

Refugees in the internet debate. A sociological analysis of the Polish internet memes.

Rafał Cekiera

Abstract

The refugee crisis has become an important topic not only in terms of official public discourse in the printed press and online media, but also as a subject of daily conversation among citizens or discussion on social media platforms. Internet memes have recently become a popular form of expression of the attitudes and opinions of their users, which creation and distribution has become a form of participation in the debate. This article attempts to reconstruct the basic narrative, concerning the issue of refugees in the Polish virtual space, whose emanations have become internet memes.

Keywords: refugee crisis, migration, internet memes, social media platforms, public discourse

Introduction

Events in 2015 related to migratory flows and the influx of a large wave of refugees to Europe have become a source of lively dispute on the EU immigration policy, the responsibility of individual European countries and their capacity to provide shelter and assistance to newcomers. According to UNHCR estimates, due to war and persecution, 59.5 million people were forced to resettle in 2015 all over the world – it is 8.3 million people more than in the previous year. By mid-November 2015 over 858 000 asylum seekers (UNHCR), of which about 20% were children (IOM), came to Europe. Over 3770 people drowned in the Mediterranean attempting to cross by sea to Europe in 2015. It is difficult to estimate how many more people lost their lives on land, for example when passing towards Europe across the Sahara (IOM).

The above mentioned figures show the scale of the refugee crisis. It has become a challenge not only for EU policy makers, but also an important element of public debates in the individual EU member states. It has rapidly touched the very core of the issue associated with definitional arrangements. The difference between a refugee and an immigrant was often invoked and emphasized in various discussions. The arbitrariness of this division, however, is not obvious enough. The Geneva Convention of 1951 defines a refugee as a person who „owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country“ (Convention 1951). The difficulty with the practical application of this definition stems from the fact, that some of the countries whose citizens seek asylum in Europe (e.g. Syria), are not able in any way to provide them protection.

The dispute about the understanding of the terms „refugee“ and „immigrant“ became extremely relevant for the conducted debates. The way of defining the status of people coming to Europe was often a derivative of the acceptance or opposition to help them. Therefore we are dealing with a big definitional confusion in the debate – the same group of people is simultaneously being defined as refugees (usually supporting their acceptance) or economic migrants (mostly opposing their support of any kind). For the purposes of this article, notions refugee / immigrant (and seeking asylum) will be used interchangeably – as a consequence of the described situation.

Internet memes as a communication tool

Internet space is nowadays becoming a principal area of public debate and discussion. It is a place of egalitarian, almost limitless expression of individual opinion, an environment of shaping attitudes and popularizing ideas. As a result, the virtual network is also an extremely useful area of exploration for analysts of social life – “the broad adoption of the web as a communication medium has made it possible to study social behavior at a new scale” (McKelvey, Rudnick, Conover, Menczer 2012).

Internet memes are an extremely popular tool of communication among network users. They are defined as digitized units of information,

copied or processed and distributed with the use of currently operating technology of internet communications (Kołowiecki 2012; Zaremba 2012). This information may be „photos, videos (usually short), music videos, graphics, texts, quotes, animations and their various combination (e.g. photos with description). Internet users distribute them to other people, either directly or in a place intended for that purpose, online forums and social networking sites, where they are available for other users“ (Juza 2013, 49). The growing popularity of this type of statements is associated with the rapid development of social networking sites. Just recalling Facebook for instance, which currently has 1.7 billion users; on 24. 8. 2015 more than a billion users logged in for the first time in one day (expandedramblings.com). Memes are seen at this point as „a solid and popular element of communication on the Internet“ (Zaremba 2012, 71). They are usually formed based on certain websites – so-called meme generators. Simplicity of use makes it easy to create uncomplicated internet memes accessible by most network users.

