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POLAND'S MULTICULTURAL FUTURE VIS-À-VIS CRITICISM OF THE POLICY OF MULTICULTURALISM

POLAND AND ITS MULTICULTURAL POLICY

Multicultural policies of various scope pursued in many European countries, increasingly often meets with uncompromising criticism. Negative opinions about the policy of multiculturalism have been voiced by many European leaders (e.g. Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel). Possible derogations from the Schengen Convention are the subject of discussions aimed at preventing the undesired influx of foreigners, and Romania and Bulgaria have not yet been admitted to the Schengen area. European countries long known for their tolerance of explicit otherness, such as the Netherlands, are changing their policies. In a national referendum, Switzerland, known as the stronghold of ideological neutrality, has decided to forbid construction of minarets. Changes in Europe are huge but they may be difficult to see from the Polish perspective. As Poland still is not perceived as a country attractive to immigrants (especially in comparison to the “old” EU15), there has been no public debate on integration and social policy towards immigrants. In Poland, apart from few expert papers and occasional media interest in the fate of some individuals, most information on multicultural policy is presented through the prism of affluent western countries. However, the situation in Poland may change radically in the nearest future. The reasons may be Poland’s economic growth as well as (or first of all) a policy change in other EU members states, and the unstable economic and political situation in Poland’s close and distant neighbours. That is why it is important to be prepared in advance, starting from today.

The need of an immigration policy in Poland has been evidenced by experiences of western European countries which too late started to treat immigrants (and later also their children) as an important element of their societies, and by immigrants’ experience in Poland, which does not instil optimism. The latter issue has recently been studied by a growing number of researchers. It is apparent that immigrants’ integration encounters difficulties today. However, as the number of immigrants is relatively low in Poland, immigration issues are much less present in the public debate than in “old” Europe. So far, the approach to immigrants is based on the belief that their stay in Poland will be temporary. Indeed, in many cases that approach is

conducive to Poland being treated, by people who want to emigrate from their own country, as a migration transition country on the road to the final destination place and not as the place of new permanent residence. Unfortunately, such a policy approach tends to ignore persons who settle in Poland for good and this contributes to difficulties they have while integrating with Polish society and in their daily functioning. Today it is a micro-scale issue which concerns individuals and small groups but, in the future, it may become a critical issue for the general public as it is now in France and the UK. The lack of a carefully designed policy towards immigrants for whom Poland is the country of destination is likely to cause to a delayed and heated dispute in the future.

The current policy towards immigrants and their situation in Poland have been analysed in numerous studies including studies on the contacts of immigrants with Polish public offices. The said contacts are frequently the first ones after the arrival in Poland and concern most important issues such as employment, accommodation and health care. Recent research demonstrates that very few public administration institutions are well prepared to assist foreigners. It has been pointed out that many civil servants have a dismissive attitude to immigrants which follows from their belief that foreigners are not the most important group in need. Another issue raised in particular by immigrants from the East is the xenophobic behaviour of civil servants who, guided by stereotypes or biases, address the foreigners in a patronising way.¹ Also institutions which exclusively serve foreigners and specialised departments in voivodship administration employ staff without proper training on dealing with immigrants who are their usual clients. If appropriate courses on multicultural communication were obligatory, civil servants would be less surprised with foreigners' conduct resulting from foreign cultures, culture shock or stages of integration processes. Many civil servants do not speak English or do it unwillingly and they do not know Russian and Ukrainian which the majority of their clients use.² The unavailability of information about procedures in foreign languages, contradictory information and expectations that a foreigner will speak Polish or bring with him or her translations of necessary documents, all result in multiple visits of immigrants to public administration offices in order to resolve a single issue.³

Migrants do not always feel comfortable even while dealing with institutions designed to protect them. When they inform the police that they have been victims of racially motivated crimes, they are often ignored by police officers not willing to accept a racial motivation behind criminal acts.⁴ Immigrants who were forced to leave

¹ W. Klaus, *Cudzoziemiec w urzędzie. Czy polskie urzędy są przygotowane do obsługi obcokrajowców?*, in: J. Frelak (ed.) (2010), *Dyskusja o integracji. Wybór tekstów Polskiego Forum Integracyjnego*, Warszawa, pp. 141-145.

² *Ibidem*, p. 147.

³ E. Nowicka, A. Winiarska, *Polska w doświadczeniach długoletnich imigrantów*, in: W. Klaus (ed.) (2010), *Sąsiedzi czy intruzi? O dyskryminacji cudzoziemców w Polsce*, Warszawa, p. 154.

