for a different reason: the abortion ban, party-enabled police brutality, poverty, LGBTQ+ discrimination, and economic inequalities are all brought up. Though mostly concrete, the listed grievances can almost sound populist – expressed in harsh words is a firm, antagonistic boundary between the powerful but corrupt "złotouste skurwysyny" ("golden-tongued fuckers") (Kreczmer 2020: 0.53–0.56) and countless underdogs. PiS' governance appears to be the main addressee of the song, with their policies and nationalism primarily referenced – however, other politicians are not exempt from the people's scrutiny either, as Księżycowy Terrorysta expresses hatred for *all* politicians who lied to them – also the liberals, also the left (Kreczmer 2020: 0.32–0.47).

Though all-encompassing, the song retains a focus on Poland and Polishness. The turbopatriotism mainstreamed by PiS, or "prawicowa propaganda" ("right-wing propaganda") (Kreczmer 2020: 2.09–2.11) is further decried in the second section of the lyrics, which asserts that Poland is not only about violence, religion, and the flaunting of national symbols. Going further, the song's lyrics make a point that nationalism fundamentally misrepresents national struggles for freedom. Bringing up Baczyński and Kościuszko (two prominent figures from the history of uprisings for Poland's sovereignty), Księżycowy Terrorysta does not separate his understanding of Polishness from the pedagogic past but reinterprets this past as full of struggle *primarily* against fascism and authoritarian regimes.

> "Patriotycznymi hasłami / Próbujecie nas zastraszyć
> Ale Baczyński tak jak ja / Wiedział jak się kończy faszyzm"
> ("Through patriotic slogans / You're trying to intimidate us
> But Baczyński just like me / Knew what fascism leads to")
>
> (Kreczmer 2020: 1.44–1.51)
> Full text and translation available at:
> https://www.tekstowo.pl/piosenka,ksiezycowy_terrorysta,moja_polska.html

As a consequence of this retelling of the Polish past, Księżycowy Terrorysta sings also about a Polish present that despite PiS' exclusionary narratives, is inclusive in reality. This Poland is personified through figures of disadvantaged Polish people, who could be excluded by PiS' monolithic nationalist discourse: a protesting girl, a working-class Polish expat, a woman who does not want to have children (Kreczmer 2020: 2.20–3.07). This Poland, the song further proclaims, is open towards "sisters" from the Middle East or from Africa (Kreczmer 2020: 2.35–2.43); it transcends borders and race, and ultimately, defines itself through values of "freedom", "strength", and "hope" (Kreczmer 2020: 3.03–3.16), not through any inborn essence.

As the hopeful melody rises in energy and the mobilizing lyrics unfold, "My Poland" concludes in a somewhat nationalistic sentiment. In the song's final lines, a strong sense of national belonging, pride, and that self-sacrificing love for the nation that Anderson describes become affirmed – except without racism and exclusionary sentiments added. The static image that accompanies the song's YouTube release (Kreczmer 2020) adds even a militaristic dimension – the black and white picture combined with a symbol of the Women's Strike (red lightning) is taken from the Spanish Civil War archives and depicts a woman in a uniform, with a rifle. In combination with the song's final lines, this image subtly implies that the pluralist vision of Poland presented in the song is no less worth fighting and dying for than the nationalists see their motherland as. This message of "My Poland" seems to have resonated with many listeners, who in the YouTube comments took the time to express how the song made them cry and smile (comments by @atomaszfarbaa1650; @85grisza; @drzycimski), how it mobilized them to take more action (@assioo14), to wake up (@musley7819); mentioning love and hope (@kszysztofor1972; @kalpatarudaasa; @brudnanatalia1938), and even asking "Lord, give us a free homeland" (@peatbull3426).

> "Moja Polsko kocham cię / Ty dajesz siłę i nadzieję
> Ty nie mieszkasz tylko tutaj / Twoim domem cały świat"
> ("My Poland I love you / You give strength and hope,
> You don't just live here / The whole world your home")
>
> (Kreczmer 2020: 3.08–3.15)

In short, Księżycowy Terrorysta's song rearticulated Polishness – challenging PiS' construct of the monolithic Polish people and proposing a new interpretation of both the nation's history and its present. In this retelling, Polishness is personified by disadvantaged groups, resilient, open, and diverse, fundamentally opposed to political regimes and fascism. This interpretation borrows certain elements from softpatriotism, but also draws on reframed populist and nationalist sentiments as sources of mobilization. While conceiving its cosmopolitan Poland, "My Poland"

