

POWER/KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION
A FOUCAULDIAN ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSES ON THE
2010 TU-154 CRASH IN SMOLENSK

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ABSTRACT

This study analyze the Polish discourses on the 2010 Tu-154 plane crash in Smolensk in which 96 state officials, including the Polish president, were killed. Contrary to previous investigation on the aftermaths of the Smolensk plane crash which focused on the phenomenon of national mourning, my study examines the political and social division which the crash highlighted. With the use of a Foucauldian conceptual framework, this study investigates two major discourses on the crash: the national and liberal discourses. Whereas the former constituted the catastrophe as a result of an intentional action and produced theories of conspiracy and the responsibility of Russia for the crash, the latter established the crash as a result of contingencies. It is argued that these explanations of the Smolensk plane crash depend on the relations specific to the rule-governed systems which incorporate various elements as institutions, events, theories or concepts. The major focus of this study is the process whereby one of these explanations, namely the accidental one, has been established as the official and true theory. A genealogical study of such events as appointments of experts committees, publications of the reports on the causes of the Smolensk plane crash, as well as struggles between the national and liberal discourses depicts the mechanism whereby the truth on Smolensk crash was constituted, and reveals the power relations which participated in this process.

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INTRODUCTION

On the 10th of April 2010 a Polish delegation, including Polish President, Lech Kaczynski, his wife, major politicians and government officials, was flying to Katyn to commemorate the death of the victims of the Katyn massacre¹. When pilots attempted to land at the Smolensk airport in Russia, the plane crashed killing all 96 passengers.

The response of Polish society was highly emotional. Few hours after the catastrophe, thousands of Poles went on the streets and gathered in front of the Presidential Palace in the capital city of Warsaw. For the next two weeks, people from all over the country were arriving to pay tribute to the victims of the crash, especially to the Presidential couple. There was an atmosphere of sadness, grim and trauma. However, the vagueness of the circumstances of the crash, as well as a bizarre chain of events which followed it, ceased national mourning and divided Polish society and the political scene of Poland between those who advocate the explanation of the plane crash as a “pure accident”, and those who either regard the circumstances of the crash as at least suspicious or explicitly express theories of conspiracy.

The existing literature on the aftermaths of the Smolensk plane crash is sparse and addressee only the first stage of the aftermaths of the catastrophe in Poland, namely national mourning. For instance, the book *Smolensk catastrophe: social, political and media reactions* conceptualize the crash as an traumatic event which united the Polish nation in pain (Gilinski & Wasilewski 2011). Likewise, the article “The Category of Dislocation in the Analysis of Changes in Polish Public Discourse after the Smolensk Catastrophe” of Maciej Witkowski (2012) argues that the national tragedy of the Smolensk catastrophe lead to the emergence of a new symbolic order based on renewed national myths.

¹ The Katyn massacre was the secret execution of more than 20 thousand Polish nationals carried out by the Soviet People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs in 1940 in Katyn, Russia.

Although the article “The Politics of Catastrophe” of Leszek Kocznawicz (2012), tackles the division which the crash in Smolensk highlighted, it fails to address the aftermaths of the Smolensk plane crash as a broader social phenomenon. This results from his concept of ideology which is limited in two major aspects. First of all, Koczanowicz (2012) concentrates on the ideologies of political parties, and therefore refrains from the issue of ideology as a social phenomenon. Secondly, he employs the concept of ideology only to one worldview, which he calls “national-religious” ideology, whereas the issue of the “modernization ideology” is evaded.

An intriguing aspect of the Polish public debate on the Smolensk plane crash is the fact that in spite of the obscurity and the multiplication of contradictory evidence in the case of “Smolensk” investigation, the scenario which claimed the crash to be an accident has gained the status of the official explanation. My research question is how this official explanation on the Smolensk plane crash has been established.

In order to answer my research question I use the theoretical and methodological framework of Michel Foucault which can be found in such works as *The Archaeology of Knowledge, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, and *The History of Sexuality*. With the use of the concepts of discourse and power/knowledge, I conduct an archaeological and genealogical investigation of the theories on the Smolensk plane crash. The archaeological part of my research enables to contextualizes the explanations of the Smolensk plane crash within the social and political fields to which they belong. Moreover, it also presents how the event of Smolensk crash has been discursively produced. In this way, the archaeology of the crash prepares the ground for the genealogy, which explains how the official explanation was constituted.

In order to gather the necessary data for addressing the abovementioned issues, I conducted a media analysis of the news on the catastrophe and its investigation. I analyzed

around 100 articles which were published in the major Polish newspapers in the period from 10 April 2010 to 30 April 2013. When collecting the material, I concentrated on the publications which occurred in the time when the most important events regarding the crash and its investigation took place, such as: the crash itself, the publication of the Russian Interstate Aviation Committee reports, anniversaries of the catastrophe, the publication of an article on the explosive material on the plane, the publication of the report of the Polish committee investigating the crash, as well as the conflict over the so called “Smolensk cross”, a cross which was placed in front of the Presidential Palace in Warsaw after the catastrophe.

Moreover, I have conducted five in-depth interviews with the representatives of the organizations and groups engaged in criticizing the official explanation. My interviewees were: Ewa Stankiewicz, the president of the “Solidarni 2010” association, Cezary Gmyz, the journalist of “Rzeczpospolita” who published the article on the presence of explosive materials on the Tu-154, Dawid Wildstein, editor of the opinion section of the “Gazeta Polska Codziennie”, Magdalena Meta, the widow of Tomasz Merta, a former member of Donald Tusk’s government and a victim of the Smolensk crash, as well as Edward Mizikowski, a member and the bodyguard of the group of “cross defenders” who blocked the removal of the “Smolensk cross” from the center of Warsaw, and a former activist of “Solidarity” movement².

In addition, in the period of 10 to 30 April 2013, I conducted a participant observation of the third anniversary of the Smolensk plane crash and the gatherings of the cross defenders which were organized in front of the presidential palace in Warsaw every evening. My fieldwork considered solely the actors propagating the unofficial explanation of the Smolensk plane crash, since their voice is marginalized in the Polish public sphere.

In the first chapter of my thesis, I present the basics of Foucauldian archaeology and

² All of these actors and institutions are discussed in the second and third chapter.

genealogy, especially the concepts of discourse and power/knowledge, as well as my conceptualization of two Polish discourses on the Smolensk plane crash: the national and liberal discourse. Subsequently, the second chapter presents the archeology of the national discourse and its discursive relations which allowed for the production of conspiracy theories and the “Smolensk assassination”. In the third chapter, I present the genealogy of the constitution of the truth about the Smolensk plane crash.

CHAPTER 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND GENEALOGICAL STUDIES

In this chapter, I discuss the conceptual tools which I used in my research on the Smolensk discourses. First of all, I present the principles of a Foucauldian archaeological research. Secondly, I introduce the concept of discourse and my conceptualization of the Polish discourses on Smolensk: the liberal and national discourses. Finally, I describe the basics of the genealogy and its application to my case.

1.1 Archaeology of the catastrophe

One of the crucial concepts in my thesis is Foucauldian discourse. Discourse is composed of signs, but it is not equal with language, since its role is to constitute its objects, and not to signify or refer to them (Foucault 2002). In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault (2002: 55) describes discourse as “practice that systematically form the objects of which it speaks”. This definition contains the most important characteristic of discourse, namely, the fact that discourse is productive (Kendall & Wickham 1999). With the use of Foucauldian concept of discourse, I analyze how the Smolensk plane crash has been discursively produced in Poland. Since the statements of discourse do not designate things which exist in reality, but constitute

them in a certain form, I analyze how the Smolensk plane crash has been generated.

