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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL - Italian Team for Security, Terroristic Issues & Managing Emergencies



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# SICUREZZA, TERRORISMO E SOCIETÀ

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# Public sentiment after the terrorist attacks and their impact on the attitudes on Polish people

MAREK GÓRKA, URSZULA SOLER

## Abstract

Terrorism occurs in all parts of the world although most incidents occur in the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa. Terror is first of all the terror of the next attack. Killing dozens or hundreds of people is not the ultimate goal of terrorism. These events achieve a broader goal of creating division, fear, and escalating racist and xenophobic trends. Populist, far-right groups may well fuel more hatred. What if terrorism contributes to political and social disruption, which in turn leads to even more grievances that inspire further campaigns of political violence? From Denmark to the Netherlands to Poland, a new wave of rightwing parties has emerged over the past decade-and-a-half, and they are casting a much wider net than Jean-Marie Le Pen ever attempted to. And by deftly appealing to fear, nostalgia and resentment of elites, they are rapidly broadening their base. Such organisations, just like other populist and anti-immigrant parties gaining support in the polls across Europe, have been quick to make political capital from the attacks, citing them as proof that all their fears about Islamism were true.

The aim of the thesis is to discuss recent acts of terrorism in Europe in 2015-2016 and their influence on both the social attitude and the political decisions of the ruling elites in Europe. Therefore, the thesis is trying to answer the question whether the rise of a terrorist threat entails an increased support for radical, populist and nationalist movements in Poland.

The questions asked to the two groups of people representing two opposing social groups, were quite a challenge. Both groups, despite being different from each other, take part in an ongoing public discussion about what could be done to limit the terrorists threat.

The threat of terrorism in Poland is more serious now than in the previous years. It is worth examining how society perceives the problem of terrorism and whether the anxiety connected with it could have any impact on the shape of the political scene. Statistical data show that the sense of terrorist threat in society has been politicised and the differences between particular political circles run along the ideological divisions.

An important field of research, picturing social attitudes is an analysis of the society in the perspective of sociodemographic divisions.

Having to verify some correlations between terroristic attacks and an increase in the hostility towards refugees, it is worth confronting those tragic events with the data illustrating the current attitudes in society.

## Keywords

Terrorism, Escalation, Radicalization, Populism, Poland

## 1. Introduction

Terrorism has been evolving as a political and religious tactic for hundreds of years. Initially, terrorist acts were on a local scale and involved a small number of people. As time went by, capabilities grew and terrorist acts became more violent, destructive and global. Terrorism is a mean to achieve political goals through the use of violence, force and fear. Thus, it is an intentional use of terror, which affects far more than just direct victims<sup>1</sup>.

## 2. Methodological aspects of the social sense of threat

The aim of the thesis is to discuss recent acts of terrorism in Europe in 2015-2016 and their influence on both the social attitude and the political decisions of the ruling elites in Europe. Therefore, the thesis is trying to answer the question whether the rise of a terrorist threat entails an increased support for radical, populist and nationalist movements in Poland. The thesis is also trying to depict the mood in the Polish society regarding the tragic events that occurred in Europe. In Poland, at the turn of 2016 and 2017 two thirds of the respondents (67%) equated the wave of immigration with a terrorist threat<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, it is worth analyzing how public opinion sees a connection between a mass immigration and terrorist attacks. The commentators, publicists, politicians and Polish society are divided on this matter. What the thesis will also attempt to do is to confront the world of academics and the world of ordinary citizens to find differences in how terrorist sources and threats and the ways of dealing with them are perceived by the two social groups.

The choice of Polish society as the subject matter stems from a few reasons. Firstly, after fifty years under the communist rule, Polish people appreciate the benefits of being the EU member. Poland has not yet completely eradicated the stigma of communism, which is still for some of the Polish citizens, including the ruling elites, a traumatic experience. Secondly, Poland is an intriguing field of study for social mood, especially when taken into consideration that Poland is regarded as a leader in East-central Europe.

Despite its difficult history, Poland has not experienced a trauma of recent terrorist attacks. The country is not situated in the heart of the mainstream European matters. However, it does undertake such challenges as hosting some international events. In the time of our research, these were the NATO

<sup>1</sup> B. Hoffman, *The Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, „The Atlantic Monthly”, 2003, vol. 291/5, s. 6, [in:] [www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/2005/RAND\\_RP1187.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/2005/RAND_RP1187.pdf) (reading date August 12, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> *The attitude of Poles to accept refugees*, [in:] [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2017/K\\_001\\_17.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2017/K_001_17.PDF) (reading date: December 12, 2016).

Summit in Warsaw on the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> of July and World Youth Day in Cracow, which took place on the 26<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> of July. What also needs to be mentioned is an antiterrorist act passed in Poland on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, which was a reaction to the increasing terrorist threat in the Western European countries<sup>3</sup>.

The two concepts, which are the key to defining and analyzing a relation between the threats and the social attitude are social determinism and social indeterminism. The first concept claims that political parties and the government reflect social divisions. In other words, decisions taken by the government are related to the changes which take place in society<sup>4</sup>. The change on the level of the governing group is linked to the social changes. Thus, the presence of a particular party in a country and the popularity of political slogans can be explained in the context of the given social groups, whose interests are represented by this party.