does not shy away from constructing a morally charged, antagonistic us versus them frontier – between *the people* of all genders and races on the one hand, and the controlling, manipulative *elites* of all politicians, the police, the Church on the other. As Belgian political theorist Chantal Mouffe (2018) contested, such an adoption of elements of populist discourse by the left, can, in fact, be productive: as the ongoing crisis of neoliberalist formation left many feeling like the populists were the only ones recognizing popular demands, simply promising to uphold proper politics is no longer an option. Importantly, though hopeful, the song also features criticism of class-based inequalities – unlike softpatriotism, it brings the struggles of the underprivileged to the forefront of its Polishness. The pedagogic past features in "My Poland" as well, reframed to show not a history of nation's greatness, but a history of a resilient and inclusive community – this narrative provides foundations for the song's ideal future. Finally, nationalism's central affects – pride, love, belonging – feature in the hopeful conclusion, where sound evokes collectivity and visuals subtly suggest that even armed struggle for a plural Poland is not necessarily off the table. As Napiórkowski argued, in the struggle against turbopatriotism, "tylko nadzieja może zmierzyć się z nostalgią" ("only hope can counter nostalgia") (2019: 255). In "My Poland", this hope is grounded in a (reinterpreted) past, based on critiques of the unequal present, and oriented towards a free, equal, and inclusive future.

Much like "My Poland", various protests against PiS I attended could be argued to have constructed us/them frontiers within which the idea of the Polish people was rearticulated. Be it June 4 or the Women's Strike mobilization, I observed PiS' authoritarianism be emphasized during protest marches, with posters and songs used often painting an image of the party as the *actual* elite: standing above the law, corrupt, manipulative, powerful but isolated from the Polish people. The image of Poland that was constructed during the October 1 mobilization might have been, like softpatriotism, focused on its Europeanness and a narrative of liberal progress. Simultaneously, however, the politician speakers at the protest attempted to rewrite histories: by claiming a uniquely Polish tradition of tolerance and by suggesting that the current movements descended from past mobilizations against the communist regime (Tusk 2023). The struggles and solidarity of disadvantaged groups were central especially to the yearly protests that emerged in direct opposition to the turbopatriotic Independence Marches. Called "For Your and Our Freedom", these 'street party' marches, like Księżycowy Terrorysta's song, celebrated the national holiday alternatively, defining Polishness as "przywiązanie do idei żywej, różnorodnej i prawdziwej niepodległości" ("commitment to the idea of living, diverse, and true independence") (Koalicja Antyfaszystowska 2023); opposed to imperialism and nationalism, but not to the idea of the people's community. As I observed during my ongoing research, throughout protest movements against PiS, Polishness was routinely conceived in terms similar to Księżycowy Terrorysta's song: somewhat softpatriotic, but with populist elements, rewriting the past, present, and future to redefine nationhood in more inclusive terms. On a larger scale, such reclaiming of national identity could boost the collective identities of anti-populist radical right movements: by spurring mobilizing frontiers, and inspiring positive affect – hope, belonging, pride.

Critical disinvestment: Exhaustion of “Polish Tango” (“Polskie Tango”) (2020)

So far, I have argued that the active retelling of Polishness communicated in “My Poland” reflected the same path that many movements opposed to PiS undertook. However, hope and investment in nationhood have not been the only attitudes resonating with those who opposed the party’s discourse. In fact, one of the most viral protest songs written in PiS’ Poland proved to be “Polskie Tango” (“Polish Tango”): a 2020 hip hop single by the well-known rapper Taco Hemingway, with over 38 million views on YouTube (Hemingway 2020). Although well-rooted in the histories of Polish hip hop, Hemingway’s work is argued to represent a new strand within it – moving away from the genre’s frequent (in the Polish context) connections to nationalism and materialism, and towards a critical, lyrically complex “unashamedly middle-class voice” (Rymajdo 2023: 171). Published just before the 2020 presidential elections, in the following months, “Polish Tango” became a ubiquitous song: brought up by portals, TV reports, and trending on social media (Wirtualne Media 2020). Its affective force appeared to be appreciated by the party’s opponents, as “Polish Tango” soon enough could be encountered playing from the soundsystems at the Women’s Strike protests (Bochyńska 2020) and garnering comments that praised its “perfect descriptions” of reality (@ All3n) or proclaimed it “the new anthem of Poland” (@KakaduTM). Albeit also having Polishness as its core theme, in contrast to “My Poland”, “Polish Tango” depicted the country in overwhelmingly negative terms – as peripheral, backwards, ugly, riddled with problems… but nonetheless beloved.

Musically, the difference between “My Poland” and this song can be heard immediately: “Polish Tango” is a disruptive song, often described as the sound of “pissed off” (Patryk 2020) Hemingway. Beginning with an off-pitch synthesizer tune, the song builds up to a consistent beat. The beat is interrupted with regular klaxon sounds, as Hemingway’s rapping grows more frantic, signifying urgency, tension, and nervousness: not only anger but also stress and anxiety. In the chorus, string-like synthesizer sounds form the melody, then a deep bass is introduced, and backing vocals shout to hype up the rather mellow tune. In later verses, the rapper’s voice cracks, growing more emotional, with fear evoked also through the sounds of sirens and a flashing video. Throughout the song, there is an overwhelming, near-apocalyptic impression of crisis.