In order to answer this type of question, one has to go beyond a nominalistic approach and look at discourses as a rule-governed systems. Such systems, called by Foucault (2002) “discursive formations”, produce not only objects, but also statements, subjects, concepts and theories. These basic elements of discourse are mutually dependent, as they are constituted and regulated according to the rules particular to a given discourse. Therefore, the first step in analyzing the Smolensk plane crash discourses is to place the produced events within the matrices of the respective discourses, which are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Smolensk plane crash discourses

	Liberal discourse	National discourse
object	accidental crash	assassination
enunciative modalities³	statements issued by experts, mainstream journalists, ruling party politicians	statements issued by experts, alternative journalists, opposition politicians
concepts	modern state, democratic transparency	great nation, history of Russia and its relations with Poland, corrupted state, communism
theories	Theory of democratic order theories of natural and applied science	theory of conspiracy, theories of natural and applied science

³ “Enunciative modalities “ refer to the positions and practices asserted with authority within discursive formations (Foucault 2002).

The “liberal discourse” refers to the discourse which operates in the Polish mainstream media and the state institutions. It operates with the use of selected theories of physics and engineering which explain the Smolensk plane crash as caused by such contingencies as the weather conditions, difficulties in communication between the pilots and the control tower of the Smolensk airport, or unintentional mistakes of the plane’s crew. Such conclusions are drawn by the expert’s committees appointed by the government, whose credibility is provided by the concepts of modern state and democratic transparency. This discourse gives the authority to the experts and journalists who are shown in the mainstream media, as well as to the politician of Civic Platform, the ruling party in Poland.

The “national discourse” has its own experts and natural and applied sciences theories which participate in the production of the crash as a non-coincidence. For instance, by building the theoretical modes on the basis of engineering, this discourse rebuts the thesis on the contingent nature of the crash. Moreover, it also makes the link with the history of Poland and its past relations with Russia. For instance, statements about the Smolensk crash are juxtaposed with the statements on the Katyn massacre and Soviet imperialism. The national discourse grants the right to speak the truth to statesmen who fight for national interests, conservative journalists and experts cooperating with the opposition party.

Using the conceptualization of liberal and national discourses, I analyze the production of the Smolensk plane crash on three levels. According to Foucault (2002), there are three groups of relations which regulate discourses: primary relations, which are established between such domains as “institutions, political events, economic practices and processes” (Foucault 2002: 180), secondary relations, which relate to the relations between subjective categorizations and modes of thinking, and discursive relations, which operate “at the limit of

discourse” and are given the priority over the first two kinds of relations.

Consequently, at the level of primary relations, I analyze the relations between non-discursive fields such as the Polish media, the government and the Polish political system, the relations between Poland and Russia, expert institutions such as the Russian Interstate Aviation Committee or the Polish Committee for Investigation of National Aviation Accidents. At the level of secondary relations, my analysis includes the relations between statements of individual actors such as major Polish politicians, journalists and the experts on aviation. What have to be emphasized is the fact that the Smolensk discourses do not include all the complex relationships which can be found at the non-discursive and subjective level. The crucial meaning of Foucault’s concept of discourse is that it refrains from the dichotomy of materialism and idealism. Namely, discourses do not operate on every institution or event which seems to be relevant from the materialistic point of view. Neither do they give voice to every subject who appears valid for idealists. The discursive relations do not reflect the primary and secondary relations, but interact with them and make use of them. Similarly, I analyze the relations between the discursive practices and their interplay with primary and secondary relations in order to establish the discursive relations specific for the Smolensk discourses which allowed for the constitution of their objects, statements, subjects, concepts and theories.

1.2 Genealogy and the power/knowledge

Whereas in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* discursive relations are understood as a paradigm (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982), in the later works of Foucault they refer to power relations (Foucault & Gordon 1980a). Indeed, what is missing from archaeology is the notion of power. As a result, Foucauldian archaeological research can catalogue discourses and reveal their

internal logic, as such it remains valid for my research, but it cannot explain how power makes them authoritative and asymmetrical.

The method which is capable of answering this question is genealogy, which was introduced by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*. Using the genealogical approach of Foucault, I investigate the practices which generated “the power of constituting a domain of objects, in relation to which one can affirm or deny true or false propositions” (Foucault 1981:73). For these purpose, I apply the concepts of power/knowledge and its technologies.

1.2.1. Power/knowledge

In the *History of Sexuality* Foucault explained that power “is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical relationship in a particular society” (1980b:93). A Foucauldian concept of power refers to:

The process which through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies (Foucault 1980a: 92 – 93).

Thereof, arguing that the Smolensk discourses have been established and regulated by the power relations, avoids attributing power to particular actors, institutions or social groups. Power relations are mobile, asymmetrical and productive in the sense that they constitute structured discursive entities through a set of operations performed on the social body (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982).

The workings of power are inseparable from knowledge and its production. Within the Foucauldian framework, knowledge is never neutral since it is both a product of power and its generator (Foucault 1980a). In the light of Foucauldian perspective, the knowledge on the

Smolensk plane crash results from struggles and power relations between diverse actors, institutions and discourses. Therefore, as I argue in the third chapter, the official explanation of the Smolensk catastrophe resulted from the asymmetrical power relations between the liberal and national discourse, and numerous struggles which have taken place between them.

One of the main means whereby power/knowledge operates is the production of subjects. For Foucault “there are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to (Foucault 1982:212). In my research, I employ the notion of the technology of power in order to account for the mechanisms whereby the liberal discourse subjugated its opponents. As I argue in the third chapter, this technology of power was one of the mechanisms which allowed the liberal discourse to establish its dominant position in Poland, as well as contributed to the constitution of the regime of truth on the Smolensk crash.

CHAPTER 2 THE ARCHIVE OF SMOLENSK ASSASSINATION

This chapter introduces the characteristics of national discourse on the Smolensk plane crash. The findings presented in the following sections are based on my archaeological research of the news on the Smolensk plane crash, interviews I conducted with the subjects of the national discourse, as well as on my participant observation of the cross defenders and the third anniversary of the Smolensk catastrophe which took place on 10 April, 2013.

The chapter begins with introductory information on the difference between discourse and language in order to illustrate how I obtained my findings using a research inspired by Foucauldian archaeology. Subsequently I present my findings by discussing the features of the national discourse.

2.1 Discourse versus language

Archeological research differs from the studies of language employed by such disciplines as logics, hermeneutics and structuralism. From the point of view of logic, language consists of prepositions which are either true or false. In contrast, the truth-value of a statement, the elemental unit of discourse, depends on the system in which it occurs (Foucault 2002; Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982). Moreover, logic usually applies a version of the correspondence theory of truth which establishes truth-values of prepositions on the grounds of their relationship with reality. Discourse, in contrast, has neither outside, nor inside (Kendall & Wickham 1999). It has no outside because it does not refer to things which exist in reality. One cannot go beyond discourse to reach materiality, as it is always mediated by discourse (Foucault 2002)⁴. On the other hand, discourse lacks inside in the sense that it is not the product of individuals' thought (Kendall & Wickham 1999). According to Foucault (2002) something is said or written because it follows the rules of discourse, and not because of the author's intentions. By no means does the archaeological approach exclude in this way the influence of social institutions or individuals on discourse, as it will be argued in the following section. What Foucault (2002) did argue is the relative independence of discourse from its non-discursive background and individual modes of thinking.

