

# Images and Power in the Digital Age: The political role of digital visuality

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**Abstract:** The idea that digitalization, in general, and digital visuality, in particular, can have, alone, subversive or otherwise, emancipative effects on politics is based on the belief that the ideological apparatus supporting hegemonic relations consists of false ideas that the “power of images” can effectively challenge once larger parts of society are given access to this “power”. This idea misinterprets the role of digital visuality by misconstruing the role of ideology, and by positioning visual communication and associated technology in a sort of socio-political vacuum: beyond the reach of ideology and the relations of power supported by it. Based on the insights provided by the classical works of Walter Benjamin and Jean Baudrillard on the visual construction of reality, I argue that an authoritative discussion of the cultural, social and political implications of digital visuality in Western societies invites the intellectual positioning of this process within the broader framework of hegemonic capitalism and the problems of control associated with it. My main point is that in Western societies, the actualization of the subversive potential of digital visuality, as well as that of other forms of communication, requires material conditions that depend on ideology rather than technology. These ideological conditions explain why, for example, digital visuality may be effective in the cultural and socio-political subversion of non-capitalist societies. In Western societies, however, despite the extensive subcultural uses of digital visuality, the subversive potential is fatally reduced (if not nullified) by mechanisms that can be subsumed in what Frederic Jameson called “the cultural logic of late capitalism”. In support of my main argument, I offer some preliminary reflections on the media coverage of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the uses of organized violence in the “Arab Spring” of 2011.

**Keywords:** visual communication, ideology, politics, Walter Benjamin, Jean Baudrillard

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is part of a larger study on the power of visual communication. Here I would like to address the issue of digital visuality, a specific but nowadays seemingly dominant form of visual communication, and the nature or direction of the power allegedly associated to it. The question then is: what is the “power” of digital visuality; and what are its effects on politics (the competition for the control over the distribution on power in society)? I believe this question is core in any attempt to assess the socio-cultural implications of innovation and technological development in communication.

In order to locate my discussion within broader conceptual coordinates, I should mention that my approach rejects technological determinism and what, in lack of a better term, I would describe as the contemplative tradition in visual analysis.

Perspectives inspired by technological determinism usually consider communication or media technology as the source of change or the cause of social phenomena that catch the attention of the analysts. The problem with these perspectives is that by explaining social change with technological development, they induce the naïve student to believe that technological development itself is not part of the social world. Far from being a neutral force, technological development is a core process that contains and reflects ideological assumptions concerning the distribution of power in society. In my view, technological development and social change are interconnected and the evolution of both is fueled by politics: the competition for the control over the distribution of values in society.

The contemplative tradition to visual communication constructs the power of visual communication in terms of a relationship between the image and the viewer, to study how and why this relationship changes in society. In the formulation of W. J. T. Mitchell, “double consciousness” is a key concept in this approach. It expresses the idea that, although very few of us would believe that images are living things, still many more of us relate to images *as if* they were indeed alive (Mitchell, 2005, p. 11). From the “philosophical argument” that “images are like living organisms”, this approach sets to ask:

If the living image has always been the subject of a double consciousness, of simultaneous belief and disavowal, what conditions are making the disavowal more difficult to maintain today? Why, in other words, do various forms of “iconoclasm” – the war of images – seem so conspicuously a part of the pictorial turn in our time? (Mitchell, 2005, p. 11)

This approach points to an important question (why are images seemingly more important today than in the past?) but, as I argued elsewhere, it does so in the wrong way. By adopting the metaphor of “live images” and inciting the viewer to pay attention to “what do pictures want?” it falls prey to a fundamental attribution error: it looks for causes, reasons, motives etc. in the tools rather than in their users; in the objects rather than in the agent; and in things rather than in humans. As technological determinism, but in a more sophisticated way, this approach seems unsuitable for the analysis of relations of power because in the “visual construction of the social” (Mitchell, 2005, p. 356), human agency remains hidden and the ideological origins of social change ultimately out of intellectual reach.

In my approach, the emancipative potential of visual forms of expression does not reside in technology or in photography, and therefore not in digital visuality. Rather it depends on the material and immaterial conditions that assist, support or hinder the effective usage of visual

communication by human agents in the competition for the control over the distribution of values in society.

First, I will discuss the limits of three main arguments that can be made in support of the emancipative potential of digital visibility. Second, with the help of a few insights from the works of Walter Benjamin and Jean Baudrillard, among others, I will give a closer look at the role of ideology and ideological apparatus in resolving the indeterminacy of visual communication. Finally, I will describe this role at work in the coverage of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and of the “Arab Spring” in 2011.

## **2. THE EMANCIPATIVE ARGUMENT**

The belief that digital visibility may indeed have important emancipative potentialities can presumably be based on at least three types of arguments concerning political dissent, information and the formation of visual communities.

### **2.1. Supporting voices of dissent and the circulation of “visual evidence”**

A generic but widespread argument in support of digital visibility is the belief that this form of communication distinctively supports, incites, facilitates or otherwise helps the expression of societal “voices” of individuals and groups which are marginalized by mainstream media. A more specific argument along these lines is that digital visibility facilitates the production and circulation of visual evidence concerning abuses committed by oppressive regimes that can exert an effective control on institutional media. In this idea, the power of visual communication (based on something I would like to call “reality principle” and digital visibility), creates the conditions for simultaneity and ubiquity: we can know what is happening everywhere in the world at the same time it is happening. I am sure that few of us would disagree that it would be nice if oppressive regimes could be subverted by the mere circulation of visual evidence of their dark deeds. The widespread possibility of showing and watching abuses committed every minute in every corner of the world does not translate automatically or necessarily into the possibility to do something about it. The political mobilization against systematic abusive behavior requires not only knowledge about these abuses and will to oppose them, but also political resources (e.g. force) and a political organization able to make effective use of that knowledge and those resources. More commonly, this type of visual evidence is used by other regimes, including democracy, to mobilize consensus against the perpetrator. In this respect, rather than promoting awareness and dissidence, digital visibility simply facilitates the usage of visual communication for political propaganda. Its efficacy does not reflect the “power of images” or their relation to truth, but the political strength of the political organization using it. More precisely, while the efficacy of visual communication depends on its effective usage by a political organization, the emancipative potential of this form of communication depends on the goals or interests of the same political organizations. From this perspective, it would seem that (digital) visual communication is able to perform equally well to subvert oppressive as well as democratic regimes, to tell or to hide the truth, to support or to manipulate political “voice”. For good or bad, visual evidence becomes politically relevant if and when it is effectively used by an influential political organization. We will see in a moment how this perspective may indeed provide some useful insights if applied to the visual coverage of the so called “Arab Spring”.

If emancipation is discussed as a political process or phenomenon (and not for example a psychological one) digital visibility appears to be neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition. The belief in its emancipative power seems rather to reflect a rather naïve idea of what politics is all about and a dramatic underestimation of political pragmatics: the complex interplay of material and immaterial conditions affecting the capacity of individuals and groups to participate to the competition for the control over the distribution of values in society. At best, and discounting political propaganda, digital visibility can be a form of political communication that, as communication in general, is indeed a fundamental dimension of democratic participation.

Finally, I would also like to add that the mobilizing effect of images of abuses should not be taken for granted. Like all images, these have ambivalent meanings and, therefore, roles. Images of victims of a car accident, for example, may be used to invite caution in driving. They also feature prominently in websites that offer those for the visual pleasure of a morbid audience. The same happened with the images of Abu Ghraib.

## **2.2. Creating the “imagined” community as a political actor**

A more interesting belief concerning the emancipative potential of digital visibility reflects the idea that images are a form of text with a distinctive emotional capacity. In the right conditions, images can create feelings of belonging and identification that ultimately result in forms of collective behavior that are politically relevant – e.g. transforming a more or less loose group of separate individuals in a political organization. While in the previous argument the power of visual communication resided in what I called the “reality principle” (the belief that images can give access to a hidden aspect of reality and hidden truth) in this argument I think what we are dealing with is something I would call the “pleasure principle”. The idea here is that digital visibility facilitates the circulation of images that for a variety of reasons fulfill desires of belonging, participation, identification etc. that alternative forms of communication leave somehow frustrated. Furthermore, digitalization enables and accelerates the circulation of images across material and immaterial obstacles (such as borders, cultures, language, status, gender, etc.) to more conventional forms of communication. This argument seems convincing, on political grounds, because the idea of a community of (visual) meaning is compatible with the theorization of collective identity famously formulated by Benedict Anderson and, perhaps less famously, with the “puissance” of the “tribes” as described by Michel Maffesoli (Maffesoli, 1996). These groups are then supposed to be politically influential, bringing to the fore issues (e.g. gay rights) which are neglected by conventional political actors (e.g. political parties based on class identity) hence contributing to increase the inclusiveness of the political system.

In this argument, the political role of digital visibility is more indirect, but also possibly more influential. Implicit in the recognition of the emotional appeal of visual communication, however, is also the ambivalence of this appeal. It is supportive of emancipation as well as of oppression. If the advantage of visibility as a form of political communication - compared to e.g. written communication - consists in its greater emotional appeal, the problem here is to see if and to what extent the politics of emotions can foster or undermine emancipative potentialities – or simply democratic politics. In fact, since digital visibility can support minority rights as well as neo-Nazi and other forms of fundamentalism, this line of argument

is convincing about the political relevance of digital visibility but cannot dissolve the ambivalence of its emancipative potential.

From a different perspective, the political relevance of these communities of meaning and, therefore, of “digital” visibility can be criticized arguing that the imagined communities described by Benedict Anderson were “creatures” that could still prosper in the political condition of modernity. Today, in the digital age, the postmodern condition had profoundly altered not only the nature of politics but, more radically, the very saliency of meaning and the nature of the real.

With Jean-François Lyotard, for example, it can be argued that the condition of disenchantment undermines the very possibility of institutionalization of a set of common meanings/beliefs into a ‘grand narrative’ capable of generating organized collective action. As Maffesoli notes:

The major characteristics attributed to these emotional communities are their ephemeral aspect; ‘changeable composition’; ‘ill-defined nature’; local flavour; their ‘lack of organization’ and routinization (Veralltäglicung). (Maffesoli, 1996, p. 12)

Even if digital visibility can create a community of meaning, there are legitimate reasons of doubt concerning the actual capacity of these communities to support emancipation. In fact, in postmodernism, there are reasons to doubt that not only digital visibility but even its meaning itself could be politically relevant, if one has to believe Frederic Jameson when he writes that:

Now reference and reality disappear altogether, and even meaning – the signified – is problematized. We are left with that pure and random play of signifiers that we call postmodernism, which no longer produces monumental works of the modernist type but ceaselessly reshuffles the fragments of pre-existent text, the building blocks of older cultural and social production, in some new and heightened bricolage: metabooks which cannibalize other books, metatexts which collate bits of other texts – such is the logic of postmodernism in general, which find one of its strongest and most original, authentic forms in the new art of experimental video. (Jameson, 1991, p. 96)

In sum, the problem with this indirect political role of digital visibility can be called “indeterminacy”. The enactment of emancipative potential is far from granted because digital visibility happens to perform community building functions in times when conventional political communication and identities have lost their currency, and, more radically, even the notion of meaning itself becomes problematic. It should be clear that this situation does not, *per se*, rule out the possibility of emancipative usage of digital visibility. It just requires, by those who want to give it a try, a more accurate assessment of the current state of affairs.

### **2.3. Changing the social construction of reality (and of the political within it)**

A third argument in favor of the emancipative potential of digital visibility may suggest that this form of visual communication can indeed foster political emancipation by introducing fundamental changes in the process of the social construction of reality - a process famously described by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman. The question here is then to see what is the nature of these changes, and what are the foreseeable political implications associated to them.

If digital visuality cannot credibly reduce the indeterminacy of visual communication in its conventional functions of political propaganda and community building, one may still claim that, compared to conventional photography, digital visuality affects the social construction of reality in at least three ways. First, it opens up the practice of visual communication to large parts of the population, blurring the distinction between producer, distributor and consumer of visual objects (the apparent “democratization” of visual communication, a process that Benjamins discussed about film and one I will discuss further in the next section). Second, it enhances the productive capacity of visual technology beyond reality itself, into the hyper-real by enabling the production of images that transcend the human perspective (like viewing the war with the “eyes” of a missile, a point discussed by Jean Baudrillard that I will revisit in a moment). Third, it performs as a logic for the representation of reality that has pedagogical implications, and enhances the social value of visual communication in the social construction of reality (a message must be visual if it has to be relevant at all!) independently from reality itself.

The combined effects of these three changes introduced by digital visuality, one may suggest, are ‘emancipative’ on political grounds to the extent that their role is ‘subversive’ of the social construction of reality. Political emancipation, in other words, is associated to the dissolution of the relations of power legitimized by notions of truth and reality that are effectively challenged by the logic of digital visuality, the hyperrealism of its representations, and the widespread access to both. To change the world, one should first change the way we look at it. Digital visuality can help in looking at the world not as it is, but as it could be (utopia/dystopia).

This argument is presumably the most sophisticated of the three discussed here. In this perspective, the power of visual communication goes beyond information to stretch into knowledge, and, in particular, into the process of knowledge construction about the social world. Additionally, in this argument, the emancipative claim of digital visuality does not address the political directly but indirectly, blending socio-constructivism and media ecology in what appears a promising step towards a political theory of visual politics. The core conceptual move here is the idea that reality is constructed by social communication (socio-constructivism), and that if communication is relevant, the ways we communicate must make a difference in the way reality is constructed and, maybe, in the nature of it (media ecology). Finally, this argument introduces the themes of the crisis of truth, and the substitution of reality by its representations, which are two core aspects of Postmodernism, but it also invites a critical reflection on the political shortcomings of this form of criticism, and on the intellectual possibility to overcome them.

My claim, in relation to the emancipative potential of digital visuality as described in this argument, can be summarized as follows. If digital visuality supports the dissolution of the real, the impact on the relations of power depends on the way we construe the conceptual linkage between reality and politics. If politics is constructed as a result of, and dependent upon, reality, then the subversion of reality is the subversion of the political. Conventional processes and identities lose their meanings e.g. election, class struggle, etc. This “subversion” however, rather than opening up opportunities for emancipation, seems to be what Jean Baudrillard described as a regime of simulation: a situation in which relations of power are beyond the reach of change. Visual communication with all its ambivalence, and

because of it, is a most effective tool to manage relations of power through –rather than despite - the subversion of the real.

But if politics is seen as a process that construes reality, and the social construction of reality as a fundamental dimension of the competition over the control for the distribution of values in the society (as I am inclined to believe), then the subversion of the real is not ‘outside’ the domain of politics, but an important part of it, a more or less deliberate move to affect this competition.

Michel Foucault already pointed out the productive capacity of power/knowledge to create the meanings or “discursive formations” necessary for the reproduction of control. Where the cultural logic of late capitalism applies, if the incessant production of new meanings is constitutive of relations of power, as Frederic Jameson suggests, these relations may not dissolve because the symbols and rituals expressing them are deprived of meaning (e.g. through the autonomy of the signifier). Rather, in these conditions, the possibility of emancipative changes is disconnected from the social construction of meaning: it is beyond the reach of change through communication – and this is “the violence of the system” that Baudrillard believed generated terrorism as a form of antagonistic violence. [Baudrillard 2003 (2002), p. 58]

If digital visibility contributes to shatter the myth of truth in visual communication to the advantage of the “pleasure principle” political emancipation becomes as illusionary as the beauty of a computer generated landscape we may enjoy while we sit in a room without windows, or a digital fireplace burning on our TV screen.

If we believe that reality is socially constructed, we should also give some currency to at least other two ideas. First, that the control on the social construction of reality is unequally distributed in society and therefore, that some groups are more influential than others. Second, that technological evolution is also part of this reality and also influenced by, rather than merely having influence upon, the unequal distribution of power in society. What this means for our discussion is that the emancipative claim of digital visibility can indeed be seen in a broader perspective, as a form of communication that affects the social construction of reality, rather than directly the relation of power within it. But it also means that the social effects of digital visibility are mediated by other circumstances and conditions that presumably, to a certain extent, reflect relations of power. It is this mediation, one may suggest, that ultimately produces the elements of ambivalence in the emancipative promise of digital visibility: the indeterminacy in the role of images, visual community and representation of the political that I have discussed here.

In my view, this line of argument invites reflection on the role of ideology or, more precisely, on the role of institutionalized hierarchies of values on the social uses of available technologies for visual communication.

### **3. DIGITAL VISUALITY AND IDEOLOGY**

In the previous section I challenged the ideas that images or visual technology can bring about emancipation. In the discussion of three arguments in support of the emancipative claim of digital visibility I tried to argue that indeterminacy is the key feature of this role,

referring to a set of possibilities the implementation of which seems to rely upon, much more than bring about, change in established relations of power.

In discussing the role of ideology, I want to suggest that the emancipative potential of digital visuality (as other communication technologies) depends on effective usage, and that effective usage depends on the capacity of the user to come to terms with (or acknowledge) the conditions affecting its usage. Most relevant, among these conditions, are the institutionalized hierarchies of values that more or less latently affect the uses of digital visuality, like other forms of expression.

Therefore, I define ideology as an *institutionalized hierarchy of value performing descriptive and prescriptive functions in the competition over the distribution of values in society*.

Looking at this concept of ideology is important, in my opinion, to defamiliarize our experience of media and communication, to become aware of the risks associated to unreflective ways of engaging with technology in general, and visual technology in particular. This is an exercise with a pedagogical connotation that I believe is necessary to resist the pervasiveness of the “promotional cultural” and the fact that this culture “has become, today, virtually co-extensive with our produced symbolic world” (Wernick, 1991, p. 182) – a process that in political perspective goes dangerously close to the saturation of the symbolic imaginary by corporate interests<sup>1</sup>.

To address the emancipative potential of digital visuality I therefore suggest another line of argument – digital visuality is a (political) form of communication that participates (reflects, affects, etc.) with the ideological conditions of a given society.

Within the limits of this paper I will briefly recall some ideas expressed in the works of Walter Benjamin and Jean Baudrillard that are useful for identifying the ideological elements embedded in digital visuality. After this, I will use these ideas for a preliminary interpretation of the visual coverage of the Iraq invasion and “Arab Spring”.

### **3.1. Walter Benjamin and the role of technological reproducibility**

I believe we are all familiar with the celebrated work of Walter Benjamin on the mechanical reproducibility of the work of art. My main point here is that mechanical reproducibility is not a process that can be considered ideologically neutral. While I believe that Benjamin is fundamentally right concerning the cultural and socio-political implications of this feature, I think he is however wrong when he suggests the possibility of using the potential of film in support of revolutionary culture, to subvert property relations, and ultimately satisfy the human “reproductive” need. Past history simply shows that this has not happened, and I cannot see, in contemporary history, any reason why we should expect to experience this subversive turn anytime soon. In fact, the filmic power of the “apparatus” seems stronger than ever, spreading from the large to the small screen of TV, and to the even smaller screen of personal computers, in form of online movies, video on demand and videogames. Digital visuality may facilitate the diversification of delivery platforms, but not the pluralism of

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<sup>1</sup> An example is the use of images in mobile communication, a form of technology that, as I argued with Mikko Villi is far from ‘connecting people’ but makes absence productive in the management of social space. (Villi & Stocchetti, 2011)

ideological functions. These functions are those that Benjamin described in his article and it may be useful recall them today.

First, mechanical reproducibility effaces the role of tradition, destroys the aura of the work of art, its “cult value”, but enhances its “exhibition value”. Hence it creates the conditions for the politics of art: the use of aesthetics in the competition for the control over the distribution of values in society. (Benjamin, 2008, p. 25)

Second, in the politics of art, mechanical reproducibility allows for the possibility to establish a distinctive relationship between difference and similarity, in which perception “extracts sameness even from what is unique”. In the process of social construction of reality discussed earlier, mechanical reproducibility makes it possible to enforce “the alignment of reality with the masses and of the masses with reality ... a process of immeasurable importance for both thinking and perception”. (Benjamin, 2008, pp. 23-24).

Third, the relevance of mechanical reproducibility is not primarily in the kind of (visual) products it creates, but rather in the social functions that are attributed to these products. In this perspective, the training functions that Benjamin sees for film applies equally well, in my view, to videogames and digital photography:

The function of film is to train human beings in the apperceptions and reactions needed to deal with a vast apparatus whose role in their lives is expanding almost daily... The representation of human beings by means of an apparatus has made possible a highly productive use of the human being's self-alienation. (Benjamin, 2008, p. 26 and 32)

Fourth, even before digitalization (and the idea of “simulation” in Baudrillard), Benjamin describes the ideological function of film in term of “adaptation” between the people's perception of themselves, and the world around them, and the needs of the apparatus (in Baudrillard, “the system”) achieved through the blurring of the difference between reality and its representations:

*The most important social function of film is to establish equilibrium between human beings and the apparatus. Film achieves this goal not only in terms of man's presentation of himself to the camera but also in terms of his representation of his environment by means of this apparatus. (...) This is where the camera comes into play, with all its resources for swooping and rising, disrupting and isolating, stretching or compressing a sequence, enlarging or reducing an object. It is through the camera that we first discover the optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis. (Benjamin, 2008, p. 37) (Italics in the original)*

Fifth, mechanical reproducibility (of which digital visuality is just the latest expression) is a form of control over the representation of reality. This control, however, is not ideologically neutral but rather selective. While Benjamin notes that the functioning of the (ideological) apparatus effectively nullified the emancipative or “revolutionary” opportunities in film, I claim that the same apparatus performs in a similar way in the other domains, where digital visuality has been put to work (namely videogames, advertisement and the practices associated to private photography).

Film capital uses the revolutionary opportunities implied by this control for counterrevolutionary purposes. Not only does the cult of the movie star which it fosters preserve that magic of the personality which has long been no more than the putrid magic of its own commodity character, but its counterpart, the cult of the audience, reinforces the corruption by which fascism is seeking to supplant the class consciousness of the masses. (Benjamin, 2008, p. 33)

Sixth, intrinsic in this control is the possibility of bringing about a perception of reality, and to naturalize representations of the world that, albeit psychotic *per se*, are enforced as authoritative representations of reality:

Many of the deformations and stereotypes, transformations and catastrophes which can assail the optical world in films afflict the actual world in psychoses, hallucinations, and dreams. Thanks to the camera, therefore, the individual perceptions of the psychotic or the dreamer can be appropriated by collective perception. The ancient truth expressed by Heraclitus, that those who are awake have a world in common while each sleeper has a world of his own, has been invalidated by film – and less by depicting the dream world itself than by creating figures of collective dream, such as the globe-encircling Mickey Mouse. (Benjamin, 2008, pp. 37-38)

Seventh, for Benjamin, in capitalist and fascist societies, film is the masses' "true training ground" for "reception in distraction" as the form of apperception which leads to the aestheticization of politics and, ultimately, to war as strategies to preserve property relations.

*The logical outcome of fascism is an aestheticizing of political life (...) All efforts to aestheticize politics culminate in one point. That one point is war. War and only war, makes it possible to set a goal for mass movements on the grandest scale while preserving traditional property relations. That is how the situation presents itself in political terms. In technological terms it can be formulated as follows: only war makes it possible to mobilize all of today's technological resources while maintaining property relations. (Benjamin, 2008, p. 41) (Italics in the original)*

We will see in a moment that Benjamin's insight about aestheticization and war sound especially actual in relation to the visual coverage of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and in the "Arab Spring" in 2011.

What makes Benjamin's analysis on the socio-political effects of technological reproducibility of the work of art a bit obsolete, in my view, is his faith on the possibility for communist ideology to re-appropriate the revolutionary potential of film and the idea, closely associated to this, that the ideological effects of film could be reversed and even put to good use for the emancipation of the masses. As we know, Soviet Communism relied on film for "stimulating the involvement of the masses through illusionary displays" (Benjamin, 2008, p. 34) very much like "film capital" does, exposing the masses to the same aestheticization of politics that Benjamin discusses in capitalist society. If Benjamin would write today, he would perhaps acknowledge that capitalism is an ideology more resilient and ultimately effective than he thought – and maybe that visual communication is a less effective emancipative tool than he hoped.

### **3.2. Jean Baudrillard and the regime of simulation**

There are at least two ideas that are relevant here: simulacra and simulation. Like Benjamin, Baudrillard believes that a crucial moment consists in the disappearance of difference (e.g. between the 'map' and the 'territory') (Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, [1985] 1994, p. 2). If the emancipative potential of digital visibility is assessed in relation to the social construction of reality, the mechanical reproducibility of images that have "no relation to any reality whatsoever" (Baudrillard, [1985] 1994, p. 6) should raise some concern. While in Benjamin the manipulative potential of film (and I argue of digital visibility too) is bent to the need of the reproduction of reality along ideological lines, with Baudrillard the process gets out of control. Media is not a tool to control reality but to substitute it. The substitution itself

is not part of an ideological program, such as that of the capitalist or the fascist, but a result of the representational logic of the media itself.

Baudrillard suggests that this state of affairs, the effective substitution of the real with its mediated representation, implies the end of the political since the possibility of change, in a “regime” of simulation is simply ruled out. My suggestion here is rather that this “regime” has itself ideological connotations, and, independently from the (im)possibility of change, this state of affairs is indeed the result of politics: the practical effect of an hegemonic ideology on the social construction of the world.

The value of Baudrillard’s ideas lies, in my opinion, in the insight it may offer when identifying the deep effects of mechanical reproducibility on the cultures of perception. The limit, however, is its incapacity to see the effects he describes as a state of affairs belonging to the social world, and therefore, associated to identifiable interests and agents.

To the extent that the use of images as simulacra and the “regime” of simulation associated to it are constitutive of the postmodern condition, this very “condition” is not politically neutral and assuredly far from emancipative. As Jameson put it rather unambiguously:

Yet this is the point at which I must remind the reader of the obvious: namely, that this whole global, yet American, postmodern culture is the internal and superstructural expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world: in this sense, as throughout class history, the underside of culture is blood, torture, death, and terror. (Jameson, 1991, p. 5)

I can therefore suggest that the visual strategy of hegemonic capitalism is presumably the following: the control of the social construction of reality by blurring the difference between reality and simulation, by making images simulacra and therefore destroying the possibility of effective usage of visual communication for subversion.