Accompanied by this fearful, tense, and exhausting music, Hemingway raps about how he sees the Polish past and present. Beginning with the moment of Poland’s post-communist transitions, the lyrics recount a dystopian history of recent Polish struggles: the sudden confrontation with the West, the shock of capitalist influx, the resulting problems of poverty, hunger, and domestic violence (Hemingway 2020: 0.05–0.35). Unfortunately, the single quickly asserts, Poland’s issues are not only a matter of the past – due to (PiS’) inept government, Poland is still a “farmer’s market” of Europe.

> “Mój kraj wyszedł z klatki, teraz się mota
> Moi krajem może rządzić byle miernota
> W moim kraju ta oświata to jest ciemnota
> Z jednej strony – jarmark, a z drugiej – Europa”

(“My country came out of the cage and now it's struggling
Every mediocrity can rule my country
The education system of my country is ignorance
On the one side – a farmer's market, on the other – Europe”)

(Hemingway 2020: 0.35–0.45)
Full text and translation available at:
https://www.tekstowo.pl/piosenka,taco_hemingway,polskie_tango__prod__lanek_.html. Certain English phrasings adapted for a more accurate translation.

The song’s chorus further expresses a lack of belief in Poland, comparing its flag to an imaginary Santa Claus and its greatest river, Vistula, to a “grząskie bagno” (“boggy swamp”) (Hemingway 2020: 0.48–0.54). The third verse of the song turns the most concretely political, mockingly adopting the perspective of those whose “main mission is to tell you that your life is amazing” (“główną misją dla nich mówić ci, że żyjesz świetnie”) (Hemingway 2020: 2.03–2.08): visually implied to be the PiS-aligned media (through headlines reminiscent of TVP television). In an ironic tone, the song’s lyrics criticize the party’s assertions that life in contemporary Poland is perfect, while the rest of the world lives wrongly: ridiculing PiS’ fear-provoking warnings about Western “gender trends” (“moda na gender”) and “carbon vilification” (“nagonka na węgiel”) (Hemingway 2020: 2.18–2.23). Generally expressed in harsh language that evokes anger, gloom, disgust, and despair, the song concludes by provocatively combining Catholic phrases with vulgar words to draw up a frontier of “them”, the party (and the Church it allied itself with) versus “us” – the recipients of the song: “Bóg z nami, chuj z wami” (“God with us, dick with you” literally; the figurative meaning of the phrase is “God with us, fuck you”) (Hemingway 2020: 2.30).

However, in spite of its negative emotional valence, “Polskie Tango” is hardly a rejection of Polishness. In the song’s bridge, its lyrics quote a patriotic nursery rhyme “Kto ty jesteś? Polak mały” (“Who are you? A little Pole”), repurposing this symbol from the Polish past to verbalize the country’s present issues; while still affirming that criticism comes from a place of care. Unlike Polish nationalists or even Księżycowy Terrorysta, Hemingway has no more hope; however, he does not abandon national identity – the fragile “fucked up” “sandcastle” of Poland is still loved, despite everything.

“Czym ta ziemia? To mój zamek z piachu
Czym zdobyta? Propagandą strachu
Czy ją kochasz? Bardzo, mówię szczerze
A w co wierzysz? W nic nie wierzę”
(“What is this land for you? My sandcastle
How was it conquered? With propaganda of fear
Do you love it? / Sincerely, I do
And what do you believe in? / I believe in nothing”)

(Hemingway 2020: 1.06–1.25)

Maintained in a low-quality aesthetic, the music video accompanying the song adds to the expression of exhaustion, wherein Poland is a periphery, riddled with problems. Archival images of the communist and early capitalist Polish past form the core of the song’s visuals (Hemingway 2020). As the lyrics unfold, the

chronologies of images become mixed, with also stylized images of the rapper showing up in-between. Even as Hemingway moves onto lyrically exploring the Polish present, most images continue to suggest the past. In context, this strategy seems to comment on how little has changed between communism and PiS' rule – how the contemporary Polish identity is still a reflection of its past, represented not as glorified greatness, but as everyday poverty, backwardness, and the struggles that came with non-Western positioning.

