

THE PROBLEM OF MULTICULTURALISM IN THE CONTEXT OF CONFLICT

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ABSTRACT

The issue of multiculturalism is one of the most important topics which the European Union must face now. The reason is the greatest migration noted after the Second World War. In this paper, by application of the method of critical analysis, few attempts have been made to collect, present, and refer to the arguments of supporters and opponents in the ongoing discussion on the acceptance and employment of immigrants, or the opposite approach, i.e. closing borders, turning back or isolation of immigration streams. Given these facts, the aim of the paper is to identify the real causes of the current state in the Poles' opinion in relation to the issues undertaken and to determine the possible direction of their evolution

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Introduction

The issue of multiculturalism is one of the most important topics which the European Union must face now. That's because of the greatest migration noted after the Second World War. However, the migration of the people from the North-East Africa and East Asia (mainly from Syria, Iraq, Libya and Eritrea), create the problem of uncertainty, and the seeds of conflict, not only at the macro level (interstate), but also the micro level (i.e. different types of organizations offering employment). On the one hand, it can be observed so-called "policy of multi-culti", understood as wide-open policy to immigrants (considering to refugees and those migrating

in case of their earnings). On the other hand, it is noted extreme nationalism and indifference to the tragic, wandering fate of millions of people.

This paper is based on a method of critical analysis of CBOS (Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej / Centre for Public Opinion Research) surveys carried out in different time intervals, in order to explore the question of the relationship between multiculturalism and the conflict. The aim of the study was to complement the current state of knowledge on the subject, through observations and conclusions arising from the data sets from different periods and research, taking into account

changes in factors (their frequency and quality) affecting the attitude of Poles towards immigrants.

The intention of this study was to answer the question: is it necessary to promote multiculturalism or criticize it? The author's intention was to provide a cold analysis of the actual opinion of Poles and identify further reasons of this (or the attitude of them) or to develop a set of reasons which are contained in the messages of CBOS. In order to implement this intention, an analysis referring to the management of cultural diversity, as well as previously mentioned statistical data analysis based on CBOS public opinion research, news provided by recognized TV stations and newspaper editorials and author's own thoughts and opinions was applied. The result of its analysis comprises not only wider knowledge on the topic in question and it also opens a wider field for further discussions on this issue.

1. Genesis, definition and types of multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is a social phenomenon which is present in humanity since its beginning, even though it has not always been consciously realised and analysed. One may observe its beginning in the pre-history, when prehistoric tribes have been migrating in search for animals, through ancient times (Rome mainly) and medieval period, where we deal with slavery, wars and colonialism, or migrations, till today, with multicultural Canada and Australia, as well as great emigration evoked by II World War (to the USA usually). In 80s and 90s of XX century the described phenomenon was noticeable particularly in the western Europe (Grzybowski 2007: 45-46).

Multiculturalism has been usually defined in a very simple way, literally, as co-existence of many cultures in one so-

cial space and period. Meanwhile, culture (ethnic, national) is understood as a system of behavioural patterns (values, standards, ideas) and their products (existing, transformed, created) internalised and used in social life process. Culture is then a relatively integral part based on inheritance and continuity of patterns, which thus, requires specific community to be the carrier of them (Golka 2007: 55-59). According to Zburzycki, this definition of multiculturalism as a conglomerate of many cultures has a significant disadvantage, which is not considering interactions of cultures (their members), causing the creation of new qualities (cultures) (Gęsiak 2007: 23). Appearance of such superior culture brings the domination of previous main culture to the end and leads to common democratic activities of the individual cultures members (Sadowski 1999: 34). Popularisation of multiculturalism is associated mainly with progressing globalisation and metropolisation.

Multiculturalism is often misidentified with interculturalism and transculturalism. Interculturalism is mainly owed to the Internet, as this phenomenon enabled fast transmission of data on a global scale, which includes intercultural interactions. Interculturalism means learning between cultures with no necessity of direct mutual contact, which is related to meeting their members and risks of several misunderstandings, ambiguities and related disadvantages or consequences (Śliz, Szczepański 2011: 12).