#### **4. THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY AND THE EMANCIPATIVE POTENTIAL OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION**

##### **4.1. Iraq 1991-2003**

There is little doubt that, in the US-led invasion of Iraq, digital visuality was the weapon of choice in psychological warfare. The point was even made explicit by one of the many “analysts” involved in the war reporting exercise<sup>2</sup>. The targets of this warfare, however, were not only the Iraqi people and their army, but also the Western people. Domestic audiences were involved in that war in the role of spectators and funders, but also masses in the process of being trained to conform to the needs of the ruling class (if we follow Benjamin) and ultimately persuaded to buy into the myth of the monopoly of legitimate force by the US, if we follow Baudrillard (Baudrillard, 1991, p. 96).

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<sup>2</sup> During the early hours of the US led invasion of Iraq in 2003, commenting for th CNN International the computer generated images of the invasion plans, retired US General Dan Christian quite candidly observed that “the coalition forces would not allow this kind of broadcasting were it not to be used for psychological influencing as well”. (CNN World, 21 March 2003 at 06:16 GMT)

That war, possibly more than any other in the past, was construed as a visual “work of art” whose main goal was to bring the viewers to enjoy what they saw. It was a huge, costly and successful experiment in institutional control over the social construction of a specific reality (war). The cognitive strategy used to achieve this control consisted in blurring the distinction between reality and the communicative representation of it. The role of visual communication was to provide visual evidence in support of institutional claims. Colin Powell’s presentation of the “evidence” in support of the US administration’s claim that Saddam Hussein was indeed in possession of weapons of mass destruction was not a diplomatic farce, but rather a public rehearsal of this communicative strategy<sup>3</sup>. The visual coverage of the actual war was performed as a theatrical show in which live broadcast, computer generated simulations, and images compilations had the main communicative function of transforming the war into a visual product for leisure consumption.

As Mirzoeff observed:

For all the deconstructive, feminist, anti-racist, visual culture theory that I have at my disposal, there was no way to counter the sweating, exulting triumph of the war watcher. To call attention to the deaths of Iraqi civilians or to mention that this attack lacked the authority of the United Nations would simply have added to his delight. (Mirzoeff, 2005, pp. 1-2)

The political implications of constructing war as an object of visual pleasure (or as “war porn, (Baudrillard, 2006)) are huge, if one thinks about it. It is this form of enjoyment, for example, that produces the emotional conditions for the transformation of a democratic regime in a “garrison state” – a transformation described by Harold D. Lasswell already in the 1940s.

The war coverage of the invasion of Iraq in BBC World and CNN International produced the aesthetization of war on a global scale, for a global audience, across cultures and irrespective of the diversities among “visual cultures”. It is trivial to say that this would not have been possible without digital technology. Less trivial may be to discuss the non-material conditions that made it possible. My suggestion, in this respect, is that an exercise in the aesthetization of war of that magnitude is both a sign and a tool: a sign (indicator) of the ideological strength of global capitalism; and a tool to enforce intellectual and cognitive deterrence against competing ideologies. A visual coverage of that sort was possible and intelligible because global audiences had already been trained – so to say – in that type of spectacle by the flood of mainstream war movies and video games that shared the same digital technology. Furthermore, and to the extent that war coverage was effectively experienced and consumed by a great number of people as a work of art for mass visual enjoyment, the aesthetization of war succeed in creating the cognitive basis for the legitimization of the same ideology. This is a good example, in my opinion, of how ideology determines the usage of available technology, and how the ideological usage of available technology supports ideology itself.

The ultimate piece of evidence for an argument against the emancipative role of digital technology based on the “reality principle” comes from the publication of the images of the abuse committed by US personnel on war prisoners at Abu-Ghraib.

Once established (by the symbolic authority of transnational TV networks), the idea that violence can be experienced as a form of visual pleasure cannot be disposed of so easily. The ideological effects of war coverage spread to the post-war, and affected the socio-political

<sup>3</sup> Available on line at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nt5RZ6ukbNc>

impact of those images. For a public trained in enjoying the spectacle of large scale violence, the images of the abuses at Abu Ghraib were not construed as visual evidence of the war crimes committed by the US military and political leaders, but rather as just another piece of visual enjoyment. In that instance, digital technology failed to express the emancipative potentialities, because the “reality value” of those images was eroded by their “pleasure value”. It should therefore come as no surprise that the actual consequences of the publication of those images on the perpetrators of those abuses were rather mild and inspired by “scapegoating” rather than emancipative justice, while the same images are still available on the web for the visual pleasure of their consumers.

As a note, one may also notice that today the web is still crowded with images of people re-enacting the abuses shown in the images of Abu Ghraib. The potential of digital technology, in this case, seems to go toward the naturalization of abuses and the blurring of distinctions (e.g. between our pleasure and the “pain of others”<sup>4</sup>) rather than toward emancipation.<sup>5</sup>

## 4.2. Arab Spring 2011: camera as weapons

A commonly held belief is that digital visibility, and digital technology more broadly, are decisive tools in the democratization of the Arab countries in the southern side the Mediterranean. “European Commissioner calls for ‘digital champion’ (BBC, European commissioner calls for 'digital champions', 2011) and “Syria: ‘Our Weapon is the camera’” (BBC, Syria: 'Our weapons is the camera', 2011) offer the best examples I could find of this belief expressed in available media.

My inclination, however, is to think that digital visibility/technology only facilitates the use of images, enhancing the political and military value of visual propaganda. The social meaning of these images, and the political effectiveness of their usage, depends on the nature of ideology and the quality of the organization involved in the struggle respectively.

In the visual imagery of the Arab Spring, the interesting aspect is the similarities between these and the “revolutions” of 1989. Someone who is even vaguely familiar with the socio-cultural features of the populations involved may have the impression that the Arab masses have been visually socialized into the basic model of French Revolution - as to say that when people rebel for democracy they all look the same.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> “Regarding the Pain of Others” is the title of a critical essay by Susan Sontag on this topic (Sontag, 2004 (2003)).

<sup>5</sup> see, for example discussion on:

[http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/blog/2007/02/kinkcom\\_in\\_san\\_francisco\\_women.html](http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/blog/2007/02/kinkcom_in_san_francisco_women.html)

For cultural appropriation and subversion see:

<http://www.mccullagh.org/photo/1ds-18/abu-ghraib-prisoner-uncle-sam>

[http://www.likecool.com/Abu\\_Ghraib\\_Coffee\\_Table--Furniture--Home.html](http://www.likecool.com/Abu_Ghraib_Coffee_Table--Furniture--Home.html)

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/legofesto/317378240/>

<http://www.intomobile.com/2010/08/26/verizon-droid-ad-bears-striking-resemblance-to-abu-ghraib-torture-images/>

<http://therecshow.com/richard-simmons-may-be-gay/>

<http://www.wearemongoloid.com/>

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. the cartoon by Chappatte for Makingitmagazine, available at <http://www.makingitmagazine.net/?p=3563>



Figure 1: “Les Temps”, by political cartoonist “Chappatte”.

We see women carrying guns or participating in street demonstrations, and we construe those images as signs of gender equality and women emancipation i.e. visual evidence of the spread of democracy. We see children and adults with the colors of their national flags painted on their faces, and we understand that, as supporters of some football team going to an important match, these people have a strong emotional involvement in their “cause”. Finally, we see the pictures of the villain – Gadhafi – slayed and humiliated and, besides the emotional “reward”, we understand that, at least in Libya, the revolution is over and democracy has won.

When Benjamins observes that film performs training functions for the masses, it means that masses adopt the visual form of expression to which they have been socialized – in our case by films, videogames, internet, etc. When Baudrillard discusses the role of simulacra in the “regimes of simulation”, it suggests that in these “regimes” visibility is used to hide rather than show reality. And while we see “them” finally becoming like “us”, we are “shown” the fulfillment of Francis Fukuyama’s prophecy that “the institutions embodying the West’s underlying principles of freedom and equality will continue to spread around the world” (Fukuyama, 2002, pp. 27-28).

Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, however, suggests a different possibility:

Unfortunately, the Egyptian summer of 2011 will be remembered as marking the end of revolution, a time when its emancipatory potential was suffocated. Its gravediggers are the army and the Islamists. ... the Islamists will tolerate the army’s material privileges and in exchange will secure ideological hegemony. The losers will be the pro-Western liberals, too weak – in spite of the CIA funding they are getting – to ‘promote democracy’, as well as the true agents of the spring events, the emerging secular left that has been trying to set up a network of civil society organisations, from trade unions to feminists. The rapidly worsening economic situation will sooner or later bring the poor, who were largely absent from the spring protests, onto the streets. There is likely to be a new explosion, and the difficult question for Egypt’s political subjects is who will succeed in directing the rage of the poor? Who will translate it into a political programme: the new secular left or the Islamists? (Žižek, 2011)<sup>7</sup>

While the mainstream visual representation of the Arab Spring reflects ideological canons of appropriateness and intelligibility, since the beginning, analysts have observed that these rebellions may support transitions not towards more democratic regimes but rather toward fundamentalist Islamic regimes.

<sup>7</sup> For a vehemently critical comment on Žižek’s article see Hamid Dabashi “Zizek and Gaddafi: Living in the old world” available at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/08/201183113418599933.html>

Is it possible that the same images have different meanings, different political strengths and ultimately different social roles if interpreted through different hierarchies of values? My tentative answer to all these questions is 'yes'. Circulating images of the Arab Spring shows the progress of democracy for some and the fall of non-islamic Arab regimes for others. To "us" they show "their" effort to become like "us". But to "them", the same images show "their" sacrifices made for "their" cause. And while those images enter "our" media culture in forms, timing and shapes crafted to suit the commercial needs of ("our") media companies, the same images are metabolized in "their" visual culture as the narrative elements of a new rebirth for the Arab Nation. Images of death and sacrifice can destabilize conventional authoritarian regimes to the advantage of the Islamist, because the death and sacrifice are construed as proof of the values of their cause.

The use of digital technology may work for the subversion of "conventional" authoritarian regimes (which are also among the most secular ones in that region) because first, the ideological background of these regimes could not "digest" organized opposition, and second, because the potentialities of this technology were exploited by political organizations equipped with enough material and immaterial (e.g. a recognizable ideological identity) resources to make effective use of them. The same technologies cannot subvert the inequalities of power in our regimes, because the ideological background of our regimes can effectively transform "sacrifice" into "entertainment", the symbolic expression of dissidence and resistance into cultural commodity and commercial gadgets – just think about the T-shirt with the face of "Che"! – and therefore neutralize the opposition by taking advantage of it.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I could not address the idea that digital visibility is influential in supporting postmodernism as the cultural logic of late capitalism. What I did, however, is offer the reader speculative evidence of another idea: that the effective emancipative use of material or immaterial resources depends on the availability of an emancipative ideology. To this purpose, I have defined ideology as an institutionalized hierarchy of values performing descriptive and prescriptive functions. I have argued that the emancipative potential of digital visibility depends on the development of an ideology antagonistic to that of late capitalism. Short of this, the role of digital visibility and other forms of communication will remain ambivalent or, more commonly, supportive of the hegemonic ideology.

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# The Migration of Hungarian Refugees to Prince Edward Island, Canada (1956-1957) – A Communicative Inquiry With a Local Newspaper

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**Abstract:** This article describes how local media in the smallest province of Canada socially constructed the arrival of Hungarian refugees on Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada from 1956-1957. This article addresses the role which the media has in the social construction of refugees, as well as sheds light on the niche topic of refugee migration to Prince Edward Island in the late 1950s. From an analysis of newspaper articles from *The Guardian* (PEI) it was found that during 1956-1957 Hungarian refugees were positively received on Prince Edward Island because they were anti-soviet political symbols. This political factor, coupled with their perceived ability to contribute to the Island's economy, encouraged their positive reception. The article argues that using newspapers as a primary source in a historical study of immigration can uncover both explicit and implicit attitudes with regards to communication, culture, and society.

**Keywords:** refugee studies, political migration, media representations, Cold War, Canada, Hungary

## A Revolt of the Mind

In 1953 a “revolt of the mind” was occurring in Hungary (Hidas, 1998, par 5). University students were rallying behind democratists who were challenging the Soviet status quo and calling for a government overthrow. By October of 1956, pro-democracy and anti-Soviet demonstrations were becoming increasingly intense. The Soviet government began to quash protesters with the use of violence, persecution and legislation which limited citizens' freedoms. An outmigration of 200,000 people from Hungary to Austria ensued, continuing throughout 1956 and 1957 (Dreisziger, 1985, p. 199).

Unlike the instances of out-migration that had occurred earlier in Hungary's history, the exodus of 1956-1957 was of people from all classes and occupations (Dreisziger, 1985, p.199). The North American Treaty Organization (NATO) was not willing to intervene as it

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feared that this would only promote conflict with the USSR (Thompson & Bangarth, 2008, p.295). However, as Andrew Thompson and Stephanie Bangarth write, nevertheless “Canadian immigration officials reinforced the number of immigration officers at the Canadian Embassy in Vienna, loosened the normal requirements concerning proper travel documentation, medical exams, and security clearances, and enlisted commercial airplanes to transport ... refugees out of Austria [and on to Canada]” as a way to offer support (Thompson & Bangarth, 2008, p.295). Throughout Canada the impending arrival of Hungarian refugees captivated the media. Headlines across the country were focused on the crisis in Hungary, and the immigration of Hungarians which was soon to occur. This article describes how the local newspaper *The Guardian* of the smallest province of Canada socially constructed the arrival of Hungarian refugees on Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada from 1956-1957.

## **Newspapers and Communication**

Newspapers can be an effective source to determine the reactions of an immigrant-receiving community to refugees and other newcomers. Newspapers are the communicators of “current history” (Leggit, 1938, p. 296). Newspapers are “both an integral part of the ideological apparatus of capitalist societies and one of the main agencies for the reproduction of these societies through their interpretation, packaging, and distribution of reality throughout society” (Franzosi, 1987, p. 6). What is presented in newspapers is not randomly selected. Newspaper content reflects the “will ... and interests of dominant economic groups” (Franzosi, 1987, p. 6). Akwa (2004) writes that the media is an integral part of our environment which affects our thoughts and behaviours (p.86). In addition, geographic or temporal restraints may determine that newspapers are the only available sources of data.

Some scholars write that newspaper reporting is biased, and therefore the reliability of the data is forfeited. Further, messages in the newspaper are interpreted differently from individual to individual so to determine the effect media messages have on public perception is difficult. When analyzing papers, the researcher is sometimes examining newspaper reporting as opposed to historical events. The researcher has to be aware of this reality and thus examine collections of articles as opposed to individual sets when attempting to construct a historical narrative. Doing so allows one to determine recursive themes in the newspaper and thus what issues are important or newsworthy to the dominant groups in society. (Hussain, 2000, p. 101).

## **Newspaper Data**

This article was developed from an analysis of articles published from 1956 to 1957 in Prince Edward Island’s (PEI) *The Guardian* newspaper. The articles were retrieved by manually searching through the Robertson Library’s newspaper microfiche archive collections at the University of PEI in Charlottetown, PEI. Articles which focused on Hungarian refugees were identified by scanning all of the headlines for keywords associated with the migration between 1956 and 1957 (such as, ‘Hungary’; ‘refugee’; ‘Red Cross’; ‘arrival’; ‘immigrants’; etc.) Indeed, it is likely that due to human error there were articles overlooked which could have been included. However, since this is a case study and the articles which were retrieved have been triangulated by a comparison with secondary literature, the threshold has been met for an exploratory discussion on this topic. The limitations are that this discussion is not generalizable without further research. Yet, the importance of this article is that it provides a

starting point for future research on Hungarian immigration to a small Canadian island-province during an important moment in the world history.

*The Guardian* was chosen because it was, and still is, the primary source for the Island's local news from all parts of the province. During the 1950s there were no other major newspaper outlets, and *The Guardian* would have provided a comprehensive overview of the political, social, and cultural happenings in the province. Based on these newspaper stories, this article attempts to develop a snapshot which provides detail and context of the arrival of Hungarian refugees on PEI, Canada from 1956-1957.

### **Hungarian Refugees – Push Factors and the Canadian Government's Response**

The response by the Canadian government to charter flights to Canada for more than 37,000 Hungarian refugees in 1956 can be attributed to the advocacy of church groups and other voluntary organizations (Dirks, 1993, p.9). There was a lot of dissatisfaction among groups such as the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) that the Canadian government was not doing enough to assist the plight of the 200,000 Hungarian refugees in Austria (see Slack, 1986). Church groups successfully pressured the Canadian government to provide a robust response to the Hungarian crisis.

The CCC worked closely with the government through meetings in Ottawa to co-ordinate governmental and non-governmental settlement assistance for the Hungarian refugees. Canadians supported the advocacy of these volunteer groups. Newspapers across the country paid close attention to the situation in Austria. As a result, Canadians, being "responsible participant[s] in world affairs" (Dirks, 1993, p.11) at the time, reacted to this coverage and gave their full support to accommodating the Hungarian refugees.

The federal government's positive response to accepting the Hungarian refugees can be attributed to the pro-active efforts of voluntary organizations and to the idea that the Hungarian refugees were the right type of immigrant (Knowles, 1997, p. 126 & p. 128). Thompson and Bangarth write that, "accepting large numbers of refugees advanced the larger ideological, economic, and racial interests of the country" (Thompson & Bangarth, 2008, p. 310). By accepting large numbers of persons who had opposed the Soviets, the Canadian government was reaffirming its own democratic values. The Hungarian refugees, as long as they were young and healthy, were able to gain employment and contribute to the economy and society.

At the national level, Canada's economy was booming. Realizing this, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration J.W. Pickersgill used the Hungarian crisis as a way to solve the country's labour shortage. Historians have noted that the migration of Hungarians to Canada marked the beginning of a more open-door attitude towards refugees (Knowles, 1997, p. 126) and an end to Canada's European-focused refugee policy. (Adelman, 1993, p. 32). In 1956, Hungarian migration to Canada was the largest influx of refugees since the end of World War Two. The Minister's policy with regards to the Hungarian migration thus marks a seminal moment in Canada's immigration history.

## From the Newspaper: Prince Edward Island Receives Hungarian Refugees, 1956



*The Guardian* 1957, February 28

a massive transformation, causing concern for many residents. It is for this reason then, that Islanders may have been wary that the Hungarians would only further strain the Island's economy which was primarily based on the agricultural industry and was in flux. The turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the beginning of a wave of out-migration of people from the Island. This out-migration continued to strain the Island's economy throughout the 1950s and left fewer and fewer people to work as farm labourers (Armsworthy, 2005, p.2). During the 1950s, compared to Ontario and the Western provinces, the Island's economy was lagging behind. Increasingly, Prince Edward Island was turning to the federal government for payments to make up for the agricultural industry which was in decline. Thus, it is likely that those articles which touted the Hungarian's as being the right "stock" were implicitly *reassuring* residents that the Hungarians would not further strain the province's meagre economy.

On December 10, 1956, Minister of Health and Chairman of the Prince Edward Island Emergency Relief Committee, M.L. Bonnell announced that a refugee centre had been established in Falconwood, PEI ("To use treatment centre as refugees clearing house", 1956, p. 2). Bonnell had no idea of the number of refugees that would be arriving on the Island. The PEI Department of Health was going to provide medical examinations for the refugees at Falconwood. However, it is clear that Bonnell was adamant that the government could not accommodate all of the refugees' needs. He called upon doctors and nurses to volunteer, and charitable organizations to provide blankets, clothing, food, and other items. Persons who could offer accommodation in their homes or translation services were also called upon.

*The Guardian* newspaper provided excellent coverage of the Hungarian's arrival in the small province, which then had a population of only 99,285. As Canadians at the time were "overcome with compassion for the liberty-seeking Hungarians" (Knowles, 1997, p. 140), the newspaper coverage mirrored public opinion. *The Guardian* articles demonstrate that Islanders were in-synch with the national pro-humanitarian movement. Islanders assisted the Hungarians because they believed that by doing so, they were participating in a pro-democracy movement. However, some apprehension with regards to the Hungarian newcomer's potential impacts on the Island's economy existed among residents of the province. During the 1950s, the agricultural industry was undergoing

Bonnell specifically called upon the Women's Institute and the Catholic Women's League for their services. It is likely that these two organizations would have had a key role in accommodating refugees. Women's organizations were particularly a focus of calls for help. The state seemed to rely upon them in times of crisis. These organizations would have already had a history of being involved in charity and philanthropy on Prince Edward Island and were thus prepared. Islanders would have been familiar with organizations such as the Institute and it would not have been seen as odd that this organization would be involved in this type of charity. With the support of a locally-respected organization such as the Institute, Islanders may have then been more eager and less apprehensive to offer their own support.

The Red Cross on the Island also played an important role in assisting refugees. However, the Red Cross's role was regional, national, and transnational as opposed to the purely local role of the Institute. In a January 28, 1957 *Guardian* article, although the monetary target of the fund for the Hungarians still had not been achieved, the contributions Islanders made to the Red Cross's Hungarian Relief Fund were written about with pride. ("Red Cross says Hungarian fund is still short", 1957, p.2). The author writes that the Canadian Hungarian Relief Fund had been created to support the Hungarians who were living in refugee centres in Austria. Through organizations such as the Red Cross, Islanders went beyond their provincial and national borders to provide relief for Hungarian refugees abroad. Through assisting refugees abroad (and at home), Islanders were creating a positive representation of themselves. Islanders' actions as written about in *The Guardian* contribute to a picture of an Island that was welcoming and philanthropic. Representing themselves as good Samaritans may have been as important as reaffirming democratic and Christian values when considering to accommodate the refugees.

An article published on February 02, 1957 illustrates the response to the Hungarian crisis that was occurring on Prince Edward Island and throughout the rest of Canada. The author writes about a February 1<sup>st</sup> open-house meeting of the Prince Edward Island Division of the Canadian Red Cross Society. Lieutenant Colonel Howard, Commissioner of the New Brunswick Red Cross and guest speaker, is quoted as reassuring Islanders that the Hungarians "will make excellent Canadians." ("Hungarians will make fine citizens, Red Cross told", 1957). The article communicates to Islanders that the Hungarians are the right type, that they had a good appearance, that they had left their country with very little money, and that with the exception of a few aged and infirm refugees, they would make fine citizens. It was Islanders' "moral obligation" to assist the Hungarians in settling on Prince Edward Island. ("Hungarians will make fine citizens, Red Cross told", 1957). Similar to other articles, the need for clothing and other items was reiterated.

A regional response to the Hungarian refugee crisis was occurring alongside a national and international one. Similar to the larger nationally co-ordinated response that was occurring, regional bodies such as branches of the Red Cross were working in collaboration to share information and resources. This *Guardian* article also provides information on the type of immigrant that was sought and also the reasons why Islanders and the rest of Canada believed they should accommodate the refugees.

These articles demonstrate that the crisis was a newsworthy issue and that the media was interested in Hungarian and United Nations (UN) issues. It could be argued then, that Islanders were not only concerned about those refugees who were settling on Prince Edward Island, but also the regional and international response to the refugees. There are a series of articles that discuss the arrival of refugees in Halifax, Red Cross volunteers' experiences

working with the Hungarian refugees, the current situation in Hungary, and the latest news regarding UN Activities (“U.N. badge” 1956; “1,589 refugees reach Halifax on Italian liner” 1957; “Made MCA flight with Canada-bound refugees” 1957; and Marton, 1957).

The fact that Howard communicated that those selected to come to Canada were “an excellent type, rugged, good appearance, [and] healthy” (“Hungarians will make fine citizens, Red Cross told” 1957) is indicative of the type of migrant that the rural agricultural-based Island was seeking. So as to reassure Islanders that these people would contribute to the development of farms and other agricultural industries, Howard highlighted their positive physical attributes. What is interesting to note is Howard’s concern with the aged and infirm refugees who, he believed, might create problems for the Island. This contradicts the CCC’s advocacy regarding social equality and refugee selection. Thompson and Bangarth write that the CCC not only assisted in the settling of refugees, but also lobbied the government on social justice issues – one being the selection of refugees based strictly on humanitarian need. Howard’s comments indicate that there were limits to the power that the CCC’s rhetoric had over public opinion. Good physical and mental health were viewed as attributes essential for a migrant to be able to successfully contribute to the Island’s industries – and the majority of Hungarian refugees were the right type.

Indeed, this of observation “reassuring” articles is reflective of a small, but nevertheless present, counternarrative which was occurring in Canada at the time. As written about by Adam (2010), communist-driven discourses emerged which highlighted the negative economic effects the Hungarian immigration may cause. In particular, Adam (2010) notes that it was argued that the Hungarians would depress local wages and even replace local workers. Yet, overwhelmingly, the historical record shows that the majority of discourses were in favour of the Hungarian refugees.

The possible economic repercussions that were associated with receiving the refugees did not outweigh Islanders’ perceived national duty to accept these people. Writing about post-World War Two immigration, Franca Iacovetta notes that,

“[t]he dramatic story of Canada as a land of abundance – in everything from food supplies to consumer goods and political freedom – amid a world of suffering and destruction, and now threatened by spreading Communism, immediately emerged as a major theme in daily newspapers” (Iacovetta, 2006, p. 22).

Iacovetta’s observation holds true for the coverage that was given to the Hungarians in *The Guardian*. Further Troper (2010) found that through all forms of media, television broadcasts included, the Hungarian refugees were constructed as freedom fighters standing up against Soviet oppression and public opinion was in agreement. Both Iacovetta’s and Troper’s analysis align with observations of *The Guardian*. In many articles, references were made to the Communist regime that the Hungarians had fled. In an article titled, “14 Hungarians Welcomed to Province Last Night,” the contributor wrote how “[the] Hungarians stepped on Island soil last night – with the hope and intention of making this, the land of their freedom, their home.” The final stage of their passage to the Island “re-assured these people that their historic fight for freedom had been successful.” The contributor wrote that the Hungarians “fled ... Hungary ... in an effort to rid themselves from the oppression and cruelty forced on them by their Communist dominators ... [and to seek] freedom in this country” (“14 Hungarians welcomed to province last night”, 1957, p.1). Particularly in articles which

discussed the refugees' initial arrival to the country, the circumstances from which they had fled were explicitly described.