Through its lyrics, music, and sound, "Polish Tango" clarifies itself as a complaint, an expression of exhaustion, but not a rejection of national identity. Despite his strong criticisms, vulgar vocabulary, and anxious music, Hemingway still affirms that he loves Poland – almost like a victim of Stockholm syndrome, tied to national identity despite abandoned hope. In a disavowal of turbopatriotism, the past is anything but glorified: it is synonymous with the gray, ugly everyday more-so than great battles. Similarly, the present is a source of shame as compared to the rest of Europe; through words like *jarmark* ("farmer's market"), *ciemnota* ("ignorance"), and *miernota* ("mediocrity"), the artist emphasizes Polish backwardness encouraged by populist discourse. But despite not being softpatriotic either (as it privileges European progress, but lacks optimism), the song does lay claim to being *patriotic* – understood as identifying with the nation, recognizing its history, and feeling love towards it. This relationship with national identity is twisted, complicated. However, rejecting national pride, Hemingway seems to say, does not deprive one of fond feelings of belonging. The Poland described in "Polish Tango" is abnormal, yet familiar – it was, is, and will continue to be a peripheral, messed-up place, but it is this periphery, not the prosperous West, that is home; as rapped in the chorus, even with "nogi w błocie" ("legs stuck in mud"), one can still be "dancing the Polish tango" ("tańczę polskie tango") (Hemingway 2020: 0.45–0.50). Exhaustion, disinvestment in national pride, and near-Stockholm syndrome – these three themes of "Polish Tango" may sound defeatist. However, the song's aforementioned resonance with protest movements against PiS suggests that even this take on national identity is inscribed with a degree of mobilizing power.

In the Polish context, the grim aspects of Hemingway's renarration of Polishness are certainly not unique. "Polishness is abnormality" – these 1987 words of Donald Tusk, the Polish prime minister at the time of writing this article, have been cited now and again in the media, by both PiS politicians and their opponents (Szczęśniak 2018). In the original text of Tusk, one can find the same complexity that Chmielewska-Szlajfer described as part and parcel of reshaping Polish communities after communism: Polishness within it is full of divergent understandings and evokes conflicting emotions, including shame.

As seen from the recent (2023) large-scale research of Polish psychologists, in understanding national identity, fourteen percent of Poles can still be described as "ashamed" ones ("zawstydzeni Polską") (Marchlewska et al 2023) – as in discouraged by Polish politics, and due to this, privileging a positive image of external groups over identification with own country. Shame, following Polish studies scholar Elżbieta Sękowska, could result from an internalized recognition of supposed Western superiority (2008) in confrontations between national and European identity; in PiS' rhetoric, this shame is described as forced onto Polish people by Western elites (Napiórkowski 2019). However, while PiS reduces the not-entirely-positive understandings of Polishness to the term *ojkofobia* – accusing

its opponents of hating their own country – such hatred is clearly disavowed in Hemingway's song.

In the end, although "Polish Tango" converses with peripheral shame and the trope of Polishness as abnormality, it still centers national identity. Its evocation of crisis and exhaustion, paradoxically, does not lead to giving up and emigration – instead, "do przodu" ("straight on ahead") and "jebać PiS" ("Fuck PiS", a popular protest tagline hidden underneath eight stars) are the final sentiments expressed in the song, making it palatable for protest movements. According to Benjamin Moffitt (2016: 113–132), performing an exaggerated and simplified "sense of crisis" is what grants populist political styles an appearance of justified urgency. Perhaps the power of Hemingway's song can be explained in similar terms. Ultimately, when played at protests, this single could amplify a sense of crisis; provoking a feeling that, even if Poland may never be quite like the West, action against its further backsliding is urgently necessary

Politics of withdrawal: Grief of "Nothing about Poland" ("Nic o Polsce") (2021)

Maria Peszek has been releasing alternative music criticizing nationalism and discrimination since 2008. Considered an activist singer, Peszek is known for among other, her 2012 song "Sorry Polsko" ("Sorry Poland"), where not unlike softpatriots, she rejected nationalist heroic martyrdom while still affirming love for the nation – singing that she would refuse to sacrifice herself for Poland but that should not make her a bad citizen (Latoch-Zielińska 2020). Like "Polish Tango", this song has seen frequent use at the anti-PiS protests and references to it on protest banners (Hanyzewski 2020).

However, Peszek's most recent album *Ave Maria* (2021) radically breaks up with her high engagement and proclaims withdrawal. As she expresses in the album's titular song, she is done with loud, active resistance; but her choosing to stand down does not mean complicity with the status quo: "Już nie krzyczę już nie szczekam, ale na nic też nie czekam / Jestem ziemią niczyją to tyle (…) Ave Maria, radikal bezczel" ("I don't scream anymore, I don't bark anymore, but I don't wait for anything either/ I'm no man's land, that's all (…) Ave Maria, radical audacity") (Peszek 2021a). Within the album, one song in particular is dedicated to Poland – which Peszek claims is the last she will write for her country ever (Piotrowicz, 2021). Titled "Nic o Polsce" ("Nothing about Poland"), the song is a downtempo, melodic expression of grief that declares that (to Peszek) Poland and Polishness have died.