The concept of a meme owes its scientific career to Richard Dawkins and his book „The selfish gene“ (first edition 1976), in which he saw similarities between genetic and cultural evolution. For this theory it was important to transfer the category of biological gene onto cultural area. The meme replicating in this space has some sort of an internal imperative of reproduction, which aims to sustain its own existence. In the original, broad sense a meme can be understood as „a relatively new replicator evolution, a unit of the transmission of cultural heritage or a unit of imitation“ (Mendova 2013, 168). It is however difficult to directly implement the concept of R. Dawkins to internet memes. There is no indication that the life of memes are also conditioned by the laws of natural selection, „both concepts – internet memes and memes within the meaning of the theory of mathematics – are in fact more divided than connected“ (Juza 2013, 50). The dynamics of internet memes dissemination and their survival rate are subject to different rules: „They spread rapidly, they transform and, depending on their success, are forgotten or become established as parts of that public sphere.“ (Konstantineas, Vlachos 2012).

Researchers, dealing with the estimation of internet memes propagation, emphasize the fact that „viral memes tend to spread like epidemics“ (Weng, Menczer, Ahn 2013). Propagation and aggregation of memes

occur through typical network communication channels – social media platforms, blogs, e-mails, instant messaging, information services and all other services that enable communication among internet users (Zaremba 2012, 61). Social media are an especially friendly channels for the communication of memes; „liking“ or sharing the content recognized as interesting, exciting or funny are instant ways of distributing them online. This is performed on the principles of viral marketing (Sroka 2014, 35) – as the memes researchers point out in colloquial language „the word viral is practically synonymous with internet meme. In both cases it concerns information that people communicate to each other through the internet, without the participation of specialized institutions, often on a large scale“ (Juza 2013, 50). Popularity is somehow inscribed in the very definition of an internet meme: „Ultimately, something becomes a meme when it reaches a significant volume and is easily recognizable by the internet community (Ronak 2013, 250). In this way, internet memes have become an important part of mass culture (Patel 2013), stimulating its global impact strength, creating - especially among young people - an unprecedented platform of communication“ (Kołowiecki 2012). The canonical example of such a global internet meme may be, for example, the video of Gangnam style (Changhoon, Hajin, Kyle, Jinwook, Bongwon 2014).

Internet memes as a digital form of gossip

The popularity of internet memes is a direct consequence of transferring a growing part of everyday human activity into the virtual sphere, as well as the socio-cultural transformations, as a result of the virtualization of human existence. Among them, reconstructions in the area of rules of interpersonal communication in the public sphere are extremely important - its democratization and departure from a hierarchical relationship (sender – receiver) to the concurrent model (sender / receiver – receiver / sender). Potentially, every person becomes the sender and is able to produce specific content and promote it in the network. Memes become an important form of expression in the virtual space particularly for young people – „this kind of view exchanges might be a reason of reflection and crystallization of attitudes mostly among the young internet users“ (Sroka 2014, 82).

Egalitarianism of meanings production is one of the basic terms merging with internet memes – „Never before have the public had such a large impact on the creation of content and its subjective choice“ (Lalik 2011). Certainly, it affects the importance of communication through the memes for public debate. The set of broadcasters has been extended, „understood not only as traditional and electronic media, but also as individual citizens, who already began to develop the space given to them, in order to include their voices in the public debate“ (Krawczyk-Antońska 2013, 66). It should however be remembered, that the authors of memes are usually anonymous – which voids responsibility for the produced communicate, can be linked with a variety of manipulations, resulting from the desire of persuasion and should suggest caution in assessing their credibility.

Singularity of the message contest, which is a meme, brings it closer to the content of rumors, urban legends, sometimes an anecdote or a joke. Memes are of ludic origin (Juza 2013, 52). A number of similarities between gossip, municipal rumor and the meme, communicating specific content distributed on the internet, are stressed. Information heard and difficult to verify (often random and sensational), the importance of the emotional component of information - these are some similarities between rumors and memes. Another common features are functional tasks that both forms of communication can meet: improving self-esteem by depreciating others or maintaining social ties (creating a specific „circles of trust“) (Krawczyk-Antońska 2013). What is important for the propagation of memes, „thanks to the simultaneity of the media, any information is sent and multiplied by a number of other entities, without a thorough analysis of the content and source“ (Ibid 72).