Transculturalism means unification of cultures, hybrydisation of them in a manner blurring their individual features. One may say that such „merger” is problematic for the ingredient cultures, as each of them tries to preserve its identity, so none of them is really trying to be dominative in order not to be identified with the others. Kosty-

rko (2004: 22) defines transculturalism as „a feature of historical – social processes and phenomena, resulting in transferring one culture's values to the other one, capable to understand and adapt these values”.

Multiculturalism, interculturalism and transculturalism are, thus, the terms close to each other, as they all point at cultural co-existence in one social space. However, each of these terms focuses on a different aspect of this co-existence: multiculturalism – on interactions; interculturalism – on culture's mutual learning and transculturalism – on culture's mutual penetration (hybridisation).

The above mentioned multiculturalism could also be called macro – multiculturalism, as it refers to cultures in wider social space, where we usually deal with the whole states. The very same multiculturalism includes a division involving aspects of following types of backgrounds: ethnic, racial, national and religious.

In turn, micro variant of multiculturalism refers to specific environments (management issue). Multiculturalism in this context may be associated with a statement that „there are various cultural environments and factors which are important for the organisation and people from these environments, which may co-exist and succeed in the same organisation” (Stoner et al. 2011: 197). Micro – multiculturalism refers to the same factors as its macro variant, including, however, more specific ones as gender, age, physical ability, sexual orientation and other discrimination oriented factors (Stoner et al. 2011: 197).

2. Multiculturalism and conflicts

Durkheim (2000: 41) states that in order to make multiculturalism function freely and stop its factors differences from generating tensions, antagonisms or conflicts,

an individual needs to reject all possible prejudice (*praenotiones*), or discriminative stereotypes. The foundation of multiculturalism and its condition *sine qua non* is respecting freedom and equal rights of all cultures – known as democracy.

Intolerance and xenophobia lead to discrimination of minorities, exclusion and rejection, which consequently lead to aggressive attitudes, aimed at attracting the majority's attention to the problem or at intimidation, the intention of which is to restore one's (minority) desired place in the total cultural environment.

Considering micro – multiculturalism in organisational context, one needs to focus on following conflict generating factors as: racial and ethnic discrimination (glass ceiling, sexual harassment, stereotypes, etc), age, religion, sexual orientation, trade union or political membership, disability (Stoner et al. 2011: 199-202).

The awareness of variety of possible interactions between different cultures members does not lead to conflicts elimination. It even seems to prove them inevitable, or just limitable to some extent (Mamzer 2003: 33). That's why management theorists emphasise a necessity to introduce management of variety (Stoner et al. 2011: 206-207).

The peaceful co-existence is favoured by knowledge learned from the other cultures, which is supported by multiculturalism as such. People fear of the unknown and are reluctant to accept changes. The stereotype becomes their substitute, which distorts the reality to confirm itself. Profound exploration of another culture brings peaceful judgement and sensation of safety. Learning other cultures helps to avoid cultural shocks, gives time to compare and reorganise for one culture to contact with another (not necessarily assimilate) to introduce it to one's values and standards

(Korporowicz 1995: 31-40). Multiculturalism develops a network of connections forcing changes in mentality, proving that variety of cultures needs not necessarily lead to conflicts, but it can support exchange as well (i.e. knowledge, goods, services etc.), which creates a peaceful co-existence of many cultures in one social space (Śliz, Szczepański 2011: 12).

3. Heritage of multicultural conflicts research

Analyses on multiculturalism come down to either the tests of theoretical descriptions of this phenomenon, or to the analysis of social reality defined by the term itself. Therefore, this issue includes following spheres: geography, history, sociology and economics (Rykała 2013: 8-9).

Multiculturalism combines a number of diversities and definitely includes a need to mitigate conflicts evoked by differences. The list of these major conflicts of the twentieth century occurred on the multicultural ground (i.e. ethnical, religious, racial) was collected and presented by Golka (2010: 111-116). One may mention here Boxers in China fighting against Catholics and Europeans (1900), Chicago US racial conflicts (1919), fights between Palestinian and Jews in Jerusalem (1925), genocide between Tutsi and Hutu in Rwanda and Burundi (1995), the ethno-religious war in Bosnia (1992) and many others. While the breadth of this list is staggering it should be emphasized that even in the twenty-first century, the world is not free from this type of conflict, e.g. military intervention of western coalition in Iraq and Afghanistan (2001), the Russian-Georgian war (2006), the countries which now emanate with largest migrating populations to Europe – from Syria (2011), Iraq (2014), Libya (2011) and Eritrea (the echoes of conflicts from 1998-2000).