### **Cold War Escapees, Refugees, or Both?**

*The Guardian* told how “1,589 escapees from Russian-dominated Hungary arrived [in Canada]” (“1,589 refugees reach Halifax liner”, 1957, p.1). This type of rhetoric demonstrates the politics behind the Hungarians' positive reception on Prince Edward Island. These people were political symbols and Islanders were fulfilling a national duty by receiving the refugees. They were also encouraging a larger, international pro-democracy movement. Iacovetta provides reasoning as to why journalists played on the democracy versus communism, good versus evil binary. She writes that during the 1950s, journalists were enthralled by the drama of the Cold War. Through using the Hungarian migrants as characters in this drama, journalists sensationalized the Cold War. As a result, newspapers played a significant role in shaping public opinion in favour of receiving the refugees. Liebovich (1988) writes that “[t]he origins of the Cold War related to the perception of an all-encompassing mentality that drives countries to conquer and subdue, just as the Axis powers had attempted to forge a New Order in Europe and Asia. That is why news stories and editorials must be measured as a factor in how the Cold War came to start” (p.111).

The announcement in a February 27, 1957 *Guardian* article of the impending arrival of the first Hungarian refugees on the Island is indicative of the receiving community's positive reaction to the arrival of the Hungarians. (“Hungarians to arrive tonight”, 1957, p.1). Prince Edward Island's positive reaction is demonstrated by the range of community members and groups that would be greeting the refugees. The arrival of the first group of the Hungarian refugees was written about with great pomp in a *Guardian* article (“14 Hungarians welcomed to province last night”, 1957, p.1). The author wrote about 14 refugees who were greeted by a number of governmental and non-governmental representatives after they had taken a train from Borden to Charlottetown. Greeting the Hungarians were members from the Provincial [Refugee] Co-ordinating Committee, Catholic Women's League, Red Cross, Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, The Women's Institute, Knights of Columbus, Parkdale Village, an Island physician Dr. T Gencheff who was able to act as a translator, and the director of the Falconwood Refugee Centre, Dr. Murchison. The author wrote that the Hungarians were transported in “style in comfort” to the “shiny new, lobby of this fine new building [the Falconwood Refugee Centre]” (“14 Hungarians welcomed to province last night”, 1957, p.1). The involvement of a number of different governmental and nongovernmental bodies in the settling of these refugees is a defining component of the Hungarian migration to Prince Edward Island.

### **Communication Inquiry: Analysis of *The Guardian* Newspaper**

Many explicit and implicit themes are present in these articles. First, they demonstrate that presumably, public support was in favour of accommodating the Hungarian refugees from 1956-1957. Second, most articles were written as feel-good stories. It seemed as though *The Guardian* was attempting to show Islanders the product of their good will and donations. Most articles are positive overall, and do not make mention of any possible problems that might occur from the refugees settling on the Island. Third, it is evident that there was no one,

sole, organization that was receiving the refugees. It was a co-ordinated approach from a number of different bodies.

The references to the Hungarians having fled from the oppression of their Communist dictators is indicative of much more than a push-factor. It is symbolic of the political climate at the time. By accepting large numbers of persons who had opposed Communism, Canada and Canadians were assisting in a larger fight to promote democracy and undermine Communism. Dreisziger writes that, “[w]ith the Cold War at its height, empathy for the victims and opponents of Communist rule was great. The idea of standing up against overwhelming odds also fired the imagination of the Free World.” (Dreisziger, 1985, p. 200).

Supporting those who had opposed Communism may have been equally important as one’s Christian duty to accommodate the Hungarian refugees. Yet, this did not mean that there were not local concerns about these people settling into Island communities. Articles which reassure Islanders that these people are in fact good for the province and that they will “make fine citizens” demonstrate that apprehension may have existed. However, even with the Island’s economy suffering, the refugees, it was believed, would only contribute to reviving the agricultural industry.

The migration of over 37,000 Hungarians to Canada from 1956-1957 impacted all regions of the country, even the smallest province of Prince Edward Island. Newspaper articles are useful in providing a snapshot of historical moments in time, and in identifying explicit and implicit characteristics of the society.

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# A Possible Research Method For Exploring Hidden Relations in Ecological Communication

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**Abstract:** Waste management recently has become a key issue in environment protection. The area is accompanied by various kinds of lobbying activities all around the world and it has the potential of directly affecting the everyday life of people and corporations. My future thesis investigates the aspects of communication regarding waste management. I analyse the factors that may influence social consciousness in the long run and what communication tools opinion leaders can use to reach out to the various social platforms.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This year will also bring several changes regarding waste management in Hungary that will profoundly influence the prioritisation and accordingly the communication of different fields. It is impossible to foresee all consequences of these transitions in the legal and ownership status; furthermore, it is also up to the professional elite in the field, to what extent they can influence the policy-makers within the current government so that the attitude of our society regarding waste should change in a positive way in the future.

In European countries waste management is determined and guided by the waste hierarchy that contains the hierarchy of fields that manage, dispose of, recycle and recover waste. Appreciation and acceptance of these fields are greatly varied among the population and the professional circles as well. This is well reflected in a non-representative, nevertheless gap-filling qualitative survey that I carried out earlier this year.

Considering the future of waste management, we have to investigate what, when, how, in what media and to what audience is worth communicating. We also need to map the attitudes of different social layers in order to reach out to them with efficient communication. The question is, what tools are available to reach our goals, which social groups, tendencies are the driving forces in Hungary? Is there a difference between us and Hungary's neighbours in Europe, or are we motivated by the same drives and organizing forces? What channels of communications are open and available for the education and mind framing of the population, and how can we broaden these channels? Do we and does the East-European region have a

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chance to catch up, are we lagging behind at all compared to the developed West-European states? If yes, to what clearly recognisable degree and in what area? I hope to answer all these and most probably some further questions during my research. I think it is important to shape an overall image of the current public awareness programmes and especially their communication background that allows us to draw conclusions in reference to future trends.

I also found it important to select a survey method that can achieve results beyond those produced by in-depth interviews based on pre-prepared questionnaires.

Last year I ventured to map the stakeholder relations of the field in relation to what driving forces have considerable impact in this profession.

Based on the results and moving on, this year I have examined the leaders of the profession and civil servants in relevant executive positions, focusing the subject based on their own set of concepts. My survey refers to ecological communication, in particular certain opinions of several managers and decision-makers of Hungarian waste management, utilizing a combination of two specific research methods.

The survey aims at exploring hidden relationships within the field of waste management that can influence social consciousness in Hungary and the consumers' relationship to waste. I also found it important to select a survey method that can achieve results beyond those produced by in-depth interviews based on pre-prepared questionnaires. Observing the specific field through the personal set of concepts of the subject plays a key role in this issue. Random comparison of individual concepts encourage a new way of thinking that has the potential of emerging new aspects, relationships, hidden dimensions. Thus I could reveal what can be communicated to the public, what the priorities are according to the management, what can be told and what not, and what kind of misconceptions dwell among the population. Due to my research I can assert that I have an extensive overview of the professional aspects of my thesis, and step by step I can get fully involved with the establishment of my theory.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

I carried out my research by combining two methods. These were the Rep Test (Role Construction Repertory Grid test) and Storytelling research methods. With the help of these methods we defined 15 concepts named by the research subjects within the field of waste management, and the constructs and contrasts of these concepts were analysed through case studies and storytelling. Finally I combined and textually analysed these results. Thus the subject of the interview was shaped by the subjects, since there was no prepared questionnaire beyond the scheme of the Rep Test. Practically speaking this is the essence of qualitative market research: the important factors (constructions) of certain subjects is not defined by the investigator but the research subject, as it were, we „distill” the properties of the given theme from the research subjects. (Polya, 3-4.)

### **Parameters of the Rep Test**

G. Kelly's Repertory Grid Technique is a very useful, widely applicable method in qualitative market research, though it is not so widely spread in Hungary. The Rep Test is originally a projective test in psychology that aims to explore important categories interpreting constructions of implicit theories/personal meanings of social situations. In order

to analyse the Grid, Kelly has established a mathematical scheme, but since this requires software support, it has only increased in importance since the development of computer technology and applied software. The method helps to explore the personal constructions of certain consumers and to map their perceptual and mental processes. It has the advantage of quantifying qualitative test results, thus in itself provides the integration of qualitative and quantitative market research. (Túri, 2000, 72.) As the Rep Grid method explores the aspects of not so much the „how much” but the „how”, it helps us to investigate the thought processes, the perception and the subconscious motivations of a consumer’s decision making. In comparison with interviewing this method has the advantage of eliminating the influence of the researcher. In other methods the researcher always has his/her own initial construction system that inevitably influences the outcome of the interview. My research so far included seventeen research subjects. In order to reach the representative threshold, in the coming years I am planning to involve in my research as many Hungarian professionals and decision-makers of the field as possible. The research consists of two parts. First we ask the consumer to select personally important/relevant concepts related to the research theme. Next the subject is asked to examine these elements in groups of three, and analyse these triads by naming a property in which two elements are similar to each other while differing in the same property from the third element of the group. This way the consumer defines a dimension in which one pole represents similarity (two elements sharing an attribute in contrast to the third) and the other pole represents the difference of the third element (Lehota, 2001).

For the sake of readability the two similar elements are signed by (X), the third element that carries the attribute of difference is unsigned (O). Furthermore, the test has an important role in choosing strategies of communication or persuasion, resulting in the partners being aware of each other’s constructions, or at least being able to deduce them.

ELEMENTS

CONSTRUCTS

	Similarity Pole	Contrast Pole
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Figure 1: Form of the Rep Test<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://webspaceship.edu/cgboer/kelly.html>

## Parameters of the Storytelling method

The past decade new tendencies appeared in futurology that builds partly on individual creativity, partly on group thinking. The Storytelling method has become popular because the current and future problems cannot be solved within the frames of traditional value systems. (Nováky, 2005.) In my research we reached similar open-mindedness to explore present and future dimensions in waste managed through the concept system of the REP method. In my opinion this research method combined with the REP test can explore deeper relationships than only with in-depth interviews, because the subject includes himself in the topic through his own set of concepts. Accordingly, the investigator can goad the subject with directional questions to find deeper consequences during the Storytelling part of the survey.

## SUBJECTS OF THE SURVEY

Fifteen high-ranking professional managers of the field took part in my survey from the governmental administration and the municipality as well as the related NGO sector. As supplement and to test whether this influences the results of the survey, two more persons completed the test: a consumer who claims to be environmentally conscious and well-read in the topic, plus myself as a communication professional. Since our answers did not alter the research results to any extent, I have included the concepts generated by us in the body of the research.

The REP Test yielded 255 waste related or associated concepts, based on which an additional 31.5 hours of audio was recorded using the Storytelling method. From these assets I selected the three concepts that were mentioned most frequently: **separate waste collection**, **waste reuse/recycling** and **energy recovery**, also known as waste incineration. As these top three concepts were mentioned remarkably more than any others, and having compared their functions with the Storytelling material, I believe that this method highlighted the most important or problematic topics.

## 3. RESULTS

### Issues amongst users

Separate waste collection, waste reuse/recycling and energy recovery, also known as waste incineration. These four concepts were the most mentioned phrases by the elite of the waste management sector. It seems that the biggest problems, questions and lack of clarity linger around these four words amongst people and even amongst the representatives of the waste management sector. The first two expressions have more to do with people and education, while the third one is more interesting for the professionals of waste management and maybe to NGO's. As you will see there is even a whole European dispute going on around about waste hierarchy that has a big part in energy recovery.

Several fundamental problems have been clarified by professionals about separate waste collection that exist in the minds of consumers resulting in refusal and negative attitude. According to the survey a classic misbelief is that the separately collected waste is being mixed together again in the container vehicles. As a matter of fact, by now this concept has

evolved to an excuse rather than a misbelief among the population, this issue popped up so frequently in the survey that it surely needs to be dealt with as soon as possible.

Similarly, if a selective container is placed in a distance larger than 500 meters, people find it unnecessary and a waste of time to dispose of their garbage separated. Smell may appear as possible nuisance and they experience problems having to allocate suitable garbage collector bins in their living habitats as well. There's one common denominator in the problems mentioned: the experts addressed the issue with bad communication, and the statements trying to refute the phenomena permanently kept the public biased. Meanwhile, communication should have focused on the fact that no public service has any interest in mixing the wastage, since only separated waste can be sold to waste processing companies (e.g. Fe-Group). Great emphasis is placed on proactive communication in every other sector, but in this case it cannot be recommended, what's more, it has adverse effects for the case. The public services need to launch an effective communication campaign reaching a wide range of consumers in order to finally clarify this issue. However, this time they will need a new message and new communication aspects to let the public see, what interests and processing mechanisms lie behind separate waste collection.

The second phrase that was mentioned the most times was: reuse or recycling of waste. This type of waste management consists of a simple cleaning and/or repair of objects/tools, where after they can be used again in their original function. In some countries rinsing the plastic bottles before placing them in the separate waste containers is a relevant act in accordance with the local public health regulations. At the same time, currently in Hungary a drinking bottle would never end up as a drinking bottle again, not even if separated according to their colours, as the legal regulations do not allow it. Subjects of the survey have introduced recycling as a finite process, being limited in time – and according to them this has to be emphasised during public awareness campaigns. There are no re-processing methods that would infinitely allow us to reuse the same material again and again. For example, fibres get lost when recycling paper, and long carbon chains of plastic break down during recycling and plastic of shorter carbon chains cannot be used for the same purpose. Efficiency is a notion of exploitation (in recycling or in energy recovery) that indicates the effectiveness of utilization. The more energy we utilize from the energy content of the wastage, the higher is its efficiency, and thus the less residual material is produced. The higher the efficiency, the smaller impact manifests in the environment. To sum it up, according to the majority of the research subjects, this area within waste management in Hungary is not developed enough yet to involve the population via effective methods and that we cannot prioritize separate waste collection over recycling.

## PROFESSIONAL DEBATES

The third phrase mentioned most frequently is rather an issue inside the waste management profession, governmental organisation the legislative body and NGO's. Energy recovery (waste incineration) is something that has the biggest debates around it and is not meaning the same to everybody. Within the survey this needed to be viewed in a broader environment and not only from a Hungarian perspective. Regarding the available technologies, energy recovery (waste incineration) is an indispensable method of waste treatment in West European countries. Within waste management, incineration is implemented in complex, integrated systems. The basic attitude here is that it is impossible to separate all waste: among others, a large amount of the waste is polluted (oily bottles, used pizza boxes, etc.), there is always a quantity that public services cannot handle any other way. Within the waste hierarchy, incineration is better than waste deposit, because it qualifies as energy recovery. If

certain efficiency can be achieved by disposal and energy or district heating can be produced, the procedure qualifies as utilization. In order to get thermal utilization across to the public, well-prepared and trained professionals need to carry out appropriate mind framing campaigns to avoid that preconceptions emerge in the population (for example, separately collected waste gets mixed again, transported to China and simply burnt there). Rather, the issue should be addressed in educative materials for pedagogy or the media, so that the required message will be associated along guidelines prepared by communication professionals with competence in waste management.

For the time being, 74% of waste ends in deposit in Hungary, while in Austria the proportion is only 3%(!) – This low amount is due to incinerators –, and, nevertheless, separate waste collection is flourishing in the region. In Hungary, there's only one high-capacity incinerator operating in Budapest, meanwhile in countries west of us several times as many. To mention a few examples, nine incinerators are being built in Poland simultaneously, in Portugal three sites are in development with the support of the European Union, and while France is a host to a quarter of all European incinerators, they are planning to create even more. One of the current high-priority projects of the Hungarian capital is an investment into a second incinerator. It remains to be seen whether decision-makers have realized the indisputable role of communal waste in energy recovery and whether a new facility will actually be completed in the near future.

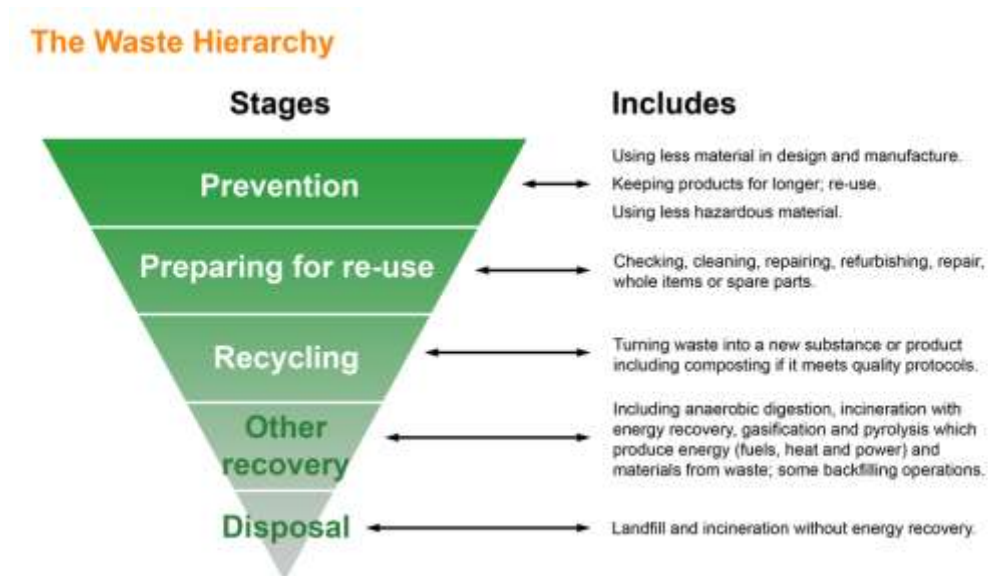


Figure 2: Waste hierarchy<sup>2</sup>

The most remarkable result of this research is that based on the answers of the research subjects, our waste hierarchy appears to differ from other, West European neighbour countries and even from the Hungarian Framework Directive on Waste – namely that reuse, i.e. separate collection comes before recoverability of materials. Although energy recovery was only the third most frequently mentioned Rep concept among the research subjects, the Storytelling part clearly shows that according to professionals the idea of incineration needs a lot more emphasis from the current policy-makers. Investments in this direction and development of the existing facilities/capacities in this area promise improvement and a sustainable, environmentally conscious development.

<sup>2</sup> <http://andrewtmarlow.wordpress.com/2012/05/15/waste-hierarchy/>

## EUROPEAN TRENDS WITH A HUNGARIAN APPROACH

The need for environmental protection is unquestionable today, and at the same time there is a growing urge for an activity called environmental management. This activity, amongst others, aims to create environmental awareness among all members of the society, from private citizens to businesses and other organizations.

Hungarian professionals mostly try to follow the example of Germany or Austria, and for a reason. In Europe, Austria has the highest rate of biological product use per capita, and Styria is a storehouse of renewable energy and other environmental technologies.

Germany and Austria were the first European countries to introduce separate waste collection. Therefore, the Austrian technology and know-how could be transplanted not only to Hungary but to all other parts of the world. Though circumstances and conditions are very different there, England can be a good source of approaches and methods that play a role in influencing the attitudes and behaviour of the society (Fojtik 2005.) The British aim at the next generation with their awareness-raising communication, just like Hungary, but our results do not show such a remarkable positive change in separate collection as those in England.

Results of the survey helped professionals outlining the problem that Western Europe has an over-capacity for waste incineration. So many incineration plants were built during the last 30 years that there is not enough waste to make their operation profitable. Therefore, energy recovery came into conflict with the recovery of materials: being the best type of fuel, in Germany the same materials (plastic, paper) were incinerated that could have been recycled. According to representatives of green organizations, additional problems arise from the fact that energy recovery is a procedure that is more technology-intensive than labour-intensive, thus with machines replacing manpower, it may lead towns to an impasse. The largest problem is that increasing the number of incinerator plants can tie a town to a vicious cycle, as they have to keep on producing garbage in order to prevent the incinerators producing deficit.

Nordic countries of Europe produce less waste emission, partly because they reuse the generated materials, partly because they collect it separately. Why do they have so many incineration plants then? In these countries thermic use means something else than for their Western European neighbours. They consider incineration as recovery of materials, while here and in the countries west of us waste burning is used for disposal or thermic use. The difference lies in the technology: in Northern European countries they use plasma gasification. They heat up the raw materials to plasma state with a strong electrical arc and in an electrically conductive space the molecules break down to atoms and thus they create chemically clean materials. The required plasma temperatures of 3200 °C for pyrolysis of waste materials is generated by thermal power plants that can immediately reuse the output gases, for example hydrogen, created by the plasma gasification.

This is a different technology, and at the same time a different approach as well. Does this method qualify as recovery of materials? According to the Swedish policy, it does, but in Western and Eastern Europe it is not considered so. Naples recently claimed to have become a Zero Waste municipality, achieving this by having its SMW incinerated in Sweden and in Austria. Sweden sends the slag back to Italy, because it contains materials that can be used as secondary raw materials, like non-magnetic metals that they wish to retrieve. Italian waste management is at the top of the world, just like Sweden – it is not for nothing that they transport their waste so far. Electric energy in the northern countries is far cheaper, but its

transportation is difficult due to geographical circumstances, therefore local energy production is of high importance.

Contemporary interpretation of waste hierarchy in the European Union is lacking flexibility. Everybody considers this an old system that can be built up only from the bottom; but it does not qualify as an effective model any more. Based on this hierarchy, a new system should be created that meets the economic, social and environmental needs of a specific country.

Differences between countries should be permitted. For Hungary, recoverability of materials does not necessarily have to be placed at the top of the hierarchy. For example, Slovenia having a population of 2 million, waste separation has no high importance there, since it is not considered economical at such a low population, still, they are among the top in recycling in Europe. Indeed it is essential to implement waste hierarchy in every country, but accordingly, with a certain amount of common sense.

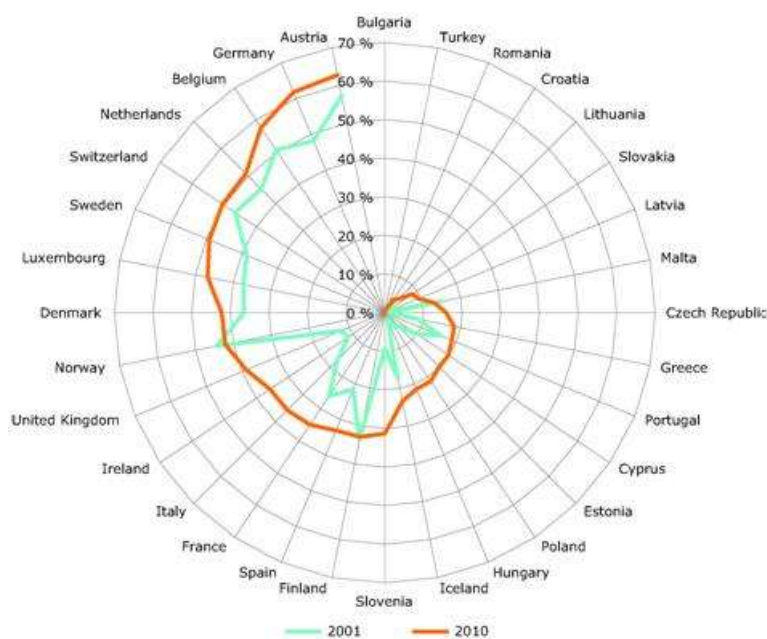


Figure 3: Municipal waste recycling rates in 32 European countries, 2001 and 2010 <sup>3</sup>

## A NEW APPROACH

As an overall result of the survey, it has been realized that health awareness show significant coherence to waste awareness, they are based on each other and they are closely related. Nobody can be only conscious about the environment but at the same time not checking the quality of purchased goods, their possible effects on health or their packaging materials. It is interesting to observe the curve of development of environmental awareness in a consumer. First he is hit by messages that persuade him about conscious energy consumption, as personal involvement and interest is being generated by the fact that he would recognisably save money if he pays attention. Later, if he incorporates the principles as well (and not only the financial benefits) into his everyday life, he becomes receptive to activities like waste separation or personalised healthy lifestyle models. These concepts build on each other; they are complementary and support each other to create an environmentally conscious person. Therefore different environmental subjects should not be isolated from each other and communicated separately to the population. That only results in the situation that we

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/figures/municipal-waste-recycling-rates-in>

experience nowadays: people think that there is an order of importance among the certain subjects. It also occurs that several environmental organizations use a different terminology when they bomb the citizens with messages concerning how to achieve environmentally responsible behaviour. Environmentalists cannot be characterised as having a holistic approach, although this would lead not only to better management of their own field, they could also reach higher influence among the consumers. Methods of environmental protection and damage prevention can be easily and relevantly incorporated in their own lives. Adults tend to push the responsibilities over to their children, exclaiming that „the next generation will solve these problems”. This kind of attitude needs to be changed. But for adults there are no such effective platforms as kindergartens or schools for children that would help to build environmentally conscious activities in their everyday lives as basic schemes. For example, if an adult is involved in a green office programme at his workplace, and following some internal information he is „obliged to” to pay extra attention to this, instead of co-operation (or pretence co-operation at the best), they are more likely to show firm resistance. This will of course perfectly function with those employees who already have environmental awareness in their everyday life and most likely switched their computers off, if it was left for longer than half an hour, even before attention was called to it.

If we observe the communication of profit-oriented companies, they also tend to choose one or two topics of segmented areas. They have their own directives and purposes and they will pick the environmental issues that can serve them in connection with their own business. According to their own interests, they will segment their target group, the relevant messages and sets of instruments in their communication. On one hand, it is not possible (or at least financially reasonable) to set up a strategy that treats everybody as target group; on the other hand, this would not even be effective. Nevertheless, the emphasis is not so much on choosing the right target groups: it is more on supporting the customers with a holistic environmental attitude, within which we can highlight our preferred subject. All participants should feel the obligation to create a system that helps understanding and acceptance as well. If substantial CSR (corporate social responsibility) would exist today in Hungary, all profit-oriented companies targeting at a larger medium would incorporate endeavours connected to sustainability and environmental projects in its strategy. Of course, nothing works if pursued alone, and that is why we find NGOs and non-profit organizations experienced in comprehensive environmental approaches, who welcome companies to join them in these endeavours. Governmental policy does not help the situation at the moment. The tendency of the past years resulted in a situation where, after the closing of the Ministry of Environment, all areas related to environmental protection belong to a State Secretariat. According to plans in the near future this will be further reduced by subordinating it to departments.