> "Tu kiedyś było drzewo / Tu kiedyś był mój dom
> Sarny o wielkich oczach / Dawno odeszły stąd"
> ("There was once a tree here / There was once my home here
> Roes with huge eyes / Left long ago"
>
> (Peszek 2021b: 0.00–0.20)

Full text and translation available at:
https://www.tekstowo.pl/piosenka,maria_peszek,nic_o_polsce_1.html.
Certain English phrasings adapted for a more accurate translation.

Using a simple tune, distorted, slow-paced percussion, and strained, woeful vocals, "Nothing about Poland" sounds intimate and vulnerable in its verses. Its low tempo contrasts with "Polish Tango" and "My Poland": in comparison to the other two, Peszek's song sounds more relaxed. More layers are added, however, and the energy steadily increases, as it heads towards its chorus; by the time she affirms the song's title at what could be considered the single's musical culmination, Peszek's voice is loud, confident, and clear, delivering a consonant melody in the major key, with distortions gone from the instrumentation. The pattern returns and the song ends on the chorus, leaving the listener not with melancholy expressed in the verses – but a sense of acceptance.

Lyrically, the song follows a similar progression – it starts with a general lament of loss and grief – mourning signifiers such as home and nature. "Chciałabym wierzyć, ale nie umiem" ("I would like to believe, but I can't") (Peszek 2021b: 0:48-0.54), Peszek expresses her vulnerability in the pre-chorus, while hope, trust, and love are described as not possible anymore. In the chorus, she further mourns her country, which she claims is now over; however, combined with the changes in the music, this mourning sounds like a moment of letting go of the pain through acknowledging closure.

> "Nic nie będzie już o Polsce / Polski we mnie nie ma
> Polska była i umarła / Polska się skończyła"
> ("Nothing will be about Poland anymore / I don't have Poland in me anymore
> Poland existed and has died / Poland is over")
>
> (Peszek 2021b: 1.15–1.29)

Finally, although "Nothing about Poland" does not feature a music video, when consuming the song on streaming platforms, the listener would be faced with Peszek's *Ave Maria* album cover. Shot in muted blues – another cue potentially suggesting sadness – the image contains a photo of Peszek, laying in a bathtub, maintaining eye contact with whoever's looking; her non-conforming appearance (with for example unshaved armpits) on full display. Just like the song's sound, these visuals seem intimate, personal, mellow; but simultaneously, they represent non-conformist existence without shame.

Understanding "Nothing about Poland" in context of Peszek's prior work shows a progression – from attempts at renegotiating Polish identity, actively challenging turbopatriotism's obsession with heroism and violence, towards a personal exodus from even discussing what Polishness should be like. The song's eschatological lyrics and the expression of grief through voice facilitate a departure from narrating the nation – after all, if Poland is dead, there is nothing there to negotiate. However, this withdrawal does not necessarily mean surrendering to the populist-nationalist discourse. Understood as expressing *politics of withdrawal*, Peszek's song can also be conceived as a possible radical contribution, which opens up space for new ways of conceptualizing the collectivity inhabiting Poland.

As described by Dutch cultural studies analyst Pepita Hesselberth and philosopher Joost de Bloois, "politics of withdrawal" describes an approach to withdrawal as not mere passivity, but a way to increase political antagonism, and even a "precondition for the radical overhaul of politics" (2020: 2–3). Despite appearances of being an individual choice, withdrawal, they argue, is a "gesture" of collectivity that signifies "disinvestment" in dominant systems and places itself against the condition of "no exit" that existing hegemonies can suggest (2020: 7–10). What precedes withdrawal is often a gradual influx of weariness that leads to a tipping point (Hesselberth and de Bloois 2020: 8). As such, withdrawal is imbued with negative affect: one that comes before and "transpires in silence" (stress, overload, anger) but just as importantly one that comes afterwards: grief, shame, and even mourning (Hesselberth and de Bloois 2020: 151–155).

In the light of the politics of withdrawal, even a personal, mournful song like "Nothing about Poland" could be seen as a viable response to dominant systems – in this case, the dominant nationalism mainstreamed by PiS. Importantly, Peszek is not isolated in her choice to grieve the nation. During the various protests against the party, themes of mourning Poland could be spotted, for instance on banners that proclaimed 'POL/END' (Losik 2021) or in protest titles such as "Już Polska zginęła, my nadal żyjemy" ("Poland has died already, we are still alive") (FARSA 2020).