The basic assumptions of the conducted analysis

The perception of internet memes in the category of gossip allows for a broader perceptual look at the public hearing on the issue of the refugee crisis. According to A. Appadurai, „any kind of uncertainty gains strength when there are (for any reason) movements of population on a large scale when new awards or risks associated with large ethnic identities or when the existing network of social knowledge are destroyed by rumor, terror or social movement.“ (Appadurai 2009, 15-16) the

combination of mass migration and gossip becomes the ground conducive to uncertainty and fears.

For the purpose of this paper, the issue of reliability of the information contained in internet memes devoted to refugees / immigrants is not so important. The fact that this information is „the specific expression of the commitment of their creators in public affairs is important. Similar to gossip, jokes and urban legends, internet memes are in fact often comments on the current reality. (...) internet memes, like gossip and jokes, may reflect different moods in the society and refer to issues that are important for the society. The creators of the internet memes therefore take on the role of creators and commentators of public discourse (...)“ (Juza 2013, 58).

The subject of our interest is the reconstruction of a public debate on the refugee crisis waged in the virtual space via internet memes. The aim is to identify the basic internet narrative created by memes. The notion of narrative – as Polish anthropologist W. J. Burszta wrote – will be used in the sense that it is „a form of representation of the world, but also a way of talking about the events – both real and imagined. In other words, the narrative is a form of understanding the world and structuring mental experience in terms of human intentions“ (Burszta 2004, 181). The most important narratives concerning the refugee crisis, materialized through internet memes and identified in the Polish virtual space, will be summarized in this article.

The analyzed Polish internet memes came from two sources: Facebook and demotywatory.pl. Global Facebook in Poland is used by 80% of active internet users (20.1 million people), of whom 47% are relatively young – 15-34 years of age (Gemius 2015). The website demotywatory.pl is in turn the most famous and popular online virtual warehouse of internet memes - modeled on US sites, it was established in 2008, quickly gaining recognition on the Polish internet and giving rise to various clone websites (Sroka 2014, 49). Popularity of memes related to the refugee crisis is indicated by search stats, showing „more than 1,000“ memes for the terms „refugees“ and „immigrants“, which according to the page means „incalculable number above 1000“ (as of 02/10/2016). Search results for other exemplary categories: „tourists“ (133 memes), „travelers“ (13 memes), „sociology“ (39 memes) – clearly

indicate the popularity of the meme dedicated to the study. The analysis of memes was conducted in December 2015¹.

Polish internet anti-refugee narratives

A large number of memes warning against refugees and depicting disturbing scenarios for the future, due to their possible admission to the Polish territory, allow to distinguish some of the basic anti-refugee narratives. Their common feature is the categorically expressed opposition to the admission of asylum seekers in Europe to Poland, however the reasoning behind such approach is different. The narratives presented below relate to the variety of orders (e.g. economic, cultural, religious) and differently justified expressed opposition.

Narrative „**terrorists**“ – the opposition is built on creating hazards arising from the identification of a refugee / immigrant with a terrorist. In a more nuanced version, it indicates that the group of immigrants to Europe „can also comprise of terrorists“ and their identification and separation is impossible. The terrorist attacks of the past, threatening their repetitions in the case of consent for admittance of people seeking refuge to Europe, are often cited in memes. A part of the memes also alleges European policy makers naivety, suggesting that in the name of lofty humanitarian slogans, they expose the safety of its citizens. An example of such a narrative can be memes that relate to the history of the Trojan horse. Photos from films, presenting a replica of the Trojan horse, is compiled with refugees and descriptions such as: „Trojan horse then and now. People do not learn from own mistakes“² or „Europe! Wake up! Trojan horse approx. 1200. BC, Islamic horse approx. 2015.“³

Narrative „**Islam will flood us**“ also refers to the fears and concerns – this time related to the religion of refugees. Implicit (and sometimes literally) suggestions that the principles of Islam are incompatible with the culture dominant in Poland and the Catholic religion. There are even special fan-pages on Facebook, warning against „Islamization

¹ The part of this research (preliminary results) was published in the article: Cekierra R. (2017), *Terrorystyci, tchórze i lenie – konstruowanie wizerunków uchodźców za pomocą memów internetowych*, „Kultura-Media-Teologia”, 29.