It is also hermeneutics which deals with interpreting that largely differs from archaeology. According to Foucault, "if interpretation can never be brought to the end, it is simply because there is nothing to interpret" (Foucault 1990:64). For Foucault (1990), there is no "deeper" meaning of words because the phenomena with which researchers deal are already interpretations. Thereof, the only interesting hermeneutic aspect of a statement is its literal meaning given in the context in which it occurs (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982). From such

⁴ This issue needs a longer epistemological consideration, which goes beyond the scope of my thesis.

a point of view, any hermeneutic interpretation of the statements of the national and liberal discourses is irrelevant. Employing a Foucauldian archaeological approach, I aim at determining “the juxtaposition, coexistence, or interaction of heterogeneous elements (...) and the relation that is established between them by discursive practices”, (Foucault 2002:81–82) particular for the two discourses on the Smolensk plane crash.

Tracing the relations between discursive practices allows for establishing the discursive formation of a given discourse. According to Foucault:

By system of formation, then, I mean a complex group of relations that function as a rule: it lays down what must be related, in a particular discursive practice, for such and such an enunciation to be made, for such and such a concept to be used, for such and such a strategy to be organized. To define a system of formation in its specific individuality is therefore to characterize a discourse or a group of statements by the regularity of a practice (Foucault 2002: 83)

The approach described in the above excerpt of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* resembles to a certain degree the method of structuralism. However, whereas structuralists search for the general rules underling human actions, archeologists investigate the rules which have a historical and local character (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982). Likewise, my analysis does not seek to reveal general structures which determine what can be said or written about Smolensk plane crash, but it establishes the relationships specific for the Smolensk discourses which allowed for the production of the crash in particular forms. In conclusion, instead of looking at how the Smolensk discourses refer to the reality, convey a deeper meaning or express basic structures, I analyze how they produce the elements of which they speak.

Contrary to a popular criticism of Foucault (Rabinow & Dreyfus 1981), a Foucauldian understanding of discourse does not exclude non-discursive dimensions of social reality. In fact, discursive relations are mediated by so called “primary” and “secondary relations”(Foucault 2002). Whereas the former refers to the relations between materialistic entities such as institutions or events, the latter denotes the relations between individual ways of thinking. Therefore, things and thoughts constitute discourse as well, but they do not have

the priority in the process of formation of discourse. Similarly, neither institutions nor subjective ideas have a decisive role in the process of producing truth on the Smolensk crash. However, since they play an important role in this process, they are analyzed with regard to each of the Smolensk discourses.

2.2. National discourse: the production of conspiracy theories and the Smolensk assassination

The national discourse as a rule-governed system constitutes the Smolensk plane crash as an intentional action on the basis of relations which are particular to its discursive formation. In order to account for this discursive formation, the following section begins with an introduction of the main elements of the primary relations⁵ of the national discourse and its enunciative modality. Subsequently, I discuss the discursive relations of the national discourse which allowed for constituting theories of conspiracy and the Smolensk assassination as immanently legitimate.

2.2.1. The primary relations of the national discourse

Besides the obvious element of the primary relation of the national discourse, which is the very crash in Smolensk, the major components of these relations are the following institutions: the alternative Polish media with a more conservative profile such as “Rzeczpospolita”, “Gazeta Polska Codziennie” and “Nasz Dziennik”, the opposition party, the Law and Justice (PiS) and the Parliamentary Unit for Investigating the Causes of the Tu-154 catastrophe initiated by PiS, called “Macierewicz’s Committee”⁶, the “Solidarni 2010” association, the “Smolensk Families”, as well as the group of people who regularly gather in

⁵ It has to be stressed that it is not possible to list all of the primary relations that are relevant for the Smolensk discourses. Therefore, I concentrate on the main institutions which have direct influence on these discourses what can be observed by analyzing the national discourse.

⁶ The name of the committee derives from the surname of its head, Antoni Macierewicz.

front of the Presidential Palace in Warsaw, commonly referred to as the “cross defenders”.

All of these institutions are closely related to each other. “Rzeczpospolita”, “Gazeta Polska Codziennie” and “Nasz Dziennik” openly support the Law and Justice party, and are connected with and advocate the claims of “Solidarni 2010” association, the “Smolensk Families” and the “cross defenders”. PiS is the main opposition party in Poland. It won the parliamentary elections in 2005 on the basis of a right-wing populist campaign targeted against the Civic Platform⁷, the former communist and “the rich and educated”. Lech Kaczynski, the deceased president killed in the Smolensk plane crash, was, along with his brother Jaroslaw Kaczynski, the leader of PiS. The party appointed Macierewicz’s Committee in order to find “true” causes of the crash and oppose the explanation of the crash advocated by the government. The committee gathers various experts dealing with the aviation accidents who develop theories about an explosion on the Tu-154. “Solidarni 2010” is an association of people, who, after the crash in Smolensk, pitched a tent in front of the presidential palace and stayed there for almost three years in order to express their disagreement with the government’s policy on the investigation of the Smolensk crash. “Solidarni 2010” are closely related with the “cross defenders”: a group which occupied the space around the Smolensk cross⁸ in front of the Presidential Palace in Warsaw for more than two years for the purpose of protecting the Smolensk Cross from displacement from the center of Warsaw. The president of the “Solidarni 2010”, Ewa Stankiewicz, shot two movies, “Solidarni 2010” and “Cross”, devoted to the events which took place in front of the presidential palace after the Smolensk plane crash. The latter movie, “Cross”, depicted the activity of the “cross defenders” and the aggression and offences of which they were victims⁹ when they protected the “Smolensk cross”. Finally, the “Smolensk Families” is an association which gathers the families of the

⁷ The currently ruling party in Poland.

⁸ The issue of the “Smolensk cross” is discussed in the third chapter.

⁹ The cross defenders were regularly physically and mentally tormented by unknown aggressor while guarding the Smolensk cross.

victims of the Smolensk catastrophe. Some of its members participate in the meetings of Macierewicz's Committee and PiS. The "Families" are highly critical of the government and its policy on the investigation of the crash in Smolensk.

2.2.2. The authorities of the national discourse

The enunciative modality, the relations between statements and subjects which provide the latter with authority (Foucault 2002), of the national discourse derives from the institutions which participate in the production of it. This authority is provided not by the actors themselves, but on the basis of the positions which the actors occupy within the organization of a given discursive field (Foucault 2002). For instance, the voice of Jarosław Kaczyński is warranted as a "serious speech act" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982) on the grounds of his leadership in PiS party, as well as a result of the relationships between the party and the other elements of the discursive formation of the national discourse¹⁰.

The national discourse grants the authority to the subject considered patriots and "true" Poles. For instance, during the third anniversary of the Smolensk plane crash, Tomasz Sakiewicz, editor of the "Gazeta Polska Codziennie", Ewa Stankiewicz, president of "Solidarni 2010" association, and Anita Gargas, editor of the investigative section of the "Gazeta Polska Codziennie" entered the stage which was put in front of the presidential palace on the occasion of the anniversary, then the crowd stated shouting: "Applause for the true Poles!". Sakiewicz, Stankiewicz and Gargas are considered as "true Poles" because of their engagement in the struggle for the "national interest", which in the national discourse is understood as striving to reveal the truth about the Smolensk crash. Both Stankiewicz and Gargas shot movies on the Smolensk crash and its investigation and the reaction of Poles towards it. The movies were highly critical towards the government and suggested that the

¹⁰ I do not argue that enunciative modality of the national discourse is valid for everyone. The authority of statements depends as well on the power relations which are discoursed. In the third chapter.

Russian and Polish authorities are collaborating to hide the actual circumstances of the Smolensk catastrophe. Furthermore, as the “Smolensk Families” and the cross defenders are the main actors in the struggle for the “Smolensk truth” as well, they are also granted with the authority within the discursive formation of the national discourse.

