

Abstract

The dissertation explores the discursive illiberal shift that is taking place in Poland considering the period between 2015 – 2020, and focusing on its cultural side. While the existing literature has mainly looked at the causes of illiberalism, this research is concerned with the construction of a neo-traditionalist discourse based on traditionalism, anti-modernism, and anti-colonialism. The 'illiberal turn' in Poland is explained as a counter-hegemonic reaction that rejects the cultural principles of liberal democracy and proposes an alternative worldview. Drawing from Post-structuralist Discourse Theory, the dissertation seeks to unveil the content of Polish neo-traditionalism, its political and hegemonic strategy, and the fantasies that provide it with ideological strength. To achieve this aim, a discourse-theoretical analysis of several Polish 'neo-traditionalist discourse makers' was performed. While it cannot be claimed that a single group or party is chasing the same political goals, it was observed instead the existence of a common (informal and unaware) discourse coalition that repeatedly promotes a narrative based on three elements: tradition, nation (culturally defined), and people-as-a-community. The neo-traditionalist discourse coalition in Poland has deployed a hegemonic project that has, at least in part, legitimized the discursive shift towards illiberalism giving voice to the 'cultural losers of globalization'.