² <http://demotywatory.pl/4578517/Kon-Trojanski-kiedys-i-dzisiaj> (18.12.2015)

³ <http://demotywatory.pl/4550214/EUROPO-Obudz-sie-> (27.12.2015)

of Europe“, such as „Stop the Islamization of Europe“⁴ or „No for the Islamization of Europe.“⁵ Internet memes posted on these websites depict Islam as a religion based on violence, distancing or even protesting against any nuanced opinions. An example might be a meme showing several aggressive men, shouting in ecstasy and the caption: „An Islamic extremist differs from an ordinary Muslim in the way that the Islamic extremist wants to kill you himself and the ordinary Muslim wants the Islamic extremist to kill you“⁶. An extremely popular meme in this category is also an ironic image of the three Amerindians, signed: „They also had a problem with immigrants, now they live on reservations.“⁷

Another narration „**young bulls**“⁸ emphasizes the over-representation of men among the refugees - for example by providing an image of a boat of men with a commentary: „Do you not wonder why immigrants from Africa who come to Europe on boats are in the vast majority healthy, strong men?“⁹ The over-representation of men among asylum seekers produces two opposing reactions visible in memes. The first one is questioning the manhood of refugees (e.g. meme with the description: „Refugees from Africa. Strangely enough, most of them are men. Had the women had bigger balls to stay in the country to fight for a better tomorrow“¹⁰). On the other hand, their aggressiveness is indicated – for example a meme showing a young boy throwing an object, signed: „If immigrants with equal determination defended their own country as with which they are storming the Hungarian border today, they would have won the war in their own country by now.“¹¹

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/Stop-islamizacji-Europy-191777667634248/?fref=ts> (41 843 fans -10.02.2016)

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/Nie-dla-Islamizacji-Europy-182944451832138/timeline> (274 203 fans – 10.02.2016)

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/191777667634248/photos/pb.191777667634248.-2207520000.1455120381./632346926910651/?type=3&theater> (27.12.2015)

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/191777667634248/photos/pb.191777667634248.-2207520000.1455120367./739355222876487/?type=3&theater> (27.12.2015)

⁸ The notion „young bulls“ in relation to refugees / immigrants was used in a popular radio show on 29.09.2015 by the former PiS deputy Joachim Brudziński – current Deputy Speaker of the Polish Parliament. (<http://www.polskieradio.pl/9/300/Artykul/1514410,Spor-o-immigrantow-w-Polsce-mlode-byczki-czy-ludzie-uciekajacy-przed-islamistami>).

⁹ <http://demotywatory.pl/4535161/Imigranci-z-Afryki> (27.12.2015)

¹⁰ <http://demotywatory.pl/4542606/Uchodzcy-z-Afryki> (27.12.2015)

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/stop.islamizacji.eu/photos/pb.457175511006348.-2207520000.1455125374./956176011106293/?type=3&theater> (27.12.2015)

Narrative „we will have to pay for it“ refers to economic issues. It includes memes that relate to the cost of refugees acceptance, collating salaries of so-called „ordinary Poles“ with the height of the alleged benefits for refugees, which supposedly would be higher than the Polish pensions (e.g. meme with a photo of an anxious old lady, taking out a note from her wallet, with a description: „I will exchange my pension after 40 years of work for a dole of a refugee“¹²). In the context of this economic narrative, the poverty of refugees is also undermined, suggesting that they have a suspiciously good brand of phones – as in the popular meme, which is just a position of images of several men charging their phones with a description: „Apple iPhones, Samsung Galaxy S3 and S5. I wonder whether it is the basic equipment of a refugee“¹³. Memes suggesting a reluctance (often called harder a „despise“) to accept the offered food, fall under this perception as well. A photo of bread in the trash, signed e.g.: „Shock! Immigrants have to throw away the gifts of Hungarians. Generally, no wonder. Sandwiches apparently did not include truffles and were not covered with gold leaves“¹⁴, might be an example operating in several memes.