## FUTURE OF THE SURVEY

With the help of the concepts and their functions introduced by Luhmann, we can model a communication system that can clarify how individual social subsystems (economy, law, science, politics, art, religion, education) map issues related to ecological problems, and which subsystem can take action and at what depth. The author, relying on his own system theory, identifies the challenge in relation to this subject mainly in the question of how can the social subsystems offer solutions to ecological problems.

<b>SUBSYSTEM</b>	<b>FUNCTION</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>CODE</b>
<b>Economy</b>	Reducing scarcity	Money	Payment/non-payment
<b>Law</b>	Ensuring the fulfilment of expectations	Law, jurisdiction	Legal/illegal
<b>Science</b>	Producing new knowledge	Truth	True/false
<b>Politics</b>	Producing collectively binding decisions	Power	Power/powerlessness government/opposition
<b>Art</b>	Representing the world	forming, work of art	convincing/unconvincing beautiful/ugly
<b>Education</b>	Selecting for the career	Career	Praise/reproof
<b>Religion</b>	Eliminating contingency	Belief	Immanent/transcendent

Table 1.: Subsystems of Luhmann (own compilation)

Currently the tool-sets of social systems have no direct effects on solving ecological problems, they only have social dimensions. Among the subsystems, according to Luhmann, politics has the biggest effect and highest influencing potential in relation to the other subsystems. Politics cannot put anything into effect directly, yet, this scene is still the best choice of forum for ecological communication, since politics has the largest influence on all the other social subsystems. My current research verified this. Through centralized planning, hand-held direction and dominantly one-way communication, the government owns control and removes such collaborations that were already present in the Hungarian market. Though Luhmann has clearly stated that his work (and its system theory background) is not suitable for solving ecological problems, in my opinion, he still took a significant step forward by successfully specifying through his model the social subsystems that are able to become its driving force. (Luhmann, 2010) I agree with him that the political scenery has such huge influence on other subsystems that using leverage or even perhaps pressure, it can promote the state of affairs.

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# The Role of Social Media in Creating Intercultural Dialogue and Overcoming Prejudice – a Comparative Analysis of Pilot Survey Results

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**Abstract:** Multiculturalism, as a political and social phenomenon, is more and more often perceived as a challenge in the realm of studying communication processes. New media make it possible to communicate and build relations in the global dimension with a simultaneous impact on the development of horizontal communication, creating groups and communities and active support for different forms of social participation. In this context a pilot study concerning the role of new media in overcoming schemata and prejudice of students in two different cities with different levels of multiculturalism in the local community was carried out.

**Keywords:** multiculturalism, social media, stereotypes, prejudice, hate speech, cultural differences, intercultural communication, comparative research

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of intercultural communication, problems connected with diversity and prejudice resulting from contacts between people of different nationality, ethnicity or religion is an important problem of multicultural Europe to which attention is drawn in various contexts. The Council of Europe, noticing the problem of prejudice having different sources, started a social campaign "No Hate Speech Movement"<sup>1</sup> in 2013, aimed mainly at eliminating hate speech on the Internet. Countries that are members of the European Union with its freedom of movement and residence, have different histories and experiences connected with multiculturalism. Among EU member states there are still countries whose societies are ethnically homogenous and where multiculturalism is a new challenge. As Zygmunt Bauman puts it "*With the tested ways of acting being no longer available, we seem to be left without a good strategy to handle newcomers.*" (Bauman 2006: 131) At the same time Charles Tilly

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1 Campaign website: <http://nohate.ext.coe.int/The-Campaign> [accessed 24.06.2014.]

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emphasises that one of the challenges of the contemporary world is preventing preservation of categorical inequalities that concern systemic differences in the access to benefits due to e.g. different nationality, race, ethnic origin or religion. (Tilly 2008: 138)

Multiculturalism is also starting to be perceived on more levels. From the traditional systemic understanding of multiculturalism as a structure created by people of different nationalities, cultures, ethnicity and religion that inhabit a given territory to perceiving family as a new scope of research in this respect. In families there are no borders of homogeneity of nationalities, cultures or religions of partners. According to Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, in Germany about twenty per cent of relationships are between partners of different nationality, ethnicity, religion or skin colour (in Berlin it is currently even over 20 per cent of relationships) (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2013). Often people with a different ethnic or cultural identity live in another country, which is not the country of origin of either of the partners. This sets another area for analyses of multiculturalism. At the same time, as Ulrich Beck already noted, multiculturalism is also space for identification of new risks, sources of conflicts and looking for ways to tackle them. Risks resulting from the present can also be an element integrating people, regardless of their nationality or shared values. (Beck 2002) The risk society is being redefined in the face of constant individualisation, which means that only the individual becomes the subject of rights and obligations. This means that *"individuals alone must to a greater extent notice, interpret and manage possibilities, threats and ambiguities in their lives that they formerly used to cope with in their families, local communities and by relating to a social class or group."* (Beck, Giddens & Lash 2009: 20) An individual is thus becoming more and more dependent on controlling their own possibilities, including the risky ones.

Social media plays a very important role in creating new forms of multicultural relations. In a globalised world they enable people to start relations with others in many different ways. Olga Guedes Bailey, Bart Cammaerts and Nico Carpentier define social media as alternative media that concentrate on the concept of media serving the community – as such they are part of the civil society. In the context of understanding the community, not only in its spatial aspect but also in the cultural one – alternative media serve building a community of meanings, interpenetrations and images. As they claim: *"A community is actively built by its members who in the act of its creation gain their own identity."* (Bailey, Cammaerts & Carpentier 2008: 12) Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim notice the phenomenon of using the Internet to connect people from different countries and cultures thus influencing the creation of multicultural relationships. These relationships thus also come into existence as a result of taking conscious actions – looking for partners representing a different national identity and cultural values. The problem of such relations is a challenge for societies that for many years have been regarded as multicultural. According to Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande, discarding the either/or logic to the benefit of building integration by cosmopolitisation is a project that may change the outlook of European countries on changing reality. (Beck & Grande 2009: 25) However, statements of politicians that determine people's opinions about multiculturalism become symptomatic – like the famous words of German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, about the failure of "multikulti" policy, or the words of the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, about changing the policy towards immigrants and restricting access to privileges connected with residing in the United Kingdom. To some extent, such declarations by politicians in countries where multiculturalism has been a fact for many years questions the pluralist model of state policy, regulating relations between different groups, each retaining their own identity.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> More about the theoretical model of multiculturalism can be found at P. Boski, *Cultural frames for social behaviour [Kulturowe ramy zachowań społecznych]*. (2009: 529)

The aim of the following study is to analyze the results of a comparative pilot survey concerning students' attitudes towards people coming from different countries and ethnic groups. The study was carried out in two cities of different countries, each on a different level of multiculturalism - Berlin (in Germany) and Krakow (in Poland). Research was conducted at two Universities: Protestant University of Applied Sciences in Berlin and Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University. The research location was selected because Berlin is currently a multicultural city where many nationalities, ethnic and cultural groups coexist.<sup>3</sup> There are almost half a million people from about one hundred and ninety countries in Berlin. The dominating minorities include people from Turkey, the former Soviet Union, the former Yugoslavia and Poland. For many years, German social policy has been actively supporting social integration. On the other hand, Krakow has a long history of being a multicultural community. Before World War II., almost thirty per cent of the population were people of Jewish origin. Currently Krakow is becoming more and more multicultural, mainly due to investments that draw new citizens from abroad as well as students, mainly from Ukraine. Consequently, it can be concluded that Berlin and Krakow represent a different level of saturation of the local society with multiculturalism and thus, also a different level of potential stereotypes and prejudice present in both cities nowadays, without referring to historical aspects of multiculturalism.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of the pilot research was to answer the following questions:

1. Do students notice multiculturalism of the environment they function in and if so, how do they perceive it?
2. What are the sources of their knowledge about multiculturalism and what/who shapes their attitudes?
3. Do they use social media in communication processes in the area of multiculturalism and do they treat these media as a source of education?
4. Do students feel threatened by living in a multicultural world? if so, what are the sources of their anxiety?

The survey was carried out in May and June 2014 in Berlin and Krakow on a group of two hundred randomly selected students, one hundred in each university<sup>4</sup>. Students who took part in the survey in Berlin came mainly from Germany. Besides German nationality a few people declared other nationality, sometimes mixed: Austrian, Italian, Turkish, Japanese, Spanish, English, Australian. The age of students who participated in the survey was between 19 and 53, averaging 28 years. In Krakow, the respondents also included a group of students from Ukraine who study in the Krakow University and reside in Poland. Students who took part in the survey in Krakow can be divided into two groups - over a half are Polish and just over twenty per cent are Ukrainians who study with them. One person declared to be of Slovak nationality. Fourteen people did not declare any nationality. The age of students who participated in the survey in Krakow was between 17 and 49 years of age, and was 22 on average. Research was carried out with a quantitative assessment of survey data gathered through thirty-four, mainly closed-ended questions. The content of the questionnaires used in

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/migration/index.pl.html> [accessed 24.06.2014.]

<sup>4</sup> In order to make the analysis easier, in the following part of the article names of cities are used instead of the names of universities when presenting research results.

the survey was the same, but questionnaires used in the Berlin survey were translated into German. The study encompassed students of different years of study, in Berlin studying "social work", in Krakow: "journalism and social communication" and "management".<sup>5</sup>

### 3. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

Students in Berlin and students in Krakow received 200 questionnaires in total. Each university received one hundred questionnaires –the former returned all of them while the latter returned only ninety eight. In some questionnaires students did not answered all the questions, so, in the presentation of research results the total numbers do not always correspond to the number of all questionnaires.

The following tables and graphs present answers of students in separate thematic blocks of the survey. The first group of the presented results concerns the attitude of students in both cities toward people coming from other nationalities and ethnic groups.

**Table 1.** Contacts of students with representatives of other nationalities/ethnic groups

<b>Do you study with people coming from other nationalities / ethnic groups? If so, what are these?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>I do not pay attention to it</b>
<b>Berlin</b>	<b>81</b> (Japan, Ghana, Italy, Poland, United Kingdom, Turkey, Russia, Germany ( <i>for students of other nationalities</i> ), France, Mexico, Czech Republic, Cameroon, Kazakhstan, Lebanon), Africans were also mentioned	<b>0</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Krakow</b>	<b>92</b> (Ukraine, Poland ( <i>for students of other nationalities</i> ), Turkey, Russia, Slovakia, the USA)	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

Source: Author

According to the above declarations of students, people studying at Krakow University more often report studying together with students from other countries. Students in Krakow also pay more attention to those people. The survey also revealed differences in the origin of students who study in both universities – education in Berlin offers students more diverse contacts.

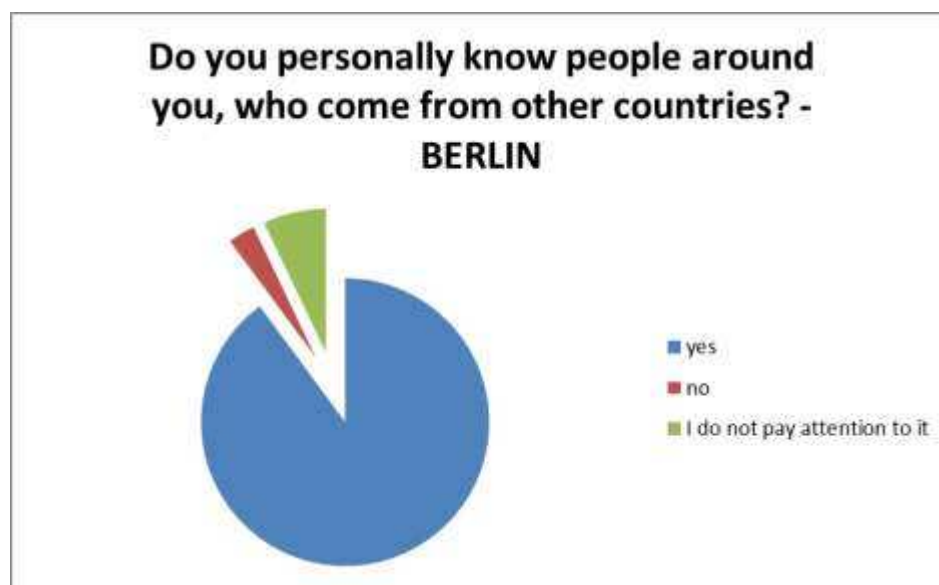
<sup>5</sup> In Poland education in the field of "social work" takes place as a major within different types of studies and it is not a separate field of study as in Germany.

**Table 2.** Relations of students with representatives of other nationalities/ethnic groups

Are there people of other nationalities or ethnic groups in the group of students you have closer relations with (e.g. you meet outside of the university)? If so, which ones?	Yes	No	I do not pay attention to it
<b>Berlin</b>	<b>52</b> (Romania, Bosnia, United Kingdom, Poland, Australia, Turkey, Russia, Italy, France, Lebanon, China, Cameroon, Holland, Georgia, Kurdistan, Ecuador, Puerto Rico,) Asians, Africans, Buddhists and Muslims were also mentioned	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Krakow</b>	<b>40</b> (Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Belarus, Czech Republic, Ireland)	<b>53</b>	<b>3</b>

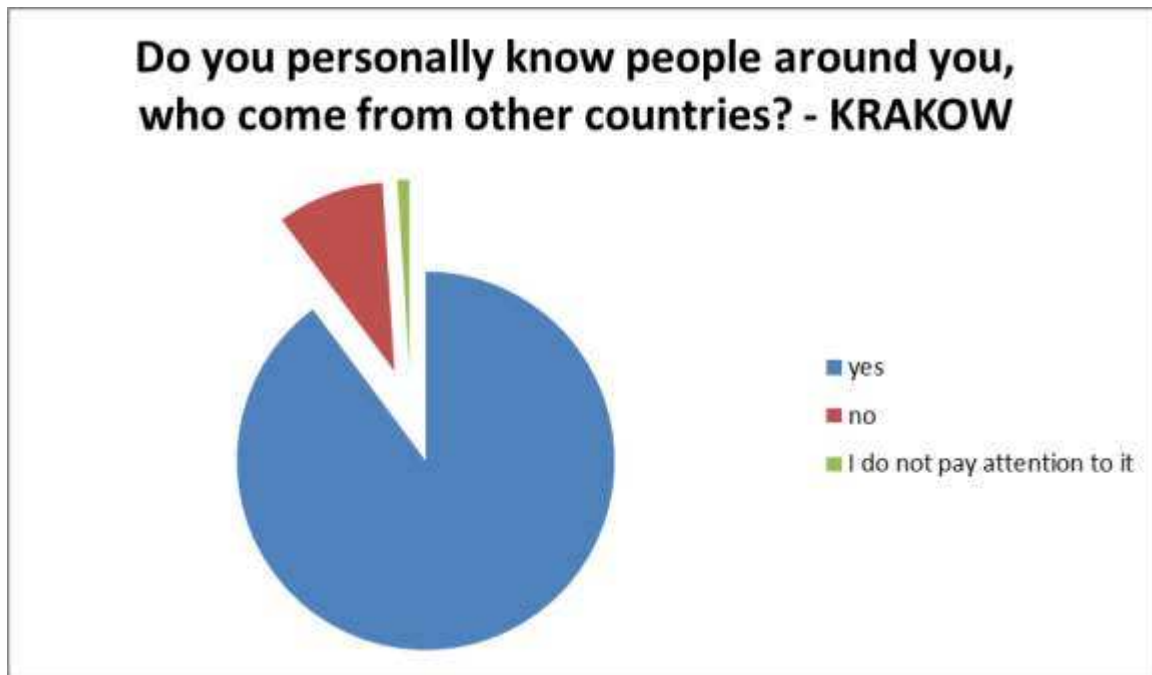
Source: Author

According to data from survey questionnaires presented above, students in Berlin are more open to building and keeping relations with students from other countries and ethnic groups than the ones who study in Poland. Similarly, as in the case of the previous table, students in Berlin also less often say that they pay attention to students from other nationalities and ethnic groups around them, what may prove that functioning in a multicultural environment makes these relations so common that some students do not pay attention to the country of origin of their fellow students.

**Chart 1a.** The level of acquaintance with people of other nationalities and ethnic groups - students from Berlin

Source: Author

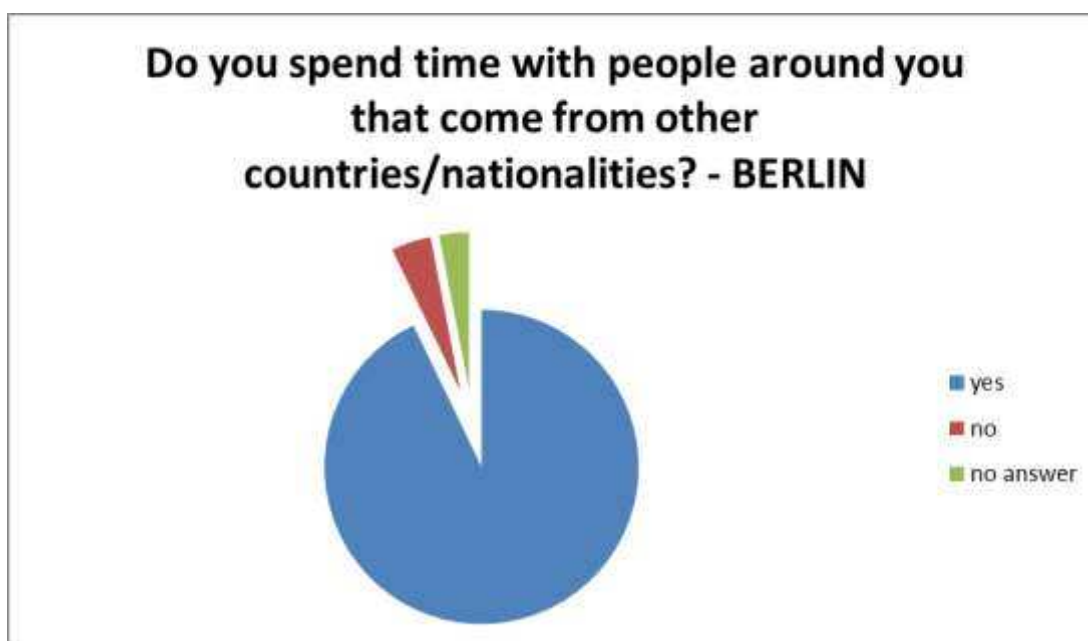
**Chart 1b.** The level of acquaintance with people of other nationalities and ethnic groups - students from Krakow



Source: Author

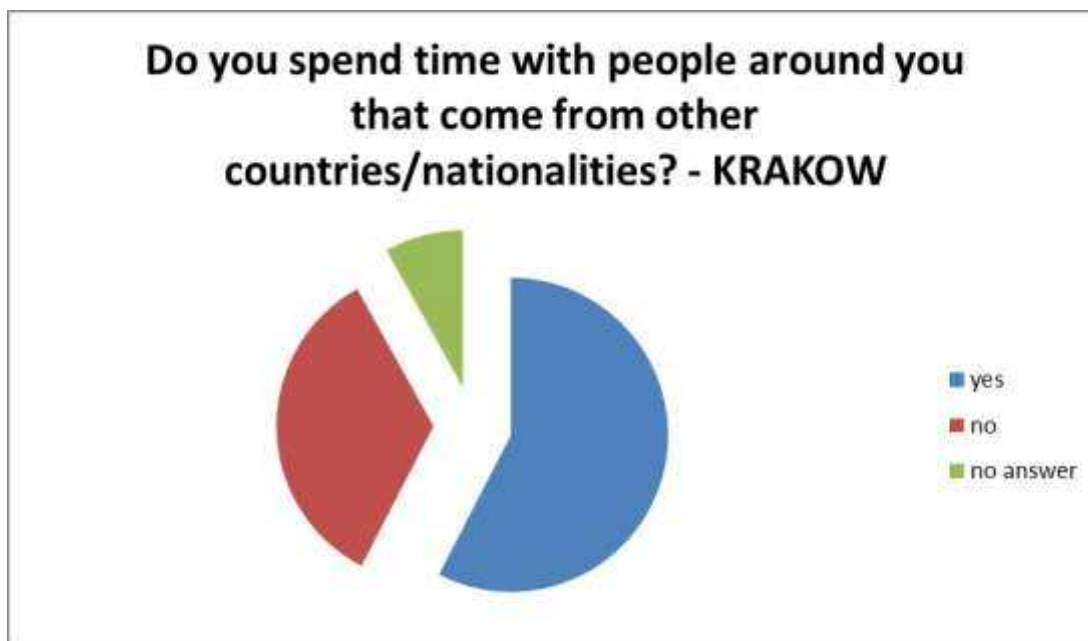
The two above charts also confirm that the students' level of acquaintance with people from other countries and nationalities around them is different in each city, not only at the universities. Students in Krakow declare a lower level of acquaintance with people of other nationalities than their peers from, Berlin but they also more often pay attention to the origins of people around them.

**Chart 2a.** Spending time with people from other countries/nationalities – Berlin



Source: Author

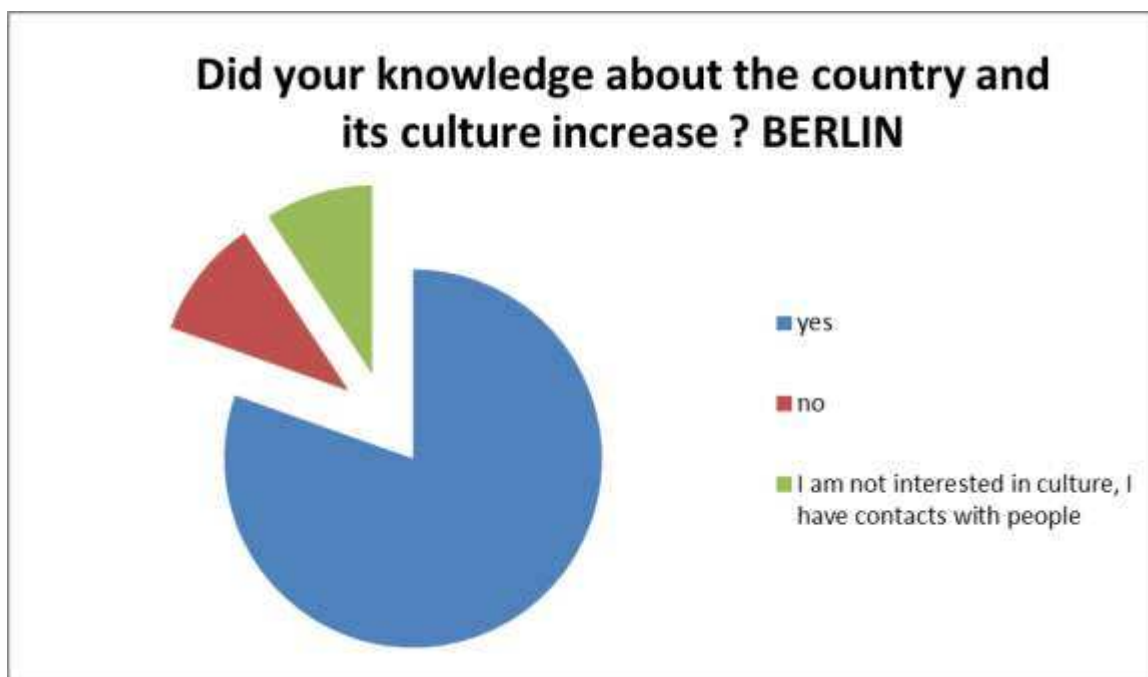
**Chart 2b.** Spending time with people from other countries/nationalities – Krakow



Source: Author

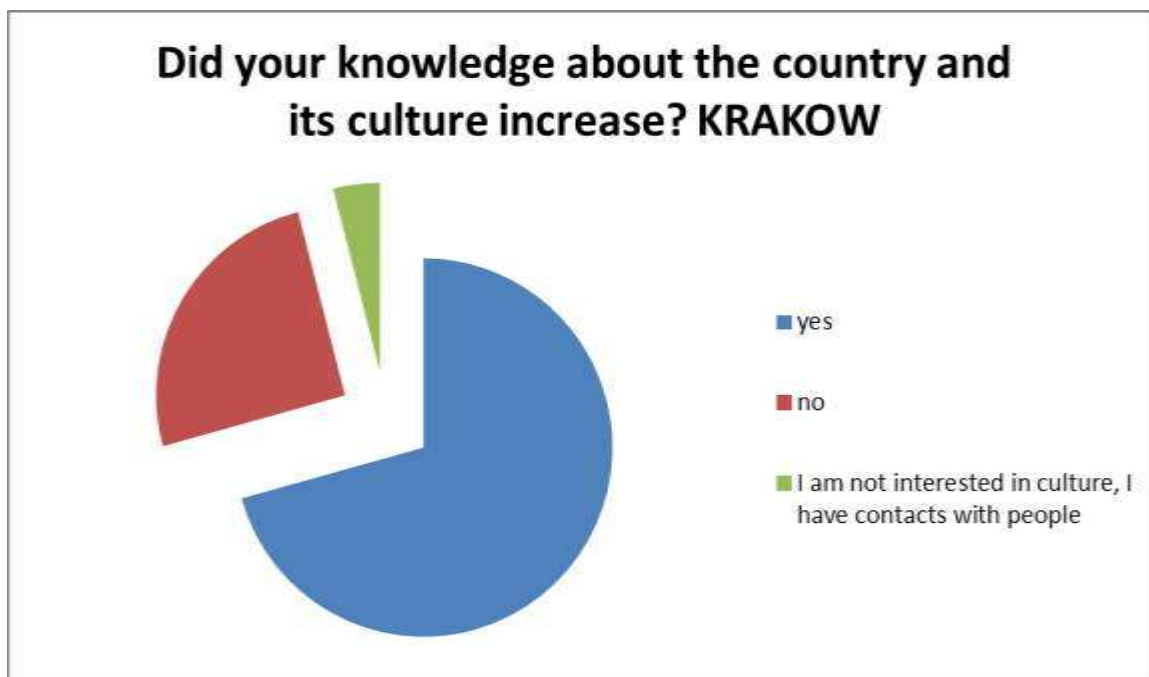
Chart 2b demonstrates an even more marked discrepancy between answers given by students in Krakow. When asked about spending free time with people of other nationality or country, it is more common for them to report that they have no relations with such people, while students in Berlin report that spending time together with people from other countries/nationalities is common.