At present, it seems that the prevailing social mood approves of antiterrorist movement, even at the cost of some civil liberties. The acceptance of the limited social liberties occurs when safety is threatened. Taking into consideration social anxiety, which is a natural reaction to the recent terrorist attacks, it can be assumed that many governments will find it easy to enforce antiterrorist laws<sup>5</sup>. Most European countries have put this agenda as their top priority when it comes to social security.

The second concept, social indeterminism, says that a political system and the ruling parties which it comprises, are independent from the social background. They create the social attitude, rather than are influenced by it<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, the political system, which is governed by its own independent rules, reflects the occurrences happening on the level of the ruling elite. These occurrences may act as an inspiration or a catalyst for various dynamics of change, may contribute to social stability or an increase in social tensions. In the realm of security policy, there are also cases, when decisions are taken independently of the situation, creating new circumstances, whose outcome is difficult to predict.

Naturally, the two mentioned theoretical approaches concerning the understanding of the interaction between a political system and society, complement each other. Nevertheless, the approach which will prove to be predominant in this paper is social determinism. It explains the thesis, that terrorist acts

<sup>3</sup>M. Górka, *Freedom or Security? Contribution to the Discussion on the Example of the Law on Anti-terrorist Operations of 10 June 2016*, „e-Politikon”, 2016, vol. 19, p.49-79.

<sup>4</sup>S.M. Lipset, S. Rokkan, *Party systems and Voter Alignments: Cross National Perspectives*, New York, 1967, p.15.

<sup>5</sup>O.S. Kerr, *Internet Surveillance Law after the USA Patriot Act: The Big Brother that Isn't*, „Northwestern University Law Review”, 2003, vol. 97/2, p. 607-610.

<sup>6</sup>G. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, Cambridge 1976, p. 179-181.

influence society and its representatives in the government. Political parties, in order to win and maintain the power, need to cater to the social mood. In the context of a terrorist threat, this occurrence is represented by any display of the government's firmness and determination to fight terrorism, even at the cost of some civil liberties.

### 3. Asylum policy

A popular question appearing in the mass media particularly after terrorist attacks, is whether Europe would be able to defend itself. When they say Europe, observers, publicists, and also politicians mean the European Union and its European values on which this institution is founded on. The answer depends on many factors. In Europe, there are discernible centrifugal tendencies, for instance some extremist as well as separatist movements<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, many outside players, such as Russia and in some way the United States, have been trying to weaken the European project for political and economic reasons. It is not in their interest to have strong players in Europe, they prefer to have bilateral relationship with other countries, for example the United States with Great Britain or Germany. Therefore, there are many temptations and pressures from the outside, but not all of them are clearly noticeable or transparent. For a long period of time, internal issues circled around a pragmatic dispute about the crisis in the euro zone. It turned out, however, that the truly important dispute is the one about values. It arose because of the immigration crisis, which have been escalating for many years. Yet, when such a powerful country in the European Union as Germany faced this particular problem, there appeared a necessity to create more serious and optimal policies with regards to immigration. Angela Merkel, in her dramatic speech, put everything at stake saying that the European dream is not a pragmatic alliance, but it is based on some values, which cannot be negotiated. Since then, a discussion about the meaning of the values, which are fundamental to the European Union has started<sup>8</sup>.

It is a complex problem, because the discussion on the approach towards refugees entails two clashing standpoints: shall they be taken in or not? What makes this issue even more complicated is that some people link it to terror-

<sup>7</sup> B. Martinovic, M. Verkuyten, J. Weesie, *Group identity, ethnic separatism and multiple out-groups: The Basque case*, „Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology”, 2011, vol.21/1, p. 28-40.

<sup>8</sup> A. Troianovski, *Populist Tide Puts Angela Merkel on the Defensive; Trump victory and anti-immigrant sentiment across Europe boost opponents of German chancellor and her refugee policy*, „Wall Street Journal”, 18 November 2016.



ism. The question is whether these two problems should be treated separately or not? There is a strong conviction within society and the political elite that there is a connection between a wave of refugees and a terrorist threat.

Some groups in Poland, which point at a bit exaggerated picture of the terrorism threat, often indicate the reports published the American government every year about terrorist attacks around the world. In 2014 there were a few thousands of such attacks, with thirty-three thousand people were killed in them. The people responsible for them are predominantly members of different radical Muslim movements, originating in countries such as Nigeria, Somalia, Pakistan, Afghanistan or Syria. It is highlighted that it is not a civilizational war, but it is a war waged by fanatics against the whole world, not just Europe<sup>9</sup>.

The opponents of this viewpoint claim, that there is a close correlation between the mass immigration from the Muslim countries and a potential possibility of further attacks<sup>10</sup>. In a large assemblage of people, it is much easier to smuggle and hide extremists and recruit them among the newcomers. All these factors increase the likelihood of terrorist attacks.