Reluctance to bear any financial costs related to the assistance for refugees is coherent with the belief that „**this is not our problem**“. Within this narrative, the refugee crisis is presented as a matter of Western countries, whose responsibility would result from historical circumstances. An example would be a meme functioning in different versions with the slogan: „Not our wars, not our culture, not our immigrants“¹⁵. A special place in this narrative is occupied by Germany, whose policy of openness to refugees is regarded as the primary source of the refugee crisis. An example would be a meme including a part of the text on the distribution of refugees in various European countries with the comment: „I think the division is the most honest. Merkel on behalf of the

¹² <https://www.facebook.com/stopislameu/photos/pb.871977712871919.-2207520000.1455127622./926113737458316/?type=3&theater> (27.12.2015)

¹³ <http://demotywatory.pl/4546108/iPhone%E2%80%99y-Apple-Samsungi-Galaxy-S3-i-S5> (27.12.2015)

¹⁴ <http://demotywatory.pl/4543858/Szok-Imigranci-musieli-wyrzucic-dary-od-Wegrow-W-sumie-im-sie-nie-dziwie> (27.12.2015)

¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/stop.islamizacji.eu/photos/pb.457175511006348.-2207520000.1455131028./956598607730700/?type=3&theater> (27.12.2015)

Germans invited the refugees, so she can have them, we did not invite anyone, then we should not have them. Problem?¹⁶

There is another important issue in this narrative, often raised and associated with repatriations – allowing a return to Poland for all Polish citizens and their descendants, once forcibly relocated to the east. Attention is also drawn to the threatening dangers for Polish citizens residing in the east of Ukraine, appealing to assist them instead in the return and adaptation. Combining these issues allows to issue a demand, that Poland should firstly take care of its own citizens – which would exempt them from the obligation to care for others. Importantly, the demands on the repatriates are always presented in opposition to the refugees, which clearly indicates the instrumental treatment of the issue of deported Poles. An example would be a meme with a fragment of the information concerning the requests of 100 Poles to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, relating to aid in their escape from Mariupol, with an ironic commentary: „100 Poles? It is hard. 12 thousand Syrians? No problem! We can accept even more!¹⁷ Another meme shows a group of refugees (this time with a predominance of older people and women) encouraging Poles of Donbas to return to Poland: „Poles of Donbas! Pack up your stuff and come back to your country (...). Cross the border and ask for asylum, it works! If the refugees from Africa can, then so can you!¹⁸

The last one of the anti-refugee narratives is the most brutal – it refers to the category of „**Polish macho**“, and in part even outright to racist clichés. The lack of any rational argument (other than argument of force and resorting to racial stereotypes) is common for memes in this category. An example may be a meme with a photo of the popular actor Bogusław Linda loading a rifle with the caption: „I'll fucking show you an Islamization of Europe¹⁹. A meme with photos of buildings in an abandoned area contaminated after the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accidents, followed by a comment: „I have a solution for Angela Merkel

¹⁶ <http://demotywatory.pl/4571809/Moim-zdaniem-podzial-jest-jak-najbardziej-uczciwy> (27.12.2015)

¹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/stop.islamizacji.eu/photos/pb.457175511006348.-2207520000.1455131028./957997280924166/?type=3&theater> (27.12.2015)

¹⁸ <http://demotywatory.pl/szukaj?q=repatrianci> (27.12.2015)

¹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=715358078583819&set=o.191777667634248&type=3&theater> (27.12.2015)

where to accommodate refugees. There is a town in Ukraine with hundreds of empty houses, called Prypeć, near Chernobyl. It can easily accommodate up to 500 thousand refugees²⁰ can certainly be classified as racist. An extreme example would be the meme with a photo of Nazi concentration camp gates – Auschwitz, signed: „A refugee camp with an unlimited number of places“²¹. Despite the fact that the publication of such materials is prosecuted and punished, they can still be found on popular sites with memes.