**Chart 3a.** Relationship between keeping relations with people of other nationality/ethnicity and the increase of one's knowledge about their country and its culture - Berlin



Source: Author

**Chart 3b.** Relationship between keeping relations with people of other nationality/ethnicity and the increase of one's knowledge about their country and its culture – Krakow

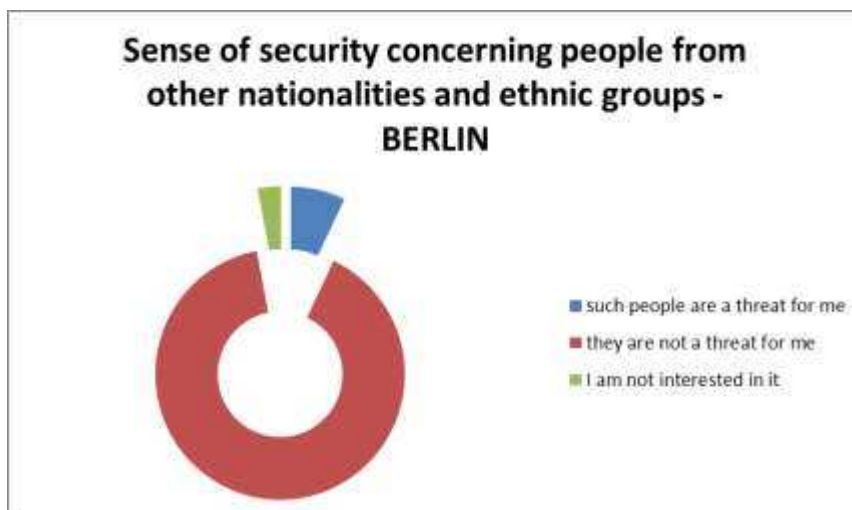


Source: Author

The two charts above show to what extent, according to students' declarations, keeping relations or spending time with people of other nationality or ethnicity influences the level of knowledge about the culture of a given country, region or ethnic group. Students in both cities declare that their knowledge about culture has increased but this chart presents a higher level of individualisation of relations of students from Berlin with people coming from other cultures, because these students more often reported that they were interested in contacts with people.

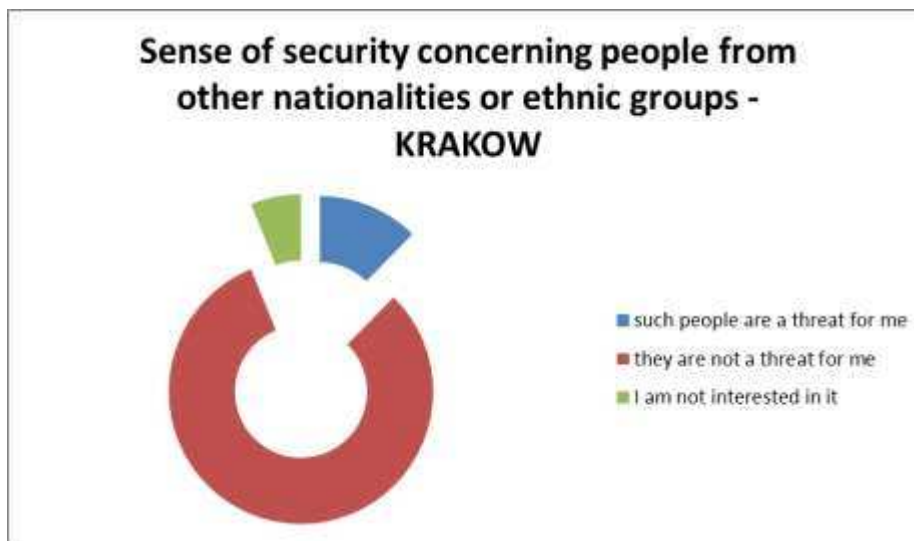
Another portion of the survey results presents answers concerning students' attitudes towards sense of security and sources of fear.

**Chart 4a.** The level of students' sense of security – Berlin



Source: Author

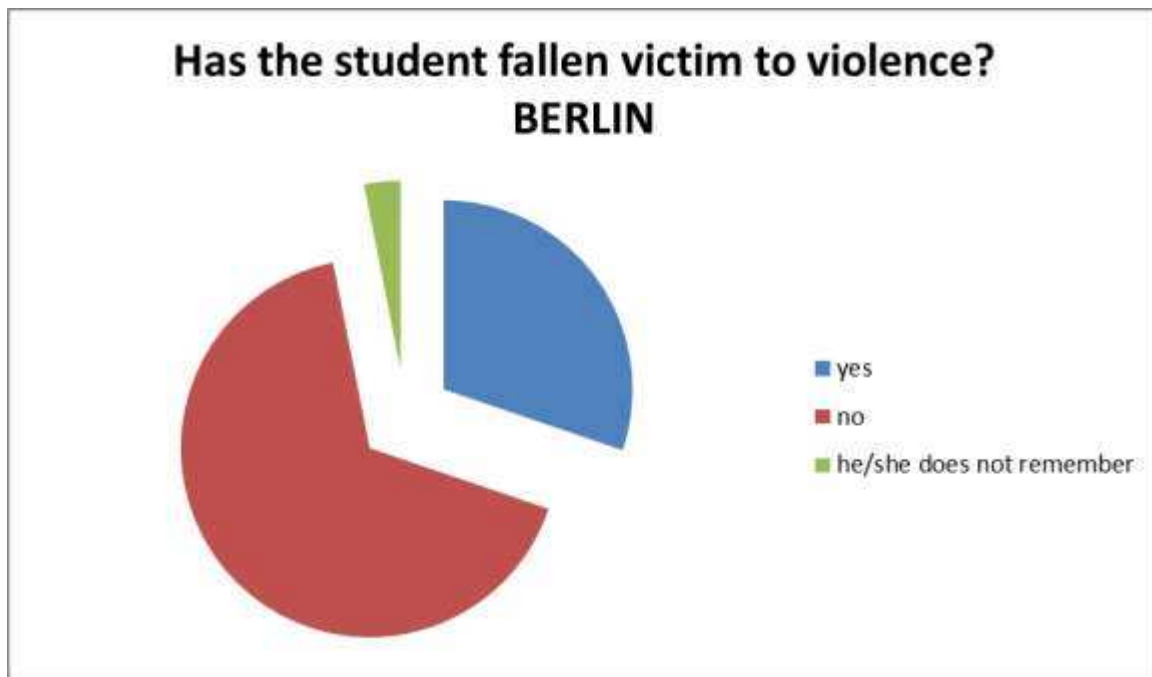
**Chart 4b.** The level of students' sense of security – Krakow



Source: Author

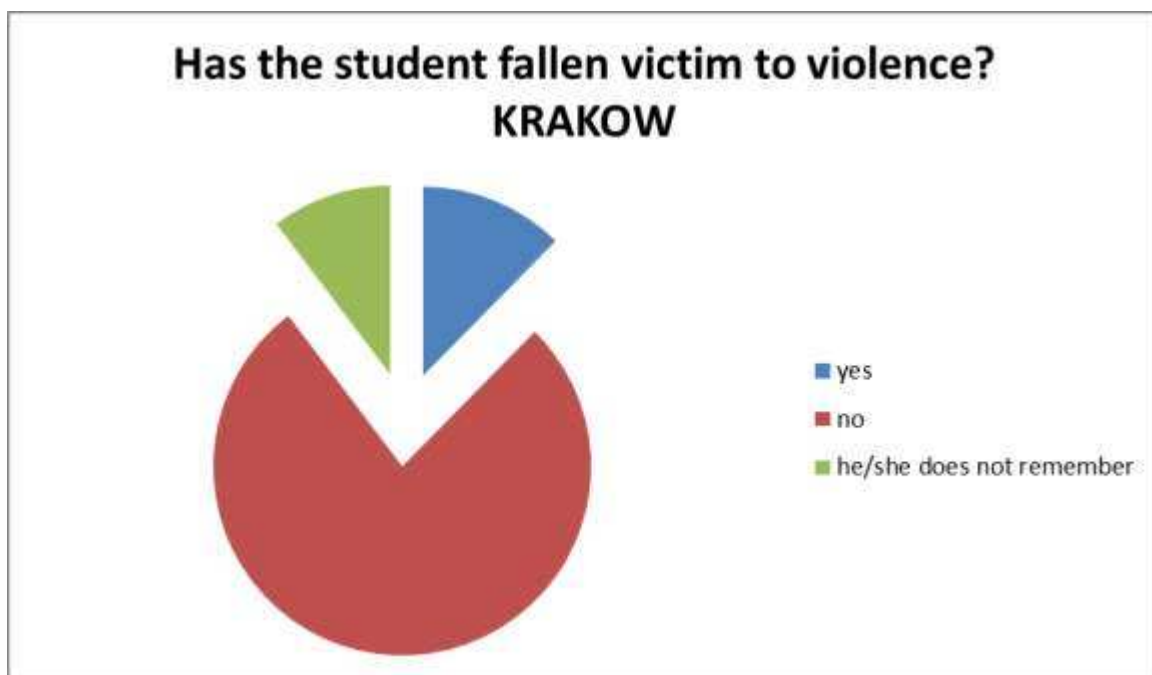
The above charts shows that students in both Berlin and Krakow basically do not treat people from other nationalities or ethnic groups as a threat source, but students from Krakow are more anxious. On the other hand, students in Berlin reported more often being not interested in this issue, what may mean that they see some threats but the source of those threats are not associated with nationality or ethnicity. Also, potential sources of their feeling of being threatened seem to be interesting. Students from Berlin report that the reason for that is the fact that another religion (that will become dominant) impose a certain model of living on them and that people coming from other countries/cultures with a different system of values will decide about their life in the future. According to students from Berlin, the inflow of new workers who might take over their jobs is not perceived as a threat. Students from Krakow share the fears of their peers from Berlin, pointing to the same sources of anxiety but they also emphasise the feeling of being threatened concerning the possibility of a worker from another country taking over their jobs.

**Chart 5a.** Nationality-motivated and ethnically-motivated violence - Berlin



Source: Author

**Chart 5b.** Nationality-motivated and ethnically-motivated violence - Krakow



Source: Author

The two graphs presented above show that students studying in Berlin were more often victims of violence motivated by their nationality, skin colour, religion or views than students in Krakow. These data are particularly interesting in juxtaposition with previous charts concerning the sense of security of students in each city. Students in Krakow declare more

fears connected with the sense of security, although, at the same time they less often fall victim to violence connected with nationality, skin colour, practiced religion or declared views.

Answers about the character of violence the students have fallen victim to, included mostly public comments and insults, exclusion from the group a student had participated in, and beating in the case of people from Berlin. Students reported quite rarely about hate speech towards them on the Internet. On the other hand, students in Krakow answered that it was aggression and hate speech on the Internet that were the basic source of violence against them, a few people also said that violence against them consisted in public insults and negative comments about them.

Juxtaposing details of people who declared that violence was used against them due to their nationality, skin colour and practiced religion, in the case of students from Berlin these were Germans (aged 20 to 49, mostly young people aged 22-25), also an Austrian man, people of Spanish, English, Japanese and Turkish origin (one answer).

On the other hand, among students in Krakow, the victims of violence were Poles (aged 22 to 40) and Ukrainians (aged 19 to 22).

**Chart 6a.** Violence motivated by nationality/ethnicity around students - Berlin



Source: Author

**Chart 6b.** Violence motivated by nationality/ethnicity around students - Krakow



Source: Author

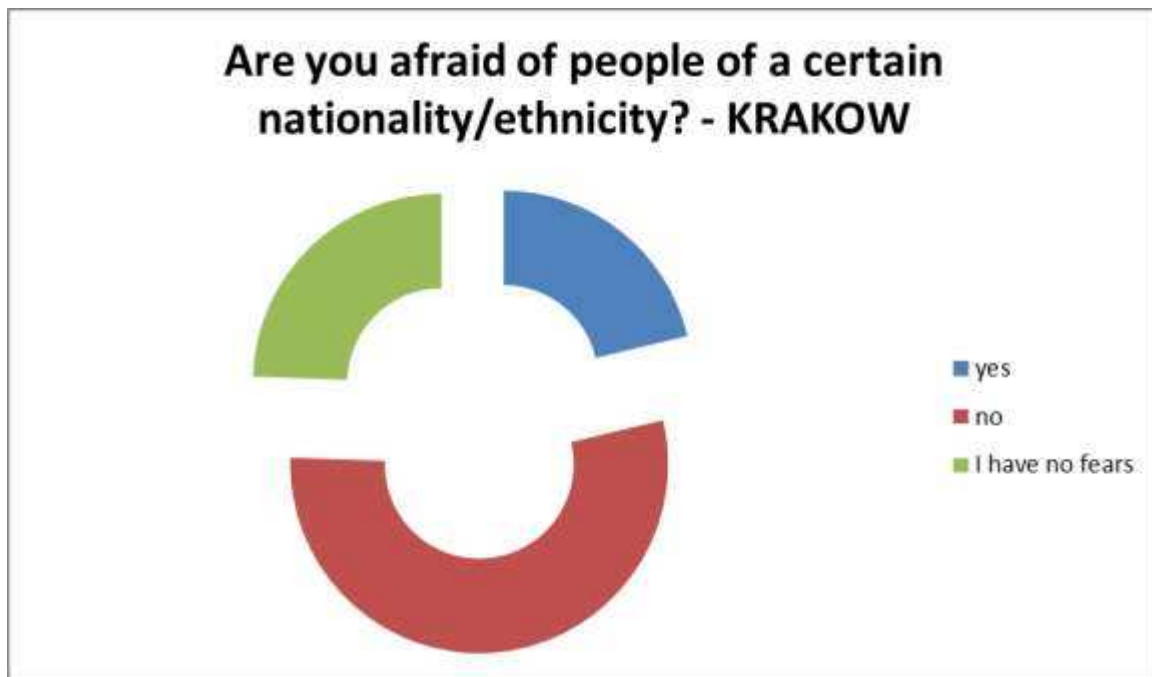
Just as in the case of previous charts, there is a marked difference in the experience in the environment of students from Berlin and Krakow as well. As students from Berlin declared, violence motivated by nationality, skin colour, religion or presented views happened around them more often than in the case of declarations of students from Krakow.

**Chart 7a.** Fears of students connected with people of certain nationalities/ethnic groups – Berlin



Source: Author

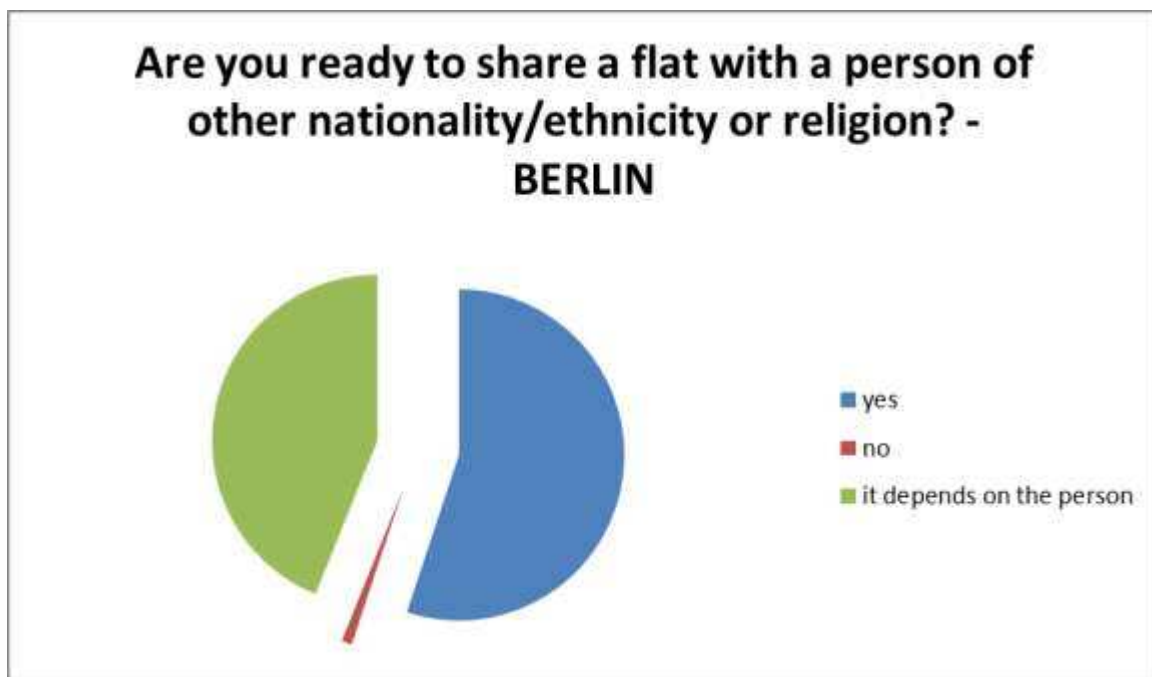
**Chart 7b.** Fears of students connected with people of certain nationalities/ethnic groups - Krakow



*Source: Author*

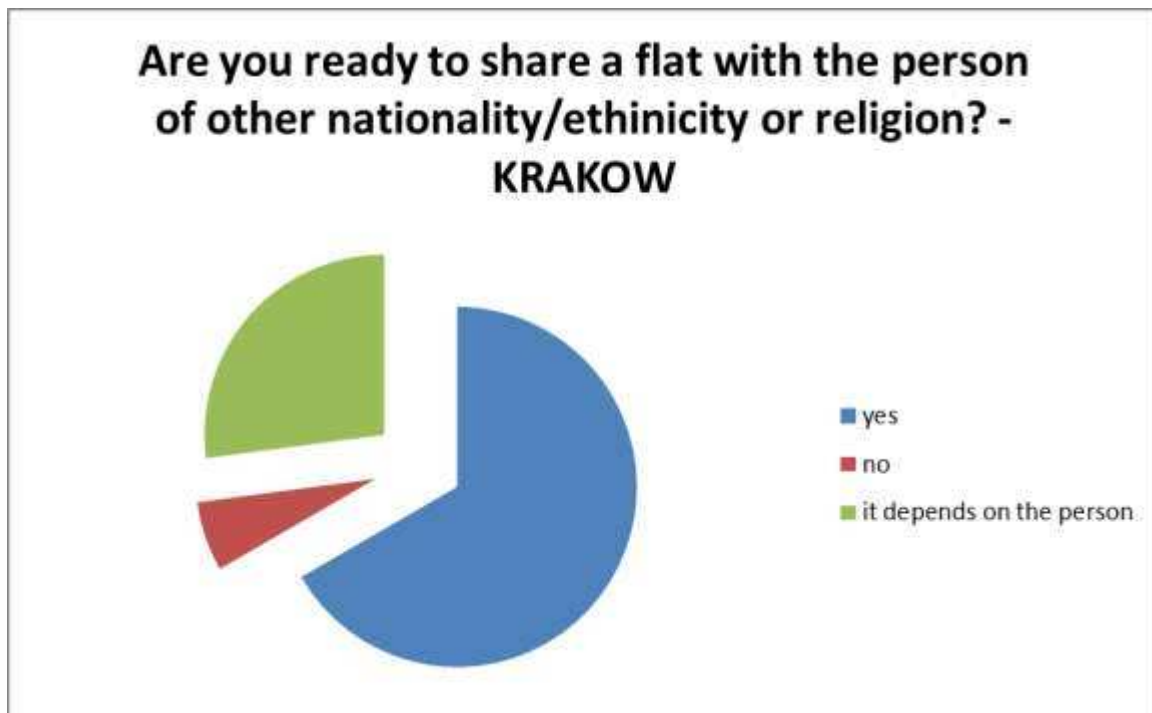
The surveyed students from both cities had a similar level of fear of people of a certain ethnic group or nationality. Both in the case of students from Berlin and Krakow, the most feared group are people from Muslim countries, although students in Krakow also mentioned people from the Far East, from Central and Eastern Europe and the inhabitants of Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Chart 8a.** Declarations concerning sharing the same space – students in Berlin



*Source: Author*

**Chart 8b.** Declarations concerning sharing the same space – students in Krakow



Source: Author

The above data, just like the ones presented before, show different attitudes of students from Berlin and Krakow. A vast majority of students is ready to share a flat with a person of another nationality and ethnicity, whereas students from Krakow gave more negative answers and also less often said that their decision depends on a given person, i.e. on individualised choice. This may prove that the level of prejudice and using stereotypes significantly influences attitudes of students from Krakow.

**Chart 9a.** Declarations excluding sharing the same space – students in Berlin



Source: Author

**Chart 9b.** Declarations excluding sharing the same space – students in Krakow



*Source: Author*

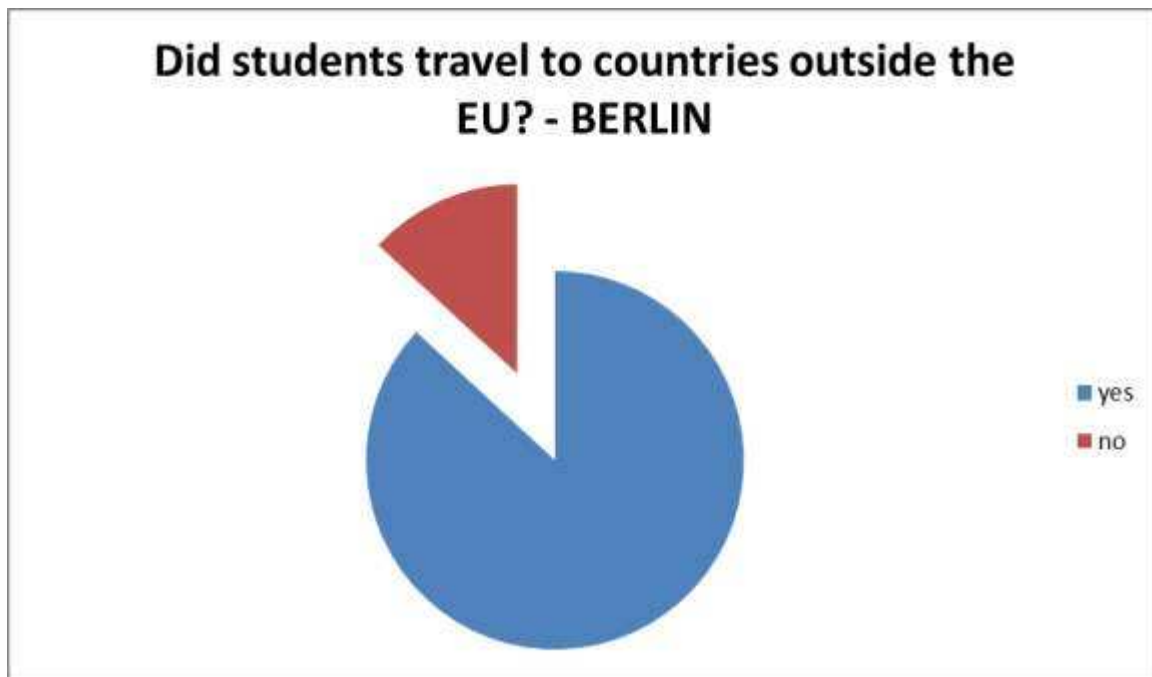
In the survey, students' answers were verified by putting in questions sounding differently but concerning the same topic in different places of the questionnaire in order to confirm answers given by students. Verification confirmed attitudes of students from Berlin but verified attitudes of students from Krakow, pointing to a higher level of prejudice towards living together with people belonging to other nationalities, ethnic or religious groups.

Among people the students from Berlin exclude sharing a flat with were religious extremists and Islam believers. There were more groups of people students from Krakow exclude living with: Islam believers, Gypsies, Jews, Germans, Ukrainians, Africans. Interestingly, in the case of the group of students from Krakow, the analysis was also done by extracting answers obtained from students (Poles and Ukrainians). In the first group there were: Gypsies, Muslims, Jews, Germans, Ukrainians and Africans. In the other: Muslims, Catholics, Russians and Poles.

According to the above results, the main source of prejudice are mainly religious differences, both in the case of students from Berlin and Krakow. Among Poles, research also revealed individual anti-Semitic attitudes (people who said that they rule out living with a person of Jewish nationality were aged between 35 and 45).

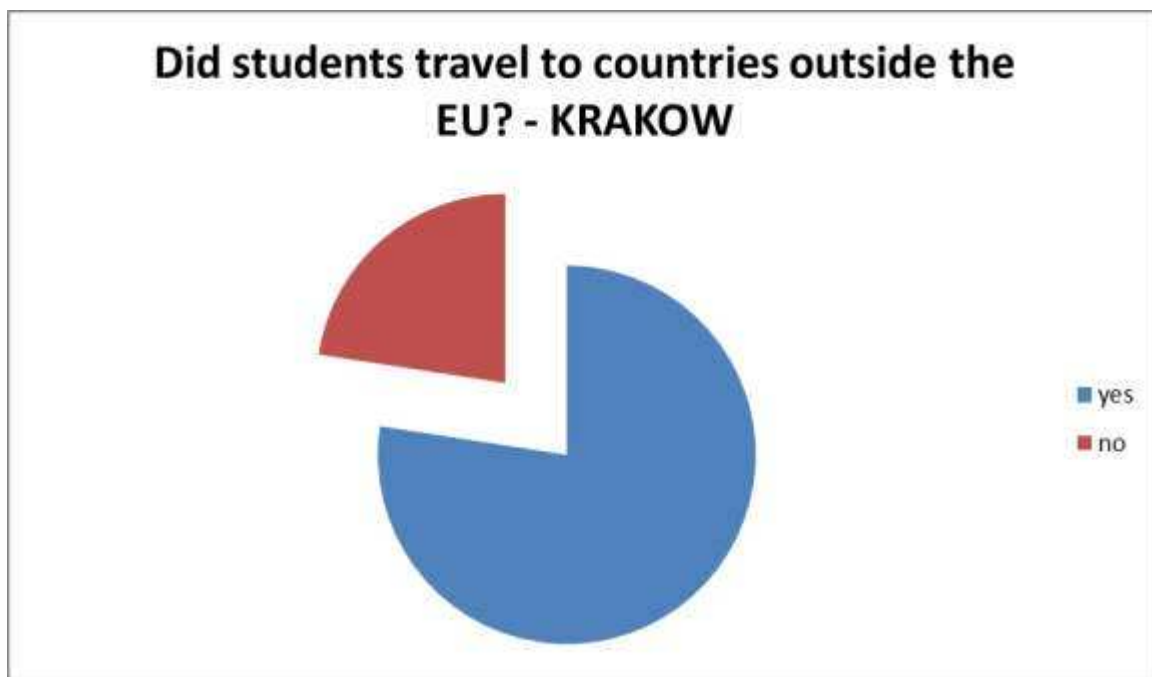
Another group of the presented research results concern experiences of students from travelling and staying in countries outside the European Union.