But besides those actively mobilizing, a much larger group for whom "Poland is dead" remains disconnected from politics. As shown from the aforementioned study of Polish psychologists, the most numerous group in Poland when it comes to national identity perceptions is not in fact the conservatives – it is the "wycofani pesymiści" ("withdrawn pessimists") (twenty-eight percent) for whom Polishness does not mean much, and who ultimately (regardless of their political views) feel that they are on their own (Marchlewska et al 2023). This group is unlikely to participate in elections, watch the news, or trust political institutions. (Marchlewska et al 2023). Due to political disappointments (but also historical traumas), it sees itself as disenfranchised, without belonging or responsibility binding them to Polishness. Although "Nothing about Poland" most likely did not become mainstream enough to reach the "withdrawn pessimists", I suggest that it is for them that narratives of withdrawal could open new spaces. For those, who feel that the concept of national people has failed in representing them, closure may be necessary. Expressing the death of all systems leads to questions about new collectivities – ones that would not require national identity to be the basis of community building. What is left when "nothing is about Poland" anymore? Looking at "withdrawn pessimists" (Marchlewska et al 2023) – the feelings of local and regional belonging can prove stronger than grand constructs of national identity.

Reshaping Poland's community after the populist radical right

Between active rearticulation, critical disinvestment, and withdrawal, this article identified multiple ways of how the nationalism and turbopatriotism mainstreamed by the populist radical right were subverted in Polish popular music. The new approaches to national identity offered in the analysed songs sketched out three

distinct visions of Poland: [1] as plural, diverse, and cosmopolitan, [2] as peripheral, flawed, and complicated, and [3] as bygone and mourned. However, unlike the failed softpatriotism described by Napiórkowski, all those understandings have not fixated on Western liberal aspirations to the point of ignoring Polish inequalities and peripherality. Instead, they can be understood as existing in contexts of traumatic histories, post-communism, and a populist moment. In "My Poland", the Polish people are an oppressed majority opposed to a corrupt elite, but also fundamentally against exclusionary regimes, such as fascism, or the rule of PiS. Polishness, articulated by Księżycowy Terrorysta, respects the past, critiques the present, and hopes for an open future. In "Polish Tango", the difficulties of the Polish reality – not yet caught up with the West, and in fact, backsliding – are emphasized, but the disinvestment in national pride does not come without an unconditional love for the country. Hemingway's song is grim, expressing a sense of crisis, but also – through it – a need for urgent action. Finally, in "Nothing about Poland", attempts at fixing the concept are rejected; leading the listener through grieving, towards closure that allows one to move on and explore new identities.

In early 2024, the tides are shifting. With PiS having lost power, the Polish national community might reshape once again. For now, PiS continues to accuse its opponents of being German agents, complicit in destroying Polish sovereignty (Telewizja Republika 2024). Simultaneously, the new majority coalition legitimizes their Polishness through emphasizing past ties to Solidarity movements or their family histories; while claiming to primarily listen to the ones excluded and Othered from monolithic understandings of the Polish people (Sejm RP 2023; Telewizja Republika 2023). Various narratives about the nation will certainly continue competing, even polarizing. However, whichever approach challenging turbopatriotism prevails, it will need to channel not just Western aspirations – but Polish histories, anxieties, and complicated feelings first and foremost.

Endnotes

1. I follow John Connelly, using the term Eastern Europe to denote "a band of countries that were Soviet satellites not in control of their own destinies" for much of the 20th century (2020: 25).
2. Napiórkowski (2019) explains that his term "turbopatriotism" was inspired by the aesthetics of turbofolk; simultaneously comparing "softpatriotism" with Muzak.
3. The mentioned number of anti-PiS songs (over 100) is a result of my work in compiling all songs written since 2015, which have been explicitly critical towards the party in their titles, visuals, or lyrics, with YouTube or Soundcloud releases that have been streamed/ viewed at least 10,000 times. The list encompasses songs released between 2015 and October 2023. It is available upon request for further research purposes.
4. The results of participant observation at various anti-PiS protests included in this article are a part of my ongoing PhD research on Polish protest music. In 2023, I have attended several protests directed against the party, including the large-scale June 4 and October 1 marches, but also for instance, the weekly protests of the association *Polskie Babcie* ("Polish Grannies"), the daily protests of a *TVP Łże* ("TVP

Lies") group, and more. For an understanding of earlier protests (such as the Women's Strike mobilization) I based myself on past online livestreams.

References

Bibliography

Anderson, B. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso.

Bhabha, H.K. Ed. 1990. *Nation and Narration*. London and New York: Routledge.

Bill, S. and Stanley, B. 2020. Whose Poland is it to be? PiS and the struggle between monism and pluralism. *East European Politics* 36 (3): 378–394. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2020.1787161

Blokker, P. 2019. Populist Nationalism, Anti-Europeanism, Postnationalism, and the East-West Distinction. *German Law Journal* 6 (2): 371–389. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S2071832200013687

Burkhardt, F. 2016. Concepts of the Nation and Legitimation in Belarus. In M. Brusis, J. Ahrens and M. Schulze Wessel Eds. *Politics and Legitimacy in Post-Soviet Eurasia*. London: Palgrave Macmillan: 148–171.