The topic which ignites a lot of emotions and inflames discussions both in the European Union headquarters and within the EU members is the refugee policy. The attacks which were carried out by refugees for some serve as proof that the people who come to the European Union countries may be a threat. On the other hand, others point out that many terrorists came to Europe when they were children and are belong to the second or even third generation of refugees and their views became radicalized in Europe resulting from them not having another alternative or possibility wanting to fit in in the new environment<sup>11</sup>.

Further terrorist attacks, which were orchestrated by people belonging to immigrant communities, may provide arguments for both parties of the dispute. The greater the reluctance towards the refugees in Europe is, the bigger favour is given to the Islamic State. It willingly attracts people who feel cast away by society, especially by the communities they live in. Integration plays a key role in this matter. The quicker these people become a part of the society they live in, the smaller is their desire to help organizing terrorist attacks and become more radical in their views. It is worth mentioning that not only refugees tend to radicalize. It also happens to people who are excluded from

<sup>9</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism 2014*, [in:] <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/239631.pdf> (reading date: December 15, 2016).

<sup>10</sup> R. Kim, *Do not scare immigrants!*, „Newsweek”, 26 May 2015.

<sup>11</sup> E.D. Gould, E. F. Klor, *The Long-run Effect of 9/11: Terrorism, Backlash, and the Assimilation of Muslim Immigrants in the West*, „The Economic Journal”, 2016, Vol. 126/597, p. 2064-2114.

society for economic or political reasons. Some terrorist attacks in Europe have been carried out by such individuals. Anders Breivik from Norway is one of them.

Amongst those responsible for terrorist attacks in Paris, both in the editorial office of the weekly Charlie Hebdo as well as in the music club in Bataclan and a few nearby cafés and restaurants, were mainly French citizens, born and raised in France, whose parents or grandparents immigrated to Europe. These people very often feel eliminated. In last few decades, there have been a few protests in the suburbs. In time, these clashes with the police spun off into what we call radicalization. Radicalization is additionally fuelled by the economic crisis in Europe and the high unemployment, particularly among young people who have not entered the labour market yet. Radicalisation is also strengthened by the activity of the Islamic State, which can serve as an inspiration for many people. It is also important is that the Islamic State widely uses modern technologies, such as social media, video recordings and others<sup>12</sup>.

This all makes some people likely to radicalise their set of beliefs. Dissatisfaction with one's life, potentials and possibilities to develop makes it easy for terrorist organisations to recruit new members. Those recruits use this opportunity and do something that influences their lives and the whole society.

In 2013 INTERPOL estimated that around five thousand people with European citizenship fight for ISIS. Surely, some of them were killed while fighting, but the European services say that some of the radicalised soldiers are going to be back. It is said that in 2015 and 2016 the Islamic State was in defensive. As a result, some of the terrorists who are now abroad may use their European Union passports to come back to the European countries they used to live in. The question is how to pinpoint them when they are crossing the European Union border. For instance, Kouachi brothers, who are behind the attack in the weekly Charlie Hebdo, were trained in Yemen. It was not the Islamic State, but a place where terrorist organisations operate. Then, they managed to get to the European Union<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> S. Mahood, H. Rane, *Islamist narratives in ISIS recruitment propaganda*, „The Journal of International Communication”, 20 December 2016, p.1-21.

<sup>13</sup> K. Bennhold; E. Schmitt, *Paris attacks expose flaws in French surveillance: Lapses and turf issues derailed original attempt to track radical brothers*, „International New York Times”, 19 February 2015, p.4.

#### 4. Proportions in the scope of antiterrorist operations

When it comes to the problem of security, it is worth looking at what happened in the USA after 9/11 to avoid the mistakes made by the Bush and Obama administration. It is a great challenge which Europe has to face. In his landmark speech given on 13th of November 2013 right after the attack in Paris, Francois Hollande announced some changes which are to affect even the constitution. The president of France in a solemn and determined way proclaimed that the state of emergency would be prolonged for an unspecified time in the future. In reality, it meant that civil liberties were limited and the executive authority was given greater power to secure safety at the cost of personal freedom. This decision resulted in an expansion of policing forces and judicial power to approximately 8.5 thousand people, disregarding the costs it incurred. In France, because of a large budget deficit, it may come as a surprise. The changes also affected the constitution, particularly clauses 16 and 36, which give the president special powers in the state of emergency. Hollande thought that it was not enough and that he demanded special powers. Another idea which was suggested was to revoke French citizenship from those, whom the executive power would think appropriate<sup>14</sup>.

Putting emotions aside, emotions which are understandable given the tragedy that affected the French, some countries, for instance Poland, may think these actions irrational. Of course, we are given a privilege of a geographical distance and emotional perspective to analyse the matters more objectively. Terrorist attacks can reoccur in other places, therefore we must be very careful in assessing the events in France. What really happened was that a few young men carried out terrorist attacks to assassinate with the help of modern communication tools. It was just a handful of people, but the aftermath of the attacks affected the entire population of France, which is 60 million of people. The Muslims, whom are to be automatically blamed, depending on different statistics live between 4 and 6 million of Muslims, depending which source we look at, were used as a scapegoat<sup>15</sup>.