**Chart 10a.** Mobility of students – Berlin



*Source: Author*

**Chart 10b.** Mobility of students – Krakow



*Source: Author*

The two above charts present students' own experiences of travelling to other countries outside the European Union. It follows from them that students from Berlin have much more experience connected with travelling outside the EU than students from Krakow.

Answers concerning the longest period of stay abroad in the case of students from Berlin include a period of up to two weeks, however, there are also answers pointing up to a period between one and three months. The most common reasons for travelling were holidays, then education or vocational apprenticeship, visiting friends or family and finally; working abroad. On the other hand, among students from Krakow, the period of stay is not longer than two weeks, less often up to a month and the reasons of the stay are most often holidays or visiting family or friends.

Juxtaposing answers to questions about travelling abroad with fears of students of people of other nationalities or ethnic groups we obtain the result that going on holidays does not help in overcoming prejudice and fear. Among students who expressed fear and prejudice against others were mostly these who declared trips (usually two-week ones) on holidays. They fear mostly Muslims (the largest number of answers), individual answers concerned the residents of Africa – Northern and Sub-Saharan.

This area was not studied, however, it is worth mentioning as an area for a possible continuation of this research - to what extent tourism, including mass tourism, influences the creation or reinforcement of prejudice and fears against people of other nationality, ethnicity or culture.

The last portion of the presented survey results concerns the influence of traditional media, including statements of politicians in the media, on shaping students' attitudes in each city. Answers concerning activity of students in social media were selected from the analysis, as they are a separate type of mass medium that may be a place for self-education of students.

**Chart 11a.** Traditional media as a source of information for students – Berlin



Source: Author

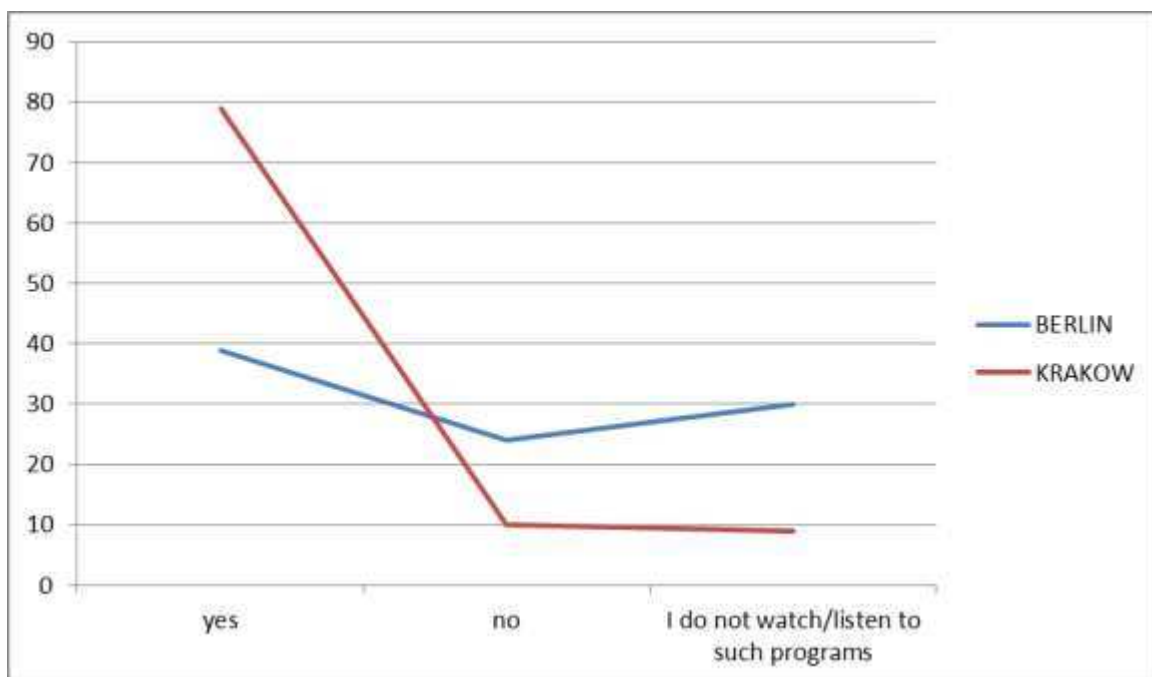
**Chart 11b.** Traditional media as a source of information for students – Krakow



Source: Author

According to the above charts students in Krakow and in Berlin have similar attitudes towards messages concerning multicultural Europe presented in traditional media. Both students in Berlin and in Krakow answer that they rather do not watch/listen or do not remember programmes that would tackle the issue of a multicultural Europe.

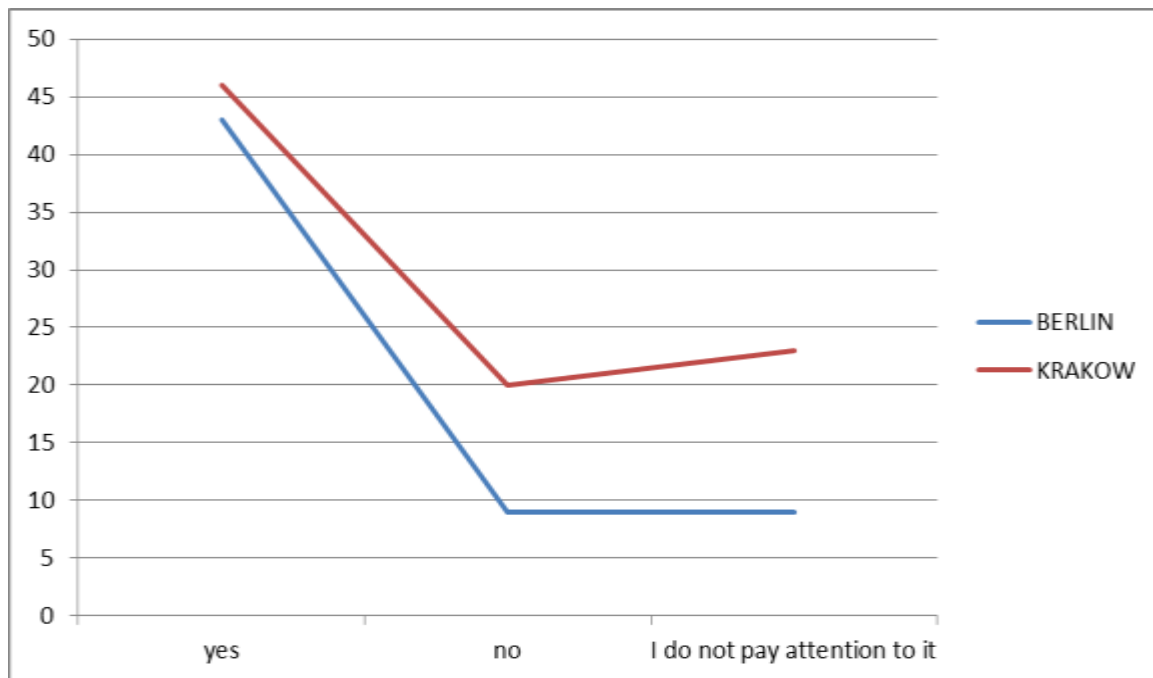
**Chart 12.** Statements of politicians on the radio and on television – students' opinions



Source: Author

The above chart presents differences in students' opinions about statements of politicians in traditional media (radio, television). Students in Krakow stated that programs they watch are highly political, contrary to the students from Berlin.

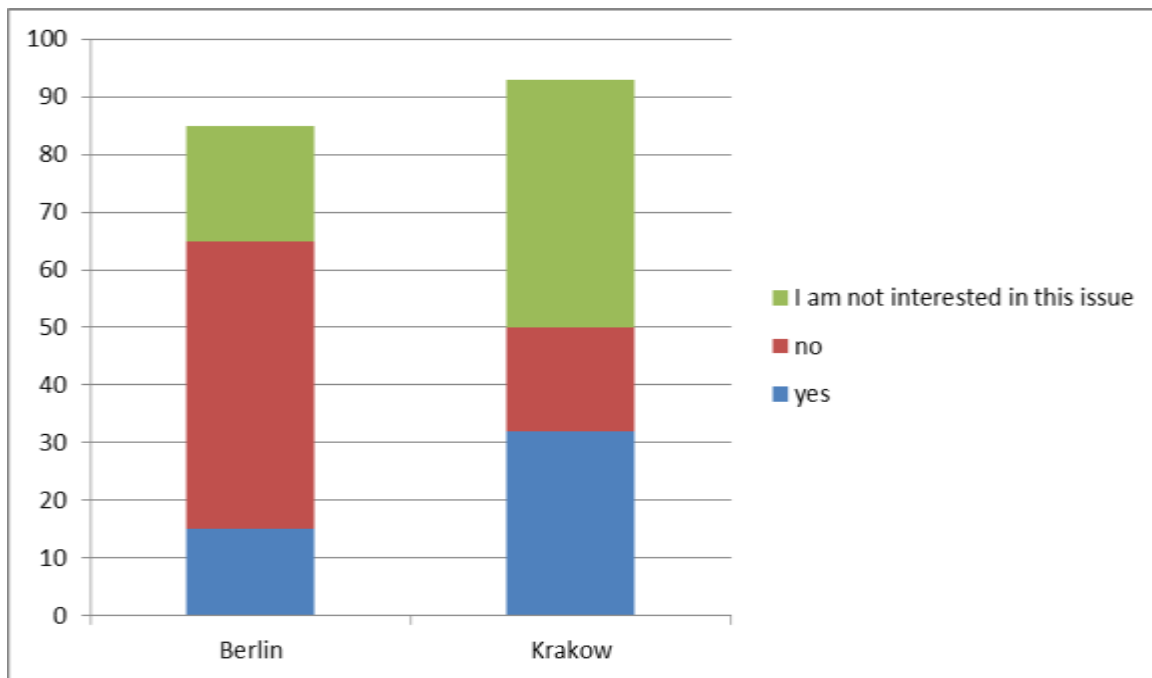
**Chart 13.** Statements of politicians on the radio and on television about multicultural Europe – students' opinions



Source: Author

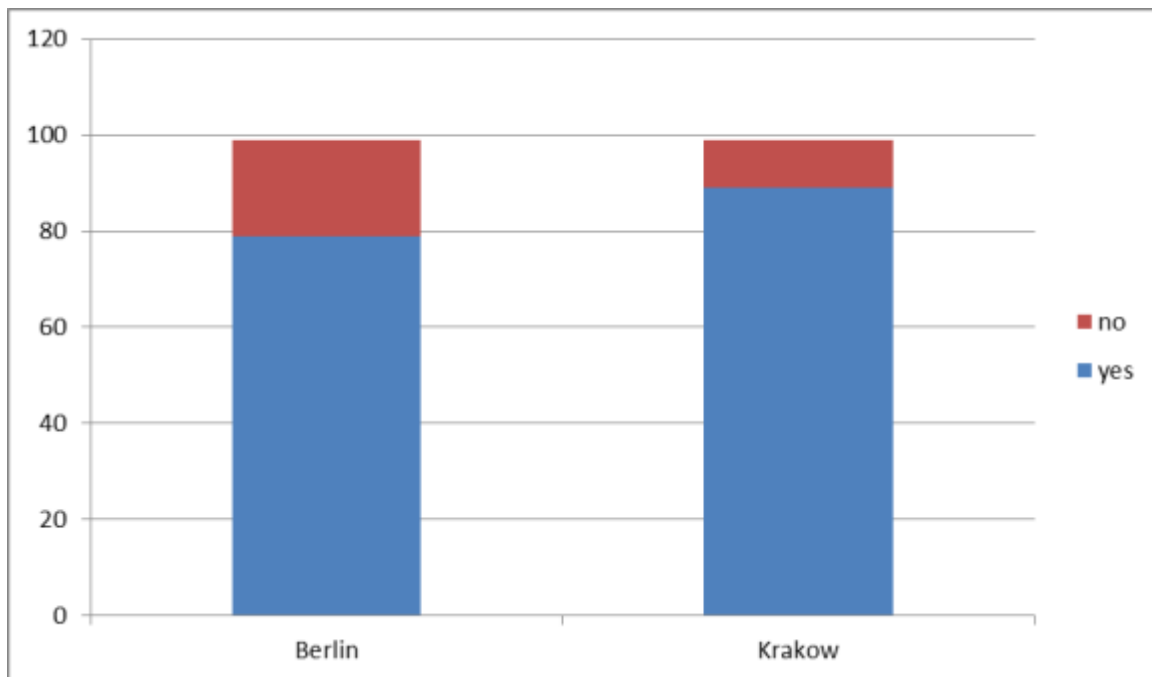
Making data from the previous two charts more precise, where students' observations concerning participation of politicians in radio or TV programs are presented, they were asked in the survey about the participation of politicians in discussions about multicultural Europe. Students from Krakow declared a similar number of statements of politicians like students from Berlin but at the same time they less often pay attention to such statements.

**Chart 14.** Students' opinions concerning the statement of German Chancellor Angela Merkel about the failure of the so-called "multikulti" policy



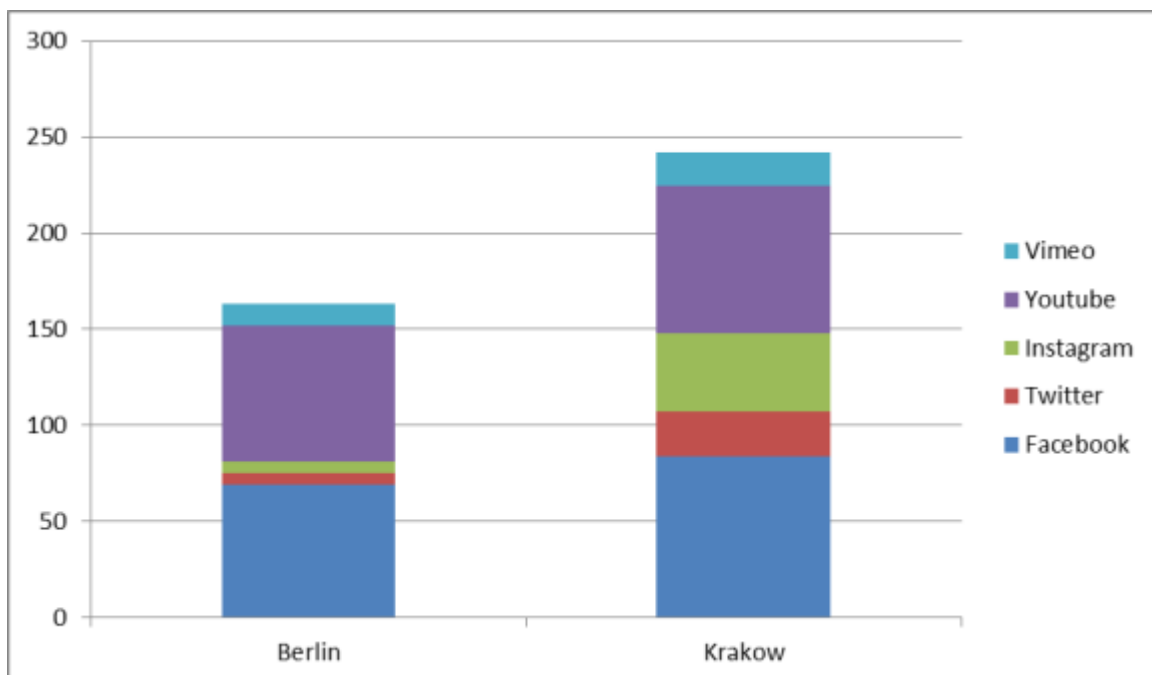
Source: Author

Students from Berlin and Krakow shows different attitudes in relating to the words of German Chancellor, Angela Merkel about the failure of the "multikulti" policy. The majority of students from Berlin declared that they do not agree with Merkel's statement, but students from Krakow said that they are not interested in this issue or they agree with the statement. Discrepancy of students' attitudes in each city is rather the result of students' own experience and their social competence shaped in certain social conditions – students from Berlin live their lives in a multicultural environment; something they can experience every day. We also can not underestimate the phenomenon of political correctness that –to some extent– might have influenced the answers of students from Berlin.

**Chart 15.** Students' activity in communication through social media

Source: Author

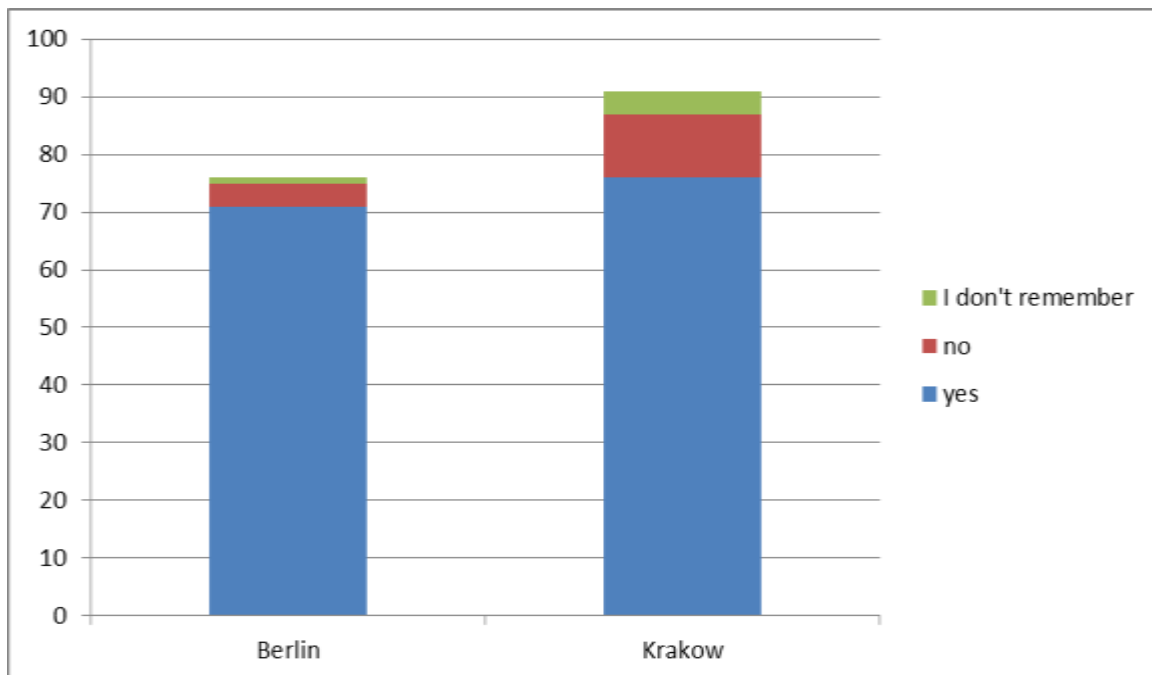
The survey revealed slight differences in using social media by students from Berlin and Krakow. Students from Berlin use social media less actively than their peers from Krakow. This may be the result of different ages of students – average age of students from Berlin who participated in the study was 28 years of age and average age of students from Krakow was 22 years.

**Chart 16.** Social media used by students

Source: Author

The above chart shows students' preferences regarding social media that they use. The most popular ones, both among students from Berlin and Krakow are the social website Facebook and the content website Youtube. Students from Krakow also pointed to Instagram and Twitter, as social media they use.<sup>6</sup>

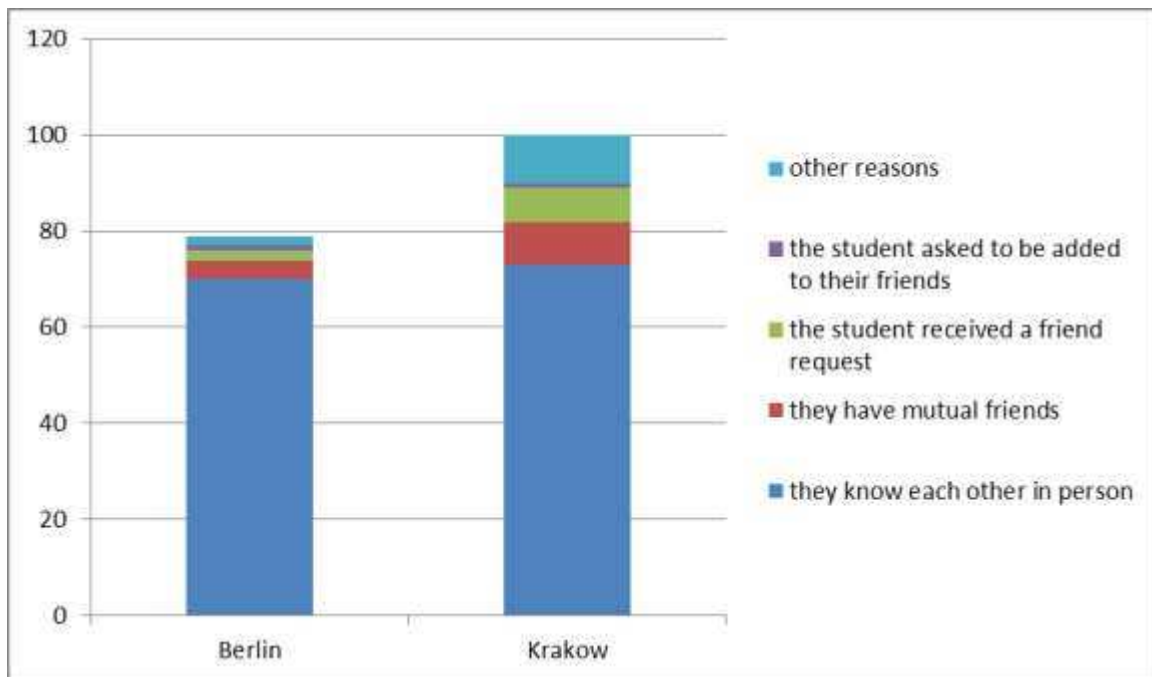
**Chart 17.** Students' declarations about having friends of other nationality/ethnicity on social media



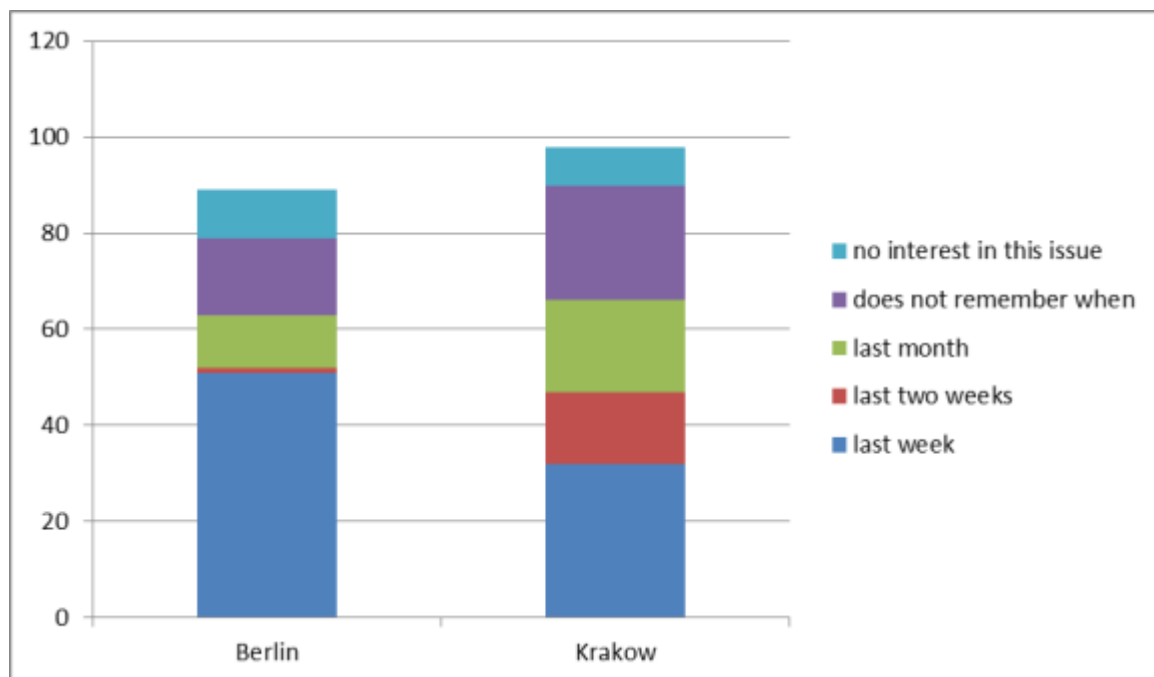
Source: Author

A vast majority of students declared that they have people of other nationalities or ethnic groups among Facebook friends. More students from Krakow said no. Reasons for starting relations on Facebook are presented in the below chart. Usually, friends on Facebook are people who know each other personally. In the case of students from Krakow there is more variety in reasons why students start relations with others.

<sup>6</sup> Answers about the popularity of Facebook and Youtube result from many previous surveys so in the questionnaire the analysis of students' activity on Facebook has been adopted.