⁴ W. Klaus, K. Wencel (2010), *Dyskryminacja cudzoziemców w Polsce 2008-2010*, in: W. Klaus (ed.), *Sąsiedzi czy intruzi?...*, pp. 114-118.

their country and stay in refugee centres speak of violence experienced from security guards and cleaners who apply “their own” rules in the absence of other staff.⁵ Other negative practices, yet for another reason, take place in institutions providing social and family care which variously interpret regulations on integration assistance to refugees and persons granted subsidiary protection. Integration assistance includes Polish language courses, assistance in finding a job and accommodation, and, generally, assistance such people need to settle in Poland.⁶ Access to health care services, in terms of legal regulations, is not an issue, i.e. immigrants whose status has been regulated⁷ are guaranteed the same access as Polish citizens. To other groups of immigrants only the emergency medical service is provided free of charge. As the income of the latter is low, they are incapable of using other chargeable services. Thus, they are practically excluded from the health care system because of their legal and economic status/situation.⁸

Also the labour market, and that refers both to attitudes and procedures, is not very friendly to immigrant jobseekers⁹ and entrepreneurs. In a pilot survey carried in 2010 by the Institute of Public Affairs, persons whose surnames suggested their non-Polish origin had smaller chances of being invited to a job interview than persons with Polish surnames and citizenship who had exactly the same qualifications and *curriculum vitae* formatted alike. According to authors of the survey report: “from among 167 employers to whom applications were sent on behalf of a Pole and a foreigner, 19 invited one or both to an interview or expressed their positive interest in an applicant in some other way. In the case of a candidate with Polish citizenship, 10 applications had to be sent to receive one interview invitation. In the case of a foreigner, almost 17 applications had to be sent to receive one invitation”¹⁰. It must be added that the unequal treatment of jobseekers because of their origin, discourages immigrants from taking legal jobs. That is not in the interest of the state

⁵ W. Klaus (2010), *Cudzoziemiec w urzędzie...*. See also: W. Klaus (ed.) (2011), *Słabe ogniwa. Wyzwania dla funkcjonowania systemu ochrony uchodźców w Polsce*, Warszawa.

⁶ W. Klaus, K. Makaruk, K. Wencel, J. Frelak (co-authors) (2011), *Odmowa przyznania pomocy integracyjnej – prawo i praktyka*, Warszawa, pp. 27-28.

⁷ It means having a health insurance contract with the National Health Fund and having paid obligatory contributions, or having other required documents e.g. a document confirming the amount of income or, in case of immigrants who were forced to leave their country, a referral issued by a physician working at a refugee centre.

⁸ B. Jabłecka (2012), *Strukturalne i kulturowe przeszkody w dostępie imigrantów do ochrony zdrowia. Analiza źródeł zastanych*, Warszawa, p. 9. See also: A. Chrzanowska, W. Klaus (eds) (2011), *Poza systemem. Dostęp do ochrony zdrowia nieudokumentowanych migrantów i cudzoziemców ubiegających się o ochronę międzynarodową*, Warszawa; D. Cianciara, K. Dudzik, A. Lewczuk, J. Pinkas (2012), *Liczba, charakterystyka i zdrowie imigrantów w Polsce*, “Problemy Higieny i Epidemiologii” Vol. 93, pp. 143-150.

⁹ M. Bieniecki, M. Pawlak (2010), *Strategie ukraińskich migrantów zarobkowych wobec polskiej rzeczywistości instytucjonalnej*, Warszawa, p. 63.

¹⁰ K. Wysieńska (2010), *Nguyen, Serhij, czy Piotr? Pilotażowe badanie audytowe dyskryminacji cudzoziemców w rekrutacji*, Warszawa, pp. 21-22.

and, in a long run, may lead to exacerbated conflicts between immigrants and state authorities.¹¹

A survey conducted among Vietnamese and Chinese minorities in Poland indicates that the state should also take steps supporting business activities of immigrant entrepreneurs. Issues that call for resolutions include procedures for obtaining a permit to conduct a business activity and unfriendly conduct of controlling inspection services and uniformed services.¹²

Difficulties faced by foreigners while adapting to and integrating with Polish society have their sources in procedures and law, and also in negative or ambivalent attitudes towards cultural and physical differences and in the need to compete with immigrants for economic goods.¹³ This brings another challenge for immigration policy: raising inter-cultural competences of Polish citizens and supporting initiatives conducive to cooperation between immigrants and the Polish majority.¹⁴

A comprehensive conceptualization of difficulties immigrants from Arab countries have in Poland was the objective of the research part of the project titled "Otwieramy Poznań" [Opening Poznań]. Surveys and interviews conducted with immigrants allowed to identify five negative aspects of the functioning of the Muslim community in Poznań: language barriers, insufficient support from central and local authorities, a negative image among other residents of the city, a negative image in local and national media, and a feeling of not being safe.¹⁵ The results show that the difficult situation of some immigrants has its roots not only in activities of various offices or services but also in common conduct patterns and stereotypes which the media discourse on immigrants endorses and revives.

Natural consequences of the aforementioned challenges are both, the postulates voiced by various communities to introduce a policy of multiculturalism, and an intensified criticism of the policy of multiculturalism and attempts at obstructing its application in Poland. Along the current immigrants' inflow and the tense situation in western European countries and the increasingly frequent use of immigration issues in electoral campaigns there, the issue of the policy of multiculturalism has become an increasingly important topic of discussions and disputes.

The debate on the policy of multiculturalism must take into consideration the situation in countries which long had or have had such a policy. Thus, it is to be expected that the western criticism of multiculturalism as the answer to integration

¹¹ K. Iglicka (2013), *Raport: Imigranci pilnie potrzebni*, "Fundacja Energia dla Europy" No. 8, p. 2.

