

POLISHNESS AND EUROSTYLE IN EU BRUSSELS

Struggles over Europe in Bodily Performances among Polish EU Civil Servants

Paweł Lewicki, European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)

By looking at the bodily performances of Polish EU civil servants in Brussels, I aim to show the colonial and racial legacy of Europe. I trace this legacy in struggles over an implicit and dominant European style that emerges in distinctions governing bodily performances in Brussels. This “Eurostyle” is firm but variable; it reflects national specificities and the modernity of Europe. Europe’s colonial power also comes into view through challenges to the Eurostyle, in performances of a resistant and more “religious” Polish body reflecting a self-imposed mission to re-Christianize Europe. Building on observations and interviews, my ethnography shows that a focus on Polishness in Brussels may explain ideological tensions in Poland stipulated by nationalistic and moralistic rhetoric as opposed to that of liberal and secular Europe.

Keywords: EU, Eurostyle, Polishness, Brussels, bodily performances

Polishness and the Eurostyle

“What’s with the scarf, Paweł? Why are Polish guys always wearing these colorful scarves around their necks?” The question was posed with a tone of amusement and astonishment while I was doing my field research among EU civil servants in Brussels. The question was asked by a Dutch friend of mine who had been working in the European Parliament for four years and could not understand the fashion worn by young Polish men in EU Brussels. His question shows that the fashion of junior EU civil servants from Poland was not readily intelligible but instead signaled something unusual and incomprehensible. It also shows that a legitimate style of dress exists among bureaucrats working for the EU and, as I show elsewhere, a lifestyle that is seen as more

up-to-date and more European, whereas other fashions and lifestyles are either disrespected or marked as non-conforming and therefore not readable (Lewicki 2017).

By analyzing Polishness in the bodily performances and lifestyles of EU civil servants in Brussels, in this article¹ I aim to shed light on the current processes of Europeanization in post-enlargement and post-crisis EU bureaucracy. The various versions of Polishness that I observed in Brussels, ranging from being *Polish and religious* to *Polish and secular and modern*, were relationally co-constitutive of the visions and imaginations of Europe shaped by what Dzenovska calls the coloniality of power (Dzenovska 2013). The examples of different bodily performances stemming from my research in

the European Commission between 2007 and 2011 clearly show the racializations and cultural hierarchy constructions governing subject positionings evoked by these visions and imaginations. The divisions and distinctions in the Polish milieu of EU civil servants may explain the growing division into East/West in the EU (Krastev 2017). However, I also argue that the divisions I observed in Brussels a few years ago shed light on cultural mechanisms that are currently leading to growing skepticism among Poles of cosmopolitan, liberal values, which constitute a shared European identity in the West of the EU (Krastev 2017) and which are currently being challenged by the growing popularity of the national conservative PiS party, which is spreading anti-elitist, nativist, and racialized notions of belonging (Korolczuk 2019).

Along with Adam and colleagues (2019b) I argue that Europe defines itself through continuous (post) colonial and (post)imperial entanglements between *Europe* and *non-Europe* that establish cultural hierarchies, which in turn are intrinsic to the process of Europeanization. The dominant constructs of Europe at the center of the EU are currently based on notions of liberal democracy, secularism, progress and rationality (Dzenovska 2018). Postcolonial theory has shown the long historical process of the emergence of these notions in contact with the Other and the resulting racial cultural distinctions and differentiations evoked by it. I draw on this scholarship and argue that a certain way of building hierarchies exists that refers to racial and racializing mechanisms; such mechanisms indicate the coloniality of power in constructing visions of Europe. These visions constantly re-emerge in relation to racialized “cultures” that allegedly do not share the proper and right vision of Europe (Dzenovska 2013, 2018). However, the coloniality of power, as both a form of government and knowledge production, also affects those allegedly outside the dominant and modern vision of Europe, as visions of Europe emerge in a relational process in a racialized and racializing fashion that is still very much in place, subsequently impacting both epistemologies and hierarchies of cultures in Europe (see also Herzfeld

2002, 2004). These visions of Europe hierarchically structure the symbolic field in Brussels and position actors. I show how these visions are reflected in bodily assessments and performances, how they reproduce cultural hierarchies and how they also impact production of different versions of Polishness in EU Brussels; whether connected to the Catholic faith or secularism. Some Poles performed non-secular habitus and manifested their religiosity and moral superiority that they aligned with Polishness and Europe. However, such a vision was often met with resistance – not only among the Europeanized Poles in EU-Brussels, but also among many people from older member states who felt that these performances were not European enough. I show how these struggles become visible in bodily performances in particular spaces while I self-reflexively reveal my own positionality in these processes, as I was also an actor in the field.

My conceptual toolkit is based on Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of habitus performance, bodily hexis and styles. Bourdieu’s theory not only facilitates a description of bodily performances but also enables greater perception of how they build distinctions and differentiations and are positioned in the field of EU bureaucracy, in turn giving rise to how these positions are embedded in a wider European and cultural national context. Bourdieu’s theory describes the reciprocal and relational building of socio-cultural strata, which helps to gain a greater insight into the relational character of cultural and racialized divisions among Poles in Brussels. In a social space where nationality and “being European” matters, it shows how different conceptualizations of nationality and of what Europe is or is supposed to be are woven into the fabric of bodies and become embodied, and in turn how these embodiments also produce visions of these entities (Bourdieu 2010; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992).

The divisions and distinctions described below that connect to and produce Europe are further developments of literature on secular (Scheer, Fadil & Scheperlen Johansen 2019) and European (Keinz & Lewicki 2019) bodies that point to embodiments representing the relationality of the production of

both secularity (to religious) and Europe (to non-Europe). According to Hirschkind (2011), the secular body consists of certain sensibilities, affects and embodied dispositions, while Scheer and colleagues (2019) remark that the secular is underpinned by a certain mode of emotionality and affect that they call subdued or contained, a “rational” emotionality. As Anika Keinz and I argue, the European body becomes embodied in moments when categories of race, class and gender intersect and are read onto bodies in certain moments in order to create identities and imaginations about and of Europe that automatically convey hierarchies (Keinz & Lewicki 2019). This scholarship underlines the relationality of embodiments while also pointing to the hidden order or tacit grammar of these embodiments: intersections of race, gender and class performances that, as an ongoing process conveying different affects and emotions, structure embodiments, which in turn position subjects in a wider cultural hierarchy. To describe these bodily performances beyond Bourdieu’s distinctions, I refer to racializations and particularly to different shades of whiteness that emerge in positions that I describe below and that are connected to notions of Europeaness, a subject explored by postcolonial scholars and in recent discussions on Europeanization in the field of anthropology (Adam et al. 2019a; Dyer 1997; Dzenovska 2018; Loftsdóttir 2011; Loftsdóttir et al. 2018). This whiteness is intersectionally constituted; it is a matter of achievement and affective labor and emerges in relations when bodies meet (Lapina forthcoming). By focusing below on performances of ostensibly religious or secular and modern bodies in two “Polish” locations in EU Brussels, the Polish-European or what I will call the Polish EU church and an Irish pub (where Poles working for the EU meet), I describe the *deservingness* of becoming truly white and European. These bodies were reciprocally assessed and marked; they also reflected relationally established hierarchies along the spectrum of whiteness and class and gender, and represented different claims over what Europe is or is supposed to be. Thus, I shed light on the nature of embodied processes of Europeanization, and how both distinctions and ra-

cializations point to the coloniality of power in Europeanization among new and old member states. I also want to show however, the ways in which this coloniality structures positions in the Polish milieu in EU Brussels and how they there are rooted in Europeanization in Poland. Viewed from such a perspective, Europe is produced in an intertwined, relational process of differentiation and distinction, reflecting its various visions depending on the genealogies of those involved in the production process.