**Chart 18.** Reasons for having friends of other nationality or ethnicity

Source: Author

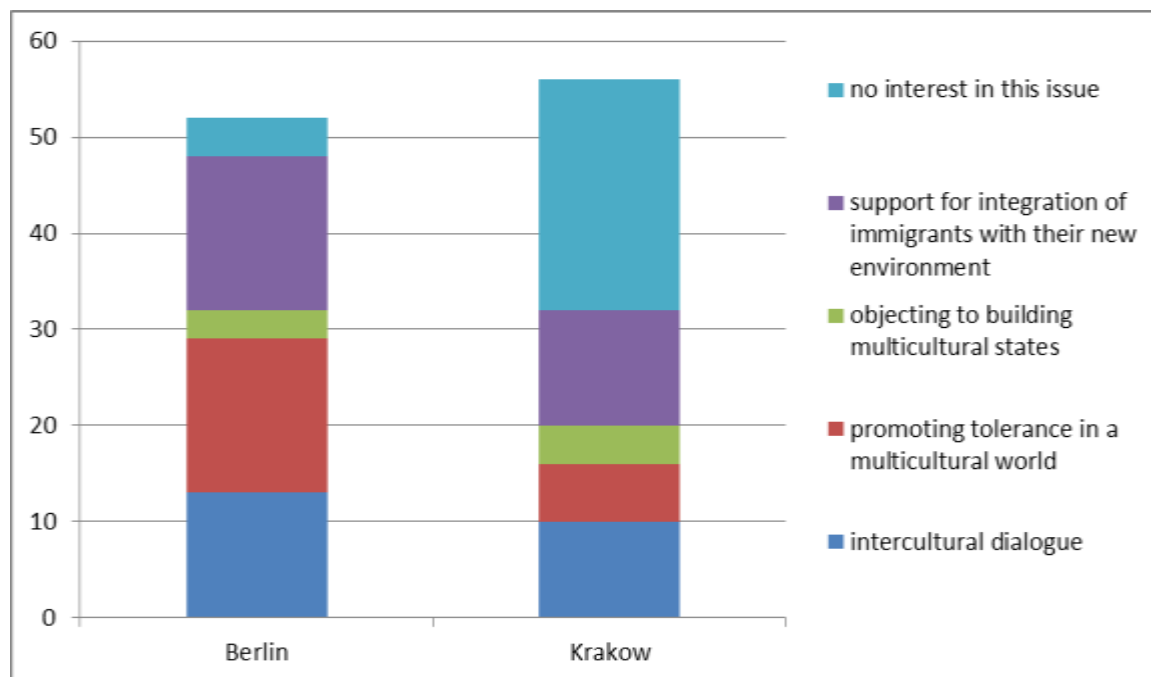
**Chart 19.** Activity of students in searching for and analysing information about multiculturalism

Source: Author

The analysis of activity on the Internet points to differences in the interest in the topic of multiculturalism of students from Berlin and Krakow. The former more often declare searching for and analysing information devoted to the issue of multiculturalism or people of other nationality or ethnicity on the Internet. Students from Krakow, as compared with their

peers from Berlin, more often point to the lack of interest in this topic. This conclusion results from the analysis of the number of people who do not remember when they searched for such information on the Internet, as well as open declarations of people about lack of interest in this issue.

**Chart 20.** Being a member of a group or community connected with the issue of multiculturalism on Facebook



Source: Author

The above table presents declarations about students' membership in groups and communities on Facebook. Students' attitudes expressed by belonging to them are different. Students from Berlin are more often members of groups and communities that are devoted to intercultural dialogue, promoting tolerance in a multicultural world and supporting integration of immigrants in a new environment. On the other hand, students from Krakow usually said that they were not interested in this issue. In addition, it is worth emphasising that both students from Berlin and from Krakow rarely declare negative attitudes towards the creation of multicultural states - the lowest index concerns declarations of membership in groups and communities that gather people around the idea of objection to building multicultural states.

## CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SURVEY AND PERSPECTIVES OF FURTHER RESEARCH

The carried out pilot survey revealed differences in attitudes of students from Berlin and Krakow. Students studying in Krakow pay more attention to multiculturalism of the environment they function in, what may prove that the change from a nationally homogenous to a more multicultural society draws their attention. On the other hand, students from Berlin treat multicultural environment they function in as natural - many respondents declare that they pay no attention to people of other nationalities and ethnic groups around them. Among

students in Berlin individualisation of relations is also more noticeable – they pay attention to people, not to their nationality or ethnicity.

Students from Krakow are also more prejudiced and have more fears than their peers from Berlin. Interestingly, negative experiences, like being the victim of violence motivated by nationality, ethnicity, skin colour, views or religion are to a greater extent shared by students in Berlin than in Krakow. At the same time, the former declare a much lower level of prejudice than the latter. This may provoke a conclusion that one's own experiences, even negative ones, do not lead to increased prejudice and fear, also due to individualisation of social relations.

Students in Krakow pointed to a high level of political content of messages in electronic media – on the radio and on TV. At the same time, in the case of both groups of students, it has not been established that politicians' statements influence different attitudes, they can, however have impact on preserving schemas and prejudice as well as reinforcing fears.

Also travelling and staying abroad does not influence overcoming prejudice and fears – these have more often been declared by students from Krakow, who at the same time declared travelling for a period not longer than a month on holiday.

In the case of both groups of students the source of prejudice are fears connected with religious differences and influence of another religion on everyday life. Students from Berlin and from Krakow said that their fears and prejudice are mainly against people of Muslim origin, practising Islam.

Students in Krakow more often communicate with the use of social media than students in Berlin. The latter at the same time declare that they more often use social media to search for information connected with multiculturalism, promoting tolerance and helping immigrants to assimilate with the society. At the same time both groups declared a rather low level of interest and activity in groups, whose aim is opposing to building multicultural societies, what may be treated as a positive effect. The analysis how students in both cities use social media has shown that they do not use them to start new relations but only move relations existing in real life to the Internet. We cannot therefore definitely say that students' activity in social media influences overcoming stereotypes and eliminating prejudice, although in the long run it may be important, particularly in the light of increasing educational mobility of students. By emphasising the importance of project identities<sup>7</sup>, Manuel Castells points out that their aim is changing cultural codes that create frameworks for communication in the network society. The result is changing the culture of virtual reality and supplementing it with alternative values. (2009: 385) It can thus be supposed that this mobility, international and intercultural contacts in the real world will in the future create new project identities. All the more so, as Jan van Dijk remarks: *"The Internet does not replace the existing ways of communication but supplements them. /.../ thanks to the support of the network and various weak bonds (coexisting with the traditional strong bonds) new communication groups and even new community types are created."* (Van Dijk 2010: 237)

The carried out survey at the same time found planes for continuing deepened analyses in order to further state the dependence between own experiences of an individual, the educational process and the impact of stereotypes on shaping attitudes in communication processes. These analyses are particularly important in determining differences between representatives of other multicultural communities, e.g. attitudes of young people in France, where also the level of saturation of the society with multiculturalism is significant and at the same time, unlike in Germany, integration of immigrants with the environment, through social activities, is not as effective as in Germany.

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<sup>7</sup> The importance of project identities as exemplification of political self-awareness and representation of different ideologies is also mentioned by Darin Barney in *The Network Society* (2008: 172)

The survey also made it possible to draw a conclusion that students from Berlin living in a multicultural environment are less prejudiced and less fearful of multiculturalism than students in Krakow (Poles and Ukrainians), for whom multiculturalism is still a social novelty. This proves that living in a multicultural environment, despite experiencing violence more often, helps individualisation of perception of people of other nationalities, ethnic or cultural groups, i.e. really eliminates stereotypes. Students from Krakow (Poles and Ukrainians) who have less contact with cultural variety (results presented in Table 1 proved it) usually follow stereotypes when defining their attitude towards the environment.<sup>8</sup> An interesting area for qualitative research that may be continuation of the carried out pilot study, is the observation of communication in social media in different groups and communities whose aim is to promote tolerance, equality, intercultural dialogue, and supporting immigrants in their assimilation with the environment. Such research would make it possible to show real differences in arguments used by young people in different countries, who are for or against the idea of building multicultural societies.

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<sup>8</sup> According to Walter G. Stephan and Cookie W. Stephan: "When a stereotype is activated it can trigger the mechanism of a self-fulfilling prophecy. This process consists of three stages. First, people are prone to look for such information that will confirm their expectations. Second, information confirming the stereotype draws attention better and is better coded, unless the evidence contrary to the expectations is strong and unambiguous. Even if the information undermining the stereotype is remembered, it will probably not be attributed to internal factors and, moreover, the person who does not fit the stereotype is often disliked. Third, expectations resulting from a stereotype influence human behaviour, increasing the possibility that a representative of a foreign group will react in a way confirming the expectations." (2003: 42).

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# The coexistence of Swabians and Hungarians in a village in near Budapest

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**Abstract:** The study takes the contact hypothesis of social psychology as its starting point and examines a Swabian-Hungarian ethnic village as an example. The contact hypothesis suggests that contact or interaction between members of different groups under the right circumstances diminishes prejudice and hostility between those groups and mitigates stereotyping and discrimination. However, for this effect to occur, certain conditions must be met: the parties should be of equal status, have a common goal, cooperate, receive the support of authorities and maintain a personal relationship, since this is the only way long-term success can be achieved. Pursuit of mutual assimilation, physical proximity and time can also help people to accept each other and adopt coexistence. These conditions have been met in the case of the Swabian and Hungarian ethnic groups living in the village of Dunabogdány. Social and political processes, Catholicism and the fact that the German language has been added to the local school curriculum have also contributed to the successful outcome.

**Keywords:** ethnic minorities, interethnic relationships, assimilation, group identity, stereotypes, prejudice, contact hypothesis

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In a small village located in near Budapest, Swabians and Hungarians now live in peace while simultaneously maintaining their national identities. This coexistence is the end result of a long and hard process propelled by the interplay of various factors. In characterising this process we may consider voluntary and forced moves, conscious and instinctive decisions, and factors related to or independent of the individual, or we may look at macro- and micro level variables. If we intend to examine this process of coexistence in a scientific manner, we may borrow the notions, definitions and results of several different fields of science. The present study takes the contact hypothesis as its framework in interpreting the results of empirical data<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The data were collected as part of my PhD thesis written for the Doctoral School in Social Communication, the Corvinus University of Budapest. The title of the thesis is: Marital mobility – a study of three generations in Dunabogdány.

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Exploring, understanding and analyzing prejudices and stereotypes has always been a central issue in social psychology. The first endeavours in this area began in the 1920s and 1930s, but the first significant steps were the works of Adorno (et al 1950) and Allport (1954) who examined several basic notions and phenomena. While the former used an approach placing the individual in the centre and summarized research on authoritarian and prejudiced personality, the latter emphasized the role of everyday observational processes in the emergence and prolonged existence of prejudices and stereotypes. I will depart from these thoughts to describe the processes leading to peaceful coexistence in Dunabogdány.

Firstly, we must briefly discuss the notion of group identity: how it emerged and why it is relevant (Sólyom 2014). Factors that feed on emotions and knowledge applicable to or related to our own group form an integral part of our individual identity, since a person's identity – according to the theory of social identity – originates from the collective. This is where we learn in what ways we are similar to or different from other group members. This means that our individual identity includes the mindset and value system of our own group, and since we are part of a collective, our personal identity also affects and shapes group norms and behaviours. Individual and group identities mutually influence each other, which is also true for stereotypes and prejudices: personal prejudices will affect those of the group and *vice versa*. The sense of belonging to our own group is determined by two factors: one is that we define ourselves as members of a group and the second is that other individuals also regard us as members. According to numerous studies in the fields of psychology, sociology and social psychology, the importance of group identity lies in the fact that, based on criteria of special personal significance to us, we tend to assign a higher value to our own group than we assign to other groups included in the comparison. In addition, the importance of group identity for a group member lies in the fact that the group we self-identify with and are members of is our primary source of self-confidence (Turner-Oakes 1986).

Evaluations are strongly affected by the relations between the different affiliations of an individual; thus the peaceful coexistence of groups or heavy tensions between them have an impact on perceptions and opinions, the emergence of stereotypes, attitudes, and solidarity within the group as well as loyalty between different groups (Doise 1980). Given that we have an interest in the success of our own group, we are likely to be biased, which results in different groups competing with one another. This competition is the source of conflicts between groups. Negative stereotypes and prejudices, biased opinions and occasionally hostile attitudes on the part of the majority group serve the purpose of preserving its dominance. However, when the interests of groups suit or complement each other, tolerance, equity, friendliness and friendship prevail (Fiske 2006; Kovács 2010). At this point, it should be noted that linguistic and cultural differences between groups will not *per se* become prejudices. The social, economic or political context is also part of the equation. During interactions between groups, different parties evaluate each other's acts and behaviours based on a pre-set, ethnocentrically constructed system of categories and they mutually create characterizations which include unique "ethnic" negative features (Hagendoorn 1995).

As for the relationship between the majority and the minority, tensions and conflicts between the two stem from the competition for power, for the right to make decisions over the use of resources, for income, prestige and influential positions in decision-making and government. The basic type of minority-majority relationship is that between an ethnic minority and the majority population of a state. The ethnic minority is constructed by the majority driven by xenophobia and prejudices. According to Allport (1977), we will have enemies once we have named them. During the process of developing an identity, it is the majority which is first identified with the minority following later and having to conform to already established

norms. This was the case, for instance, when ethnic Germans were given the label Swabians. The majority labels, identifies, limits, subjugates and if needed, excludes. Once the minority has been constructed, the majority generalises its features, classifies, creates negative stereotypes, and if the minority does not meet its standards, punishes: the majority discriminates, limits opportunities, excludes and, in the worst cases, builds ghettos and exterminates. If, however, the so-called other meets certain standards, the majority will accept and welcome it.

## 2. DISCUSSION

Ethnic minority communities are the products of migration or redrawn borders, forcefully detached from their own original groups. Voluntarily or because they have no alternative, they continue their lives in a state with a different language and culture, among strangers and enemies. Whether they decided to give up their majority status or became a minority for some other reason, the result is the same: they lack the confidence and privilege the majority groups enjoy and they become vulnerable. The harmony ensured by the majority status of the group is thus replaced with the conflict-filled existence of being in minority. A minority status has several disadvantages in itself. The struggle for survival while trying to meet various expectations, the fight for acceptance and hospitality are the source of numerous conflicts from the beginning.

Several approaches and theories have emerged in social psychology in an effort to decrease inter-group conflicts. Sherif (1980) advocated the theory of “superior goal”, Allport (1954) suggested the contact hypothesis and Adorno (1969) urged a school curriculum emphasizing the importance of autonomy and critical thinking. These remain the fundamental suggestions of social psychology today.

According to the contact hypothesis, differentiating between group identities creates distorted views of other groups and is also the cause of the overvaluation of one’s own group. If the theory is correct, then prejudices, stereotyping and discrimination may be diminished, while sympathy may be increased through interactions and direct contact between members. The more frequent and regular the interactions are between the members of different groups, the less those groups will resort to prejudices and stereotypes when thinking about the other. The explanation behind this hypothesis is that knowing others decreases anxiety and fear related to the members of other groups; with more information, attitudes towards the other identity change significantly. Furthermore, contact increases empathy towards the situation of the other group and awakens trust in its members (Tausch-Hewstone 2010).

Interaction *per se* does not necessarily result in the decrease of prejudice and inter-group hostility. For this to happen, four requirements must be met (Siklaci 2010): participating parties should be of equal status; the parties should be willing to cooperate; they should declare their mutual goals; and they should receive support from their respective legal and social authorities. However, if the parties meet while they differ in position, status or roles, an increase in and reinforcement of prejudice may be the outcome. In such cases, the conflict itself has to be managed first, and only after a successful attempt may we expect a change in attitudes. Pettigrew (1998) further developed and redefined the original contact hypothesis and added a fifth requirement to the previous four: the situation must allow participants to establish amity. According to Pettigrew, this is necessary because contact is particularly efficient if it is long-term and allows the creation of cross-group friendship-like relationships. The goal of assimilation on the part of both parties helps coexistence. However, the physical closeness of the majority and minority groups and time are important factors when it comes to improving relations between groups and attaining peaceful coexistence. Physical closeness does not only mean living geographically close to each other, i.e., everyday coexistence, but

also refers to the extent to which a given minority has already assimilated into society. Mutual understanding and acceptance are directly proportional to the level of assimilation. Acceptance of dual identities also leads to less prejudice between groups as this also requires a lower level of attachment to one's own group, and cross-categorization allows the same people to belong to another group simultaneously. This dual affiliation is an indication of tolerance and empathy in the direction of an external group (Crisp 2010). According to an inter-ethnic study in Hungary (Balassa and Kovács 2010), there is a higher chance of personal relationships forming between groups in ethnically diverse localities, and the closeness of residence and everyday shared activities also decrease negative attitudes, i.e., simple coexistence decreases prejudice. One of the developments rooted in the contact hypothesis is the extended contact effect (Wright 1997), according to which the knowledge that our fellow group members have close and good relationships, even friendships with members of an external, "enemy" group may further decrease prejudice towards that group. The reason is probably that such behaviour by other members of our group acts as a kind of norm and serves as a model of how we should behave towards the other. It provides information suggesting that a given individual may not be as "threatening and terrible" to us and to our group as we originally thought. As a result, we redefine inter-group relations in less negative terms and seriously reconsider the validity of our stereotypes.

Let us now examine the tenets of the contact hypothesis by examining the relationship between the Swabian minority and Hungarian majority in our village. Throughout my research, I have explored majority-minority relations (Sólyom 2004, 2014). Specifically, I have examined the relationship between the Swabian and Hungarian inhabitants of Dunabogdány, a village near Budapest in Pest County. In this municipality, the minority language is still used as a mother tongue; however, due to the opening up of the ethnic community, the assimilation process had a strong influence on identity and assisted peaceful coexistence with the Hungarian majority. At this point, an important factor should be noted: in Dunabogdány, the Swabian minority enjoys a plurality status meaning they have outnumbered Hungarians for several generations<sup>2</sup>.

My experiences indicate that the studied Swabian community possesses a dual identity. They define themselves as both Hungarians and Swabians and exist simultaneously as Hungarians and Swabians. They have acquired the knowledge essential for securely participating - as a survival technique - in communication with the majority of Hungarians. The Swabian community imported easily applicable, acceptable and useful elements, which meet certain basic standards. While maintaining and emphasizing its minority identity, the community accepts certain Hungarian majority practices as a result of Hungarian language socialization. However, there are considerable generational differences. It is important to note that although this community is willing to adopt a dual identity, it rejects complete homogeneity, full assimilation or giving up its Swabian identity.

Throughout history, Swabians as an ethnic group were subject to forced assimilation. For example, they were expected to adopt the values of the Hungarian majority while Hungarians did not acquire a Swabian mentality - not even over a long time. Swabians were expected to learn Hungarian so that they could pursue studies and find a job, and if they wanted to build a career, they even had to change their names to sound more Hungarian. They were considered Hungarian for military service purposes - when they were needed, the fact that they were Swabians did not make a difference. Nevertheless, Swabians did all they could to preserve their identity but could not resist assimilation. Prior to the Second World War, the community of the village was rather closed, which determined inter-group and intra-group relationships

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<sup>2</sup> By Hungarians, I mean non-Swabians who are almost exclusively Hungarians, although there are a small number of Slovaks and Serbs. The inhabitants of the village also speak of Swabians and Hungarians and do not specify ethnicity. They consider every non-Swabian person a Hungarian.

and communication. Strictly following norms was the typical way of life: the norms specified how people should behave with others, whom they may speak to or marry, whom children could or could not play with, whom people may spend leisure time with or have emotions for, what tone they may use, which bar or tavern they may go to or where they could sit in church. The community took the arrival of outsiders quite hard, which is still reflected in the attitudes of some indigenous Swabian families who complain about too many “foreigners”: people who relocate to Dunabogdány from other places. The norms once so strict eventually loosened up as a result of certain historical, political and social events – for example, the Second World War, the repatriation of 1947 and increased mobility (school, commuting to work, mixed marriages). The traditional set of values dissolved, the validity of the original ethnic knowledge and points of orientation for self-classification disappeared leading to assimilation. Nowadays, the village is more open and accepting but some indigenous families still limit outsiders’ approaching them. They continue to work a lot to preserve their Swabian identity although they have lost their language with only the most elderly villagers being able to speak and understand it. Certain group norms and values have been successfully protected and continue to serve as a basis for identity, a pillar for ethnic survival. This includes the reviving of relations with Germany, holding Swabian festivities and practices, organising intensive German language courses (a German ethnic kindergarten and school operates in the village), music and dance classes, several choirs, bands and ethnic civil society groups. The Swabian community considers itself a minority mainly based on its ancestry. Their minority culture – as it is experienced and lived in day-to-day life, different from the majority, with a set of distinct values, norms and practices covering all areas of life including the use of traditional clothes – is not as complete as it had been before the Second World War. The reasons include the modernization and assimilation mentioned above. Elements and practices of Swabian culture, which were passed down through generations, mainly survive in festivities and celebrations but are not fully articulated in everyday life.

Assimilation has not reached its full level and local Swabians do what they can to prevent it. The Swabian language is a case in point, which is currently limited to older generations while the natural language of communication among young people is Hungarian even if they have working knowledge of the minority language, which they quite rarely do (Bindorffer-Sólyom 2007). Linguistic assimilation is practically complete, language exchange has taken place. However, Swabians attempt to preserve their mother tongue in a certain form and on a certain level; it is taught as a foreign language to grandchildren and great-grandchildren in the kindergarten and schools. The members of younger generations not only all speak better Hungarian but due to their socialization, their knowledge rests also on Hungarian culture. They take classes, however, where complementary information is taught on their ethnic community and background, also as a part of formal education. Swabians in Dunabogdány can be considered assimilated; they possess a Hungarian national identity, albeit their ethnic identity also remains. Hungary is their home country but they do whatever they can to preserve their ethnic culture. They try to keep their two identities in balance, which means they are forced to find an equilibrium between assimilation and ethnic survival.

Assimilation as a compromise solution involves adopting a dual identity, which is in part a defensive response to various elements, phenomena and processes threatening Swabian identity, but which also has the effect of decreasing conflicts between groups and thus helping self-preservation. Having a dual identity also means that when Swabians define themselves as Hungarians, the negative stereotypes and attitudes Hungarians may have against Swabians become less condemning and exclusionary. The experiences gained during interethnic relations, the consequent emotional influences and assimilation counteract animosity and guide the relationship of the two ethnic groups.

Györgyi Bindorffer's (2001) study found that prejudice did exist in the past between Swabians and Hungarians in Dunabogdány but ethnicity motivated discrimination against the Swabians did not start until after the Second World War. Coexistence had been peaceful prior to 1945. The two ethnic communities had shared a similar life until certain political decisions with a series of negative effects were made. After that, Hungarians accused Swabians of being responsible for the Second World War; Swabians thus became scapegoats, victims. Their property was confiscated, they had to face forced labour, expulsion, repatriation, the arrival of outsiders and the loss of Hungarian citizenship. They felt these measures were unjust since they were good citizens, who had worked efficiently and restlessly ever since they had settled here and they had even completed military service to defend the country. Swabians became particularly hostile towards Hungarians who occupied the houses of Swabian families either expelled from the country or forced to move in with another family and who thus acquired all their property. Protestants and settlers were also unwelcome. The Hungarians of Slovakia were now held responsible for everything bad that suddenly happened to the Swabians and in Swabian eyes, they became the scapegoat.

Discrimination faded away in the early-to-mid fifties, which in turn increased the chances of interactions between people of equal status thus paving the way for assimilation. Social mobility, cooperation and the end of seclusion together with everyday coexistence, shared work, being neighbours, mixed marriages and the formation of a common 'Bogdány conscience' had a positive impact on either groups' evaluation of the other group. Mutual understanding and acceptance increased, prejudiced behaviour ceased to exist and currently there is no discrimination towards Swabians on either an individual or a group level. Stereotypes related to Swabians do exist but they are of no relevance, since Swabians are even proud of these stereotypical characteristics (e.g. frugality, economizing, considerable wealth and hard work). Stereotypical slurs against Hungarians also continue to exist (e.g. lazy, careless and messy); but the two groups appear to have accepted each other completely. There are of course some individuals in the village who up to this day still think differently and hold grudges against members of some members of the group or against the whole group, people who cannot forgive the events of the past. Negative remarks and comments also occur when specific problems need to be solved or during discussions related to the life of the village but these do not fall under the scientifically defined category of prejudice or discrimination.

Based on this research, we can conclude that as everyday interactions between Swabians and Hungarians became more frequent and positive, coexistence has led to a decrease in prejudice. There are no considerable differences in status in the village, one party may count on the cooperation of the other, and their shared goal is to peacefully live together. Institutional requirements are also met since both laws and social norms assist in getting to know and accept each other. Swabians accept Hungarians and *vice versa* leading to a strengthening of self-confidence for both ethnic groups and to more resilient relations overall. In addition to the abovementioned four criteria, belonging to the same religion also aided the rapprochement of the ethnic groups. Swabians are Catholics and a non-Swabian sharing the same belief constitutes a step forward in itself. Previously – particularly prior to the Second World War – local Hungarians were categorized by Swabians based on their faith. They distinguished Protestant Hungarians – who remain a minority in the village even today – from Catholic Hungarians who had arrived from outside the municipality. Having the same religion as Catholic Hungarians, who were also outsiders, meant they accepted them more readily than they did Protestants, which was also observable in mixed marriages. However, they remained hostile to Hungarians coming from villages and towns nearby.

Origins and knowledge of German also bring parties closer to each other but this only has an effect among members of younger or middle-aged generations, since the first generation,

which was forced to become acquainted with members of another group, did not know the language of the newcomers and did not share ancestors with them. However, their children – if they attend the kindergarten and school in Dunabogdány – learn German and participate in the events of the Swabian community, and may also participate in musical life through the local conservatory. Due to the increased number of opportunities for social mobility and to the spread of mixed marriages, we may also observe shared families and a shared ancestry, factors which may facilitate the development of friendships between group members.

It is important to note that in Dunabogdány, cultural differences between Swabians and non-Swabians are not serious enough to render relations and communication almost or actually impossible or to cause hostility. This has probably never been the case; conflicts were never very serious or violent. Instinctual or conscious differentiation and prejudices were a result of differences in mentalities such as the careful protection of private property – not only in a financial but also in an intellectual sense – and were not a consequence of differing cultural practices.