¹² I. Józwiak, Z. Karpiński, A. Piłat, J. Segeś-Frelak, K. Wysieńska, *Wnioski i rekomendacje*, in: K. Wysieńska (ed.) (2012), *Sprzedawać, gotować, budować. Plany i strategie Chińczyków i Wietnamczyków w Polsce*, Warszawa, pp. 165-166.

¹³ E. Nowicka, A. Winiarska (2010), *Polska w doświadczeniach długoletnich imigrantów...*, p. 159.

¹⁴ I. Józwiak, Z. Karpiński, A. Piłat, J. Segeś-Frelak, K. Wysieńska (2012), *Wnioski i rekomendacje...*, p. 168.

¹⁵ G. Kruk, O. Samelak, Ł. Skoczylas, A. Smirnow, *Projekt Otwieramy Poznań*, unpublished report on the animation and research project. The project "Opening Poznań" was carried out by the Institute of Psychology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań from October 2010 to February 2012.

issues, will be transplanted to Poland. My intention is to review possible sources of that criticism without deciding whether such criticism is justified or not (or whether its assessment beyond politics in its narrow sense is possible at all). Criticism of the policy of multiculturalism is a multifaceted phenomenon and its genesis is obviously complex. Therefore, my review may not be covering all possible perspectives on its reasons. For the sake of simplicity, will focus only on those aspects of the multicultural policy which concern immigrants from Muslim countries.

In order to make my review more specific, I will follow the definition of multiculturalism given by Marian Golka:

multiculturalism is an informed coexistence within the same area (or in the immediate neighbourhood without any clear divisions, or in a situation where aspirations to occupy the same area meet) of two or more social groups with relatively distinctive cultural features such as external appearance, language, religious denomination, system of values, etc., which contribute to mutual recognition of otherness with its various implications¹⁶.

It is important to add, as Golka did, that a characteristic feature of thus understood multiculturalism is not only the objectivity of its manifestations but also mutual relations between the involved.

FINANCIAL CRISIS AND THE END OF MULTICULTURAL POLICY

Let us start the review of possible sources of the critique of the multicultural policy with what to many appears the most obvious. The global financial crisis reached Europe with certain delay, but its consequences are difficult to overestimate. From the Polish perspective, among most threatened countries only Ireland was perceived as a popular migration destination but migrants headed also for Spain, Portugal, Italy, and even Greece. In this context the role of Spain is particularly important. Many people from Latin American countries still perceive it as the Promised Land because of the high living standards but primarily because of cultural similarity and the lack a major language barrier. Spain is also geographically close of Arab countries. Today, Spain has a high unemployment rate and Spanish people organise numerous protests against the economic policy of the government but more so against the whole political elite. The economic crisis has made the unemployment rate among the autochthonic population rise, which, in turn, translates into a growing aversion towards immigrants. This seemingly obvious process, is often ignored in analyses of the situation in western Europe. The main reason is that the criticism of immigrant communities focuses on cultural factors and integration issues, whereas speaking about "taking away the jobs" is perceived as populism and negatively assessed. That does not change the fact that radicalisation of the political scene in EU countries is

¹⁶ M. Golka (2010), *Imiona wielokulturowości*, Warszawa, pp. 64-65.

growing (one may suspect that this is a natural outcome of the crisis and cultural changes), and that the “job stealing” argument is increasingly often used openly. Technological revolution, which has reduced the number of workplaces, is also seen as a source of problems. That refers primarily to production industries which, in the past, grew rapidly and offered immigrants regular employment contracts.¹⁷ Looking for reasons for criticism of the multicultural policy in the deteriorating economic situation is tempting, however, that connection is not obvious for everyone. Research on twelve European countries¹⁸ demonstrated that aversion towards immigrants grows along growing affluence. Recognising the relevance of that research findings, it needs to be concluded that it is impossible to say whether the economic crisis has markedly influenced the perception of immigrants and/or whether the present situation is the culmination of a long process which might be independent from economic developments. However, the fact remains that the dismantling of support systems for immigrants and all other minorities facilitates savings needed in the time of crisis.

EUROPEAN PESSIMISM AND MULTICULTURALISM

It is possible, however, that the crisis has an impact on the criticism of the multicultural policy but in a different and not so obvious way. The idea of a united Europe has failed. Ten years ago, the idea of a united Europe as a new world superpower was commonly accepted if not in the military than at least in the economic sense. The transformation of the European Union in this sort of the world power was supported by the Lisbon strategy and political initiatives such as the enlargements of the European Union in 2004 and 2007, a reform of EU management and the EU Constitution project. The implementation of the Lisbon strategy failed, the Constitution was rejected by two European countries in national referendums, and enlargement of the Union (especially that in 2007) has been criticised. For the critics, the situation in Bulgaria and Romania has become the symbol of undue haste in letting new countries join the European community. All that has raised concerns of Euro-enthusiast and fuelled criticism from Euro-sceptics. Those events are described in pronouncements prophesying a crisis of traditional European values. Walter Laqueur¹⁹ skilfully links the above to the growing number of immigrants and their descendants, predicting the ultimate collapse of the European civilisation. His thesis is that pessimism present in Europe of today results from the awareness of the political class of European countries that the entire continent faces a crisis. This pessimism appears to be

¹⁷ W. Hładkiewicz, *Obcy w wielokulturowej Europie – casus francuski*, in: D. Angutek (ed.) (2009), *“Obcy” w przestrzeni kulturowej współczesnej Europy*, Zielona Góra, p. 105 ff.