Following this path, one should consider the question of the citizenships of the attackers. Were they Belgian or French? The problem we come across is not easy to explain or classify. If the attackers were fully-fledged citizens, then another question appears. What is wrong with the assimilation or social integration? What does it look like in western countries and why does it result

<sup>14</sup> S. Erlanger, *After Paris attack, safety vs. liberties: Rattled countries tilt toward bolder security, starting rights debate*, „International New York Times”, 21 November 2015, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> M. Tepfenhart, *Right-wing Extremists in Europe*, „Comparative Civilizations Review”, 2001, vol.65, p. 57-72.

in terrorist threat? Do terrorist attacks fulfil some needs of a specific group of people?

Having posed these questions, a whole range of answers started to be formulated after the Cherie Hebdo attacks in January 2015. The attacks on 13th of November 2005 put the January attacks in a completely different light, raising the issue which the French call „the centre of the suburbs”. It is a phenomenon typical for large European cities. In 2005, we experienced street riots in Great Britain, Sweden or France. These events serve as a background for a discussion, which in fact is pointless. The language used in this discussion was created to explain different issues. The European elites argue over whether that the problem should be dealt with by the left or the right, and in the meantime the actual problems of people living in the suburbs are not resolved. These problems include exclusion, unemployment and a lack of social integration. They affect poor people and are not dependant on culture, but on common economic factors<sup>16</sup>.

It should be stated that Muslims also die in terrorist attacks, and this is really the biggest misunderstanding. Statistics show that in France there are more Muslims serving in the police, army or other kinds of public services than in ISIS<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, we should ask ourselves the questions who are the Muslims in Western Europe? Like the Catholic community in Poland, which is not homogenous, the Muslim community is also quite diverse. It comprises of people who consider themselves Catholic liberals and of those who have more conservative beliefs. Thus, not taking this factor into consideration would be unjust for the Muslim case.

Another question worth asking is whether Europe has changed after the attacks or has it just got used to them? The attack in Germany was connected to Islamic fundamentalism, which might introduce a new perspective to the European war on terror. This war has been going on for long and it seems it will continue for much longer. The German attacks were a tragic reminder that there is no respite from terrorism, that more attacks may yet to come and Europe is not as safe as we may think.

Surely, attacking the symbol of a religious holiday, family peace and holiday time shocked many people. It became a trigger for the European Union to introduce new safety regulations. The European Commission proposed an

<sup>16</sup> M. Verkuyten, B. Martinovic, Immigrants' National Identification: Meanings, Determinants, and Consequences, „Social Issues and Policy Review”, 2012, Vol. 6/1, p. 82–112; L. Berger, *Local, National and Global Islam: Religious Guidance and European Muslim Public Opinion on Political Radicalism and Social Conservatism*, „West European Politics”, 2016, vol. 39/2, p. 205-228.

<sup>17</sup> G. Jackowska, *France: the army and police infected jihad*, [in:] <https://euroislam.pl/francja-armia-i-policja-zakazone-dzihadem> (reading date: December 16, 2016).

entire series of regulations – from a better exchange of information to restrictions in arm trading.

The European elites are suggesting further ideas on how to control money flow and cash exchange in order to make financing criminal or terrorism activities more difficult. These changes were proposed in February 2017 and, quite interestingly, they coincided the Berlin attacks, which served as one more reason to take action. These regulations are less controversial, they simply introduce a greater control over cash handling and over electronic trading platforms for exchanging currencies, or the so called pre-paid cards. Pre-paid cards allow transferring money without having a bank account. Money is transferred to the card and its owner can use it. It is mainly used by parents to give money to their children when, for example, they go on holiday, or by employers to grant holiday bonuses to their employees. These pre-paid cards are, indeed, very useful. People who do not have a bank account can use them to do online shopping or do money transfers, when cash handling can be problematic. However, without a bank account is impossible to keep the track of the transactions or identify a person who makes them. This gives a lot of worries to the European Commission. That is why they proposed that each transaction over 150 euro will require presenting an identity card<sup>18</sup>.

All of the above are just administrative attempts to make access to arms, its financing and monitoring more difficult. Undoubtedly, they are helpful, but the problem runs deeper. Civil liberty organisations point out that tightening the regulations on pre-paid cards is going to result in the limitation of personal freedom, which will affect ordinary citizens, the ones who do not plan any terrorist attacks. In the end, it is an ordinary citizen who may encounter problems while making money transfers and using pre-paid cards.

## 5. The impact of terrorist threats on politics in Europe

Without a doubt, the threat of terrorism has a great political influence on Europe. In nearly all political elections, the topic of safety and terrorism is present. These issues are also crucial in the upcoming political debates. In the researched period of 2015 and 2016 there has been an increase in the popularity of the populist and radical groups, especially in Germany, France and the Netherlands. Populist parties are fighting for power. In the Netherlands, Geert Wilders's party is leading in the polls, in France Marie La Pen

<sup>18</sup>D. Shreeja, *European Commission details plan to curb terrorism financing*, „SNL European Financials Daily”, 8 February 2016.

is thought to surely enter the second round of the presidential elections<sup>19</sup>. In Germany the Alternative for Germany, after being quite successful in local elections, is planning to repeat the same success in national elections. In the latest Bundestag elections, they missed crossing the threshold by as little as 0.2 %. Currently it is believed that they will not have any problems with reaching the desired threshold. There is even a notion that The National Democratic Party of Germany is going to become the third most powerful party in the parliament<sup>20</sup>.