This European grammar or tacit knowledge concerning “proper” embodiments and performances emerges in moments when bodies meet and hierarchies are built. As Merje Kuus (2015) writes, there is a style in Brussels that represents “the kind of argumentation, appearance, and social interaction that signifies a good sense of the game in the European Quarter” (ibid.: 372). I call this style the Eurostyle: a dominant and embodied cultural code for a legitimate Europe in Brussels. A wealth of literature on (national) styles in EU administration already exists (Kuus 2015; Lewicki 2017, 2016; McDonald 1997, 2012, 2006; Poehls 2009; Róžańska 2011; Zabursky 2000). There are national specificities and stereotypes about nationalities in Brussels regarding outlook and bodily performance (Lewicki 2017, 2016), but, as Kuus notes (2015), an agreed and legitimate way of doing things can also be observed, that also applies to bodies. Eurostyle is constant but changeable; it is relational, marking and producing distinctions and racializations in shades of whiteness and deservingness. It governs variable and various performances that creatively manage national representations, which must in turn fit the modern grammar of the Eurostyle.

As in secular and European bodies, Eurostyle becomes visible when bodies meet, when racializations producing different shades of whiteness, emotional and affective distinctions and markings regarding gender and class intersect and are applied; when (non)performance of certain sensibilities connected to secularity, progress, modesty and rationality, all embedded in capitalist consumption, produce hierarchies of who is or is not a “proper” European. This Eurostyle, moreover, also has to be accompanied by

the expression of “rational” and “modern” liberal and cosmopolitan worldviews (Pollock et al. 2002), of the separation of God from public life and of scientific discourse from politics, in future-oriented thinking, in what Bruno Latour calls a “breach with the past” (Latour 1993). In a way it serves as an embodied expression of the Latourian constitution of modernity and its ambiguity as a weapon of cultural power, as distinctions and markings produced by this Eurostyle are ambiguous and in constant flux. These separations constructing rational worldviews that feed into the Eurostyle are strategically mixed when needed; for instance, secularity is declared and required in public life, while religion and faith – and then usually Christian – punctually and sporadically become present and visible. Such mixing of Latourian separations does not destabilize the modern grammar of the Eurostyle. In such a way, the Moderns retain their modern status but remain entitled to mark all those who are non-secular and non-modern (Latour 1993).

Showing different embodiments of Polishness enables me to extract the grammar of the Eurostyle and highlight its emergence in distinctions, differentiations and racializations reflecting the coloniality of power in Europeanization in Brussels. I am focusing on positioning and strategies of self-positioning and markings, on the lookout for a “proper” performance of the Polish version of Eurostyle. Such positioning and markings are often reproduced from Poland and thus give insights into the cultural powers of Europe outside of EU Brussels – in Warsaw. I argue that an analysis of the performances of Polish EU civil servants in Brussels sheds light on the underpinnings of current populist and nationalist discourses present in Polish politics. To a great extent these performances are reminiscent of social and class divisions in postsocialist Polish society itself (Buchowski 2017, 2006), but I would like to stress that Europeanization in Poland has further affected this division, one side of which expresses a sense of belonging to a liberal, secular, successful, and future-oriented class, as opposed to all those who have allegedly been unable to catch up and thus do not fit into the liberal, modern and capitalist reality of

post-enlargement Poland. They, in turn, represent a nationalistic Polishness, connected to the Catholic faith, that claims a moral superiority and the mission of Poles to become “Christ of nations” and save Europe from itself and its excessively liberal and moral deficiency (Zarycki 2014; Zubrzycki 2006). In Brussels these divisions map onto a particular terrain: “properly European” Poles distinguish themselves from “not-really-European” Poles who are allegedly unable or unwilling to perform a (national) version of a modern Eurostyle, but perform seen as more religious and traditional Polishness, recently in Poland increasingly marked as “the real” one, connected to the Catholic faith that is allegedly intrinsically European.

By bringing myself into the picture of the descriptions I provide below, I refer to the literature on reflexivity and epistemology, particularly on positionality in ethnography (Coffey 1999; Pink 2009). The fact that I grew up in Warsaw and identify myself as Polish, my middle-class/intelligentsia secularized standing, my education, my gender, sexuality and class trajectory, including the fact that I was pursuing my Ph.D. at a German university at the time, all have an impact on how I saw and described the people that I studied and how they saw and interacted with me (see Lewicki 2017). Describing and contextualizing my *sensory knowing* (Pink 2009) enables me to bring the markings and embodiments of Europe and Polishness to light. My own Polishness and secular European body that implies tacit, sensory and affective knowledge of “proper” bodily performance help me to highlight different positions conveyed by the embodiments of Eurostyle and Polishness, and show how divisions in the field are deeply ingrained in national culture. Such a perspective, in turn, enables me to make an argument concerning the pervasiveness of the coloniality of power in Europeanization in postsocialist Europe (Dzenovska 2013, 2018) and concerning the resulting divisions evoked in Poland by its proliferation. I argue that the cultural dynamics I describe below need a framework that goes beyond the perspectives of postsocialism and neoliberalism (Buchowski 2017, 2006) and should be placed in a framework of Europeanization, as the source of

the current nationalistic discourses in Poland (see also Krastev 2017).

I conducted my ethnographic research among EU civil servants in Brussels between the years 2007 and 2011. It mostly involved the performing of biographical interviews with civil servants working in the European Commission (EC) and other EU institutions, such as the European Parliament, the General Secretariat of the Council, and EU agencies and committees. My access to the field was made possible by virtue of networks originating in Berlin and Warsaw. My supervisors from Berlin and Warsaw had provided me with the contact details of high-ranking German and Polish civil servants in Brussels. Thus, thanks to a snowball effect, I was able to interview people working at all formal levels of these institutions. The other connection that enabled me to gain access to the field was through my friends, a Dutch-British couple who worked in Brussels for a number of years prior to my arrival there. Thanks to them, I met many Polish civil servants working in mid and junior positions of the EU apparatus. I gathered my material by attending conferences and meetings organized by lobbies, embassies, and permanent representations of member states, representations of regions, at private parties, and other social events. Last but not least, I shared an apartment with an EU civil servant from Poland.

Polish Locations in Brussels

In Brussels there were, among others, two locations where Poles working in EU institutions would meet frequently outside office hours. One was an after-work meeting organized by mid-level officials once a month at an Irish pub called The Wild Geese close to the main building of the European Commission, the Berlaymont; the other was a church close to the Parc du Cinquanteenaire/Jubelpark and the Schuman Roundabout where Berlaymont stands. I have named this church the EU church because every Sunday a mass took place which was frequented by Polish people, mostly those working in EU institutions and surrounding institutions. There was another Polish mass on Sundays in an old cathedral in the neighborhood of Sablon/Zavel in the city center; this service attracted Poles working in low-paid

service jobs, on construction sites, and as domestic servants, most of whom had come to Brussels from rural Poland. This church remained an important point of reference for Poles working for the EU because in Brussels, both in the EU context and in the city in general, a pervasive stereotype of *le plombier polonais* remained – a Polish tradesman working on a construction site or, in the case of women, working in the domestic service sector (Böröcz & Sarkar 2017).

These two sites attracted slightly different kinds of people performing different versions of Polish habitus, representing alternative (Polish) responses to the implicit Eurostyle that structured positions – mine included – of many Poles in EU Brussels. These positions represent broader divisions showing struggles over the meaning of Europe and reveal the coloniality of power, as these struggles conveyed a hierarchical knowledge production on “cultures” that was racial in character, especially Polish culture and its place in Europe. The Sunday mass in the Polish EU church depicts the ways in which claims to a particular meaning of Europe evoked national representation that was connected to more religious and traditional habitus claiming moral superiority, while the meetings in the pub gathered more Europeanized, secular and “modern” Poles.