Cannady, S. and Kubicek, P. 2014. Nationalism and Legitimation for Authoritarianism: A Comparison of Nicholas I and Vladimir Putin. *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 5 (1): 1–9. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2013.11.00

Chmielewska-Szlajfer, H. 2019. *Reshaping Poland's Community after Communism: Ordinary Celebrations*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Connelly, J. 2020. *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Darden, K. and Grzymala-Busse, A. 2006. The Great Divide: Literacy, Nationalism, and the Communist Collapse. *World Politics* 59 (1): 83–115. http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/wp.2007.0015.

De Cleen, B. 2017. Populism and Nationalism. In C.R. Kaltwasser et al Eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press: 342–362.

Ding, I. and Hlavac, M. 2017. "Right" Choice: Restorative Nationalism and Right-Wing Populism in Central and Eastern Europe. *Chinese Political Science Review* 2 (1): 427–444. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s41111-017-0069-8

FARSA - Feminists Artywists Society in Action. (2020) Już Polska Zginęła, My Nadal Żyjemy. Zapal Znicz pod Ambasadą, Facebook, 24 October. https://www.facebook.com/events/808720846628495/?active_tab=about. Accessed 29 January 2024.

Garratt, J. 2018. *Music and Politics: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gest, J. 2022. Perspective | How the Left Can Embrace Nationalism While Maintaining Its Values. *Washington Post*, 7 March. https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/03/07/nationalism-left-immigration-biden-agenda-healthcare/. Accessed 20 January 2024.

Grzymala-Busse, A. 2018. Poland's Path to Illiberalism. *Current History* 117 (797): 96–101.

Hanyzewski, M. 2020. Strajk Kobiet w Warszawie. *Wprost*, 30 October. https://www.wprost.pl/kraj/10382895/strajk-kobiet-w-warszawie-nagrania-i-zdjecia-z-protestow.html. Accessed 6 January 2024.

Hesselberth, P. and de Bloois, J. Eds. 2020. *Politics of Withdrawal: Media, Arts, Theory*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Jaskulowski, K. and Majewski, P. 2022. Populist in Form, Nationalist in Content? Law and Justice, Nationalism and Memory Politics. *European Politics and Society* 24 (4): 1–16. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2022.2058752.

Kazharski, A. 2023. To Whom the Sirens Wail. Poland's Post-2022 Geopolitical Debates on Central and Eastern Europe. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 49 (2): 100–114. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0304375423119361

Koalicja Antyfaszystowska. (2023) Za Wolność Waszą i Naszą! For Yours and Our Freedom! Street Party, Facebook, 11 November. https://www.facebook.com/events/633290085644369. Accessed 10 January 2024.

Kuzio, T. 2022. Imperial Nationalism as the Driver behind Russia's Invasion of Ukraine. *Nations and Nationalism* 29 (1): 30–38. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/nana.12875

Latoch-Zielińska, M. 2020. Polska i Polskość w Tekstach Kultury Popularnej (Na Przykładzie Wybranych Piosenek). *Polonistyka. Innowacje* (11): 183–198. http://dx.doi.org/10.14746/pi.2020.11.14

Lipiński, A. and Szabo, G. 2023. Heroisation and Victimisation: Populism, Commemorative Narratives and National Days in Hungary and Poland. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 31 (2): 345–362. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2022.2130190

Losik, E. 2021. Polish Women Strike. Abortion ban in Poland. 100th day of protests. Warsaw. January. https://www.dreamstime.com/people-poland-protest-against-constitutional-court-decision-to-practically-ban-abortion-poland-near-total-abortion-ban-took-image208957128. Accessed 30 January 2024.

Marchlewska, M. et al. 2023. Czy i jak identyfikujemy się dziś z Polską? Raport segmentacyjny. Laboratorium Poznania Politycznego. Instytut Psychologii PAN. https://psychpol.psych.pan.pl/images/Raporty/LaboratoriumPoznaniaPolitycznegoIPPAN_RaportSegmentacyjny_NdS.pdf.

Maxwell, S. 2013. *The Case for Left Wing Nationalism: Essays and Articles*. London: Luath Press Ltd.

Moffitt, B. 2016. *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style, and Representation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Mouffe, C. 2018. *For a Left Populism*. London and New York: Verso.

Mudde, C. 2007. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mudde, C. and Kaltwasser, C.R. 2017. *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Napiórkowski, M. 2019. *Turbopatriotyzm*. Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne.

Nimu, A. and Volintiru, C. 2017. Mainstreaming Nationalism? The Case of the Law and Justice Party (PiS). In Bârgăoanu, A., Radu, L. and Buturoiu, A. Eds.