Polish internet pro-refugees narratives

Memes supporting the admission of refugees and containing matters of solidarity with them also refer to different motivations and arguments. No quantitative studies on the proportions of memes were conducted (for example on individual portals storing memes), but while browsing through the webpages of memes bearing the tag „refugee“, it is much more difficult to find memes supporting refugees. The analyzes allowed, however, to create a typology of some of the basic narratives.

The first basic and most common is the humanitarian narrative „**innocent victims**“. It refers to the perception of people coming to Europe as innocent victims of war or persecution conducted at the place of their former residence. In other words – it simply recalls the principles of the Geneva Convention, which obliges to help those in need of shelter. This narrative emphasizes the helplessness of refugees and their tragic fate. A specific example of an internet meme in this category was a touching picture of a little boy who was killed while crossing the sea to Europe, and his body was washed up on the beach near the popular Turkish resort of Bodrum²². The humanitarian narrative also refers to the category of humanity and responsibility for other people. Somehow, in opposition to the previously discussed narrative „this is not our problem“, there is a meme of the seriously injured young boy and the caption: „This is not your problem John Smith. That’s our problem, man“²³. An interesting,

²⁰ <http://demotywatory.pl/4544284/Mam-rozwiazanie-dla-Angeli-Merkel-gdzie-zakwaterowac-uchodzcow> (27.12.2015)

²¹ <http://demotywatory.pl/4551092/Auschwitz> (27.12.2015)

²² <https://www.facebook.com/Hashtakdla/photos/pb.822693194518937.-2207520000.1455187553.822874694500787/?type=3&theater> (27.12.2015)

²³ <http://demotywatory.pl/1509340/To-nie-twoj-problem-Janie-Kowalski> (27.12.2015)

specifically Polish feature in this category is also – resulting from disputes waged in Poland – linking the issue of in vitro fertilization with refugees. One of the memes has been published with such a description: „The embryo is a human being and must not be destroyed! Everyone will pay for their safekeeping. Refugees? We do not want them, let them drown. Approach of a large part of the Poles“²⁴.

The empathic narrative suggests to try to understand the plight of people coming to Europe. It is based on the belief that the negative (or even hostile) attitude of a part of public opinion towards refugees occurs due to the difficulty of imagining their position, their tragic fate and choices, which are extremely hard to understand by people living in a relatively quiet and rich Europe. An example of such a narrative can be a meme presenting a photo of refugees coming down out of the boat, with the caption: „They had a choice: a) to join ISIS, b) to be executed, c) to take the dinghy and try to reach Europe where human rights are respected. And what would you choose?“²⁵

The third narrative, „**reciprocity rule**“, stems from a sense of historic debt, which commands to help those in need. This is particularly important in Poland, whose citizens through the complicated history were repeatedly forced into exile or emigration. Such context is evoked the image of refugees from Europe before the war in 1941, with the caption: „Refugees fleeing the war. But not from Syria. From Europe – picture taken in Lisbon in September 1941“²⁶. Sometimes the rule of reciprocity also refers to recent history, related to Polish membership in the European Union. In this sense, full-fledged participation in the community of free European countries, based on specific values, should result in a rush to commonly face all problems - including the refugee crisis. An example might be a meme – a frame from the film with the overthrow of the Berlin Wall, signed: „We tend to forget about the values for which we fought so long“²⁷.