The Polish EU Church

The EU church was a Dominican church built in a neo-classical style that more or less blended into the cityscape. The Sunday mass was held by a charismatic Polish Dominican priest who strove to establish a family atmosphere – something one usually does not find in average churches in Poland, but only at Dominican churches, which are particularly popular among young and successful middle-class conservatives in big Polish cities. Traditionally, the Dominican order has been and continues to be focused on spreading the Gospel in urban areas; it stresses the value of good education among its members and believers, and accordingly targets people with a high educational and economic standing. Those attending mass at a Dominican church in Warsaw – as I did in my youth – would see themselves as the contemporary avant-garde of the Catholic faith, as opposed

to the ritualized, non-intellectual and politicized faith associated with the majority of Polish Catholic churches. Those masses were social events, where Warsaw's intelligentsia would meet and manifest its faith, but in a distinctive, intellectual, and individualized way. It was a manifestation of belonging and a political statement made by a conservative group of Catholics who represented the "counter-current" to the liberalizing tendency in Polish society (see also Keinz 2008; Porter-Szűcs 2011). The whole event at the EU church in Brussels reminded me of a Sunday mass at a Dominican church in Warsaw: complete with choir, candles, and neo-catechumenal groups, in which politicians, lawyers, the young intelligentsia, and the young, successful Polish middle class would meet, striving for a strong sense of religious community and an intellectual consideration of the gospel. There was even a choir to accompany the service, just as in Warsaw.

In the church in Brussels I saw one of the directors from the European Commission who told me in an interview, disconcerted, that he had been ridiculed for using the word *Bible* metaphorically during a meeting in his office. As he explained to me in an interview, he had said once, "We need a Bible of external communication," meaning a kind of rule book. In the same interview, he clearly expressed that he saw Poland as a defender of Christianity in Europe and that he had a contribution to make in this mission as a director at the European Commission. He had been the first in Brussels to tell me about the Polish EU church and had invited me to join the mass; he had identified me as Polish and Catholic by default. The Dominican priest also told me in an interview that people would come to him and share their dilemmas about policies they considered too liberal that they nevertheless now had to take an active part in as a result of working as EU civil servants; these, they said, stood in conflict with their own ethical values. Also, after mass, signatures were collected in support of a proposed bill that would ban in vitro fertilization in Poland.

I could distinguish at least three groups of people based on my assessments of their bodily performance and their position in the formal hierarchy of the European Commission. In the front rows sat

not only senior officials from the European Parliament and the European Commission but also people working in the cabinet of the Polish Commissioner and those who were willing to express their sense of belonging among those with influence over policies. Many of them had quickly advanced their careers in the EU apparatus, climbing swiftly through the ranks. While male directors in their fifties and sixties attended church with their spouses, those with career aspirations were younger, between 35 and 45, ranking at the mid-managerial level of the EC. However, among the worshippers there were people from every level within the entire hierarchy of the EU institutions.

Once, before mass began, I sat down in the middle of the church in order to get a good view. I saw one of the directors of the European Parliament walking in stiffly through the central nave with a stern expression on his face, while his wife walked beside him, holding his shoulder. He was a former minister in the Polish government and a founder of a conservative Catholic elitist association in Warsaw. He wore a thick, plain wool coat in a dark plum color, one that represented, as I was often told when I interviewed people from old member states, the stereotyped style of directors over 50 or MEPs² from Poland. In Brussels this style was labeled "out of fashion", "old", or "from a former era": thick coats in black, plum, or graphite, with small, plain collars and silk scarves with a paisley pattern and, more often than not, trousers with a crease and black leather shoes. Two directors I knew would stride into the church without looking at or greeting anyone, walking at a stiff, pompous pace. I must admit that this performance evoked astonishment in me and no small amount of condescension, which revealed my own position in the field: my assessments show that I was placing myself on the more modern and Europeanized side of Polishness, because I distanced myself from these people, from their gender performance and from the Catholic rituals that took place in the church. I linked the performances I describe here with the remarks I was told by my interviewees from older member states. On one occasion, a high-ranking official from Ireland, who had been working in a directorate of the EC that was headed by a Polish director,

expressed concern that Polish directors, despite having experience of EU policies, nevertheless practiced an authoritarian style of management. This was one of the reasons why directors from new member states were depicted as hierarchical of thought, as unable to delegate tasks and incapable of trusting their colleagues. One of my interviewees, a high-ranking official from Germany, told me that directors from new member states wanted to go over a policy document in its entirety even though it was not possible, only serving to slow the decision-making process and confirm a stereotype of new member state societies as modeled on authoritarian structures in which trust is lacking. I understood the message of the German official and felt a certain cultural intimacy with him (Herzfeld 2005), when I saw the pompous pace of the director in the church. However, beyond being not properly “European enough”, for me the director’s performance was reminiscent of small-town Polish apparatchiks or even local elites in rural areas of Poland. My own perceptions and assessments of my interviewees from older member states show the workings of powerful performance rules in EU Brussels and my condescension and embarrassment revealed my Europeanized position. My assessments of these bodily performances in this Polish-Catholic context and their alignment with the resulting associations evoked in the context of a wider cultural spectrum in EU Brussels show how bodies were connected to cultures, how their performances were racialized, and a hierarchy was constructed. My feeling of belonging alongside the German director while distancing myself from the Polish directors was an expression of constant distinctions and the relationality in which the “proper” way of dressing and “proper” body constitutes itself. In these reactions I see moments in which the Eurostyle emerges, perhaps not as a clearly expressed rule, but as tacitly existing knowledge about what is desired and at least readable in bodily performance in EU Brussels and which culture it represents. However, as I show below, these strict bodily performances were also an emanation of (moral) superiority of some of the worshippers in the church, visible in their traditional habitus reproduced from Poland.

In the EU church, there was only one woman whom I knew to have a position at director level. She always looked smart: in either a skirt or trousers in dark colors, a jacket in dark colors as well, and a thin golden chain around her neck. Her style would fit the stereotype of the sober woman’s outfit worn by representatives of new member states (Lewicki 2016).

The second group consisted of younger men (mid-thirties to mid-forties), those who sat in the front rows with their children and who clearly wanted to be more visible. The distinctive element for this group were the rural British jackets they wore, in light brown or olive green and made of waxed material, with leather collars and sewn-on pockets, the type one finds from labels such as Burberry or Barbour. These men would often wear cords or jeans or simple casual trousers, in dark fabric and without creases, and leather loafers with thick soles, similar to the type made by Ecco or Geox. Their distinct, smart-casual, and more relaxed rural British style of dress also served another purpose: as one of them told me in an interview, after mass they would socialize in non-Polish milieus, where I suppose their rural British style was not as distinctive as it appeared in the Polish EU church.

However, upon my return to Brussels in March 2011, I was struck by how the rural British style had spread among people in the church and how popular this kind of fashion had become. Regrettably, I did not see anyone who had previously been dressing in the rural British style, and consequently I was not able to see what they were wearing now or how these distinctions had developed.