As other studies have also shown, one may observe in Dunabogdány that it is not only the ethnic composition of a personal environment that affects the individual but also the other way around: an individual influences the composition of his or her environment. If some of those belonging to one group are open, interested, and ready to establish friendly or family relations with another ethnic group (e.g. through mixed marriages), other group members will have a tendency to do the same. They will consider these acts and behaviours as a model or a pattern, which will eventually result in acceptance and the opening up of a previously closed community. During my research, I have also experienced that Swabians no longer form such a closed community as they did prior to the Second World War. They are much more open and gladly welcome not only Swabians but anyone to their events. At first, their community was forced to open up because of historical, political and social pressure - a process that is nowadays voluntary. Acceptance and tolerance have increased over time and the village is much more welcoming than it used to be.

### 3. SUMMARY

This study described the process leading to the peaceful coexistence of Swabians and Hungarians in Dunabogdány. The notion, meaning and importance of group identity in inter-group relation dynamics were used to provide a theoretical background. According to this approach, our individual identity originates from the group we belong to; this is how we are able to define ourselves within the group and to distinguish our group from other groups and their members. Our own group affects us and *vice versa*. Inter-group relations determine whether peaceful coexistence or conflicts will follow and accordingly influence perceptions, attitudes and opinions regarding other groups. This general description also applies to majority-minority relations. When there is a conflict, the minority assimilates, flees or is destroyed. The majority either accepts/welcomes or attempts to forcefully assimilate minorities resulting in a constant state of conflict. If they remain unwilling, the ethnic group is either frightened away or is exterminated. According to the contact hypothesis, communication and interactions between the groups, and becoming acquainted with each other aid acceptance and understanding while decreasing stereotypes and prejudices. The more frequent and deeper the direct contact, the more quickly will opinions and attitudes change. This process can be observed in Dunabogdány, where the Swabian minority and the Hungarian majority – following the years of forced assimilation - can peacefully coexist today. However, this does not mean surrender on the part of the Swabian community but rather the development of a dual identity. This enabled them to save their ethnic group and to create the necessary environment for peaceful coexistence. The Hungarians also agreed that

this form of “half” assimilation was sufficient and allowed Swabians to preserve their traditions. Both sides entered a compromise but this required the presence of certain basic criteria: equal status of parties, a shared goal, cooperation, institutional support and amical relations between the two ethnic groups. Furthermore, the wish to become acquainted with the other group, physical closeness and time also helped to increase acceptance. Finally, social and political processes, a common faith, and German – a language learnt and used by members of both groups – also influenced Hungarian-Swabian relations.

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# Global Science Books: A Tale from the Cuckoo's Nest. How Predatory Open Access Publishing Can Influence the Metrics of a Traditional Scholarly Publisher

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**Abstract:** Based on the July, 2013 list published at scholarlyoa.com by Jeffrey Beall, the number of references by “predatory” open access (POA) journals or publishers was quantified in Global Science Books (GSB) journals. This is the first such ever attempt by any publisher or journal to complete such an analysis. Over an approximately 6-month period, a total of 189,904 references were examined in the reference lists of 2928 manuscripts published in any journal (extant or extinct, 31 in total) over a 7-year period (January 2007 to July 2013). The objective was to assess how unscholarly or predatory publishing can impact and/or influence another publisher and how the reference lists of the surrogate publisher can be used as an unsuspecting instrument (a surrogate deposit, the cuckoo’s nest) to spread and validate POA publishers and their journals.

**Keywords:** Global Science Books; open access; predatory publishing, blogs

Broadly, a predatory open access (POA) publisher refers to an open access (OA) publisher that engages in practices that are deceitful, fraudulent, non-academic or otherwise meant to draw unfair benefit from scientists or authors in a dishonest or unfair way. Traditional print publishers may also be predatory in nature but limited literature exists on such predatory practices. There exists no literature yet that quantitatively examines how predatory publishing (Teixeira da Silva 2013) influences the literature, other journals or other publishers. This is the first study to show how POA publishing can, inadvertently, affect the reference lists of other

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*Conflict of Interest:* The author was the Editor-in-Chief of all Global Science Books (GSB) journals from 2007 until June, 2013 and was also GSB’s founder. The position held at GSB was purely voluntary, without financial remuneration or any other tangible benefits. The author declares no other conflicts of interest.

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academic publishers. Even though papers submitted to journals may pass through peer review, it is virtually impossible to block or screen out papers that appear in its reference list based on the perception that they are unscholarly. Such an action would be perceived by scientists as unscholarly or biased since scientists are free to draw upon the literature to support their studies. Critics of this opinion may claim that truly scholarly journals would include a clause in their instructions for authors that would encourage scholarly behaviour and the reliance on only scholarly texts and sources, or to limit the risk that the sources used are of unscientific nature, such as indicated by the ICEA: “Authors are responsible for the accuracy of references and are encouraged to use reliable sources.”<sup>2</sup> This presumption would, however, assume that the scholarly level of all so-called scholarly journals, OA or traditional STM print publishers, was the same, but which it is clearly not.

POA publishers potentially harm science by creating a negative perception in society about the validity of scientific findings since scientists find a quick and easy venue to publish their findings, even if at a cost (Beall, 2012). However, the inconsistent and often unfair and/or unquantified criteria used by Beall have also been the subject of criticism and concern that damage to valid, but green, start-up publishers may be unfairly targeted (Butler, 2013), even though Beall (2013) claims that POAs act as a location for authors to “game” the system and practice misconduct such as plagiarism.

The final reference lists of manuscripts that were accepted for publication in Global Science Books journals were used. GSB is a traditional print publisher specializing primarily in plant science journals that initiated in 2006 and ceased publication of the entire journal fleet in 2013. GSB journals were selected for analysis since the author was the editor-in-chief of all GSB journals over the entire period, and thus oversaw all peer review and quality control (QC)-related activities. POA publishing has increased exponentially over the past 4-6 years, seeing a 20-fold increase between 2011 and 2014.<sup>3</sup> However, POA publishing has probably existed since the start of the OA movement (Bohannon 2013). Consequently, only references of journals that were published between 2003 and 2013 and that appeared in the July, 2013 list published at [scholarlyoa.com](http://scholarlyoa.com) by Jeffrey Beall were considered in this small analysis. The newly expanded 2014 list was not used for the analysis because several POA journals and publishers only started to publish in 2013, and thus rarely appeared in the reference lists of GSB journals, whose last issues were published in January, 2013. All other references – by virtue of the fact that they did not appear on the Beall list and were thus not considered to be predatory – were eliminated. From the remaining references, any references that were from traditional print journals, web-sites, books or any other reference that was not from an OA journal, were eliminated. Hybrid print-OA journals were also not included. Using the remaining list (a total of 24,527 references from the initial 189,904), the references were classified as a 0 (present) or 1 (absent) on the Beall’s list of OA predatory journals/publishers<sup>4</sup>, a blog that has sought to examine the predatory practices of POA publishers and stand-alone journals. Comparisons were performed manually. Each reference that appeared from a predatory publisher or predatory journal was classified as a single 0 (i.e., present) count, even if it appeared multiple times. The exercise (i.e., verification) was conducted only once (i.e., cross-assessment of reference lists was not repeated). Four ratios (E, F, G, H) based on the data explained in Table 1 were plotted on a graph on a per-year basis (Fig. 1). The overall trend for all four ratios was positive. This indicates that the number of references of papers from POA journals or publishers each year superseded the total number from the previous year. Ratios E, G and H were linear while ratio F was exponential.

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<http://www.icea.org/content/guide-authors>

<sup>3</sup> see <http://scholarlyoa.com/2014/01/02/list-of-predatory-publishers-2014/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://scholarlyoa.com/individual-journals> and <http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers>

The level of inclusion of POA journal references in GSB journals increased 9-, 64-, 7- and 14-fold over the 7-year period when using ratios E, F, G and H, respectively (Fig. 1). Even the smallest positive ratio is a worrisome sign that valid academic and scholarly journals may be being used by POA journals and publishers to expand their level of indexing and to validate their existence in the wider literature, OA or traditional. There are no other such data sets yet in the literature to confirm or disprove this hypothesis.

GSB journals have been serving as one conduit for POA publishers to validate their results, and thus existence. This is achieved by authors who have included papers from POA publishers in their reference lists of manuscripts published in scholarly peer-reviewed journals. By not actively banning or excluding the references from reference lists of GSB journals, the inclusion of a paper from a supposedly POA journal or publisher intuitively implies that it is academically sound. Since this premise in many cases is not true – hence the reason for the predatory label of such journals and publishers – GSB journals have been serving as the cuckoo's nest for the surrogate validation of potentially non-academic, false or fraudulent scientific work. Until a quantitative analysis of POA publishing is complete, the results and implications suggested by this paper will remain hypothetical, although a recent paper (Bohannon 2013) has also highlighted the risks of POA to the integrity of academic publishing, even though aspects of that study, including its design and control group, were also flawed (Becker 2014). Other publishers are urged to examine the reference lists of papers published in their journals and to, as best as possible, quantify the level of surrogate use, cuckoo-style, by POA publishers. The reader is cautioned, however, that not all POA journals listed on the Jeff Beall blog may in fact be predatory, and that predation needs to be quantified, as suggested by the Predatory Score (Teixeira da Silva 2013) in order to quantitatively prove its predatory or unscholarly nature. That work is currently underway.

There are potentially dozens of reasons, both personal and professional, that may have influenced the decline of GSB's editorial processes. However, the weaknesses, flaws and porosity of traditional peer review are well known (Teixeira da Silva and Dobránszki, 2015). A complex situation, as evidenced in the formal responses to the reviewers, as indicated in the Appendix, would have no doubt influenced the porosity of the peer review system. However, given the inherent flaws and weaknesses of the Beall list, and given the fact that there are no other comparative studies at present, I prefer to not extrapolate too much beyond what has been written here, for now. It would be important for other publishers to step forward to analyze the reference lists of their journals to quantify, using an updated (2014) version of the Beall lists, how they, too may or may not be serving as cuckoo's nests, for the POA journals and publishers.

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**Table 1** Quantification of the level of involuntary predation of papers published between 2007 and 2013 in Global Science Books (GSB; [www.globalsciencebooks.info](http://www.globalsciencebooks.info)) journals on a year-by-year basis according to a formally defined list (June, 2013) of predatory open access publishers and/or journals ([www.scholarlyoa.com](http://www.scholarlyoa.com)) as assessed by the number of appearances in the reference lists of GSB journals.

Year	Total No. published papers (A)	Total No. references (B)	Total No. OA references (C)	Total No. of predatory journal references (D)	E = C/A (%)	F = D/A (%)	G = D/C (%)	H = C/B (%)
2007	450	37471	861	18	1.913	0.040	0.021	0.023
2008	412	26862	1168	68	2.835	0.165	0.058	0.043
2009	512	31406	3829	167	7.479	0.326	0.044	0.122
2010	519	28634	4418	316	8.513	0.609	0.072	0.154
2011	496	29536	5617	621	11.325	1.252	0.111	0.190
2012	423	31092	7013	787	16.579	1.861	0.112	0.226
2013	93 <sup>4</sup>	4903	1621	239	17.430	2.570	0.147	0.331
Totals	2905 <sup>1</sup>	189904*	24527 <sup>2</sup>	2116 <sup>3</sup>				

See graphical representation of E-H ratios in Fig. 1

E = Total No. OA references/Total No. papers

F = Total No. of predatory journal references/Total No. papers

G = Total No. of predatory journal references/Total No. OA references

H = Total No. OA references/Total No. references

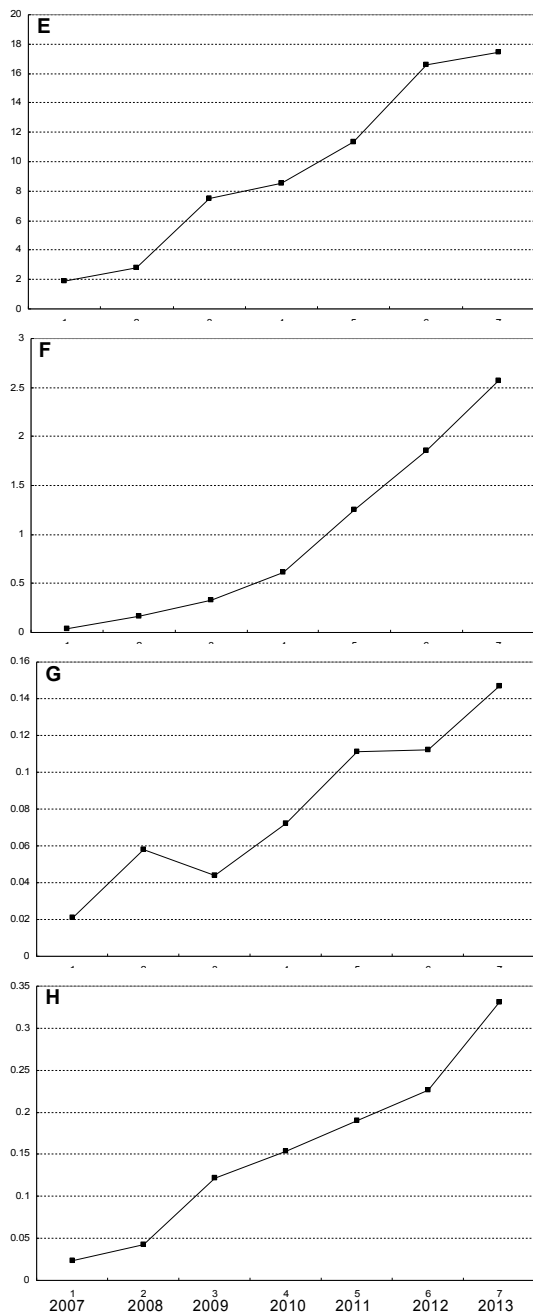
<sup>1</sup>This is the total number of papers published, following peer review. The number does not represent the number of submitted papers (3739) or the number of rejected papers (510, assessed in a separate paper).

<sup>2</sup>This includes all references in the final version of accepted papers used for proof development and thus the final publisher version. Only references that were published between 2003 and 2013 were considered. All other references were eliminated. From the remaining references, any references that were traditional print journals, web-sites, books or any other reference that was not an OA journal, were eliminated. Hybrid print-OA journals were also not included. Thus, the true total of references was not used, i.e., 189,904\* since the emphasis is on the predatory OA journals and predatory OA publishers.

<sup>3</sup>Based on references of journals and/or publishers on the Jeffrey Beall list at [www.scholarlyoa.com](http://www.scholarlyoa.com) (pooling January and July, 2013 lists).

<sup>4</sup>Calculated up until July 30, 2013

**Fig. 1** Graphical representation of 4 relative ratios in Table 1 to show trends in different parameters over time in GSB journals. E = Total No. OA references/Total No. papers; F = Total No. of predatory journal references/Total No. papers; G = Total No. of predatory journal references/Total No. OA references; H = Total No. OA references/Total No. references



## Appendix (*verbatim*, edited only for spelling mistakes, and structure)<sup>1</sup>

[AR = author's response]

### Reviewer 1

I'm in the situation of being asked to provide critical comments and suggestions in the form of peer evaluation for a manuscript which is very short and specialized, studying a globally relevant problem as emerged within a small, maybe obscure segment of OA publishing. My discomfort originates mainly from the lack of contextualization of this research in terms of traditional scientometric investigations, i.e. reference-based publication/citation networks and spatial scientometrics. It would have been more informative if the author further analyzed the POA citation data to form networks based on bibliographic coupling, or used geographical maps for presentation (something similar to what Bohannon did in visualizing his OA sting operation).

[AR: This is a major task, and the use of spatial scientometrics is not a skill that I possess. I agree whole-heartedly with the reviewer that such analyses would fortify the message, but at this moment, it is impossible for me to conduct such analyses. The main purpose of this short piece was to draw awareness to an issue that has not been explored yet at all, namely the way in which papers that are published in journals that were listed in the Beall blog lists of „predators” could enter the main-stream literature and reference lists, thus fuzzing the line between academic (peer reviewed) and non-academic or even pseudo-academic.]

The author also missed the opportunity to react critically, as an EIC and founder of GSB, to the increase experienced in the "*level of inclusion of POA journal references in GSB journals*" (line 72-73). Such retrospection could serve the interests of the wider audience, especially editors and reviewers of new OA journals who, in some cases, desperately needs to develop quality assurance guidelines against dishonest researchers. In the absence of such critical retrospection, the situation presented and studied in the ms may suggest at least one, but possibly all of the followings to the reader:

- the review process at GSB journals was flawed (or at least some editors or reviewers acted without due care and diligence), as the peer review process missed, in multiple occasions, to correct the literature base used in the manuscript before, and possibly after publication (as I fail to see discussions about any countermeasures or retraction notices in the text of the manuscript, and I was not able to find any in the GSB website).

[AR: No doubt about that. In fact, retractions in Nature will also indicate that the process is flawed, even in the world's best journals. In essence, which peer review process is perfect? It is precisely because it is porous that makes traditional peer review and the need to assess the influence of predatory publishing so essential. This small piece of mine simply provides a single-case example, and a tiny window on the process and **possible** effects. GSB is now a dysfunctional publisher without functionality, so criticisms of the literature published there will have to take place on blogs, or other suitable formats such as literature reviews.]

-due to this error, GSB as a publisher also may have started to lean towards being "unscientific" -from 2011 onwards and in average, virtually every published paper contained

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<sup>1</sup> This Appendix contains 1.) the full peer evaluation reports of those two reviewers to whom the manuscript was assigned during the peer review process 2.) Dr. Teixeira da Silva's answers to the reviewers' comments and requests. The Appendix was published together with the article by KOME, to the explicit request of the author and with the knowledge and consent of the reviewers.

1-2 references to predatory journals. As it is not clear from the data whether some GSB journals contained a few papers with reference lists filled with predatory journals, or each and every paper published in GSB journals contained some references to articles published in POA journals, [AR: indeed, there was a peak in POA journal referencing in three journals, IJBPS, AAJPSB and MERJPSB, which could be linked, perhaps, to a cultural influence in the use of POA references to support factual or unfactual claims; this links to the above scientometrics analysis which may have revealed a country-POA use relationship] it is not possible to question the scientific quality of each GSB journal individually, but GSB as a publisher may be criticized for scientific rigor, which is not shedding good light on its journals either. As the author stated (l. 84-85) "*GSB journals have been serving as the cuckoo's nest for the surrogate validation of potentially non-academic, false or fraudulent scientific work*" –true, but this was a vicious circle, as the more articles with POA references published, the less scientific reputation GSB remained. Which was probably not stellar even at the start of the time period investigated, as GSB started as a new OA publisher in 2007-2008, according to its website. Maybe it would be more fair to say that GSB had the potential to become a reputable scientific publisher, but because of accepting articles which a.) aimed to validate potentially non-scientific or fraudulent works b.) accidentally validated such works due to author/reviewer/editorial failure in serving as scientific gatekeepers, this potential was never realized, or hindered to a significant extent. [AR: Once again, this is a strong possibility, given the restraints in human resources. Given my personal experience with dozens of plant science journals over two decades, at least, I can claim quite confidently that GSB represented a medium to high level of stringent review and quality control, but most certainly not perfect. Although I can appreciate the viewpoint by this reviewer, the tone is somewhat excessively harsh. Since the issue of POA was most likely not an issue for >95% of GSB authors, it was not this factor that led to the gradual crumbling of the publisher. It was suggested, in a survey which GSB conducted on plant scientists\*, by a Serbian leader in the plant sciences, that the main reason why GSB would lose ground was based on three reasons:

- a) there was no open access model;
- b) there were no impact factors assigned to any of the journals;
- c) the journals were not indexed in any major data-bases.

\* [http://www.globalsciencebooks.info/JournalsSup/images/Sample/AAJPSB\\_5\(1\)85-89o.pdf](http://www.globalsciencebooks.info/JournalsSup/images/Sample/AAJPSB_5(1)85-89o.pdf) ]

- the increasing number of POA references and the significant decrease in published papers in 2013 (93 published papers in 2013jan-jul, cf. 4-500 papers per year in 2007-2012) is a causation, or simply a correlation? Are there any undisclosed/not presented factors here that can explain this decrease? Editors and reviewers started to reject papers with POA references, change in editorial guidelines or something else? It would be interesting to the readers to learn more about the background. [AR: This is a good point, and a detailed in-depth paper on the history of GSB and the lessons learned will be published in 2015, which will hopefully address the many queries that this reviewer is making. Even if they do show weakness in our editorial operations. As for the cause, or correlation, certainly two key events/reasons would have led to this slow-down of papers, and possibly the ironically inverse increase in the number of POA references appearing in our journals:

- a) A bitter battle (which is ongoing) with Elsevier about the ethics of collaboration and the definition of the terms of authorship:

<http://retractionwatch.com/2014/04/10/following-personal-attacks-and-threats-elsevier-plant-journal-makes-author-persona-non-grata/#more-19776>

b) An increasing personal bitterness towards science as the realization that GSB journals had been tainted by POA journals and that the peer review process had been imperfect (simply because no alternative existed within a limited human resource frame-work).

c) most likely these issues started to interfere with my ability to effectively steer the GSB ship, and indeed, failure or weakness in leadership ensued, which is the reason why I decided to terminate GSB, since no suitable strict (as I was) EIC could be found to replace me. During 2012-2013, precisely in the period that the reviewer is questioning, GSB had approached approximately 80 or more commercial publishers with the proposal of a take-over, but all of them, without exception, were only interested in the profit margins of GSB, and the IF scores of GSB journals, further accentuating my bitterness towards the traditional STM establishment. These personal stories will be openly disclosed in 2015.]

However, the aforementioned comments and critiques does not prevent me from advising the editors to accept and publish this manuscript. I'm certain that taking these comments in the vein they were intended would help the journal's audience to profit more from reading it; while no harm is done by leaving the manuscript unchanged. The analysis seems to be accurate (though, there is little that can be wrong with it) and the paper provides a particular insight about a so far neglected segment of predatory publishing. [AR: The very sad realization that what the review has stated, has several elements of truth to it, has in fact prevented me from dealing with this paper for resubmission to KOME. In part this is because this has been such a terrible personal and professional journey. I can fully understand that the reviewer would like to see more retrospective and even introspective analysis published alongside this simple data set, but the links and the possible correlations are extremely complex, so I do not want to muddy the paper with possibly tangential interpretations. I would hope that the reviewer and KOME can appreciate my position. I simply want a small data set to be out there, that would allow for deeper discussion at PubPeer, Retraction Watch, scholarlyoa.com and The Scholarly Kitchen. As I say, it is my intention to make all GSB content open access in 2015, and to also publish a memoir of the former publisher, which would then reference this small data set in KOME.]

## Reviewer 2

First of all I would like to say that, in my opinion, the paper examines an extremely interesting and important topic of scientific communication. Moreover, it confers on original, innovative aspects, since, according to the author, this is the first study to show how predatory open access publishing can affect the reference list of other academic publishers. Since a reference list could be conceived as a 'communicative image' or as a compendium of the corresponding article, we could say that the way of infecting a so-called normal scientific article (and, by this, infecting a normal academic journal which contains the article in question) consists of placing a POA-article into the reference list of an article which is published in a 'truly' scholarly journal. Since I think that the article decently shows the workmanship of the author and I find the topic important and relevant as regards pure communication inquiry, I propose the article for publication in KOME. However, I have to mention two indefinabilities which, I think, could and should be discussed more precisely. First, I miss a correct distinction between articles and journals in the sense of distinguishing between sets and its elements. At least in classical logic, we could not squarely transfer the property of a given set (or class) to its elements (partition fallacies). So the properties of a given journal (a platform) could not be unproblematically corresponded to the properties of a given article in this journal. But in reference lists we normally found first of all articles and

not publishers. [AR: Indeed, this is what makes the topic so complex to analyze and quantify, because one cannot say that simply because one journal may be unscholarly that the publisher is also unscholarly. So, that is why I do not want to stray into the field of random hypotheses to try and explain the possibilities behind the data, because that could be unfair. The study simply wants to say the following:

- a) There was a publisher, called GSB, that published a set of journals that we considered scholarly simply because they were subjected to really strict peer and editorial scrutiny.
- b) Based on Beall's published lists (the only ones available, even today) of POA journals/publishers, we wanted to quantify how many of the references in the reference lists of our journals, contained papers published in POA journals or publishers.
- c) Given the fact that the Beall blog has serious flaws, and given the fact that many of the criteria on Beall's lists are flawed simply because there is no quantification of the parameters that make a journal or publisher „predatory”, I do not want to extrapolate too much beyond the sample data set, because that could be unfair on some papers, journals or eve publisher who may in fact, not be predatory. In fact, to try and quantify the level of predation, I devised, in 2012/2013, the Predatory Score: [http://www.globalscience-books.info/JournalsSup/images/2013/AAJPSB\\_7\(S11\)/AAJPSB\\_7\(S11\)21-34o.pdf](http://www.globalscience-books.info/JournalsSup/images/2013/AAJPSB_7(S11)/AAJPSB_7(S11)21-34o.pdf) ]

Second, the definition of a predatory open access publisher: a predatory open access (POA) publisher refers to an open access (OA) publisher that engages in practices that are deceitful, fraudulent, non-academic or otherwise meant to draw unfair benefit from scientists or authors in a dishonest or unfair way seems a bit ordinary (in a sense of commonplace-like) to me. The author should explain in details what that the 'POA' label refers to. Is it a legal, a moral, a scientific, a political or an economic category? [AR: It is all, and it is none of these. One could for example, argue that Elsevier, PLOS or Taylor and Francis\*\* are predatory for their pricing policies, if only that aspect alone is considered. But to try to simplistically explain what a POA it is impossible, at the moment. Please see my Predatory Score which would allow for the predatory nature to be quantified, and this is something that Jeffrey Beall should have adopted, but failed to, upon my suggestion. If we can apply the Predatory Score, which now needs to be upgraded to accommodate new factors that have emerged in 2013-2014, then we can clearly say if Publisher A or B, or journal X or Y, is “predatory”, taking into consideration legal, moral, scientific, political and economic factors.

\*\* <http://retractionwatch.com/2014/11/20/journal-retracts-paper-when-authors-refuse-to-pay-page-charges/> ]