¹⁸ Authors of this research are Semyonov, Rajiman, and Gorodzeisky. After: J. Hryniewicz, *Polityka wielokulturowości a imigranci islamscy w Europie Zachodniej*, in: S. Kaprański (ed.) (2010), *Pamięć, przestrzeń, tożsamość*, Warszawa, pp. 143-169.

¹⁹ W. Laqueur (2007), *The Last Days of Europe: Epitaph for an Old Continent*, New York [Polish translation: *Ostatnie dni Europy. Epitafium dla Starego Kontynentu*, Wrocław 2008].

even deeper in the light of the still recent thesis about the bright future of Europe as the new world power.²⁰

Besides, a belief in Europe's bright future was not limited to Europe. It might have been that American liberals terrified of the success of euro and the road taken by their country under the rule of George W. Bush, were actually the strongest source of that belief. The effective introduction of the new currency into markets was a blow for America. The American dollar symbolised the economic power of the US which was thought to have been decisive in winning the Cold War and defeating the Soviet Union. Thomas Roy Reid, the author of *United States of Europe: The new superpower and the end of American supremacy*, titled a chapter of his book devoted to euro: *The Almighty Undollar*.²¹ American intellectual elite was also strongly concerned about the growing debt of the United States, decades-long problems with the health care system, and political confusion of the state which by many was considered the only superpower in the world. The confusion was especially painful if compared with the great ideas and projects implemented on the "other" shores of two big oceans surrounding North America, that is in Europe and China. In the world where a collapse of national states and the clash of civilisations were predicted, the European Union was supposed to grow to be the example of a new organisation fitting the changing world and leading it. All of that (and probably many other factors) was the source of great expectations for Europe on both sides of the Atlantic. When it turned out that the Union was not able to meet them, pessimism arose. Nowadays, even those who adhered to the vision of the bright future of Europe write that the situation has changed not as expected (e.g. Charles Kupchan, author of the book entitled *The end of the American era*²²).

Theses about the collapse of Europe coexist with theses about its growing Islamisation and inefficient multicultural policy which together transform old European democracies into Muslim countries. Therefore, the conservative model depicts Europe as a civilisation in its final stage, bored and sluggish, incapable of meeting requirements imposed by the outside world and, at the same time, not caring about its demographic and ideological cohesion. Europe has brought disappointment to its enthusiasts. At the same time Euro-sceptics have argued against the European life style and for urgent changes. These two phenomena shape the criticism of EU policy towards immigrants. The more apocalyptic the mood is, the fiercer is the criticism. It is not difficult to see that at the present stage of the crisis, in a situation where many European countries suffer financial problems, the collapse of Europe may seem more imminent and real than ever (surely since 1989).

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ T. R. Reid (2005), *The United States of Europe. The new superpower and the end of American supremacy*, New York.

²² Cf. Ch. Kupchan (2011), *Niedemokratyczne kapitalizmy i nieliberalne demokracje*, "Europa" No. 7, pp. 10-13.

GLOBALISATION AND MULTICULTURAL POLICY

Janusz Hryniewicz²³ underlines that the number of immigrants in a given area and their ethnicity have an impact on attitudes towards them. If that is so, then it may be not only the actually growing number of foreigners but also their perceived presence that matter. New generations of immigrants enter the political, cultural, and economic arena. They are not satisfied with the mere fact of residing in a given country and earning their living there. They are more visible than their parents, which, subsequently, may give rise to a feeling of not being safe. If we try to view contemporary multiculturalism in such categories, the criticism of multiculturalism is a manifestation of an ethnic conflict.

It is worth linking the above with the decreasing importance of the US in the global world. Sometimes, conflicts resulting from multiculturalism arise where there is no hegemon.²⁴ That is so because the leader's perception of multicultural issues can be top-down and the hegemon will act accordingly to maintain order. At the same time, the hegemon does not allow for any grass-root actions because they are perceived as a threat to the leader's authority. Obviously, this does not alter the fact that multiculturalism may function peacefully in democracy (or, in a politically multi-polar system). Referring back to Marian Golka's considerations²⁵, the conditions for such a state of affairs are awareness and acceptance of multiculturalism treated as a value and recognition of positive characteristics of specific cultures and positive features resulting from their interaction. Peaceful multiculturalism is also supported by efficient inter-group communication, training, and the tolerant approach (policy) of the majority towards the minority and of the minority towards the majority. Viewing globalisation optimistically, it can be argued that the growing awareness of the world's diversity limits outbursts of potential conflicts.²⁶ Such an optimistic perspective, however, is not the only one. Arjun Appadurai is of the opinion that, under globalisation conditions, "the cultural field is the main one in which fantasies of purity, authenticity, borders, and security can be enacted"²⁷. Immigrants as representatives of minorities are in this sense the first victims of fear, the source of which is beyond their control. Appadurai comments further on minorities, saying that: "Their languages exacerbate worries about national cultural coherence. Their lifestyles are easy ways to displace widespread tensions in society [...]"²⁸. External political changes (emergence of a multi-polar world, globalisation) interact with in-