To be a patriot and a true Pole also means that one has to be an anti-communist. On this basis Antoni Macierewicz, the head of the Parliamentary Unit for Investigating the Causes of the Tu-154 catastrophe, is another authoritative subject of the national discourse. Macierewicz is a member of PiS, a former Minister of the Interior and a former head of the Military Counter-Espionage Agency. He is famous for his anti-communist activity, especially for so called “register of “Macierewicz”, created in 1991 a list of 64 members of the Polish government which, according to the documents of the communist regime collected by Macierewicz, collaborated with the communist secret services during the times of People’s Republic of Poland. In addition, in 2006 Macierewicz liquidated Military Information Services, the Polish military intelligence agency, on the ground of its collaboration with former agents of the Soviet Committee for State Security (KGB) and the Security Service (SB) of the communist Poland.

2.2.3. The discursive relations of the national discourse

With the use of an archeological analysis of the interviews I conducted and articles published by the alternative media, I found following repetitive elements of the national discourse: a negative notion of the history of Russia and its relations with Poland, an assumption on a corrupted nature of the Polish government and Polish state institutions, a theory about a strong influence of former communists on the present situation in Poland, as well as a distinctly positive concept of nation. The relations between these elements constitute, as Foucault (2002) would call them, “discourse relations” of the national discourse. In the following

sections I discuss each of these elements.

Russia and Poland

The national discourse produces a pejorative image of the Russian state, its history and its relations with Poland by selectively drawing from history¹¹. A crucial object of the national discourse is the Katyn massacre, the communist crime carried out by the Soviet People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs in which more than 20 thousand Polish nationals were murdered in 1940 in Katyn, Russia. In Poland Katyn is a strongly negative symbol of communism, the Soviet totalitarian system and its crimes. Until the collapse of USSR the Soviet authorities denied responsibility for the Katyn massacre. The dissension between Poland and Russia with regard to declassifying the documents on the massacre has been present also after the end of the Soviet Russia. For this reason many Poles consider the issue of Katyn massacre as a sign of hostility of the contemporary Russia towards Poland and the "deceitful" nature of its authorities.

The national discourse draws an analogy between the massacre and the plane crash in Smolensk. The very fact that the Polish delegation flew to Smolensk to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Katyn massacre was used by the discourse to generate a conspiracy theory. For instance, discursive practices of the cross defenders incorporates this analogy in a symbolic way: there is an inscription "Katyn 1940 – Smolensk 2010" engraved on the cross with the cross defenders bring every evening in front of the presidential palace. Similar inscriptions appear on banners brought by people who attended the third anniversary of the Smolensk crash. For example, there was a banner with the caption: : "Wake up Poland! The

¹¹ The concept of Russia produced by the national discourse is a good example of what Foucault (2002) means by the priority of the discursive relations over the primary and secondary relations. The national discourse does not make use of all the history and a full picture of the current state of affairs in Russia. Neither does it equal the subjective representations of Russia of the interviewed individuals, since discourse can be distinguished by regularity of statements (rules their production). The national discourse produces a negative concept of Russia by selectively drawing from its history and subjective ways of thinking about the country.

Katyn and Smolensk massacres attack the independency of Poland”. Moreover, the Smolensk crash is often referred to as the “Second Katyn”, and the investigation of the crash is called, analogically to the “Katyn lie”, the “Smolensk lie”.

Furthermore, the national discourse creates the relationship between Russia and Poland as an imperial one. As Merta said in the interview I conducted with her:

[The Polish Military Prosecutor’s Office] refused to give the permission for the presence of independent experts during the autopsy [of the victims of the Smolensk crash]. Beata Gosiweska¹² met with such refusal along with a commentary: “you do not understand that Russia is an empire”. This means that the orders are not issued by the Polish military commanders, but by Moscow (Merta)¹³.

Likewise, while commenting on the Polish-Russian relationships, Gmyz mentioned the imperial tendencies of Russia towards Poland and give an example of the shale gas fields which were found on the territory of Poland. The fields can end the dependence of Poland on the gas supply from Russia as the deposit of shale gas in Poland is estimated to provide the country with energetic self-sufficiency, and therefore, according to Gmyz,:

Russia regards this situation as a threat to its political interests because in the Russian consciousness the sentence “a chicken is not a bird and Poland is not abroad” holds still– it is a realization of the old Brezhnev’s doctrine on “near abroad”, which should remain under the influence of Russia (Gmyz).

These are not only the relations between Poland and Russia that are established as gloomy in the national discourse, but also Russia and its history. In the interview I conducted with her, Stankiewicz argued:

Why should I think that Russia did not assassinated [the passengers of the Tupolev], since it assassinated its own citizens by blowing up the buildings with them in order to exterminate Chechens. The same Russia which killed more than hundred independent journalists ...It is a stupidity to exclude the possibility that Russia murdered the Polish president who stood up against Putin. And Putin is famous for having the bodies of dead journalists delivered as a birthday gift (Stnakiwicz).

The state versus nation

The negative notion of Russia and its hostile relations with Poland are linked with distrust towards the current Polish government and state institutions within the field of national discourse. Stankiewicz explained her engagement in protests against the government’s policy on the Smolensk crash investigation in the following way:

¹² Beata Gosiewska is the widow of Przemysław Gosiweski who died in the Smolensk crash. Gosiewski was a former Minister of the Transport during the rules of PiS party in Poland.

¹³ All the citations was translated from Polish by the author.

It was a reaction towards what was going on: towards destroying the state, towards that the president died, and the people how were supposed to provide him with security are promoted to a higher position by the new president. There is no more tangible testimony for the collapse of the state (...) and I do not agree for this kind of “whorishness” which floods in like Asian savages from the very top (Stankiewicz).

From my interview with Edward Mizinski, I learnt that:

They [the government] told lies so many times that it is a sin to believe in their reports. One has to be a scoundrel without conscience to trust them. We have never believed them. Two weeks after the crash I sent a notification to the Prosecutor's Office of the possibility of committing a crime on the Polish president and the elite of the fourth Polish Republic, by Michnik¹⁴, Tusk and Komorowski. I did not mention Arabski¹⁵, and this is what I regret (Mizinski).

Likewise the “Smolensk families” conceive of the Polish government as a traitor. The father of Artur Zietek, the deceased navigator of the Tu-154, during a live broadcast of a meeting of Macierewicz committee transmitted by “Polsat”, a private channel available in Poland nationwide, complained:

Two years ago Mr. Tusk said that we would get everything. Until now I have not got the [results] of the autopsy, I have not got anything, just a scrap-paper saying that my son died in Smolensk Oblast. Is this a Polish government or a Russian lackey? When he [Tusk] was embracing the Russian Tsar, Putin¹⁶, Putin probably whispered to his ear: “We fixed what you wanted” (“Dziennik” 5¹⁷).

For the Law and Justice party there is no doubt that the government does not serve the interest of the Polish nation. Invited for an evening edition of a news program of the national television (TVP) on the 17 April 2012, Jaroslaw Kaczynski argued:

We are dealing with covering-up the case...He [Tusk] got caught in a game with Putin, and now it is very difficult to withdraw from it...The Polish authorities have to be replaced, maybe then we will come closer to the truth... Those who rule in Russia and Poland nowadays do not want the truth to come to the light. (“Dziennik” 3).