Why Europe? Narratives and Counter-Narratives of European Integration. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
Patryk. 2020. Wkurzony Taco Hemingway tańczy 'Polskie Tango' [KLIP]. *Rap News*, 10 July. https://rapnews.pl/wkurzony-taco-hemingway-tanczy-polskie-tango-klip/. Accessed 5 December 2023.
Piotrowicz, Paweł. 2021. Maria Peszek: we mnie Polski już nie ma [WYWIAD]. *Onet Kultura*, 21 September. https://kultura.onet.pl/muzyka/wywiady-i-artykuly/ave-maria-maria-peszek-we-mnie-polski-juz-nie-ma-wywiad-z-artystka/qm4z3cl. Accessed 10 December 2023.
Połońska, E. 2019. Watchdog, Lapdog, or Attack Dog? Public Service Media and the Law and Justice Government in Poland. In Połońska, E. and Beckett, C. Eds. *Public Service Broadcasting and Media Systems in Troubled European Democracies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan: 227–255.
Radonić, L. 2020. 'Our' vs. 'Inherited' Museums. PiS and Fidesz as Mnemonic Warriors. Südosteuropa 68 (1): 44-78. http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/soeu-2020-0003
Rolski, T. 2023. Huge Turnout in Poland's Decisive Election, Highest since 1919. ABC News, 16 October. https://abcnews.go.com/International/huge-turnout-poland-decisive-elections/story?id=104004666. Accessed 16 January 2024.
Rymajdo, K. 2023. Polish Hip Hop at Home and Abroad: Return Migration in the Work of Taco Hemingway. *Journal of World Popular Music* 10 (2): 163–187. http://dx.doi.org/10.1558/jwpm.22212%20
Schiller, M. 2017. Who said we were over it? On Nationalist Nostalgia and a Specter Haunting Europe: Popular Music and the Melancholic Presence of the Past. In Merrill, J., Ed. *Popular Music Studies Today*. Wiesbaden: Springer: 261–270.
Sękowska, E. 2008. Polskość i/a Europejskość w Dyskursie Publicznym. *Poradnik Językowy* (8): 3–15.
Szczęśniak, A. 2018. "Polskość to nienormalność". Dlaczego słowa Tuska denerwują patriotów z PIS. [Pełny tekst z 1987 r.]. *Oko.Press*, 28 June. https://oko.press/polskosc-to-nienormalnosc-slowa-tuska-denerwuja-pis-patriotow. Accessed 20 January 2024.
Way, L. 2021. *Analysing Politics and Protest in Digital Popular Culture: A Multimodal Introduction*. London: Sage.
Wirtualne Media. 2020. "Polskie Tango" Taco Hemingwaya hitem lata w Spotify (TOP 10). *Wirtualne Media*, 26 August. https://www.wirtualnemedia.pl/artykul/polskie-tango-taco-hemingway-hit-lata-spotify-top-10. Accessed 29 January 2024.
Żuk, P. 2018. Nation, National Remembrance, and Education – Polish Schools as Factories of Nationalism and Prejudice. *The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 46 (6): 1046–1062. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2017.1381079

Videography

Bochyńska, N. (2020) Taco Pewnie nie Przewidział..., Twitter, 26 October. https://twitter.com/BochynskaNikola/status/1320798767268974595. Accessed 31 January 2024.

Kreczmer, M. 2020. Moja Polska - Księżycowy Terrorysta. *YouTube*, 5 November. Available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYyKP_timhI. Accessed 31 January 2024.

Hemingway, T. 2020. Taco Hemingway - POLSKIE TANGO (prod. Lanek). *YouTube*, 10 July. Available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i84L16VL6c8. Accessed 31 January 2024.

Peszek, M. —

2021a. Maria Peszek - Ave Maria (Official Music Video). *YouTube*, 2 July. Available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2h36bcg-BXc. Accessed 31 January 2024.

2021b. Nic O Polsce. *YouTube*, 9 September. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgbrT-kUS_M. Accessed 31 January 2024.

Sejm RP. 2023. Inauguracyjne orędzie marszałka Sejmu Szymona Hołowni. *YouTube*, 16 November. Available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RqsURLe123E. Accessed 30 January 2024.

Telewizja Republika —

2023. Pierwsze przemówienie Tuska po wyborze na premiera. Zwrócił się do swojego mentora "Bolka" L. Wałęsy. *YouTube*, 11 December. Available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQeQBQhLDJs. Accessed 29 January 2024.

2024. Kaczyński: Bronimy Polski, przed tym ideologicznym nieszczęściem i niemieckim imperializmem. *YouTube*, 11 January. Available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCbFKyEe7uM. Accessed 29 January 2024.

Tusk, D. 2023. Donald Tusk - MARSZ MILIONA SERC, 1.10.2023. YouTube, 1 October. Available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1bexeeTeVc. Accessed 29 January 2024.