These individuals in rural British outfits represented a small group of Poles who had been successful in the EU administration apparatus and quickly climbed both in the formal hierarchy and in prestige. Each member of the group had had some experience of living, studying, or working in “the West”. I viewed their outfits and lifestyle as distinctive in a Polish milieu. Their outfits were “British” but they represented the status of British style as one granting access to a more universal and “European” style on the one hand, while on the other they revealed the ambitions of these individuals, as those having

aspirations to be part of a more “proper European” cultural order. As long as it was cold and grey outside, I did not see any other Polish men in the church who wore the lighter colors that are worn more frequently in Brussels or in countries where winter is milder (Italy, France, Spain), colors such as light bottle green, khaki, or beige, or even check patterned garments in these colors, which by contrast were more visible on the streets of Brussels all year round. Instead, I saw different versions of deep purple, dark blue, and navy blue, all shades of dark brown and very dark green, but I could not see any extravagant additions or bright or pastel colors among the middle-aged and older men in the church.

There was also a third group comprised of young civil servants (under 35) whom I recognized; I was aware that they worked in junior positions, and were largely not married but were often in relationships with heterosexual partners.³ These young men wore either wool or cotton, black or navy blue slim-fit short coats, and jackets to the knees, some with large, upturned collars and two rows of buttons at the front, among other accessories (similar to trench coats). Many of them also wore thin-striped, long and colorful scarves tied in a knot around their necks like the one mentioned at the beginning of this article. These scarves seemed to be popular among Polish men of a certain age working at the European Commission, contrasting sharply with the rest of their dark outfits. These colorfully striped scarves, and the contrast they presented against their monochromatic attire, made these men distinctive as a group of junior officials; it made them look more relaxed, even though they were in fact somewhat smartly dressed. When I went to Poland for Christmas that year, I also saw many such scarves worn by men of a similar age in shops like Peek and Cloppenburg, selling clothes of popular brands, and in large newly established shopping malls, where successful young middle-class men, who often work for international companies, buy their clothing. These young junior officials in the EU church were alumni of prestigious departments at Polish universities; in my interviews they declared themselves clear proponents of Polish EU membership, believing that this should

modernize Poland. They connected their own success with Polish EU membership and the possibility of adopting a lifestyle in Brussels that many of them regarded as cosmopolitan, although some of them did tell me that they had only started going to church after arriving there. I also saw some of them in the Irish pub at Polish meetings held there. They were therefore playing on both sides of the Polish register, one which apparently despised the Polish church and the other which saw the Catholic faith as a part of Polishness. However, socializing in one’s free time within national networks alone was never a ticket to a career in the EU apparatus, because this exclusivity does not provide the opportunity to present oneself as a true European. As the assessments of both myself and my friend show, their indecipherable scarves did not fit the Eurostyle, although in a certain sense they in fact did. Through puzzlement and sarcasm, my friend and I were performing hierarchy building and positioning ourselves as those with knowledge of fashion in EU Brussels. I could connect the colorful scarf with Warsaw, or Poznań, or Kraków, and the progressive Catholic habitus of the Dominican church, but I could also feel that it represented a lack of what one could interpret as cosmopolitan and secular habitus that would have made these men more credible and valued in EU Brussels.

The Eurostyle emerged at this point through my distinctions and racializations while marking different shades of whiteness. These divisions and racializations were based both on divisions from Poland and dominant notions of a secular Europe in EU Brussels, notions that convey a liberal, secular worldview and reiterate imaginations of the cosmopolitan lifestyle of the white middle class (Hannerz 1990, 2005), which “enjoys cultural difference” (Hannerz 2005: 200). However, this middle class “always knows where the exit is” (*ibid.*: 200) – that is to say, its members are quick to remark when a certain culture is somehow indecipherable, or may imply or represent inappropriate performances (see also Pollock et al. 2002).

It was difficult to determine any patterns among women’s outfits due to the mere fact that I only knew one female director from the EC who attended these

masses. Younger women (those in their late thirties or younger) often wore plain jackets. However, in contradistinction to the men, their outfits differed in terms of color: light or olive green, light purple, or dark turquoise; they were also made of thinner fabric. This was due to the fact that they wore both sweaters matching the color and/or style of their jackets and scarves underneath their jackets.

Men occupied the first rows of the EU church, with women only present as partners or wives, a fact which was visible in the overall social arrangement of the church. The young men dressed in the casual rural British style were distinctive, not least because they were revealing their “progressiveness” through taking care of their children, talking to them, maybe explaining certain elements of the mass, as opposed to the traditional gender roles that were visible in the dominant older male figures who were stern and gave the impression of not being present for their families. I saw those dressed in the rural British style as representatives of a middle-aged, progressive, career-oriented class who performed the Eurostyle by coming to church without their spouses, where they played the role of progressive fathers. Their absent wives, who were not working at the EC, also point to the pragmatic need of their men to be visible at the church, underlining their presence in Polish networks rather than their need to take part in religious events with their families. One such person told me that he deliberately softens certain formulations on the situation in Russia in documents he is working on for a directorate responsible for policies on non-EU states. As he explained to me, he wanted to send a signal to his colleagues that he is not a “typical Polish Russophobe,” since Poles are seen as permanent and irrational Russophobes. The Eurostyle refers not only to their bodily performance but also to the ability to mix the elements of the Latourian constitution of modernity (Latour 1993). In the church they were mixing private, professional and religious with Polish and European, but they would never publicly say that Europe has to be Christian, for example during a meeting in an EU institution as one of the Polish directors did, for which he was ridiculed. Such performances, when God, nature and society are separated in public, but mixed in more private spheres,

are congruent with Latour’s reference to practices of the Moderns (ibid.) and confirmation of the Eurostyle performance. In such a way, their presence in the church was only strategically and punctually fitting of a particular, Polish performance in Brussels, but it did not challenge the historically grounded grammar of the dominant, secular Eurostyle in EU institutions, which their bodily performance certainly represented and which they evidently aspired to. That’s why their presence in the church did not hamper their career progression, as they managed to climb up the bureaucratic ladder within a relatively short space of time. In an interview one of them told me, “I know what is going on in this church and there are reasons why I go there.” However, there were also more traditional configurations of male behavior, similar to that of the directors, in this age group.

This is what I noted in my field diary in an entry on March 1, 2009:

The priest is using a “we” form, as opposed to the usual impersonal grammatical forms (as in a “normal” mass). Those from the EC [are] mostly [wearing] coats made out of fabric, [with] brown, black, often colorful scarves. Conservative! It’s all good quality, but not chic, women [with] matching colorful sweaters, scarves and other items, other colors from the men, but also grey coats, or jackets. You can see that those from the institutions know each other and stick together. Masses of children and buggies! After the mass, signatures are collected supporting Gowin’s⁴ anti-IVF bill proposal. I am a foreign body here – they look at me curiously but discretely – probably not knowing where to place me, as I wear cargo pants and a cord jacket, lambswool sweater, a mix of colors, a brown, cream, and black scarf around my neck, and casual, black tennis shoes. Those women, I guess not from the institutions, are wearing nylon jackets (wives?), looking thicker and warmer, brown, lilac, white – they are more practical, water resistant, good for Brussels weather. Apparently, children are an integrating factor. [name] coming out of the church with a stern face with his wife beside him – like a landowner in a village church in Poland.

Apart from collecting signatures in support of the anti-IVF bill in Poland, on another occasion there was a collection supporting an orphanage, also in Poland. People here saw themselves as good and charitable Poles, fashioning themselves in this church as elites, as in a Dominican church in Warsaw, but they were simultaneously unable to see the Polish working-class church in Sablon/Zavel as part of the same national affiliation. In this way they were reproducing divisions that they had brought with them from Poland and racializing the working-class Poles in Brussels while fueling anxieties among some Polish EU civil servants concerning their own whiteness (see Böröcz & Sarkar 2017; Buchowski 2006; Smoczynski, Fitzgerald & Zarycki 2017).