²³ J. Hryniewicz (2010), *op. cit.*

²⁴ M. Golka, *Oblicza wielokulturowości*, in: M. Kempny, A. Kapciak, S. Łodziński (ed.) (1997), *U progu wielokulturowości*, Warszawa, p. 60; M. Golka (2010), *Imiona...*, p. 123.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 123-137.

²⁶ Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 115-116.

²⁷ A. Appadurai (2006), *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC, p.23 [Polish translation: *Strach przed mniejszościami. Esej o geografii gniewu*, Warszawa, 2009, p. 30].

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 45 [Polish translation p. 50].

ternal factors (growing numbers of immigrants, coming of age of immigrants' new generations). Due to all that, the importance of issues connected with immigration grows in political debates and the policy of multiculturalism becomes the epitome of failed attempts to handle the present situation. Thus the policy of multiculturalism is more intensely criticised. On the other hand, multicultural policy is also perceived as a consequence of globalisation. Andrzej Szahaj²⁹ links that perspective to the growing desire to search for differences in the unifying reality. Most probably, globalisation has a two-sided impact, i.e. on both the supporters of multicultural policy and its critics.

MULTICULTURALISM VERSUS UNIFICATION: DESCENDANTS OF IMMIGRANTS

Both, the growing numbers of immigrants and their stronger visibility in streets of western European cities evoke a feeling of cultural otherness followed by criticism of multicultural policy. Actually, contrary to popular opinions, that feeling does not necessarily mean that "the multicultural society does not work". The problem with such a thesis is its hidden confusion of terms, namely, multiculturalism is taken as a synonym of unification. Noticing the otherness of immigrants does not prove the failure of multicultural policy because the objective of the latter is peaceful co-existence of people of various cultures within the same area. In its western European variant, multicultural policy has been implemented through "cultural neutrality of the state"³⁰. That ideology leads to the acceptance of the equality of cultures and the diversity of sources from which people living in a given territory may draw to construe their identities. In terms of state activities, it includes alignment of various administration capacities to provide quality services to persons lacking cultural competencies traditional for a given community. Frequently, that includes making regularisation and obtaining a work permit or even citizenship easier. State activities include also anti-discrimination regulations and financial support for minority groups.³¹ Criticism of such a policy may result from the fact that its introduction "strengthens the cultural distance between immigrants and natives"³². Paradoxically, the policy of cultural neutrality in a way entails an attempt of public authorities to impose on a given community their interpretation of its culture. Janusz Hryniewicz³³ gives an example of a German court which invoked its own interpretation of the Quran in a divorce case of a Muslim couple. Marek Krajewski³⁴, in turn, underlines

²⁹ A. Szahaj (2004), *E pluribus unum? Dylematy wielokulturowości i politycznej poprawności*, Kraków, p. 133.

³⁰ J. Hryniewicz (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 146.

³¹ Cf. J. Niessen, T. Huddleston, L. Citron (2007), *Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX)*, Brussels.

³² J. Hryniewicz (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 149.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 151.

³⁴ M. Krajewski, *Paradoksy wielokulturowości*, in: R. Cichoński (ed.) (1997), *Teorie społeczne a możliwości praktyczne*, Poznań.

that the idea of multiculturalism is, in fact, inextricably linked to European humanism and as such is mono-cultural in its nature. Those arguments sound convincing and today they are as valid as they were many years ago when multicultural policy was implemented and its criticism was not so common. What has changed, then? Assuming that the interpretation given above is correct, multiculturalism has been confused with unification. It was thought that multicultural policy would eventually result in immigrants becoming similar – in the cultural sense – to traditional natives. Such a conviction might have resulted from ethnocentrism or a belief in the incredible plasticity of human habits. “Is the attractive power of the European way of life so small that it will be overwhelmed by foreign customs and habits?”, asked Laqueur³⁵. That is now coupled with a political activity of immigrants and their descendants which is not radical³⁶ but clearly demonstrates that the old model of functioning of immigrants, which consists in “bribing” them with regular employment and relative tolerance in exchange for them not interfering with politics, works no longer. Perhaps, this causes the dissatisfaction with multicultural policy. One may argue that immigrants are tolerated only as a cheap and unqualified workforce, politically inactive and not benefiting from economic growth on equal terms. Of course, sometimes, moral aspects of that fact are underlined but that hardly influences the actual policy.³⁷ On the other hand, one must not forget that migration (including labour migration) is nothing new and descendant of old immigrants are now an important part of many European societies.