Along with the distrust towards the state, the national discourse produces a concept of a great Polish nation which stands in opposition to the state. Jaroslaw Kaczynski during his speech on the third anniversary of the Smolensk catastrophe stated: “if we agree to what happens with Smolensk it means that anything can be done to Poland. We do not agree to this. Poland will last because there are millions of patriots in Poland. As long as we live, Poland is not

¹⁴ Adam Michnik is the editor of “Gazeta Wyborcza” the most popular newspaper in Poland, and the representative of the profile of the Polish mainstream media.

¹⁵ Tomasz Arabski is the head of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland since 2011. Arabski was responsible for the organization of the flights to Smolensk on 10 April 2010.

¹⁶ Zietek refers to the first meeting of Tusk with Putin after the Smolensk crash when they embraced each other.

¹⁷ The list of references of the newspapers articles can be found in the Appendix “Newspapers articles”.

dead¹⁸! We will have great Poland because we are great nation!”.

Moreover, the national discourse creates the concepts of national interest and national pride which needs a sovereign county: “they [the government] does not behave as the authority of a sovereign country. A country which gives away the investigation on the death of its president to a different nation is a sovereign country?”, Stankiewicz continued: “it is better to pretend that Russia did not split on the face of Poland”.

Communism

The national discourse juxtaposes the corruption of the state with a strong and negative influence of former communists on the current situation in Poland. This juxtaposition provides the discourse with the possibility of producing statements which explain the corruption of the state and the mainstream media by the presence of the remnants of the communist system. For instance, the celebration of the third anniversary of the crash was full of anti-communist exclamations which expressed the belief in the fault of “the communist” for the hiding the truth about the Smolensk crash. Throughout the all-day celebration of the anniversary, a middle aged man held a banner with the caption: “Komorowski¹⁹! This appeal surpasses you since you have already lost your honor because of: removing the cross, building a monument of Bolsheviks, having Jaruzelski in the presidential palace and collaborating with communist”. Stankiewicz and Wildstein also offered this type of explanation:

There is no difference here how who lies, public or private [Polish mainstream media], they lie equally and speak with one voice: the mainstream media originates from postcommunist capital, form the communist secret service...all the clerks originate from the communist system...form the worst (Stankiewicz)

The Smolensk case reveals a complete lack of sovereignty of the [Polish] media, their complaisance towards the government, almost caring out commands...It revels such nightmares in the Military Prosecutor’s Office like those of the Peoples Republic of

¹⁸ “As long as we live, Poland is not dead” is a paraphrase of a verse of the Polish national anthem: “Poland has not yet succumbed, as long as we remain”.

¹⁹ Bronisław Komorowski was elected the President of Poland after the death of Lech Kaczynski in Smolensk. In the elections he was the candidate of the Civic Platform.

Poland, limiting civil liberties, for instance the surveillance of journalists (Wieldstein).

Theories of conspiracy, blame and assassination

The discursive relations of the national discourse are established between the five elements discussed above. I argue that this relations regulate the national discourse and allows for the production of two version of a conspiracy theory which results in the production of the “Smolensk” assassination”, and a thesis on the Russia responsibility for the plane catastrophe in Smolensk.

The first version of the conspiracy theory about the crash presents it as a murder of the Polish political elite committed by the Russian authorities: “Form the data that are available to me, I think it was an assassination carried out by Russia. The Polish government had no idea what was going on [during the day of the crash], they were really downcast by the situation, I cannot imagine that they knew something” (Wildstein).

The other version is the theory on the collaboration between Polish and Russian government.

Either this Prime Minister is an amateur...or he consciously collaborated and has blood on his hand, but he consciously exposed the President to death, because he did: the Smolensk catastrophe was proceeded by a diplomatic game in which the PM Tusk with the Russian authorities led to separate the visits to Smolensk. This was a game against the Polish president in which the Polish PM participated (Stankiewicz).

Along with two alternative theories on the Smolensk assassination, the national discourse produces a third type of explanation which does not state explicitly that the catastrophe was a result of an intentional action since there is not enough of evidence for such a claim, but it argues that Russia should be blamed for the crash anyway:

At present is seems that the theory on the assassination has better ground than the opposite theory. However, we have to remember what are we are investigating: simulations [of the Tu-154 flight], satellite photographs, and we do not have a strong evidence in our hands...Nevertheless, it is obvious that Russians are to blame, and I am not necessarily talking about an assassination, because I do not presuppose that it was an intentional act. Nevertheless, I do not have any doubts that it were the Russian who crashed the plane, whether they did it on purpose, this is a totally different issue. (Merta).

In conclusion, I argued that the national discourse is regulated by four elements: the negative

notion of the history of Russia and its relations with Poland, the thesis on the corrupted character of the Polish government, which is partially explained by the premise on a significant influence of former communists on the current public sphere in Poland, as well as the concept of the great Polish nation. The relationships between these elements provided the national discourse with the possibility of generating theories of conspiracy, the statement on the Russia's responsibility for the crash, and the "Smolensk assassination" as reasonable within the national discursive formation.

CHAPTER 3 GENEALOGY OF THE SMOLENSK ACCIDENT

In this chapter I analyze the crucial discursive events which led to the constitution of truth about the Smolensk plane crash. In order to reveal the mechanisms whereby the power has operated, I employ a genealogical analysis which aims at the "meticulous rediscovery of struggles" (Foucault 2003) which have taken place in the process of naturalization of the Smolensk "regime of truth". Through exposing the political power of knowledge, I deconstruct the logical and rational status attributed to the official explanation of the catastrophe. I argue that the power to constitute true statements on the Smolensk plane crash, and its following embodiment in the state apparatus, resulted from the disjuncture and contradiction between the national and liberal discourse, as well as the power relations between Poland and Russia.

3.1. The constitution of the accident

The liberal discourse granted the right to conduct the investigation of the Smolensk plane crash to the Russian state by producing the Tu-154 flight to Smolensk as a civil one. In the

first two weeks after the catastrophe, the Polish government, in agreement with the Russian authorities, decided to investigate the causes of the crash under Annex 13 of the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, which applies, as the name of the institution suggests, to civil aviation. According to this Annex, investigation of a plane accident is conducted by the state in “the territory of which an accident or incident occurs”²⁰. Therefore, the investigation of the Smolensk crash was given to Russia and its Interstate Aviation Committee (IAC) headed by Tatiana Anodina and supervised by Vladimir Putin.

The national discourse constituted the decision as unjustified and shady. First of all, the experts of the national discourse considered the flight of Tu-154 to Smolensk a military one and on this basis argued that the Polish state could have had the right to conduct the investigation on the crash if the government had decided to apply to this case the Polish-Russian agreement on military aircraft signed by the countries in 1993 (Piekarski 2011). According to Macierewicz, by applying the Chicago Convention “we [Poland] confined the destiny of knowledge to Russia” (“Wirtualna Polska” 4).

This critique was rebutted by the liberal discourse which excluded other legal regulation as either inapplicable to the case of the Smolensk crash, or inefficient. The Polish Minister of Interior stated that the Polish-Russian agreement on military aircraft was intended to regulate the issue of withdrawing the Russian corps from the territory of Poland after the collapse of the USSR, and hence it cannot be used in the case of Smolensk crash (“Wirtualna Polska” 4). Moreover, he claimed that the agreement is not an actual regulation but “just a framework which would have to be filled with content”, and thus inefficient (“Wirtualna Polska” 4). In addition, the Polish Prime Minister assured that “the Chicago Convention, along with Appendix 13, is the only existing legal basis which allows us to take action immediately and has objective standards” (“Rzeczpospolita” 3). Moreover, the liberal discourse made

²⁰ The Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, Annex 13.

provision for the pressure exerted by the national discourse by creating its own expert institution, Miller's Committee, which was appointed by the Polish government to investigate the circumstances of the catastrophe in Smolensk irrespectively of the findings of the Russian IAC. As a result, the operation of power/knowledge hid the political relations between Poland and Russia, as well as the relations between the liberal and national discourse, under the claims of lacking alternatives and objectivity.