Though maybe not for the whole world, but at least for European countries, twenty-first century and its rise of the European Union has brought tremendous positive changes at the level of cultural conflicts. Researchers (e.g. H.G. Wells and other proponents of globalism) proposed a model of a state without borders, where people would stop fighting militarily for land, where no one feels worse because of one's race or religion, redirecting one's energy to compete for so-called better economic life (Golka 2010: 114). People began to transport goods and travel freely (within the Schengen zone), even in search of jobs, which made service workers travel outside their own countries due to lack of work in their current place of residence or due to low profitability of work. The model described was to ensure the end of great wars (which also happened within the present EU), but did not save it from conflicts in a narrower range. Scientists are aware of the imperfections of this model, still, acknowledging that conflicts at the micro level are easier to crush and less devastating, in other words, do not threaten the general public so much.

The high vulnerability of the multicultural society conflict is conditioned by: either the large differences between the components of different cultures, or similar groups numerosity (Szahaj 2008: 66).

Just before Polish accession to the EU (2002-2003), and after its accession (2004), till 2014, a generally accepted view prevailed in Polish science, that one should strive to create a global multicultural society. As the biggest obstacle standing in the way of accepting the co-existence of different cultures and religions, a trivial prejudice was pointed, resulting from the creation of a false image of the "other ones". Of course, this fact contributed to make the states' administrations

to undertake a number of practical tasks aimed at preventing the danger posed by the fact of refusal to understand the other person, which was based on ignorance towards the culture, tradition, rituals, religion or language of nations, communities or groups, e.g. International Forum for Dialogue of Cultures (Olha 2005: 129-130).

After 2014, with the great wave of immigrants coming to Europe, the support for the so-called multi-culti policy began to decrease, and one of the pillars of the EU (Great Britain) decided to leave this community in 2016 (the so-called brexit) because of fear of flooding their country with immigrants. Poland does not react so hysterically because of the low attractiveness of this country to immigrants, but the Poles do share the concern of the British.

Regardless of politicians' actions, we must initiate a scientific discourse aimed at redefining, or at least reviewing the existing arrangements in order to set new solutions, altered according to the demographic situation of the European Union today.

It is worth noting at this point that this issue is extremely complex and diverse, so one cannot expect simple solutions or comprehensive comments (especially in such a short paper like this). On the contrary, each of the analyzes of multiculturalism issues will be just another attempt and it is only a temporary description of the phenomenon because of its unstable character (Golka 2010: 15). However, we should continue these attempts to deepen the understanding of observed changes and make accurate predictions.

4. Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) data analysis on multiculturalism

In this part of research the facts on general attitude of Poles towards other nations and their cultures are presented. It

includes Middle East and African, as well as Ukrainian refugees, who influence Polish opinion on different cultures right now. To carry out these analyzes, the surveys of the National Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS) were used, which were based on direct interviews (face-to-face), computer-aided (CAPI) on a representative random sample group of adult Polish citizens – in the following days and in following quantities:

- in June 2015, No. 93 – tests performed on 14-20 May 2015 on a group of 1,048 persons;
- in July 2015, No. 106 – research carried out on 11-17 June 2015 on a group of 1011 persons;
- in October 2015, No. 133 – research carried out on 17-23 September 2015 on a group of 972 persons;
- in December 2015, No. 178 – research carried out on 15-21 October 2015 on a group of 1,114 Polish citizens. The survey in the Czech Republic (CVVM) was carried out on 5-12 October 2015 (N = 1045), Slovakia (FOCUS) on 6-14 October 2015 (N = 1032), and in Hungary (TARKI) – 16 to 23 October 2015 (N = 1003);
- January 2016 No. 3 – research made on 3-10 December 2015 on a group of 989 persons;
- in February 2016, No. 24 – research made on 3-10 February 2016 on a group of 1,000 persons;
- in April 2016, No. 53 – research carried out on 2-9 March 2016 on a group of 1,034 persons.