Terrorist threat will surely leave a mark not only on politics of particular countries but it will also determine the European Union politics. At the turn of 2016 and 2017, the Slovak presidency finishes and the Maltese presidency begins. Malta may be a small country, but it is extremely interested in the immigration matters. This is because it is a transition point for those who migrate from North Africa to Italy. Hence, the matters of safety have been and will remain crucial in the EU politics. On a side note, it is worth wondering whether the overall EU politics is affected depending on what country is currently the president.

Malta is a significant example, because it belongs to the group of countries whose constitution guarantees their neutrality. Therefore surely, Malta will be the voice of those countries which are concerned about the integrity over safety and defence in the EU in the future. Surely, Malta will not block those matters, but it will definitely make sure that the interests of countries like Austria, Sweden and itself to be recognized<sup>21</sup>.

However, after the recent terrorist attacks, a tough and determined attitude of political leaders towards the terrorist threat is understandable. What also plays an important role is the increasing popularity of the far right, Marine Le Pen and the National Front. Controversial and emotional speeches are a normal part of the election campaigns<sup>22</sup>. This can explain Sarkozy's reaction

<sup>19</sup> *At a summit in Germany, nationalism goes international*, „The Economist”, 24 January 2017 [in:] <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21715550-marine-le-pen-geert-wilders-and-other-european-populists-try-make-common-cause-summit> (reading date: December 17, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> L. Corrias, *Populism in a Constitutional Key: Constituent Power, Popular Sovereignty and Constitutional Identity*, „European Constitutional Law Review”, 2016, vol. 12/1, p.6-26.

<sup>21</sup> J. Dempsey, *EU and NATO vie to set trans-Atlantic agenda*, „International Herald Tribune”, 19 February 2005, p.1; F. Fabbrini, *Austerity, the European Council, and the Institutional Future of the European Union: A Proposal to Strengthen the Presidency of the European Council*, „Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies”, 2015, vol.22/2, p.269-334; *Malta : Minister Abela reaffirms Malta's political commitment to security and stability in the Mediterranean*, „MENA Report”, 16 November 2016.

<sup>22</sup> C. Liphshiz, *'Trump effect' for Europe's far right?*, „Washington Jewish Week”, 24 November 2016, p.1,15,17; J. Magnay, *French PM tips Le Pen victory*, „Weekend Australian”, 19 November 2016, p.12.

and his strong words, which strived to surpass even French Prime Minister Manuel Valls's fierce rhetoric. The latter went as far as talking about obliterating the opponents. The escalation of the emotionally-charged language is what is necessary in the election campaign. In other words, there is no need to change the constitution, but such rhetoric is necessary to make it sound like „a slam of a fist on the table”<sup>23</sup>.

A term often used during public debates is „the union of safety”, which turns out to be a very complex process, often with a wide range of meanings. First of all, the term relates to protection against terrorism or more severe crimes. Mainly, it means restriction with regards to money laundering activities, an easier access to citizens' personal information and a guarantee that the attacks in Paris, Brussels and Berlin will not happen again.

Secondly, the other term which is widely used is „the union of defence”, which entails tough defence measures. This concept is mainly promoted by France and Germany, as the next step towards further integration after Brexit. „The union of defence” aims at improving the military cooperation. In 2016 the main goal was to improve the coordination of the EU's military missions and the administrative procedures. A joint purchase of equipment is also on the agenda<sup>24</sup>.

How will the other countries and the European Union react to such restrictions? It is often difficult to see the internal political conditioning in other countries. Observing the reaction of Francois Hollande it is worth explaining the wider context of the situation. The context is that a weak president was fighting for the re-election in 2017. On the first of December 2016 Francois Hollande announced in his proclamation that he would run for the re-election in the presidential elections planned for 23rd of April and 7th of May. In the latest polls before the disclosure of this decision he was reaching support of under 10%. He became the first president in the post war France who did not run for the re-election<sup>25</sup>.

Currently, the EU is trying to reinvent itself and, as much as it is possible, to encourage the member countries to exchange information and create a system for gathering and processing data. The aim of this is to identify someone who is leaving, for instance, Greece or Bulgaria and going to Turkey, but had been in Syria or Iraq before. Without this information, it will not be pos-

<sup>23</sup> J. Lichfield, *Police across Europe set to get greater powers*, „The Independent”, 20 November 2015, p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> O.G. Mosoiu, *Common Security and Defence Policy – General frame work of European Common Security and Defence Manifestation*, „Science & Military Journal”, 2015, vol.10/1, p.56-60.

<sup>25</sup> A.S. Chassany, *Hollande the unifier leaves Socialists in disarray: France: Elysee exit*, „Financial Times”, 03 December 2016, p.4.

sible to establish whether such an individual, who is on their way to France, Sweden or Germany, has good or bad intentions.