MULTICULTURALISM VERSUS UNIFICATION: ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

The perception of multicultural policy as a policy of unification matters also in situations where Islam is perceived as a threat. Christianity happens to be seen as part of both the European identity and the identity of individual nations. Surveys conducted in the UK, Ireland, Netherlands, and Denmark³⁸ have demonstrated that persons who identify themselves with Christianity are actually more likely to perceive immigration as a threat to their national identity. Majority of western European countries, however, have introduced the strict separation of religion and state, and the number of religious believers has not grown recently (at least significantly). Thus, religion is hardly the source of the recent intense criticism of multicultural policy. Another thesis, however, seems more probable, i.e. that Islam would be accepted more widely and would not be treated as a threat if the Muslim minority underwent

³⁵ W. Laqueur (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 6.

³⁶ I. Buruma (2011), *Dwie rewolucje*, “Europa” No. 7, p. 20.

³⁷ Cf. W. Żelazny, *Tubylcy i Barbarzyńcy wieloetnicznych aglomeracji*, in: B. Jałowicki, E. A. Sekuła (eds) (2011), *Metropolie mniejszości w metropoliach*, Warszawa.

³⁸ I. Storm (2011), “Christian nations”? *Ethnic Christianity and anti-immigration attitudes in four western European countries*, “Nordic Journal of Religion and Society” Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 75-96.

the laicisation process quickly. Islam could be commonly accepted as a minority religion within a given minority on the same principles as other religions are accepted. An indirect proof of that can be the enormous support provided by the right side of the political scene to those immigrants and their descendants who support a radical change of Islam, its “Europeanisation”, or decide to abandon their faith (as greatly illustrated with the Dutch example described by Ian Buruma³⁹). Also it is not clear to what extent immigrants and their descendants are religious because data available differ and suggest that the degree of religiousness depends on education and income more than on the length of stay in a given country.⁴⁰ Most probably, religiosity of immigrants and of the native population changes alike. Attitudes of immigrants’ descendants have been grouped as follows: (i) full acceptance of the culture of the country of residence, (ii) an attempt at keeping a balance between requirements of both cultures, and (iii) total rejection of the culture of the country of residence.⁴¹

Of course, Islam arouses stronger emotions due to the fact that it is identified with terrorism and linked to internal and foreign policies of Arab countries. That happens despite European conflicts having, in fact, not much in common with the reality in Arab countries.⁴² The assessment of Islam is conditioned by the assessment of the oppressive treatment of women which has been an argument for introducing changes in the law (e.g. ban on face veils) in a number of European countries. Finally, the image of Islam is strongly influenced by some religious organisations which, due to their radical character, draw attention of many people. It might have been that Islam was long tolerated because it was hoped that, with time, it would lose its influence on immigrant communities. Not only people who considered Christianity to be part of the cultural identity of a given country were fond of such an idea but also persons who perceived religion as the source of negative social phenomena. When their expectations were not met, the policy of tolerance towards Islamic cultures began to be criticised.

Those two approaches are reflected in the two ways of understanding the functioning of democratic societies distinguished by Bert van den Brink.⁴³ In the first one, a resident of a given country cannot be a competent member of a democratic society unless he or she belongs to a political community which recognises the primacy of secular legal norms. The second understanding allows for norms based on

³⁹ I. Buruma (2006), *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance*, New York [Polish translation: *Śmierć w Amsterdamzie. Zabójstwo Theo van Gogha i granice tolerancji*, Kraków 2006].

⁴⁰ W. Laqueur (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁴¹ K. Szyniszewska, *W poszukiwaniu swojej tożsamości – drugie pokolenie imigrantów*, in: D. Lalak (ed.) (2007), *Migracja, uchodźstwo, wielokulturowość. Zderzenie kultur we współczesnym świecie*, Warszawa.

⁴² Cf. I. Buruma (2011), *Dwie rewolucje...*, p. 23.

⁴³ B. van den Brink, *Imagining civic relations in moment of their break down: a crisis of civic integrity in the Netherlands*, in: A. Simon Laden, D. Owen (eds) (2007), *Multiculturalism and Political Theory*, New York, p. 356.

religious concepts of good but only when such norms contain similarly understood values e.g. individual independence. Thus, in essence, both concepts exclude from a democratic debate people who do not share democratic values understood in the European way. The concepts differ only in respect to the genesis of those values seeing their source either in religion or in its separation from the political life. The resulting different approaches are visible mainly in internal divisions within a political community characteristic of the Western culture and they do not have much to do with the immigration issue as such. Thus the immigration issue is interpreted within approaches alien to immigration, and this leads to two positions: (i) the acceptance of immigrants on the condition that, in the political life, they reject the values dictated by their religiosity, and (ii) immigrants shall interpret their religiosity in such a way that their religious values will coincide with the liberal interpretation of Christianity.

In deliberations on the issue of religions, the question is whether peaceful co-existence of two very different religious systems within one political community is possible. The issue of different religions within one multicultural society has been discussed many times. The ecumenical dialogue⁴⁴ and the setting of religiosity apart from the identity of a given community⁴⁵ were supposed to facilitate that coexistence. Despite various theoretical advantages of such solutions, they are extremely difficult to implement in practice.