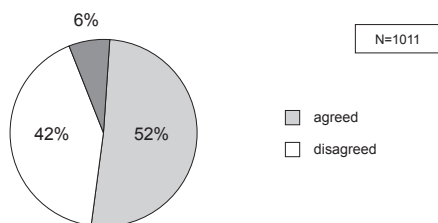
4.1. Pole's attitude towards other nations and cultures (opening / closure, positive / negative)

According to the research of July 2015, Poles were asked whether they agree with a sentence: „it is good to have just one nationality in one country”. The responses were: 52% agreed, 42% disagreed, and 6% could not give a precise answer

(Figure 1). When comparing the data with 2005 research, one can observe a slight improvement, i.e. around 6-8% in terms of

opening to other nationalities (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015 c).

Figure 1. Poles' opinions on whether that one country was inhabited by one nation



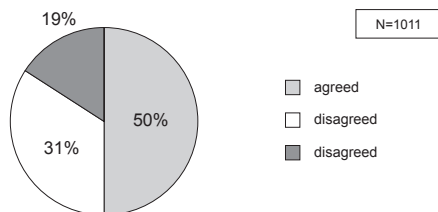
Source: Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015 c.

Poland has been a multicultural country since its very beginnings and even though such co-existence was not always peaceful, majority of Poles cherishes the variety and refuses to see Poland as monolithic society.

In the same survey, the respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the sentence: „it is good to have neighbours

of culture and tradition different from Polish”. The percentage of responses was as follows: 50% agreed, 31% disagreed, and 19% gave no specific answer (Figure 2). In comparison to 2005, around 3-5% decrease of acceptance for cultural variety in the neighbourhood was observed (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015 c).

Figure 2. Poles' opinions about whether it is good to have neighbours of a different culture and tradition



Source: Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015 c.

Each second respondent agreed to having cultural variety around the corner, which confirms large tolerance to other cultures but also proves that the cultures of our neighbouring countries are seen as desirable and commonly accepted. We are willing to visit our neighbours, learn their culture and share our culture with them. Safe proximity of different cultures, often shaped by common historical experience appears positive to majority of Poles.

One may say that common history is a strong bending factor for nations and cultures. This seems to be confirmed by research on positive or negative attitudes towards different nations. Poles like the most: Czechs (50 %), Italians (49%), Slovaks (48%) and Britons (47%). Significant percentage of respondents declare positive attitude towards Spaniards (46%), Americans (46%), Hungarians (45%), French (43%) and Dutch (41%). What concerns

negatively perceived nationalities, the most disliked ones are Romani and Arabs (67% each), but Russians (50%), Romanians (47%), Turks (45%) and Jews (37%) are also not favoured with much acceptance (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2016 a).

Since January 2015 there is a significant decrease of Poles' acceptance for many nations included in the research (27 nations and ethnic groups), which may be related to the migration crisis and terrorist attacks. CBOS researchers emphasise a correlation between perceiving refugees and attitudes towards other nationalities, which is now characterised with decrease tendency (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2016 a).

In turn, for the foreigners living in Poland, the most favoured foreigners in our country are Czechs, Americans, Germans, then Ukrainians, Belarusians, Vietnamese, Russians and the less favoured are Africans, Turks and Arabs (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015 a). Such attitude is undoubtedly influenced by present political situation related to immigration crisis.

4.2. Refugees or labour related immigrants? – the opinion of Poles on today's immigration from Middle East and Africa

Majority of Poles does not believe the immigrants are war refugees. 39% of respondents consider them as labour immigrants. 27% of Poles disagree and almost the same, 25% claim that there are equal numbers of war refugees and labour immigrants among the people entering EU (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015 d).

Table 1. What do Poles think of immigrants?

The opinion of Poles 2016		N=1000
labour immigrants	refugees	The same number of war refugees and migrants
39%	27%	25%

Source: Komunikat z badań CBOS 2016 a.

The photographs do not show old people, affected by war (invalids, mentally damaged or even bad dressed). One can see productive young people (below 40s) coming for a conquer of Europe, determined, demanding and taking without permission (which was proven in Cologne, or in several assaults on trucks, or households, crops etc.). No wonder that Poles refuse to believe in necessity to give refuge to these people, particularly when many Poles still remember the meaning of war and patriotism.