On the other hand, secret services share their confidential information unwillingly. Confidentiality is the main principle of their functioning. Here appears a problem of the mentality of these services, and also the character of their activities. Some of them, to work and protect efficiently, need to keep their secrets, because openness would impair the operations<sup>26</sup>.

In 2008 and 2009, when the crisis in the Eurozone began, it was possible to see papers headlines such as “we created the common currency too fast” without establishing any mechanisms which could held during the crisis. After that the famous two-packs or six-packs, which were a special sets of regulations, which were supposed to improve the situation in the Eurozone, were adopted. Nowadays, one can hear analogical remarks saying that the Schengen Area was created too quickly without a possibility to control some of the matters, without any cooperation with protection of borders or control over the flow of people through them.

The lack of the mentioned mechanisms was a result of the resistance of the EU members, which were reluctant to waive their sovereignty for the sake of Brussels. Ironically, now some of the members are calling for an improvement of the cooperation within the EU. On the other hand, there are countries which want to retrieve the powers they lost to the EU. Because of this, many aspects of the European integration are open to questions.

When it comes to creating the European Union secret services, it is very doubtful that the members will agree to something more than a consultancy institutions, perhaps an agency which could improve the flow of information. The entire Europol is a supportive and consulting unit, in the same way as for a long time Frontex was not a border control service but just an advisory consulting centre. Currently, Frontex is becoming border control police, an event which has caused a lot of resistance from different countries<sup>27</sup>.

Even now, during the transformation process into an union agency (previously it was an intergovernmental structure), Europol serves practically to exchange information. Officials (mainly policemen) serve to improve coordination between particular services of member countries. Many experts point out that Europol, because of the lack of other institutions, was supposed to support the police forces<sup>28</sup>. The cooperation was supposed to help in break-

<sup>26</sup> A. Wagner, *Intelligence for Counter Terrorism: Technology and Methods*, „Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism”, 2007, Vol. 2/2, p. 48-61.

<sup>27</sup> S. Wolff; A. Schout, *Frontex as Agency: More of the Same?*, „Perspectives on European Politics and Society”, 2013, vol.14/3, p. 305-324.

<sup>28</sup> J. Jansson, *Building resilience, demolishing accountability? The role of Europol in counter-terrorism*, „Policing and Society”, June 2016, p.1-16.



ing cross-border gangs, struggles with smuggling and searching for people who committed a crime in one country and escaped to another one. Yet, the question is whether this single institution is able to deal with a challenge of fighting against terrorism?

There are some pros and cons of making use of an already established organisation and its existing structures, which should be just extended. It would be more difficult to build up the agency from scratch, because it would have to be fitted to the EU structure. The question is whether the EU members will agree to such a solution? The member countries are unwilling to give away these prerogatives to Brussels. Some countries claim that, particularly in these areas, there should be more cooperation, stressing the fact that the cooperation, in fact, does not exist, so its extension would not be a big operation. It must be remembered that hunting down terrorists like those who prepared the Berlin attack on 19th December 2016, is extremely difficult. If a terrorist does not cooperate with anyone and the attack is not coordinated on a high level, it means there was no e-mail correspondence, or any other form of contact. Such terrorists, called "lone wolves" are the most difficult to be tracked down and caught<sup>29</sup>.

## 6. Scholar community vs. ordinary people against a terrorist threat in Poland

The questions asked to the two groups of people representing two opposing social groups, were quite a challenge. Both groups, despite being different from each other, take part in an ongoing public discussion about what could be done to limit the terrorists threat.

Are the worlds of experts, scientists and academic, the so called intellectual elites and of common citizens speaking with one voice? Did the elites shut themselves off or not? A popular statement often repeated across the EU, is that the so called "euro elites" alienate themselves and have no relation with ordinary communities. Because of this, any Eurosceptic thesis come upon a breeding ground.

A group of respondents, casually keeping up to date with political events, is not interested in the attacks in the Middle East (28.4%). On the other hand, the terrorist attacks that happened in Europe were very important and symbolic to them (78.3%). Another important issue was a wave of female rapes (65,5%) which happened midyear in 2016 (65,5%). Very often, when

<sup>29</sup> G. Michael, *Counterinsurgency and Lone Wolf Terrorism*, „Terrorism and Political Violence”, 2014, vol.26/1, p. 45-57.

answering the questions, they used the term “civilisation war”. The key factors for them were religious and cultural differences (81,2 %). It was pointed out that religious denomination lies at the basis of terrorism. Another recurring belief was that the German chancellor Angela Merkel is to be blamed for irresponsible immigration policy and openly encouraging immigrants to come to Europe (54,3%). The respondents also put the blame on Polish politicians who have been encouraging multi-cultural attitudes in society for years (47,8%).