Religious issues continue to be the basis for the critique of multicultural policy, especially once Christianity is considered be the characteristic of the national identity of a European country. Melanie Phillips criticises the above and her example is the UK where the heir to the throne said that he no longer believed that “Britain is or should be a Christian country” and her comment is that his “renunciation of the bedrock religious settlement of the British national amounts to a repudiation of national identity”⁴⁶.

Another issue is to what extent the phenomena, currently not approved of in western European countries, have their roots in the religion of immigrants and to what extent their roots are traditions of the lands the immigrants come from.⁴⁷ Explanations referring to certain traditional (local) behaviours are tempting as they explain the diversity of customs related to religion. Such explanations, however, are based on what is hardly visible to outsiders and thus they do not shape opinions about immigrants effectively. Popular opinions are (and, probably, will be) dominated by the stereotype of an Arab or, less frequently, a Turk. A stereotype ignores details of the origin of a given person or family. Stereotypes can be embedded in the public

⁴⁴ Cf. L. Gęsiak (2007), *Wielokulturowość. Rola religii w dynamice zjawiska*, Kraków, p. 200.

⁴⁵ A. Maalouf (1998), *Les identités meurtrières*, Paris [Polish translation: *Zabójcze tożsamości*, Warszawa 2002, p. 110].

⁴⁶ M. Phillips (2006), *Londonistan: How Britain is Creating a Terror State Within*, New York, p. 66 [Polish translation: *Londonistan. Jak Wielka Brytania stworzyła państwo terroru*, Warszawa, 2010, p. 129].

⁴⁷ I. Buruma (2006), *Murder in Amsterdam...* [Polish translation: p. 132].

discourse much more easily if attention is drawn to a negative impact of not the entire community of immigrants but of its part (of course, the most significant one). It would be difficult to reasonably argue that all or the majority of western European Muslims are extremists and thus it is argued that extremists are the immigrants' elite. That argument is put forward by for instance Melanie Phillips who writes that "the British Muslim establishment has itself been hijacked by extremist elements"⁴⁸. Such an assessment facilitates the critique of multicultural policy avoiding the necessity to prove that all immigrants, be it Muslims or members of any other minority, are to be blamed for extremism.

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONALITIES

The policy of multiculturalism would probably never be possible if a series of historical events did not happen. World War II bluntly revealed the sinister potential of racism and nationalism. The collapse of western European colonial empires was the direct reason for large number immigrants coming to old metropolises. Possibly, the fight for equal rights of Afro-Americans in the United States played a role as well.⁴⁹ From those historical events grew out the conviction that cultural diversity had to be accepted.⁵⁰ That idea, in turn, has become the foundation of the policy of multiculturalism. However, many years have passed since the said historical events and the influence of their direct witnesses on politics and the general public is increasingly weaker. Lessons of the past are being forgotten and the fears of the past give way to a rational assessment of the present. Maybe that is why there is the dissatisfaction with multicultural policy and the calls for an end of tolerance for phenomena which not so long time ago did not evoke negative emotions or were judged in the light of the past crimes of European nationalisms. Following Golka's deliberations⁵¹, we can say that as far as multiculturalism is concerned, western societies increasingly crave order where there is chaos.

Another issue is the perception of immigrants as an internal political threat. As mentioned above, political activities of the majority of immigrant communities are probably far from being radical and concentrate on the fight for better living conditions. But that does not change the fact that the demands of radical communities are often shocking to the general public and influence the perception of the entire immigrant minority. In this way, the Muslim minority is commonly associated with terrorism and anti-Semitism. These two associations, for obvious reasons, evoke horror in a large part of European societies and their political elites.

⁴⁸ After M. Phillips (2006), *op. cit.*, p. 5 [43].

⁴⁹ Ch. W. Mills, *Multiculturalism as/and/or anti-racism?*, in: A. Simon Laden, D. Owen (2007) (eds), *Multiculturalism...*

⁵⁰ Cf. J. Hryniewicz (2010), *op. cit.*, pp. 143-145.

⁵¹ M. Golka, *Wielokulturowość: między ładem a chaosem*, in: R. Cichocki (ed.) (1997), *Teorie społeczne...*

Then there is also the political struggle for power in which minorities are not the agents but objects of political efforts to win more electoral votes for a given party. The left side of the political scene, traditionally fighting for good treatment of minorities, opposes the right wing which traditionally concentrates on national and religious issues. The thing is that those old political divisions become blurred in societies with a large number of immigrants. And so, the Left, supporting equal (and sometimes affirmative) treatment of immigrants, is criticised for the actual or alleged abandonment of Enlightenment ideas which guided it in the past. The criticism concerns mainly the attitude to religion which, in accordance with broadly understood postulates of the Enlightenment, should be separated as clearly as possible from politics. The point is that some immigrant communities are perceived as obvious adherents of Islam and the support for their postulates is treated as a support for that religion.⁵² In disputes on that issue, it has been argued that Enlightenment liberalism actually promotes racism.⁵³ The leftists, traditionally considered the main power opposing nationalism, are also accused of supporting Arab anti-Semitism, which again results from their support for immigrant communities that are perceived as radically anti-Semitic.⁵⁴

In this context, Lidia Nowakowska⁵⁵ has offered an interesting analysis of the growing importance of right-wing parties. In her interpretation, the right wing (especially its populist part) has profited from European integration which re-introduced the issue of sovereignty of national states into the political discourse and that has led to the growth of classical nationalism. The enemy of nationalism is “the other” and the immigrant is the other who can be most easily noticed, named, and singled out.