Subsequently, the IAC organized a conference in Moscow on 19 May 2010, during which it announced its preliminary findings on the circumstances of the Tu-154 crash in Smolensk. The experts of IAC said that they excluded a "terrorist attract", explosion, fire or failure of the plane as possible causes of the Smolensk catastrophe ("Interia" 1). They also mentioned that the recordings of the black box which registered the conversations that had took place in the cockpit of the Tupolev before the crash happened, testified that except for pilots there had been two other people in the cockpit when the pilots had attempted to land in Smolensk. One of them was identified as Andrzej Blasik, the then Commander of the Polish Air Forces. In this way the IAC suggested that the pilots had been under the pressure of the presence of their superior ("Interia" 1). Because of this additional information, the national discourse failed to take into account that the Smolensk plane crash was officially constituted as an accident by IAC. The news on the alleged responsibility of the Commander of the Polish Air Forces for the Smolensk plane crash went to the heart of the national discourse: the national pride. On the other hand, the liberal version of the crash was confirmed and the mainstream media focused on the speculation what general Blasik had been doing in the cockpit of the plane. ("Super Express" 3).

However, at this point the struggles for the truth on Smolensk plane crash have just begun. On 20 July 2010, the members of PiS party initiated the appointment of a new committee for investigating the causes of the Smolensk crash: Macierewicz's Committee. The

reason for appointing another committee was, according to Macierewicz, the government's inability to complete the task of finding the truth about the Smolensk crash.

3.1.2 The lepers of the Smolensk cross

After the election of a new President of Poland, Bronislaw Komorowski on 6 August 2010 a group of so called "cross defenders" consolidated. Five days after the crash, a cross, named the "Smolensk Cross", was placed in front of the Presidential Palace in Warsaw by a group of Polish Scouts. The new president stated that the Smolensk Cross should be placed in the Church. The group occupied the space around the Presidential Palace in Warsaw for more than two years for the purposes of protecting the Smolensk Cross from displacement from the center of Warsaw.

The cross defenders became the centre of the power struggles between the Smolensk discourses since the defenders constantly undermined the truth claims of the Polish and Russian governments by organizing rallies and common prayers devoted to the victims of the "Smolensk assassination".

The liberal discourse produced the cross defenders as aggressive and mentally unstable fanatics. With the use of psychological and psychiatric expertise, the media diagnosed the cross defenders as paranoid and obsessive individuals who should be subjected to mental treatment. For instance, one of the most popular Polish web portal "onet.pl" published an interview with a psychologist of the Polish Academy of Science in which the expert was asked to describe the behavior of the cross defenders:

Many of the statements from in front of the presidential palace bear witness of the type of reasoning typical for paranoia. From the clinical point of view this is a psychosis. He continued: "We do not know the mechanism of the brain responsible for conspiracy thinking exactly. However, at least in some individuals delusions may be caused by disturbances in processing of information in the brain (Onet 1).

TOK fm, a very popular radio station in Poland, invited a psychologist to account for the phenomenon of the cross defenders. The expert explained that the cross defenders found

themselves in the state of the lack of security, ““in such situation”, he claimed, “the brain activates the primitive structure called “reptilian brain” – which helps finding a symbol capable of restoring the sense of security, in this case this is the Smolensk cross” (“Gazeta Wyborcza” 1). “Reptilian brain”, is a concept developed by Paul MacLean (1990) in his hypothesis on threefold nature of the human brain, refers to the “primitive brain” responsible for aggression and self preservation.

These technologies of power created the need of controlling and treating the cross defenders. As a result, the Polish President, in agreement with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Warsaw, decided to “cure” the sick part of the social body by removing the cross from the street in front of the Presidential Palace and place it, along with its defenders, in the Church. In this way, the liberal discourse stigmatized the cross defenders and disciplined them through space by relocating them from the center of the capital city of Poland to the confines of the Church. The subjugation of the cross defenders contributed to the legitimization of the thesis on the contingent cause of the catastrophe in Smolensk, as their opponents were constituted as insane, and thus deprived of the right to make authoritative statements.

3.1.3. The IAC report: a drunken general and incompetent pilots

The final findings of the IAC were announced during its conference organized on 12 January 2011. According the final report of the IAC, the “immediate cause” of the crash was the pilots’ error who delayed the decision to proceed to another airport “although they were not once timely informed on the actual weather conditions at Smolensk “Severny” Airdrome (...) (Interstate Aviation Committee 2011:182). The report stated that presence of the general Andrzej Blasik in the cockpit exerted pressure on the pilots “to land at any means” (Interstate Aviation Committee 2011). Furthermore, during the conference the experts of IAC

emphasized that the general had 0.6 per mill of alcohol in his blood at the moment of the crash. Besides, IAC included in its report information on the flight of Lech Kaczynski to Georgia in 2008 during which the deceased President demanded from pilots to land in difficult conditions (Interstate Aviation Committee 2011).

The Polish government agreed with the finding of the IAC. The next day Tusk had a press conference during which he stated: “the report is incomplete, but we [the Polish government] do not undermine the basic finding of the report... Good relations can be built solely on truth. Who proves a coward in the face of truth; he or she can jeopardize the achievements of Poles and Russians in their pursuits for good relations” (“Gazeta Wyborcza” 2).

However, the discursive formation of the liberal discourse started to disintegrate at this point. The mainstream media questioned the Polish government response to the IAC report. For instance, such newspapers as “Dziennik”, “Newsweek” or “Wprost” published articles with offensive or critical of the government heading: “The IAC Report: Prime Minister Slapped” (“Newsweek” 1), “IAC’s Report like a Punch in the Face” (“Wprost” 1), “Widow Call on the Government: Defend the Dignity of Officers” (“Dziennik” 2). Moreover, the mainstream media began to inform on the Russian media interpretation of the IAC report,. For example, “Dziennik” published an article which cited excerpts of the Russian news on the report: “IAC on the causes of the Tupolev’s catastrophe: guilty: Kaczynski, the pilots and a drunken commander of aviation”, or “Alcohol in the blood of general Blasik and the fault of the Polish pilots who belittled the weather conditions in Smolensk and refused to land in an alternative airport” (“Dziennik” 1). The mainstream media conceived of this news as offensive for Poland.

Simultaneously, for the first time since the crash the national discourse mobilized all of its forces to oppose the liberal discourse. First of all, in a press conference organized just

after Tusk's response to the report of IAC, the leader of PiS, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, blamed the Prime Minister's policy on the investigation of the Smolensk crash for the result of the IAC work:

The report is a consequence of the wrong decisions of the Prime Minister...The policy of Donald Tusk on the catastrophe proved to be a complete failure. IAC is an instrument of the Russian politics. I does not meet any standards of an objective institution. We reject the IAC [report] because it is completely unreliable" ("Super Express" 1).

Consequently, Kaczynski called for appointing an international committee for explaining the catastrophe. Furthermore, in the same day "Gazeta Polska Codziennie" organized a protest in front of the Prime Minister Chancellery entitled "Tusk is responsible for the IAC report". The crowd, which amounted to approximately 500 people, shouted "Free Poland", "We Are in Poland, Not in Russia" or "The Government before the Court" ("Gazeta Prawna" 1).