Their conservative worldviews (the ban on IVF, “over-liberal” policies of the EU, their traditional gender roles), which were conflated by myself and others in EU Brussels with certain bodily performances, evoked condescension or laughter. And these, as I argue, in a racializing and distinctive gesture, mark the emergence of the dominant and secular Eurostyle of European bodies (Keinz & Lewicki 2019). However, the words of the director who told me about the church and saw himself as a defender of Christian values and his desire to avoid the “Polish plumber” in the church in Sablon/Zavel show how these people also created distinctions and classifications: the vision of an over-liberal and cosmopolitan Europe represented by the Eurostyle was challenged by their Polish and traditional bodily performances and their claims to moral superiority (see also Herzfeld 2002, 2004). These distinctions and classifications were also visible in the way some among them wanted to be seen as proper and legitimate, white Europeans while distancing themselves from working-class Poles, but were ridiculed or misunderstood in EU Brussels due to elitist and European performances that they had brought with them from Poland.

On the one hand, it was through this seeming subversion of the Eurostyle and the self-fashioned moral superiority and claims to Europe of the EU church group, and the classification as *folk* of the people in the church in Sablon/Zavel on the other hand, in which the group was effectively building

hierarchies based on cultural traits and reproducing racial markings along the lines of deservingness and whiteness. In this particular context in EU Brussels, the participants of the mass are making a statement – we belong to Europe, but we have not lost our Polishness that is encoded in the conservative Catholic faith. They strive to rise through the cultural hierarchy by making reference to superior morality and claims to Europe. However, their version of the Eurostyle performance among the many national possibilities to perform it was certainly not a primary one, since it referred so strongly to religion or was indecipherable. My European assessments of their bodily performances and lifestyle reveal my distinction of religious Polish habitus, one that I connected to both prosaic and backward performances and clothing styles. People who gathered in the church did not reproduce the legitimate Eurostyle but rather an ethical conservatism (as opposed to the social-liberal European shared cultural values in their various national versions that are most prevalent in EU Brussels) that I connected to both a lack of Eurostyle and to a reproduction of class statuses imported from Poland. On the one hand, they aspired to be European, particularly those wearing colorful scarves, while on the other, the shared cultural values of traditional gender roles (with the exception of those dressed in rural British attire) and a restrictive stance on reproductive rights and methods (the anti-IVF petition) distanced them from the ideal of a liberal European in EU Brussels. They aspired to become European, but failed to hit the right tone and to produce a Polish representation that aligned with the Eurostyle – particularly because of religion, although my reactions and assessments conflate their shared values and visions of Polishness with a particular bodily performance, a practice so carefully described by scholars writing on visual markers and racism.

The distinctive attire and performance of those dressed in the rural British style in effect pointed to their Eurostyle, since these two particular individuals had progressed very quickly up the formal ladder within the EC. They played both registers, European and Polish, and their attendance at the church was meant as a strategic marker to their Polish belonging, as possession of national networks remains of

the utmost importance – particularly when aspiring to a managerial post at the EC. Additionally, they were able to use their nationality as a way to present themselves as rational, as highlighted by the example of handling the stereotype of Polish Russophobia.

The cultural dynamic that I portrayed as an example of this Polish EU church reveals how a dominant understanding of Europe and the Eurostyle in EU Brussels may provoke the reproduction of national habitus in a particular, seemingly religious way. As Zubrzycki (2006), Porter-Szűcs (2011) and Zarycki (2014) have shown, missionary attitudes were present in Polish nationalism for many years, and, according to Zarycki, serve to underpin conservative attitudes in Poland (and the PiS party) and the conviction that Catholicism is a foundation of Polish belonging to “the West” (Zarycki 2014). However, the more these cultural traits are underlined, the more they lead to exclusion. Such notions of Europe and claims to moral superiority can also lead to the reproduction of markings and distinctions transferred from Poland, for instance, in whitening tendencies visible in classifications of working-class Poles (Böröcz & Sarkar 2017). Together with my assessments and markings that should place me on the powerful side of the Eurostyle, the social drama that I describe in the church depicts the coloniality of power, how it structures positions along the racial and racialized distinctions that conflate particular culture and bodily performances.

The Wild Geese

One other Polish location was to be found in Brussels: an Irish pub, The Wild Geese, where a meeting would take place among “Poles and Polish speaking persons working in or closely related to European institutions” on the first Thursday of each month.⁵ It was a rather typical Irish pub, with lots of dark wooden elements in the interior, stained glass and Irish brands of beer and whiskey. I attended many meetings at The Wild Geese; the number of attendees varied from just a few to several dozen. People were of various ages, but I never saw anyone above 50, nor anyone in a senior position within the EU hierarchy. Those who attended were either working in EU institutions, or institutions or bodies involved in EU

decision-making processes. The initial atmosphere was usually rather stiff, with people seated at a big round table. There were also other, smaller tables where smaller groups could sit and talk. Most people would talk only to those they knew; thus, I often felt excluded, but as time passed, people would start to mingle more after a drink or two and the atmosphere would become more relaxed.

On one occasion I was standing at the bar in The Wild Geese with someone I had met a few minutes earlier. She was a Polish woman, a junior desk officer at the EC, and we had been making small talk until we were interrupted by her friend, who approached us and said something to her about dancing – a kind of invitation to dance, probably because the DJ had appeared a few minutes earlier and the dance floor had opened. My conversation partner politely refused and told this man that he was wearing a very nice shirt. The shirt was white and casual in style, with a light red and blue checked pattern, which looked like an American or British-style casual shirt to me, the kind one might associate with the Hilfiger label. His sleeves were rolled up, and I can safely say that this did not resemble any of the “stiff” or “old-fashioned” outfits stereotypically connected with people from new member states. The owner of the shirt, a Pole, said: “It’s from Poland! Thank you! Nice, isn’t it?! I bought it in Warsaw for [and he named the price of almost 90 PLZ, around 25€] on sale in Galeria Centrum!”⁶

I remember being astonished by this quick, spontaneous response, which somehow seemed inappropriate given the situation in which it was said. Why would he emphasize that it is from Poland? There was even something striking in the way he spoke after saying “It’s from Poland”; he said it while shaking his whole body to the rhythm of the club music, somehow emphasizing a connection between Poland and being funky. He wanted to clarify that he bought (and presently buys) his shirts in Poland, which he finds cool (appropriate for the situation, the club music and ambience). This man – and I with him, as I also saw his shirt as fashionable and cool – wanted to claim access and belonging through Polishness to the tacitly present Eurostyle, as opposed to those performances I had observed in the Polish EU

church. This would explain why many single young Polish EU civil servants would buy their clothes in Brussels or go to Paris or London to buy them, as would those from older member states. This man's exclamation about the shirt was a way of saying: Polish clothes can also be appealing, fashionable, and have a good cut and style, in keeping with the fashion in Brussels, and be *current* rather than *backward* in terms of style. My assessment of his shirt shows a kind of affective kinship between me and this man, but his adverse reaction may also point to a fear of being wrongly categorized as not dignified enough, not white enough, although he had bought the shirt in Poland. It shows the pervasive presence of Eurostyle grammar as something one wishes to aspire to and belong to, and that this can be achieved in a particular attire with a particular Polish meaning. Such implicit assessments from both myself and this man were expressions of racializing hierarchy building based on bodily performances and imaginations of the cultures they evoked. He was certainly responding to the stereotype produced in EU Brussels, but, in stark contrast to those who attended the EU church and without any attempt to subvert it with some kind of moral imagination, he was performing a secular version of Polish habitus. However, this performance remained within the same framework of the coloniality of power, as he was showcasing a modern and fashionable Polish shirt and positioning himself through wearing and commenting on it, trying to elevate Polishness in the cultural hierarchy, to make it whiter and through that gain access to the performance of proper Eurostyle.

