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The refugee crisis without refugees – the attitudes of students from north-eastern Poland towards refugees

Abstract: Until 2015, Poles had an open and approving attitude towards refugees. In the following years, it has been subject to systematic deterioration, which was a result of a number of conditions. In connection with these facts, the author's own research has identified the attitudes of students in the field of early and pre-school education as well as social work from the north-eastern region of Poland. Podlasie has seen xenophobic, racist and homophobic events in recent years. It is a region which systematically sends a message of discriminating attitudes of some of its inhabitants towards all people who are different in any sort of way. This paper consists of three parts. It features a discussion of the background against which a social revaluation of sorts is taking place in Poland, aimed at changing the perception of others. The author's research on students' attitudes towards refugees was presented based on what they associate with them. Selected conditions were also presented (e.g. familiarity with refugees, sources of knowledge about them, use of media etc.) of distinguished attitudes.

Key words: migration, exile, refugees, attitudes, education, hate speech.

Introduction

Although until 2015, the attitudes towards immigrants from non-European countries were less open than towards immigrants from European countries (similarly to the attitudes of representatives of other European countries), Poland was at the forefront of countries declaring openness towards refugees. However, in the

light of research carried out by the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) (as well as analyses of the European Social Survey, Center for Research on Prejudice) these positive attitudes towards refugees have changed in the second half of 2015: from 72% to 56% in case of declarations for accepting refugees to Poland until their return to their homeland and from 21% to 38% in case declarations against (CBOS, 2015). In the following years, this attitude was systematically deteriorating and statements indicated lack of knowledge about the causes and essence of exile and economic migration.

In connection with these facts, as part of our own research we distinguished the attitudes of a selected group of students towards refugees. The targeted selection included 203 students of early and pre-school education and social work studies. These were people entering into professional independence and, above all, were soon to become teachers and social workers. These young people – as teachers and employees of social services – will shape the attitudes of the new generation towards other people in the coming years. They will also work directly with people who are generally described as refugees.

The presented research was carried out in the region of north-eastern Poland, which, due to the scope and intensity of the migration flow to date and the specific features of the Polish society (Poland is considered to be one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries in the world), should have a special approach to the migration processes (Nowicka, Krzyżanowski, Šerbedžija 2015, p. 2). This is reflected not only on a macro scale – in 2017, the case of Poland, alongside the Czech and Hungary, was referred to the EU Court of Justice for failing to comply with its legal obligations concerning the European Community's relocation policy. Despite the potential serious consequences, the governments of these countries have received broad public support for this position (Jelinková 2019, p. 33). The micro scale concerns the region of Poland where the research was carried out – Podlasie, which has seen xenophobic, racist and homophobic events in recent years. It is a region which systematically sends a message of discriminating attitudes of some of its inhabitants towards all people who are different in any sort of way. Although examples of similar attitudes can be found throughout the country, it is this region that has been deemed the intolerant one in the public awareness.

This paper consists of three parts. The first part features a discussion of the background against which a social revaluation of sorts is taking place in Poland, aimed at changing the perception of others as people seeking refuge in Poland. The second part presents selected fragments of the author's research aimed at distinguishing the attitudes of students from north-eastern Poland towards the phenomenon of exile. This section presents students' attitudes towards refugees based on what they associate with them. The discussed results are part of a broader study on students' attitudes towards accepting refugees into Poland. However, the answers they provided for the first question about their associations with refugees have already led us to refer only to these in the paper. We considered these asso-

ciations to be an obvious element of their attitudes towards refugees. Questions, which made it possible to search for conditions of particular attitudes expressed by associations were also taken into account. The main focus was placed on answers to the following questions: What do the surveyed students associate with refugees? Are there any variables which determine the students' attitudes (expressed in their associations) towards refugees? If so, what are they? The third part of the paper is the result of a search for the causes of the presented phenomenon – the authors distinguish selected conditions (e.g. familiarity with refugees, sources of knowledge about them, use of media etc.).