One must not forget that the policy of multiculturalism has introduced many changes opposed by people with traditionalist views. The changes were usually introduced at the local level and consisted in, *inter alia*, replacing traditional names or rituals with new ones which were not related to the Christian religion. An example is the replacement of “Christmas” with “winter festivals”.⁵⁶ Melanie Phillips links such behaviours with the feeling of fear about the future fate of the dominant culture (in the cases described by her that refers to the British culture), which is treated worse than the other ones. That strand of criticism of multiculturalism assumes that the growth or just co-inhabitation of cultures different from the dominant one, will result in diminishing the importance of the latter, inhibiting its growth, and even making it fall. Such an argumentation echoes the critique prophesising the fall of Europe

⁵² Cf. I. Buruma, (2006), *Murder in Amsterdam...*

⁵³ E.g. Ch. W. Mills (2007), *op. cit.*

⁵⁴ Cf. M. Phillips (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 203; A. Finkelkraut (2003), *Au nom de l'autre, réflexion sur l'antisémitisme qui vient*, Paris and the foreword by K. Gebert [the Polish translation: *W imię Innego. Antysemitcka twarz lewicy*, Warszawa, 2005, pp. 5-44].

⁵⁵ L. Nowakowska, *Imigracja muzułmańska a fundamentalizm polityczny w Europie*, in: M. Szulakiewicz, Z. Karpus (ed.) (2005), *Fundamentalizm i kultury*, Toruń.

⁵⁶ After M. Phillips (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 123.

or of the European culture under the pressure of Muslim immigrants, which was mentioned above. Here comes the question about the extent to which multicultural policy is, in practice, the reflection of the idea of peaceful cooperation or coexistence of many cultures within one area, and to what extent it is a consent to transfer various non-European ethnocentrisms to Europe (this issue is discussed by Andrzej Szahaj who uses the American example⁵⁷).

In this way, the policy of multiculturalism is hostage to internal disputes which are part of the traditional political struggle between the Left and the Right, and to external disputes the source of which is the situation in the Middle East. Thus, while specific historical and political events facilitated the emergence of the policy of multiculturalism, other events of the same nature contribute to its critique.

While analysing the criticism of multicultural policy, we cannot forget about high unemployment rates among immigrants and their descendants, and about riots by mainly Arab, North African, and black French second-generation immigrants which shook France in 2005. As far as unemployment is concerned, until recently it was explained with prejudices of employers mainly. Currently, however, attention is drawn to education deficiencies and the emergence of the learned helplessness phenomenon caused by excessive welfare services. As for the riots, we should probably agree with Hładkiewicz who argues that they were “the reaction to a radical change in the government strategy towards that social group”⁵⁸. Changes in multicultural policy may thus bring not only positive results in the form of savings or better integration. They may also have negative consequences which go far beyond immigrants' private life. A recognition of the above is especially important in the current situation where there is no idea of how to positively resolve the problem of dissatisfaction of western European societies with the policy of multiculturalism. One may have an impression that all ideas currently articulated are solely negative, namely, that all of them propose nothing but abandoning the policy of multiculturalism and dismantling of system of financial support for immigrants (e.g. changes in the Dutch law⁵⁹).

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We have mentioned seven possible sources of the criticism of the policy of multiculturalism. They include: the financial crisis and the resulting need to reduce social spending, pessimistic visions of the future of the European culture, globalisation and the emergence of the multi-polar world, the growing number of immigrants and the coming of age of their children and grandchildren, seeing multiculturalism as unification, the time distance from the events which contributed to the formulation of the policy of multiculturalism and, finally, the still high unemployment rate among

⁵⁷ A. Szahaj (2004), *op. cit.*, pp. 65-79.

⁵⁸ W. Hładkiewicz (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁵⁹ Ł. Wójcik, *Koniec projektu Holandia*, “Przekrój” 11.07.2011, pp. 16-17.

immigrant communities. While reflecting on the possible consequences of an increased immigration to Poland and response capabilities in terms of specific actions and measures in the area of social policy, we should be aware of multiple dissatisfaction with the policy of multiculturalism in western Europe. Being aware we can learn from mistakes of our neighbours and take advantage of ideas the implementation of which was successful.

ABSTRACT

In the article seven sources of the criticism of the policy of multiculturalism are analysed in the context of opinions recently voiced by western European political leaders. The described sources of criticism are: the financial crisis and the need to reduce social spending, the pessimistic visions of the future of the European culture, globalisation, the growing number of the immigrants and their descendants, understanding multiculturalism as a unification rather than coexistence of different cultures, the decreasing impact of historical and political events that were an inspiration for the politics of multiculturalism, and, finally, the still high unemployment rate among the immigrants and their descendants.