By performing a legitimate version of the Eurostyle and being able to make "proper" classifications, I also saw his shirt as fashionable and nice, fitting the Eurostyle. I felt neither embarrassed nor inclined to mock the shirt for having been purchased in Warsaw, as I felt more inclined to do in the EU church when I observed people there. He was trying to construct a feeling of national belonging and a Polishness of shared views and values while maintaining a distance from morality and Catholicism, instead embodied in consumerism and a funky lifestyle organized around modern items that are both decipherable and fashionable in EU Brussels, unlike the

colorful Polish scarves in the EU church. In my view, he showed pride in wearing a shirt that he had purchased in Poland and in that way sought to subvert the implicit hierarchy set out by the common stereotype of Poles who were unable to perform a legitimate version of the Eurostyle. This man seemed to tacitly reinforce the powerful cultural "European" aesthetics of the Eurostyle, but he also performed an act of belonging to modern Poland and implicitly included both his friend and myself within it. I was able to observe these aspirations to redefine Polishness among certain groups of Polish EU civil servants: they tried to define "Polish" within the framework of the Eurostyle and to give "Polish" a legitimate modern connotation.

I also noted other bodily performances that enriched the Eurostyle, for instance, by adding more folk-style elements into women's outfits that would allow them to be recognized as nationals from new member states (Lewicki 2017, 2016). However, these elements did not change the modern grammar of the Eurostyle and functioned more as tokens, as something that should represent a culture but did not disrupt the way things should work (Ahmed 2012). The relevance of these classifications of a proper Eurostyle performance and the strength of the divisions of different shades of whiteness in EU Brussels can be clearly shown in the example below, in which European taste quickly detects disruptions of the established hierarchy of whiteness and an illegitimate way to perform the Eurostyle.

On one occasion, during an interview with a mid-ranked Polish official that I got to know through my friends, to whom he was a neighbor, I asked whether he was going to The Wild Geese. He answered almost with outrage that he met people only if he liked them and not because they were of a certain nationality. I also asked him which newspapers he read and whether he read the Polish press. He answered that he had never bought a Polish magazine because all of them represented "peripheral journalism, third rate journalism" which he "detests" because "[the topics in those magazines] don't interest me at all and it is so shallow." Instead he read *The Independent* because "when I open it, there's something about orangutans, about deforestation, and this is a completely

different perspective, this is a world perspective. I prefer to read about the development of air traffic and its repercussions for CO₂ emissions rather than to read about Kaczmarek [former Minister of Justice, a reference to a corruption scandal in the Polish government at the time] accusing someone of something – that just makes me sick.” He also told me that he preferred to read about the ageing of Japanese society than about “the thunder that killed a cow in the Suwałki area,” a rather poor region in northeastern Poland labeled as peripheral and known for its cold climate. To my remark concerning a general problem with the media – that it is only concerned with how to increase the profit margin of the publisher – he said: “The great problem is the whole peripheral character of the public sphere [in Poland]. This is a country on the periphery of Europe that is slowly finding its way, where the intellectual class is very weak, emaciated, almost at the point of starvation.”

When I returned to Brussels in March 2009, my friends told me a story of an encounter with their Polish neighbor in the stairwell one Sunday after the winter holidays. They asked him whether he had been in Poland for Christmas. It is quite common in Brussels that people – independent of their nationality, age, status, and place of employment – travel, sometimes with their families, to their country of origin. They told me that he replied in a tone verging on anger that he had not been in Poland but had instead gone on vacation to Australia. They also told me, not without amusement, that he was wearing black leather, English riding boots, riding breeches, a dark cord jacket, and a cap and that all things considered he “looked like an English dandy.” They joked that he still had mud on his shoes and I laughed with them. In our laughter, we all assumed he was only showing off and we actually questioned his actual ability to ride a horse. I saw this man on other occasions and I always thought he was somewhat overdressed. After spending an extended period of time in Brussels, I could sense that he was not dressed “properly” and that it was a rather peculiar occupation for a single young man from Poland to go horse-riding on Sundays (though it was not unusual for a French middle-aged female high-ranked official at the EC who I once interviewed). Both my friends’ reaction and

my own implied that he was overdressed and was attempting to give the impression that he was different from the person he actually was: as one of my interviewees from Germany put it, in a reference to men from new member states, he was “all dolled up.” His aspirations, however, were unmasked and ridiculed, marked as inappropriate to his position, nationality, and age. His outfit and leisure activity were both seen as out of sync with the Eurostyle. He was apparently seeking to convince himself and those around him of his status by performing a proper Eurostyle; he might have even imitated the rural British style seen in the EU church, but was in fact ill-fitting because it brought his national belonging into question and our laughter automatically marginalized him. The reaction and fashion preference of my friends and myself at that moment revealed our own position as defenders of the Eurostyle. I had apparently been using racializing and racial hierarchies of whiteness in references to bodily performances and lifestyles while internalizing the aesthetic rules in EU Brussels – a fact that was represented by my laughter during this encounter. I placed him into a category of whiteness where Polishness belongs into certain hierarchies of whiteness in EU Brussels – to an aspiring position, but never actually able to contribute or change the grammar of the Eurostyle. I played out my “proper Europeaness” toward my fellow countryman just to be on the more powerful side of Europe. My reaction shows that there are only legitimate ways of conceiving what Europe is, that Europeanization in EU Brussels is a reflection of the coloniality of power, positioning subjects in a hierarchical way through the application of racial visual markers and the essentializing of cultures. In such a way, it re-produces the grammar of the Eurostyle and what I and Anika Keinz have termed a European body (Keinz & Lewicki 2019), a body that is already racialized, classed and gendered. My friend’s neighbor is visually and verbally confirming essentializations through his non-Eurostyle performance, it locks him out of belonging to those performing the Eurostyle based on his origin as he makes empty claims of Polishness to be European, although in these claims he confirms the dominant notion of Europe as being modern and progressive.

Conclusions

The above examples show how the Eurostyle, as an implicit cultural mechanism that mobilizes affects and markings, orchestrates and choreographs the ways in which Polishness is embodied. These embodiments show how racializations and classifications work to build a hierarchy of cultures and of Polishness among Poles themselves. The Eurostyle remains powerful, as something one aspires to. Access to it is granted to those who can strategically and critically apply their nationality (as network capital) but who do not question the secular grammar of the Eurostyle, as I show with the example of those dressed in rural British style. Thus, the divisions are not fixed; such a cultural system also enables advancement, which is precisely the reason behind its attractiveness.

However, the Eurostyle is also challenged by habitus that may be seen as more traditional and religious, one that claims moral superiority and pertains to cultural hierarchies and racializations projected onto secular, or rather seen by those performing the marking as morally inferior bodies. Such actions of positioning performed by Polish bodies are relationally co-constitutive; they emerge in relation to each other and in particular moments in a particular time and space when they meet. Furthermore, although these meetings are situational and underpinned by both a contextual framework and the various positions of the actors involved, they are, however, all framed by intersecting racializations, gender and class distinctions in reference to bodily performances and affects these evoke. Thusly, they are evoked in one sense by the immediate context, while on the other they reactivate and reflect global flows of power and reveal deeper national genealogies of divisions. However, the ways in which the Eurostyle emerges shed light not only on the functioning of the post-enlargement EU bureaucracy; it also contributes to the literature on styles in diplomacy (Neumann 2012) and illuminates cultural dynamics among transnational elites, placing it in a context of post-enlargement and post-crisis Europe.