On the other hand, the attitude of the scholar community, representing scientific, humanistic and social circles, shows a broader understanding of terrorist threat, both in a historical and geographical context. The problem of an unstable situation in the Middle East, which appears to be a Gordian knot nowadays, was often mentioned (71,7%). The fact that there were significantly more hesitations and fewer assertive, unambiguous and clear formulas how to solve the problem being stated by the scientific community, is very characteristic. Additional questions, relating to the further scenarios were formulated. (68,2%). It can be supposed that this particular social group is considerably less prone to make assessments or formulate ad hoc statements. It was pointed out as well that it is an extremely difficult to tell what motivates terrorists in Europe, since they were born in the European countries in the second or third generation of immigrants. Scholars also noticed the irresponsible policy of Western Europe towards the Middle East countries (58,3%), for example the intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the domestic war in Syria which is a result of the Arabic Spring.

A common denominator connecting the two above groups were answers stating that political elites (both internal and European) have to reinvigorate their actions and catch up with current processes. The scholars' expectations in this matter reached 63,1%, the common citizens' expectations were a bit higher and amounted to 70,1%. Other similar answers related to the need of sealing the borders and verifying people who enter the European Union. 66,8% of the scholars talked about the importance to focus on the safety of the country's eastern border, which is also the EU border. 84,3% of the common citizens think it necessary to improve the effectiveness of the immigration policy.

## 7. The influence of terrorist attacks on the behaviour in the Polish society

The threat of terrorism in Poland is more serious now than in the previous years. What directly contributes to this fact is the influence of mass media and the news which appeal to the emotions of the people. The simple fact that a terrorist attack may have a place in the country influences the sense of security in society. It is worth examining how society perceives the problem of terrorism and whether the anxiety connected with it could have any impact on the shape of the political scene.

*The attitude of a party's electorate towards a terrorist threat<sup>30</sup>*

Party electorates specified on the basis of a voting declaration in possible parliamentary elections	What is closer to your views on the matter of terrorist threat in Poland?		
	There is a real threat of terrorism in Poland	The threat of terrorism is exaggerated in Poland/ does not exist	Difficult to say
	In percentage		
Right-wing party	53	38	8
Left-wing party	46	50	4
Centre party	41	56	3

Statistical data show that the sense of terrorist threat in society has been politicised and the differences between particular political circles run along the ideological divisions. Yet, the attitude of particular party's electorates towards a terroristic threat is not very different. The differences between the right-wing and left-wing electorate when it comes to the possibility of a terrorist attack amount to 12%.

The second subject area shows a bigger discrepancy in the answers between the two political poles. The discrepancy when it comes to the belief about the problem of terrorism is exaggerated and amounts to 18%.

The overall mindset towards the feeling of a threat occurs more often among the right-wing electorate. The left-wing voters are more sceptical about the possibility of an attack taking place. It is worth pointing out that

<sup>30</sup> Own study on the basis of Public Opinion Research Center, [in:] <http://www.cbos.pl/PL/publikacje/raporty.php> (reading date: December 12, 2016).

this survey was carried out at the beginning of December, before the attack in Berlin.

An important field of research, picturing social attitudes is an analysis of the society in the perspective of sociodemographic divisions. It appears that some groups representing one chosen category react similarly to external stimulus as well as they represent a similar way of expressing the sensitiveness towards any event. Taking into consideration the analysis of sociodemographic variables it is possible to notice a strong relationship between a fear and anxiety against the terroristic assassination and factors such as age, place of residence, education and sex.

The highest anxiety over a possibility of a terrorist attack is declared by young and middle-aged respondents, the least worry was declared by elderly people, especially those over 50 years old. It is worth noticing that there is a high level of anxiety within the group of young people. Such situation may be an impulse to radicalise approaches and support controversial political projects more willingly.

As far as education is concerned, it appears that the fear over modern threats is particularly present in the group of people with basic or vocational education. They constitute a group of people who are susceptible to political influence by populist circles. The situation changes in the secondary education group of respondents. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a correlation in terms of education, the higher level of education is, the lower is the fear over terrorist attacks. Nevertheless, this is only a tendency, and it should not be forgotten that there is a percentage of people with higher education who fear the possibility of terroristic attacks. Otherwise, one will form stereotypical and false assumptions on the profiles of these particular social groups.

When it comes to the place of residence, it appears that the people living in small villages, towns and cities of 50 to 200 thousand inhabitants are more worried about a terroristic attack. On the other hand, the feeling of security is higher in large urban areas. This phenomenon is somewhat a negation of the real terrorist threat which occurs in large urban agglomerations. It might be because people living in smaller cities and towns are more susceptible to media's influence. On the other hand, the residents of large cities may have a bigger sense of mobility and at the same time, safety. That is why they perceive various types of threats on a routine basis.

In the case of the sex of the respondents, it appears that there is a slight difference in the way safety is perceived. A larger number of women than men feel anxiety over terroristic attacks. Moreover, it seems the women, more than men, are more convinced and determined in their attitudes.