The final is a **religious narrative**, which is of great significance for many Poles – the evidence of which may be its frequent quotation. A large part of the memes in this category contains a picture of Pope Francis

²⁴ <http://demotywatory.pl/4528765/zarodki-vs-uchodzcy> (27.12.2015)

²⁵ <http://demotywatory.pl/4582700/Oni-mieli-wybor-> (27.12.2015)

²⁶ <http://demotywatory.pl/4555322/Uchodzcy-uciekajacy-przed-wojna> (27.12.2015)

²⁷ <http://demotywatory.pl/4557982/Zapominamy-o-wartosciach> (27.12.2015)

bearing the words calling for the reception of refugees²⁸. Sometimes through memes, a similar message from the Polish Bishop K. Zadarko is also invoked. A separate category are memes with fragments of the Holy Scripture concerning hospitality, solidarity and the need for provision of shelter to the newcomers²⁹. A specific, bitterly ironic meme, referring to the religious category was a portrait of the Holy Family, distributed before Christmas with the description: „Do not forget the hatred of refugees, setting a festive image of a pair from the Middle East desperately seeking shelter.“³⁰ In another version of this meme, the Holy Family picture bore such a warning: „It may be terrorists!“³¹

Polish internet memes about refugees – conclusions

Issues related to the refugee crisis have become a popular topic of internet memes, as evidenced by the extremely large number of their different variants. It is worth noting that memes are often created in response to other memes – referring to each other or commenting on each other³². This confirms that the creation and the spread of memes is a form of public debate. The testimony to memes’ attractiveness as a communication tool can be a variety of diverse content passed through them, referring to the different types of arguments.

Definitely, more versions of memes warned against admitting people coming to Europe, than supported the admission of refugees. Negative emotions in relation to refugees easily found the way of expression in memes – their structure is conducive to presenting explicit

²⁸ <http://demotywatory.pl/4545795/Papiez-Franciszek-przywraca-wiare-w-chrzciscijanstwo>, (27.12.2015)

²⁹ [http://demotywatory.pl/4548091/\(17\)-Jesli-zas-ktos-posiada-dobra-tego-swiat-a-widzi-brata-w-potrzebie-i-zamyka-przed-nim-serce-swoje-jakze-w-nim-mozemiesz-kac-milosc-Boza-\(18\)-Dzieci-milujmy-nie-slowem-ani-jezykiem-lecz-czynem-i-prawda039039](http://demotywatory.pl/4548091/(17)-Jesli-zas-ktos-posiada-dobra-tego-swiat-a-widzi-brata-w-potrzebie-i-zamyka-przed-nim-serce-swoje-jakze-w-nim-mozemiesz-kac-milosc-Boza-(18)-Dzieci-milujmy-nie-slowem-ani-jezykiem-lecz-czynem-i-prawda039039), <http://demotywatory.pl/4544232/Poznasz-chrzciscijanina> (27.12.2015)

³⁰ <http://demotywatory.pl/4582425/Uchodzczy> (27.12.2015)

³¹ <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=891763854222433&set=o.285521901566640&type=3&theater> (27.12.2015)

³² For example: <https://www.facebook.com/Hashtakdla/photos/a.822700741184849.1073741828.822693194518937/822874694500787/?type=3&theater> i <http://demotywatory.pl/szukaj?q=cia%C5%82o+brzeg&where=wszystkie&type=kazdy&when=inf&size=max&sort=date> or <http://demotywatory.pl/4545564/Wyslijcie-wojska-na-Bliski-Wschod-zniszczcie-miejscowe-sil-zbrojne-zaprowadzcie-demokracje-wezcie-surowce> i <http://demotywatory.pl/1509340/To-nie-twoj-problem-Janie-Kowalski> (27.12.2015)

and unambiguous positions. Nuanced positions are far more difficult to present in a form of a meme. A significant threat for discussions carried out through memes is also the lack of control over the credibility of the message. Information encoded in memes on the refugee issue were sometimes clearly false.

On the basis of the conducted analyzes it can also be assumed that the simplified, due to volume and structural constraints, message of the memes can promote clarity of attitudes and fostering of fears. It is much harder to use memes in order to tame the problems and rationally discuss issues concerning the influx of refugees.

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Dr. Rafał Cekiera
Institute of Sociology
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Silesia in Katowice
Poland
rafal.cekiera@us.edu.pl