My examples show how the coloniality of power is haunting Europe, and how the deservingness of a culture as properly white and European is measured through visual markers and bodily performances,

one implicitly civilized and better. Europeanization may function successfully through the Eurostyle and the emergence of what I and Anika Keinz have called the ever-becoming constructions of European bodies (Keinz & Lewicki 2019). As I show here, however, Europeanization and claims to Europe not only refer to the modernist, liberal and allegedly cosmopolitan Eurostyle, but also to claims of moral superiority, Christianity and references to a national pride and mission. In such a way, Poles confirm the European values of liberalism, rationality, secularity and modernity through their aspirations, but they are nonetheless barred from Europeaness, as their style does not contribute to the grammar of the Eurostyle and if it does, then in a way that is regarded as old-fashioned, as religiosity points to a dark and irrational past. The dynamics I have described above are responding to the paradox of Europeaness which Dzenovska has analyzed: including Eastern European countries as “returning to Europe” but also marking them as not having yet attained fully European status due to socialist legacies and backward nationalism (Dzenovska 2018).

These mechanisms of intersecting categories of differentiation and the affects they convey have history and genealogy. As Pobłocki (2016) claims, comparisons between slavery and Polish serfdom are illegitimate and need contextualization, otherwise they rather showcase Occidentalism and the efforts of Poles to rewrite their history as part of world history. The distinctions toward *boars*, which merged into distinctions toward *folk class* (Buchowski 2006; Gdula & Sadura 2012), have their historical legacy in the Polish gentry and are connected to serfdom: economic and cultural exploitation of peasants in Poland. Buchowski (2006) confirmed the perpetuation of these divisions in the creation of the internal national Other in Poland, and Smoczynski and colleagues showed these divisions in the context of today's mass Polish migration to the West (Smoczynski, Fitzgerald & Zarycki 2017). I seek to claim, however, that these divisions in Poland today, rather than by neoliberalism (Buchowski 2017), are in fact caused by Europeanization, as it may grant access to a universal and European identity. A fact that is so clearly visible in claims to moral superiority

discourses currently present in Poland, blaming the liberals for the wrong responses to refugee migration that may threaten the very existence of Europe, or gender ideology – implicitly originating from the morally inferior West – that “threatens” Polish families (implicitly consisting of man, woman, and their children). Simultaneously, the deeply ingrained downward distinctions and racializations toward the *folk class* are balanced currently by social transfers and a strongly nationalistic rhetoric of the government. On a small scale, this was already visible in Brussels a number of years ago during my research, when Poles, by performing different examples of Polishness, expressed their desires to represent and perform the Eurostyle, or react to this Eurostyle with a more national, religious and traditional, yet European style. Each of these positions was fueled by Europeanization and the desire to gain access to a more universal history or more European identity, and reflect a constantly present Occidentalism among Poles. This desire can be seen as colonial in fashion, while being both nationalistic and a latent Polish-imperialistic response to the constant depiction of Central and Eastern European countries as homophobic, nationalistic, racist, corrupt, conservative and – in the case of Poland – excessively religious.

Through the clear marking of my positionality in the empirical material, my Europeanized body, acting in line with the Eurostyle and my simultaneous knowledge of Polishness and culture marked as Polish, enabled me to draw different threads together and show mechanisms and genealogies of embodied cultural power and the production of whiteness in different locations and contexts. Feeding my distinctions and differentiations into the empirical material, the emotions that accompanied them in momentary relations, in intersecting categories of difference applied in particular moments and referring to Europe, reveal the pervasive power of Europeanization, as a way of governing and positioning subjects through racial, class and gender markings both in Poland and Brussels. It shows the situatedness, spontaneity, embeddedness and embodiment of Europeanization and its broader cultural dynam-

ics pertaining to global flows of power (Haraway 1988). It shows how Occidentalism, as a conviction that the center of the world is in the West, works through Europeanization in Poland and among Poles, while also highlighting the national specificities that are not eligible to be more European, as they are either tokenized or ridiculed because they refer to religiosity, an unknown history or to a history that should remain in the past. Rather than reproducing stereotypes about the lack of European-ness among people from new member states, such an understanding of Europeanization, based on the cultural dynamics I have described, may provide explanations as to the racial origin of markings and hierarchies in structuring the disputes concerning the meaning of Europe, and the growing tensions between East and West over differing visions for Europe itself. Lastly, such a perspective breaks the teleological notion of Europeanization as a transition (of the new member states – from [post-]socialism to European-ness) and points to a more relational aspect of building Europe.

Notes

- 1 I would like to thank Ela Drażkiewicz-Grodzicka, the anonymous reviewers of this article and the editors of *Ethnologia Europaea* for their precious comments, as well as Viadrina Institute for European Studies for its support to publish this text. Post mortem I would like to also express my gratitude to Prof. Zofia Sokolewicz († 2020) who made my research project in Brussels possible.
- 2 Members of the European Parliament.
- 3 These young officials performed similarly to the directors who attended mass with their wives; traditional gender roles here were rather visible.
- 4 Jarosław Gowin (born 1961) is a nationalist-conservative politician who proposed a restrictive law on IVF in 2007 (coincidental with my research). During that period he was one of the leaders of Civic Platform (PO), a conservative-liberal party headed by then-Prime Minister Donald Tusk. He then went on to become the Minister of Justice in the PO-led Polish Government (2011–2013). In 2013 he established his own conservative party called Polska Razem (Poland Together), and later entered a coalition with Kaczyński’s Party PiS (Law and Justice). Between November 2015 and April 2020, he was the Minister of Science and Higher Education in the PiS-led government (national-conservative). In year 2007 his bill proposal to ban IVF was unsuccessful

and IVF procedures started to be funded by the Polish public health-care system. In the course of the policy change there were heated debates, inspired particularly by the Catholic Church's opposition to assisted reproductive technologies, which polarized the public and contributed to the formulation of extremely conservative positions on IVF (see Radkowska-Walkowicz 2017). During one of my interviews with a Polish director in the EU Commission he mentioned a restrictive law on IVF as a Polish agenda item in the EU, opposed to the reproductive rights policies in Sweden and Britain, where views were more liberal and less connected to Catholic doctrine on matters of reproductive technologies.

- 5 This is a quote from the Facebook Group "Polscy Europracownicy" (Polish Euroemployees), which I joined after coming to Brussels. These Thursday meetings were organized by the founders of this group – junior civil servants working at the Commission.
- 6 Galeria Centrum is located in Warsaw's city centre, and is the successor to the Domy Towarowe Centrum, established in the 1970s. Domy Towarowe Centrum was a symbol of the blooming socialist economy of the early 1970s in Poland. During the transformation, it lost its prestige and, due to competition from enormous newly-built shopping malls on the outskirts of the city, lost most of its customers. At the beginning of the 2000s, it went through a major refurbishment and reopened as Galeria Centrum and began selling Western labels (at that time most shopping malls in Warsaw were named *Galeria*), though, in face of competition from the modern and shiny shopping malls popping up in Warsaw, it never fully regained its previous prestige.