Besides, the national discourse offered a comprehensive explanation of the way the investigation on the crash was conducted, as well as it listed the people who should be blame for it. One week after the publication of the IAC report a meeting of two Polish committees explaining the circumstances of the Smolensk crash, Miller's and Macierewicz's committees, was called. During the meeting Macierewicz claimed that Tusk entered into an "oral or written treaty" with the Russian authorities which established that the investigation will be conducted by Russia instead of Poland. Miller, on the other hand, was to sign, as Macierewicz argued, another agreement with Russians according to which the black boxes of Tu-154 would remain in Russia ("Wirtualna Polska" 2). In addition, Macierewicz stated that the report is false:

It is unprecedented case in the history of our nation and state that the most important people in the county, including the Prime Minister, the Minister of Inferior and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, while having in hands proofs that the report of Ms. Anodina is false, they hide it, and preclude the public opinion from knowing the truth" ("Wirtualna Polska" 3).

He appealed to the Polish national pride and Poland's reputation which was destroyed by the IAC report. Macierewicz argued that we should speak about "heroic pilots" whereas the government allowed the world to think that it was a drunken Polish general who caused the

tragedy in Smolensk. Thereof, Macierewicz stated that “the report slanders Poland in the face of the world”. (“Wirtualna Polska” 2).

In the face of the attacks of the national discourse and the mainstream media, the Prime Minister was forced to change his strategy. On 20 January 2011 two day session of the Polish parliament took place devoted to the IAC report. In his speech, Tusk claimed that the Smolensk catastrophe and the IAC report were “used for initiating a political game in Poland” (“TVP.info” 1). He announced that the Miller’s committee would soon present its own findings which would „show a fuller truth about the catastrophe ... regardless of the costs” (“TVP.info” 1). Moreover, Miller added that the Polish government prepared 150 pages of comments to the IAC report which “precisely as possible but without aggression” refers to the findings of IAC.

As soon as the government withdrawal from supporting the IAC explanation, the liberal discourse consolidated once again. Moreover, changing the strategy by Tusk blocked the national discourse from taking the dominant position in the face of the disintegration and the loss of legitimacy of liberal formation. In addition, the central tool of the national discourse, the nation and its pride, was prevented from another application by the promise of constituting the Polish version of truth.

However, after the report’s publication, the liberal discourse went through a significant transformation. At the beginning, the liberal discourse rested on the assumption about the partnership between Poland and Russia. However, on 8 April 2011, two days before the first anniversary of the Smolensk plane crash, Tusk gave an interview for BB2, in which he stated: “what is missing from the IAC report, somehow obvious in the face of facts, is so called Russian part of responsibility ... I mean something that Russians tries to hide not because of a dark secret but because of the traditional Russian unwillingness to admit to any kind of error or weakness” (“Super Express 2). As I argue in the following section, this transformation

allowed for constituting the legitimate explanation of the Smolensk catastrophe.

3.1.4. The Polish truth

The final report of Miller's committee was presented to the public opinion during the press conference of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister on 29 July 2011. The report stated that: "the immediate cause of the accident was the descent below the minimum descent altitude at an excessive rate of descent in weather conditions which prevented visual contact with the ground, as well as a delayed execution of the go-around procedure" (The Polish Ministry of Inferior 2011:318). This explanation did not indicate who was responsible for the crash, but describes the mechanism whereby the accident occurred, and thereof refrains for blaming the Polish pilots for the crash. Moreover, the report mentions that the circumstances which contributed to the accident were the erroneous comments of the crew Smolensk airport control-tower. It also claims that the presence of general Blasik in the cockpit of the plane had no effect on the pilot's attempt to land (The Polish Ministry of Inferor 2011). Therefore, the report acknowledged "the Russian part of the responsibility" by pointing at the fault of the crew of the Russian airport, as well as restored the national pride and "honor of the Polish officers".

In conclusion, the truth about the Smolensk plane crash was constituted by the numerous struggles which took place between the national and liberal discourses, as well as the power relation between Poland and Russia, which the liberal discourse established by giving the Russian institutions the right to conduct the investigation on the causes of the Smolensk plane crash. The Miller's report, which was acknowledged as the legitimate explanation of the crash in Poland, resulted from the power of the national discourse to appeal to the Polish national pride, on the one hand. On the other, the report was influenced by the Russians institutions which had already established the catastrophe as an accident.

After the announcement of the Millers report, the national discourse regularly attempted to mobilize its forces against the liberal discourse and the truth stated in the report. However, the process whereby the Millers report was constituted as the truth led to the consolidation of the apparatus: the power relation between the liberal and national discursive formation “that has been institutionalized, frozen, immobilized” (Bess 1988:1), and allowed the liberal discourse to regulate and repress the other. The workings of this apparatus are presented in the following section of my thesis.

3.2. The apparatus of the catastrophe

The power relation between the liberal and national discourse was institutionalized after the publication of the Miller’s report. However, the dominant position of the liberal discourse was highly endangered by the publication of a controversial article entitled ‘Trinitrotoluene on the Tupolev’s wreck’ in one of the most popular daily in Poland “Rzeczpospolita” on 30 October 2012. The article claimed that the Polish experts working in Smolensk discovered traces of explosive materials, such as trinitrotoluene and nitroglycerin, on the Tupolev.

My analysis of the trajectory of the article exposes how the liberal regime of truth employed technologies of power with the use of the mainstream media and legal and governmental institution in order to repress the statements of the national discourse.

In the light of the information on the explosives, the national discourse regained a rational ground on the basis of which it was able to produce explicit statements on assassination. For instance, the leader of the opposition party, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, stated at the meeting of the Parliamentary Unit for Investigation of the Causes of the Catastrophe of Tu-154:

The murder of 96 people, including the president of the Republic of Poland and other prominent representatives of public life, is an unheard-of crime. Everyone who, even if through machination or partisanship, had something to do with it, should suffer the consequences. This is the direction we will take (“Wirtualna Polska” 1).

The publication of the article could have changed the power relations between the liberal and

national discourse through the inter-party struggle which the opposition party began with the use of the new evidence. Kaczynski suggested that the Polish government was involved in the “Smolensk murder” through the “machination or partisanship”. In response to Tusk’s criticism of drawing unwarranted conclusions, Kaczynski said “I do not know if Mr. Tusk wants to murder me, or he is fine if I am just banished” (“Wirtualna Polska” 1). On the ground of these allegations, the opposition party called on the government to resign.

On the other hand, the liberal discourse attempted to integrate the news on explosives so that it would not constitute an anomaly for its relations. Such newspapers as “Gazeta Wyborcza” and “Dziennik” provided four possible explanations of the presence of explosive materials on the plane ranging from a hypothesis that the explosives originated from the times of the Second World War to a hypothesis about an explosion on the plane (“Gazeta Wyborcza” 3; “Dziennik” 4). The former was established as the most probable version, whereas the latter was suggested to be nonsense: “the committee should take into account all new information, or allegations, or pseudo-evidence, or the statements of experts, or pseudo-experts, no matter how ridiculous they are” (“Gazeta Wyborcza” 3), as prof. Marek Zylicz, a member of Miller’s committee, claimed in his opinion published by “Gazeta Wyborcza”.

It was not only the mainstream media that contributed to the re-limitation of the boundaries of the liberal apparatus, but also state institutions such as the Warsaw Military Prosecutor’s Office (WMPO) and the government. A special press conference was called during which the Head of the WMPO stated that the Polish prosecutors did not possess evidence on the presence of trinitrotoluene or any other explosive material on the plane. Soon after a press conference of the Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, was broadcasted on the national television. Tusk assured that there was no need to discuss the issue of the explosive materials, since the workings of the Prosecutor’s Office were clear. On the contrary, as he argued, what should have been addressed is the political culture of the opposition party: “It is unacceptable

if the leader of the opposition, using an inaccurate article, draws conclusions which devastate the institutions of the state” (“Fakt” 1). The intervention of the Prosecutor’s Office and the Prime Minister’s reformulation of the problem restraint the proliferation of the statements on the Smolensk assassination.

