



Defending the traditional Polish way of life: The role of fantasies.

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Overview of the paper

- Aims: how fantasies defend a neo-traditionalist conception of Polishness, conceal its non-necessary and mutable nature, and exclude alternatives.
- Theoretical framework and methodology: Logics Approach (Glynos and Howarth, 2007)
- Method: direct observation of counter-marches against LGBT parades in Kalisz, Lublin, and Krakow (informed by the analysis already done so far)
- Discourse analysis (discourse as meaning)



What is Polishness?

“Has the lot of the Poles up to now been so delightful? Has not your Polishness become loathsome to you? [...] To the Devil with Pater and Patria! The Son, the son's the thing, oh, indeed! But wherefore need you Patria? Is not Filistria better? You exchange Patria for Filistria and then you'll see!”

(Witold Gombrowicz, *Trans-Atlantyka*)

Articulation of neo-traditionalist demands defines ‘neo-traditionalist Polishness’ against ‘liberal Polishness’.

‘Liberal Polishness’: it is devoid of the old bonds to the Polish community and emphasizes the liberty of the individual.

‘Neo-traditionalist Polishness’: it refers to an ethno-nationalist identity and to the Christian roots of Poland. It protects traditional models of community and communitarian morality. It privileges authority and hierarchy at the expense of individual liberty; stability over relativism



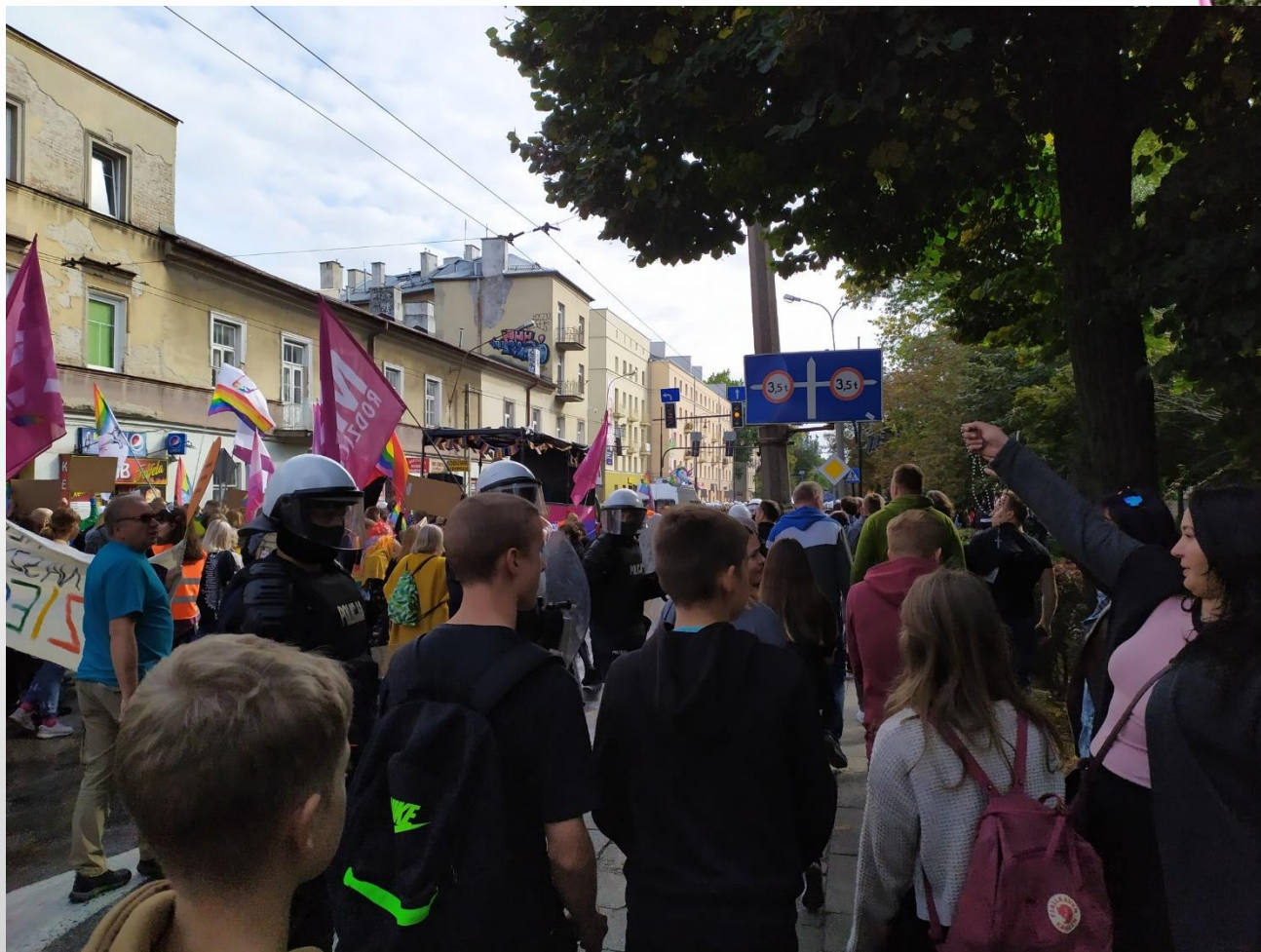
Methodology: The fantasmatic logic (Glynos and Howarth, 2007)

“What would happen to a political or religious identity, even the most binding, if it could see itself as contingent, as something that might have taken another path? Can you be devoted to an identity – or would you be differently devoted to an identity – if you knew it was also unsure?” (Rose, 2005: 96)

“Fantasy operates so as to conceal or “close off” the radical contingency of social relations” (Glynos and Howarth, 2008: 12). Fantasies, therefore, conceal the non-given character of national identities by referring to a utopian society devoid of antagonism and by blaming enemies for stealing *our way of life* (theft of enjoyment).

- Beatific fantasy
- Horrific fantasy
- Fundamental fantasy

Anti-LGBT Counter-marches



Horrific fantasy



“Here it’s Poland, not Brussel – here there is no support for perversion” (chant sung by participants in Krakow).

“Warning, rainbow plague! [...] This ideology aims to change the way of thinking, valuing and to create a different family with the exclusion from the social life of those who do not agree, to the point of legal stigmatization” (flyer distributed at the counter-march in Lublin).

“We stress our affection for those values they fear so much; they spit on; those values they want to deprive the Polish nation of. But we will surely guard them and raise the next generations in this spirit” (participant to the counter-march in Krakow).

Beatific Fantasy

Family=Poland. The promised unity

Beatific fantasy: traditional family in an idyllic scenario

Horrific fantasy: threat from LGBT and Western world-views



Sublimation

Sublimated objects embody 'our way of life'



Conclusions

- Fantasies ‘defend’ traditionalist Polishness from its liberal resignification.
- Neo-traditionalist fantasies offer a solid ideological ground for defending and strengthening the idea of a traditional Polish way of life. They explain why, at least in the analyzed example of the counter-marches, the neo-traditionalist worldview is still so resistant.
- They make sure that subjects hold on to the contingent neo-traditionalist discourse, notwithstanding the emancipatory impetus of liberalism.
- Therefore, the cultural war is not fought only by deploying a political strategy and setting political demands. It also involves the narration of fantasies that promise to achieve again the real Polish way of life. By structuring their ‘enjoyment’, fantasies grip subjects to their concept of Polishness and, eventually, radicalize the clash.