References

- Adam, Jens, Regina Römhild, Manuela Bojadžijev, Michi Knecht, Paweł Lewicki, Nurhak Polat & Rika Spikermann (eds.) 2019a: *Europa dezentrieren: Globale Verflechtungen neu denken*. Frankfurt am Main & New York: Campus.
- Adam, Jens, Regina Römhild, Manuela Bojadžijev, Michi Knecht, Paweł Lewicki, Nurhak Polat & Rika Spikermann 2019b: Europa dezentrieren: Programm und Perspektiven einer Anthropologie reflexiver Europäisierung. In: Jens Adam, Regina Römhild, Manuela Bojadžijev, Michi Knecht, Paweł Lewicki, Nurhak Polat & Rika Spikermann (eds.), *Europa dezentrieren: Globale Verflechtungen neu denken*. Frankfurt am Main & New York: Campus, 7–33.
- Ahmed, Sara 2012: *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham: Duke University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822395324>.
- Böröcz, József & Mahua Sarkar 2017: The Unbearable Whiteness of the Polish Plumber and the Hungarian Peacock Dance Around "Race". *Slavic Review* 76(2): 307–314. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2017.79>.
- Bourdieu, Pierre 2010: *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, Pierre & Loïc J.D. Wacquant 1992: *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Buchowski, Michał 2006: The Specter of Orientalism in Europe: From Exotic Other to Stigmatized Brother. *Anthropological Quarterly* 79(3): 463–482. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/anq.2006.0032>.
- Buchowski, Michał 2017: *Czyścić: Anthropologia neoliberalnego postsocjalizmu*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.
- Coffey, Amanda 1999: *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity*. London: SAGE Publ.
- Dyer, Richard 1997: *White*. London: Routledge.
- Dzenovska, Dace 2013: Historical Agency and the Coloniality of Power in Postsocialist Europe. *Anthropological Theory* 13(4): 394–416. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499613502185>.
- Dzenovska, Dace 2018: *School of Europeanness: Tolerance and other Lessons in Political Liberalism in Latvia*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501716867>.
- Gdula, Maciej & Przemysław Sadura (eds.) 2012: *Style życia i porządek klasowy w Polsce*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR.
- Hannerz, Ulf 1990: Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture. *Theory, Culture & Society* 7(2): 237–251. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/026327690007002014>.
- Hannerz, Ulf 2005: Two Faces of Cosmopolitanism: Culture and Politics. *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift* 107(3): 199–213.
- Haraway, Donna 1988: Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies* 14(3): 575–599. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>.
- Herzfeld, Michael 2002: The Absence Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism. *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101(4): 899–926. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-101-4-899>.
- Herzfeld, Michael 2004: *The Body Impolitic: Artisans and Artifice in the Global Hierarchy of Value*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Herzfeld, Michael 2005: *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Hirschkind, Charles 2011: Is there a Secular Body? *Cultural Anthropology* 26(4): 633–647. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2011.01116.x>.
- Keinz, Anika 2008: *Polens Andere: Verhandlungen von Geschlecht und Sexualität in Polen nach 1989*. Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839410110>.
- Keinz, Anika & Paweł Lewicki 2019: Who Embodies Europe? Explorations into the Construction of European Bodies. *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 28(1): 7–24. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3167/ajec.2019.280104>.

- Korolczuk, Elżbieta 2019: *Varieties of Gendered Populism: The Case of Poland*. Public Seminar, <http://www.publicseminar.org/essays/varieties-of-gendered-populism>. Accessed October 7, 2019.
- Krastev, Ivan 2017: *After Europe*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812294262>.
- Kuus, Merje 2015: Symbolic Power in Diplomatic Practice: Matters of Style in Brussels. *Cooperation and Conflict* 50(3): 368–384. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836715574914>.
- Lapina, Linda (forthcoming): Sex worker or Volunteer Visitor? Affordances of Western and Eastern European Whiteness. *Intersections: EEJSP* 6(3) (2020).
- Latour, Bruno 1993: *We have never been Modern*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Lewicki, Paweł 2016: European Bodies? Class and Gender Dynamics among EU Civil Servants in Brussels. *Anthropological Journal on European Cultures* 25(2): 116–138. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3167/ajec.2016.250206>.
- Lewicki, Paweł 2017: *EU-Space and the Euroclass: Modernity, Nationality and Lifestyle among Eurocrats in Brussels*. Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839439746>.
- Loftsdóttir, Kristín 2011: Negotiating white Icelandic Identity: Multiculturalism and Colonial Identity Formations. *Social Identities* 17(1): 11–25. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2011.531902>.
- Loftsdóttir, Kristín, Andrea L. Smith & Brigitte Hipfl 2018: Introduction. In: Kristín Loftsdóttir, Andrea L. Smith & Brigitte Hipfl (eds.), *Messy Europe: Crisis, Race, and Nation-State in a Postcolonial World*. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvw04hj9>.
- McDonald, Maryon 1997: Identities inside the European Commission. In: Neill Nugent (ed.), *At the Heart of the Union: Studies of the European Commission*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 49–70. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-25791-1_3.
- McDonald, Maryon 2006: Trying to be European in Brussels. *Berliner Blätter* 41: 84–101.
- McDonald, Maryon 2012: Putting Culture in its Place. *European Societies* 14(4): 540–561. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2012.724578>.
- Neumann, Iver B. 2012: *At Home with the Diplomats: Inside a European Foreign Ministry*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7591/cornell/9780801449932.001.0001>.
- Pink, Sarah 2009: *Doing Sensory Ethnography*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249383>.
- Pobłocki, Kacper 2016: Niewolnictwo po polsku. *Czas Kultury* 3(190): 62–68.
- Poehls, Kerstin 2009: *Europa Backstage: Expertenwissen, Habitus und kulturelle Codes im Machtfeld der EU*. Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839410370>.
- Pollock, Sheldon, Carol A. Breckendige, Dipesh Chakrabarty & Homi K. Bhabha 2002: Cosmopolitanisms. In: Sheldon Pollock, Carol A. Breckendige, Dipesh Chakrabarty & Homi K. Bhabha (eds.), *Cosmopolitanism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1–14.
- Porter-Szücs, Brian 2011: *Faith and Fatherland: Catholicism, Modernity and Poland*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195399059.001.0001>.
- Radkowska-Walkowicz, Magdalena 2017: How the Political Becomes Private: In Vitro Fertilization and the Catholic Church in Poland. *Journal of Religion and Health* 57(3): 979–993. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-017-0480-3>.
- Róžańska, Julia 2011: Polish EU Officials in Brussels: Analysis of an Emerging Community. *Migracjijske i etničke teme* 27(2): 263–298.
- Scheer, Monique, Nadia Fadil & Brigitte Scheperlen Johansen 2019: Secular Embodiments: Mapping an Emergent Field. In: Monique Scheer, Nadia Fadil & Brigitte Scheperlen Johansen (eds.), *Secular Bodies, Affects and Emotions*. London, New York et al.: Bloomsbury Academic, 1–14. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350065253.ch-001>.
- Smoczynski, Rafał, Ian Fitzgerald & Paweł Zarycki 2017: The Intelligentsia Informed Habitus in Social Distance Strategies of Polish Migrants in the UK. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40(6): 951–968. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2016.1216140>.
- Zabursky, Stacia 2000: Boundaries at Work: Discourses and Practices of Belonging in the European Space Agency. In: Irène Bellier & Thomas M. Wilson (eds.), *An Anthropology of the European Union: Building, Imagining and Experiencing the New Europe*. Oxford & New York: Berg.
- Zarycki, Tomasz 2014: *Ideologies of Eastness in Central and Eastern Europe*. London & New York: Routledge. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315819006>.
- Zubrzycki, Geneviève 2006: *The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226993058.001.0001>.
- Paweł Lewicki gained his Ph.D. from Humboldt-University in Berlin and is now an assistant professor at the Chair for Comparative Central European Studies of the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder). Currently he analyses various forms of citizenship in trajectories of marginalized, HIV-positive migrants from Poland in Berlin. One of his recent publications is *Struggles over Europe: Postcolonial East/West Dynamics of Race, Gender and Sexuality* (together with Randi Gressgård and Rafał Smoczyński). (lewicki@europa-uni.de)