Moreover, the repression of the national discourse was strengthened by a series of events which took place in the institutions of the Polish mainstream media. In the evening, the editorial staff of “Rzeczpospolita” made an announcement in which it apologized for publishing unreliable information. In the following days the mainstream media ridiculed and downgraded the article and the editorial staff of “Rzeczpospolita” with following headings: “Will <<Rzeczpospolita’s trinitrotoluene>> blow up the editor-in-chief?” (Fakt 1), “Trinitrotoluene? They must have watched Bond” (TokFM 1), or “The article about trinitrotoluene: the biggest scandal in the Polish media for ten years” (“Gazeta Wyborcza” 4), or “Kaczynski have to go? Trinitrotoluene shook PiS” (Trojka Polskie Radio 1). Moreover, the author of the article, Cezary Gmyz, was, as Foucault (1982) would said it, subjugated as an incompetent journalist and deprived of the right to speak. In the interview I conducted with Gmyz, he stated:

I, as well as others members of the editor staff, was forbidden to say anything about the case of trinitrotoluene, and thus I was not able to defend myself. In the evening [of the day when the article was published – K.K.] I decided to wrote on Twitter that I maintain all of my findings.

In addition, on the 5th of November 2013 the private owner of “Presspublica”, the company owning “Rzeczpospolita”, Grzegorz Hajdarowicz, published in the daily an article entitled ‘Credibility is the most important think’ in which he claimed:

As the publisher, I have always separated editing from business. However, the fact that I did not know what the circumstances of writing the article were, does not free me from the responsibility for the articles published in the newspaper (“Rzeczpospolita” 1).

As a result he apologized for publishing the article and acknowledged that the material was not documented at all (“Rzeczpospolita” 1). On the same day, Gmyz, the editor-in-chief, as well as two others members of editorial staff were disciplinary dismissed form

“Rzeczpospolita”.

One month after the publication of Gmyz’s article, there was a meeting of the General Prosecutor’s Office with major Polish politicians. During the meeting, the prosecutor claimed that the device which was used during the investigation in Smoleńsk did detect explosive materials on the plane. When Macierewicz, a Polish politician and the main propagator of the hypothesis on assassination in Smolensk, asked why the general prosecutor lied in his previous announcement, the prosecutor gave a confusing response. He claimed that to say that the devices detected the presence of trinitrotoluene did not contradict with the statement that there was no evidence of explosive materials because such trace has to be proven with the use of more than one method. Such entangled argumentation allowed for closing the case of explosive materials which after one month was not appealing any longer.

Until the publication of Gmyz’s article “Rzeczpospolita” had been the only mainstream media which belonged to the formation of national discourse. However, after the replacement of the editorial staff it acquired a neutral character in relation to the national and liberalssive discourses, occasionally supporting the latter.

To sum up, the trajectory of Gmyz’s articles reveals how the apparatus which consolidated the liberal discourse and institutionalized its dominant position reproduces its own domination through exercising power on the national discourse.

CONCLUSIONS

Unlikely previous studies on the aftermaths of the Smolensk plane catastrophe which deal with the problem of national mourning, my thesis analyze the social and political division which emerged in the later stage of the crash’s repercussions. Moreover, my approach does not take the explanations of the crash for grounded, but it investigates how they were

discursively produced, and what type of social and political factors contributed to this process. With the use of Foucauldian archaeological research, I conceptualized two main Smolensk discourses, namely the national and liberal discourses. As I argued, specific constitutions of the crash depended on the relations between such elements as institutions, events, statements, theories or authoritative actors which unite them in a rule- governed system. Consequently, I argued that the Smolensk accident was produced on the basis of the relations between the state institutions, the mainstream media, the ruling party, theories of applied science and expert institutions, as well as the concepts of modern state and democratic order. On the other hand, the national discourse generated the catastrophe as an association on the grounds of its discursive relations which are established between such elements as the negative notion of the history of Russia and its relations with Poland, the thesis on the corrupted character of the Polish government, which is partially explained by the premise on a significant influence of former communists on the current public sphere in Poland, as well as the concept of the great Polish nation. I also argued that these relationships provided the national discourse with the possibility of generating theories of conspiracy and the statements on the responsibility of Russia for the crash as reasonable and rational within the confines of national discursive formation.

The second part of my thesis uses the conceptualization of the Smolensk discourse in order to explain the constitution of the truth about the circumstances of the crash. I argued that the power to constitute true statements on the catastrophe, and its following embodiment in the state apparatus, resulted from numerous struggles which took place between the two opposite formations of national and liberal discourses. A crucial factor in the process of constituting the truth about the crash was the power relation between Poland and Russia. It has to be emphasized that it was not only the decision of the Polish government to grant the right to conduct the investigation to the Russian institutions that caused the asymmetrical relation

between Poland and Russia. The issue of power relations between the countries which were revealed by my genealogical investigations needs a further analysis.

Moreover, I argued that the process of constituting the Smolensk regime of truth resulted from the capacity of the national discourse to appeal to national pride, which occurred to be an efficient tool in the Polish political struggles, as well as form the temporary disintegration and the following transformation of the liberal discourse which ceased to constitute the Polish-Russian relations as a partnership. The official explanation of the crash in Poland, the Miller's report, is a synthesis of the conflicting forces of the national and liberal discourse and the Russian institutions.

In the last section of my thesis, I presented the case of the article on the explosive materials on the plane in order to demonstrate the workings of the apparatus which was established along with the truth on the Smolensk crash. I argued that the trajectory of the article depicts how this apparatus reproduces its own domination through exercising power on the national discourse.

The aspect of the aftermaths of the Smolensk plane crash which surely needs further investigation is the phenomenon of the cross defenders and their resistance towards the state and the liberal discourse. My short participant observation in the meetings of this group proved that such an investigation needs a long-term ethnographic study.

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APPENDIX. NEWSPAPERS ARTICLES

“Dziennik”

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(<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/wydarzenia/artykuly/317392,wdowa-do-rzadu-broncie-godnosci-oficerow.html>).
3. “Kaczynski krzewi teorie o zamachu i oskarża Tuska o tuszowanie sprawy”
[“Kaczynski Propagates a Conspiracy Theory and Accuse Tusk of Covering Tracks”]. April 17, 2012.
(<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/polityka/artykuly/387429,jaroslaw-kaczynski-krzewi-teorie-o-zamachu-tu-154-w-smolensku-i-oskarza-donalda-tuska-o-tuszowanie.html>).
4. “Skąd wziął się trotyl? Oto hipotezy” [“What is the Origin of the Trinitrotoluene? These are the Hypotheses”] October 30, 2012.
(<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/wydarzenia/artykuly/409079,trotyl-na-tupolewie-oto-hipotezy.html>).
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1. “Pikieta w Warszawie: <<Tusk odpowiada za raport MAK>>” [A Protest In Warsaw: <<Tusk is Responsible for the MAK Report>>”]. January 13, 2013.
(http://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/artykuly/478221,pikieta_w_warszawie_tusk_odpowiada_za_raport_mak.html).

“Gazeta Wyborcza”

1. ”<<Obrona krzyż daje im poczucie, że są potrzebni>> Psycholog o obrońcach krzyża” [“<<Defending the Cross Gives Them a Feeling that They Are Needed>> A Psychologist on The Cross Defenders.”] August 8, 2010.
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