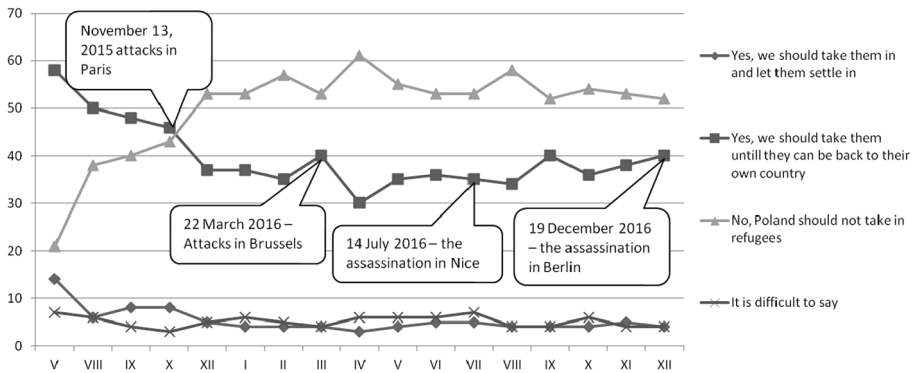
Sociodemographic divisions of Polish society towards the fear of a terrorist attack (the statistics given in percentage)<sup>31</sup>

Are you afraid of terrorist attacks?	Age				Education				Place fo residence				Sex			
	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60>	basic	Occupational	secondary	higher	village	town to 50 thousand	city more than 51 thousand to 200 thousand	city more than 201 thousand to 500 thousand	More than 500 thousand	Male	Female
	Yes, I am very worried	17,7	15,8	3,6	2,8	2,6	6,3	2,4	5,6	5,2	4,3	5,2	5,0	5,7	5,2	4,8
I am worried	26,6	19,6	37,7	36,1	38,7	54,9	52,2	39,1	30,6	46,8	37,4	36,2	31	30,1	38,5	40,7
I am not really worried	14,4	23,8	25,8	23	28,1	15,4	19,3	23,4	26,8	16,3	24,8	27,4	32	28,6	21,3	26,4
I am not worried at all	3,4	5,6	6,4	17,3	9,3	3,7	5,3	7	7,2	4,6	7	7,9	8,7	10	6,6	6,4
It is difficult to say	3,7	5,1	5,9	6,2	5,1	6,5	6,9	5,2	4,2	9,3	4,6	3,1	1,5	1,4	6,4	3

<sup>31</sup> The results of the research were obtained through surveys, observations and interviews with the inhabitants of West Pomeranian, Pomeranian, Greater Poland, Mazovian, Little Poland and Lublin Voivodship, between March and December 2016. Some of the surveys, observations and interviews, due to the respondents' professional situation, are protected under personal data protection law. In the author's view, the conclusions based on the research show a representative section of Polish society and their attitude to a terrorist threat. Although the researched group was not a large one, and it can be argued that the conclusions are too general, the authors think that the challenge undertaken by them is an innovative step taken in the field of research on the social reception of modern threats and is a contribution to further, more in-depth research.

Having to verify some correlations between terroristic attacks and an increase in the hostility towards refugees, it is worth confronting those tragic events with the data illustrating the current attitudes in society. Needless to say, one should be aware that other social and political events may also have an impact on the public opinion.

*A chart presenting the approach of Polish people towards accepting refugees from countries engulfed in armed conflict<sup>32</sup>*



In Poland, the overall approach towards taking in refugees from countries engulfed in arm conflicts is negative. November 2015, after the Paris attacks, was a breakthrough moment when positive and negative attitudes clashed with each other. After these tragic events, the respondents have begun to expressed their reluctance towards taking in refugees. They also began to identify a refugee as a terrorist more often. It is easy to see that the terrorist attacks that followed only strengthened this tendency. The attitudes on taking refugees in or closing the borders for them are now more or less stable, and the difference between the two approaches amounts to 15 to 20%.

## 7. Conclusion

Terrorism is a complex phenomenon having many different facets, but its possible occurrence will always cause fear in society. It can be assumed that causing panic among the population is terrorists' main. This fear causes a disruption in public order, social norms and customs. It makes many governments redefine their liberal democracies in the face of potential risks. As a result of introducing new, stricter regulations to restore security, social freedom and liberty is infringed upon. It is extremely

<sup>32</sup> Own study based on data from the Centre for Public Opinion Research, source: [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2017/K\\_001\\_17.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2017/K_001_17.PDF) (reading date: December 12, 2016).

difficult to draw the line between freedom and security, and it is difficult to provide the sense of freedom from terroristic threat to citizens. It is worth understanding, though, what fears and worries drive citizens in modern democracies.

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## FOCUS: FOREIGN FIGHTERS



La Rivista semestrale *Sicurezza, Terrorismo e Società* intende la *Sicurezza* come una condizione che risulta dallo stabilizzarsi e dal mantenersi di misure proattive capaci di promuovere il benessere e la qualità della vita dei cittadini e la vitalità democratica delle istituzioni; affronta il fenomeno del *Terrorismo* come un processo complesso, di lungo periodo, che affonda le sue radici nelle dimensioni culturale, religiosa, politica ed economica che caratterizzano i sistemi sociali; propone alla *Società* – quella degli studiosi e degli operatori e quella ampia di cittadini e istituzioni – strumenti di comprensione, analisi e scenari di tali fenomeni e indirizzi di gestione delle crisi.

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