Almost all of the immigrants are reluctant to return to their country, even after the end of war activities. After getting to Europe they are safe, but they still refuse to settle in poorer Asiatic or Eastern European countries, heading to Germany, Belgium, France, UK. In this context, it is not surprising that 57% of Polish citizens is against accepting Middle East and African refugees (which is not so radical in relation to Ukrainians) (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015 d). The research of CBOS show that only 35% declare help to refugees, but only till they are able to return home. 4% represents opinion, that Poland should accept the refugees and let them settle (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015 d).

Comparison of the data of February 2016 with May 2015 shows, that acceptance of the Poles for refugees fell almost by half within 10 months, from 72% to 39% (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015 d). This may be related to observances of actual threats potentially brought by immigrants, the ones which previously existed only in distant fears.

4.3. Sources of fears against immigrants

In one of CBOS surveys made in cooperation with Polish, Slovakian, Czech and Hungarian institutes, inhabitants of

Visegrad Group states were asked about their opinions on growing numbers of immigrants. The research proved that main fears concern losing one's own culture. The most concerned about their culture preservation

are Czechs (75%), then Slovaks (68%) and Hungarians (65%). Poles, in majority, do not feel any threat against their culture (50%), while 44% have such concern (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015 b).

Table 2. Fear of losing their own cultural identity

Czechs (N=1045)	Slovaks (N=1032)	Hungarians (N=1003)	Poles (N=1114)
75%	68%	65%	44%

Source: Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015 b.

The survey shows that Poles are not worried about the loss of cultural identity. Question survey did not specify how big would be an increase in the inflow into the country, therefore one may observe so high optimism of the respondents. The above CBOS research reveal, that Poles' fears against immigrants are also related to the fact, that the latter will refuse to prioritise Polish national interest (77%), there will be changes for worse (57%), new diseases will appear (46%), immigrants will seize the jobs from the locals (54%), governments will lose control over the immigration (51%), and the crime rate will rise (49%) (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015 b).

One should stress, however, that Poles are the least fearful and xenophobic among the four analysed countries, Slovaks come as next, then Hungarians and the most concerned about the immigrants are Czechs. This picture may be completed with the data on Poles' strong discomfort in direct contact with the immigrants being on the level of 49%, and moderate discomfort declared by 25% of respondents (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015 b).

Conclusions

Time shows no improvement in peaceful solutions in the immigrants' countries of provenience. Maintaining, or escalating the conflicts became a constant part of international policy. As CBOS research prove,

Poles are not against multiculturalism, they do not fear it, despite many threats it may bring. Thanks to EU membership Poles feel to be the citizens of multicultural country. We are curious and open to other cultures, we respect them, however, expecting respect in return. The basic sources of immigrants related fears come from the acts of terror (a sharp increase in the number of acts of terror after 2014). They occurred mainly in countries which were opened to immigrants (assaults in Paris, Brussels, Nice, Würzburg, München) as well as from vandalism and criminal behaviours of the refugees themselves (Cologne). Islamic terrorism has been considered by Poles to be the most important global event in 2015 (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2016 b).

Poles are usually concerned about safety of their families. They fear Islamic fundamentalist terror (as it is presented in Polish media). That is why it is hard to blame Poles to be increasingly reluctant to refugees and economic immigrants from Middle East and Africa.

Our citizens are not reluctant to all the refugees, which is confirmed by our attitude towards Ukrainian immigrants (59% supports their accepting, 34% is against) (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2016 a). Among those refugees we do not notice people (or groups) who could sabotage their flow towards West, or struggle against our culture.

The idea of Islam as a source of global evil is spreading in Poland e.g. Miriam Shaded (Warto rozmawiać... 2016). This is an easy way to build popularity and social capital, when only a small group of Poles actually knows the content of Quran and historical inheritance of political and religious contacts with this religion makes our stereotypes distort our thinking.

The ideology of war against Islam is not only unwise but also difficult, as beside Christians, they constitute the majority of global population, i.e. 33% (Corriere della Sera 2008). Moreover, it is obvious, that not every Muslim person is a terrorist (radical), just as not every Jew is an orthodox one, or not every catholic is fundamentalist type. Refusal to accept the abovementioned idea is equal to accept the necessity of fight, isolation and end of the multiculturalism.

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