The dynamics of changes in social attitudes towards refugees

It is worth remembering that until 2015 Poland was at the forefront of countries declaring openness towards refugees (CBOS 2015). What was the reason for such as significant change of the previously positive attitude of Poles towards refugees and it being propagated? In the second half of 2015, the term “migration crisis”, resulting from several reasons, began to appear more commonly. One of them being the “Arab Spring”, which resulted in warfare in Middle Eastern and North African countries and the creation of the Islamic State, i.a. as a result of the withdrawal of the NATO forces from Iraq. Although most refugees took refuge in camps in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, many decided to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. This group was also joined by economic migrants, coming mainly from southern Europe – Kosovo and Albania, which resulted in an additional increase in the influx of people in a number of European countries. The number of refugees increased even further with their search for new routes to the desired EU countries. Various types of offenses and crimes have emerged (in general in the form of sporadic riots, thefts, sexual violence, etc.), which have been systematically reported by the media.

In view of these facts, anti-immigrant movements in Europe and Poland began to develop, to the point of activating nationalist movements in a number of countries. Opinions of many Poles began to transform into anti-refugee slogans. The probable reason behind it was the fact the “Poles' purely declarative sympathies to migrants and refugees, not supported by experience of multiculturalism, are susceptible to rapid change when new events, images, discourses related to the refugee crisis appear” (Pasamonik 2017, p. 23). The above-mentioned events have been reinforced by the specificity of the dominant images. It was at that time that the media reported about men disembarking boats at the shores of Italy and Greece (indeed, the majority of the refugees were young men who embarked on their journey because their families decided they had the greatest chance of surviving the sea crossing to later bring their family to the new place, being aware

of the threat to these men in their warring countries). The dominant theme of the reports was aggressive men in the refugee camps. A negative image of a refugee – an Arab associated with the Islamic State, an aggressive person and with terrorist inclinations, causing riots (Pasamonik 2017, pp. 29–30) appeared in the Polish media. “Undoubtedly, the media not only reflected the attitudes of Poles towards refugees, but also shaped them through the selection of information, the context of their presentation, vocabulary used, emotional influence, promotion of preferred views” (Bobryk 2017, p. 60).

In view of the influx of large numbers of newcomers, there was no uniform, coherent European anti-crisis programme. There was a proposal of the European Commission to relocate 40,000 refugees between individual EU countries, which some countries accepted without opposition. The former Polish government also agreed to accept 7,000 refugees into Poland. Relocation was justified by the principle of solidarity between EU countries. The next Polish government withdrew from this proposal by appointing the Ministry of Humanitarian Aid in 2017, whose aim was to help the needy in their place of residence (it was shut down in 2019).

Media panic occurred (Pasamonik 2017, p. 26), which caused the atmosphere around the refugees to deteriorate. The so-called “hate speech” has begun to circulate – first in social media, then in other media. Social media websites began to resound with hate speech (Winiewski et al. 2016). “The refugee crisis combined with the political campaign rhetoric has caused an unprecedented outbreak of xenophobia both in the public sphere and on the Internet” (Łaciak, Frelak 2018, p. 11).

The situation has become even more complicated because public opinion has radicalizing for quite a while now in connection with terrorist attacks, the perpetrators of which were, among others, militants of the Islamic State, who came to the continent with refugees. These sentiments were reinforced by extreme right-wing groups proclaiming anti-immigrant and anti-refugee slogans. The perception of the migration crisis by anti-refugee and pro-refugee parties was further consolidated throughout Poland, the lack of dialog was not conducive to solving the truly burning issue. This was supported by the fact that “Poland has little experience in refugee integration. According to the data of the Office for Foreigners, over the last 25 years only 4,500 (3.5%) out of 135,000 foreigners who applied for the refugee status were granted it. In addition, approx. 15,000 people received temporary protection or temporary “tolerated residence” during this period (Pasamonik, Markowska-Manista 2017, p. 10). These researchers also note that “while nowadays multiculturalism is the norm and a part of everyday life in Western Europe, the Central and Eastern European countries are still facing the challenge of increasing cultural diversity” (Pasamonik, Markowska-Manista 2017, p. 11).

The following part of the paper features an attempt at distinguishing the dominant attitudes among the surveyed students towards refugees in Poland and their selected conditions.

Methodological basis of the research

The research, whose selected results are presented in this paper, was carried out in June 2018 among students of the pedagogy and social work studies of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology at the University of Białystok in Poland. Eventually, after eliminating the questionnaires which contained deficiencies significant from the perspective of later analysis, especially within the dependent variable, the sample of 203 respondents was formed. Target/random sampling strategy was applied – pedagogy students were deliberately chosen, as they are people who, due to the specificity of the chosen field of study, should show openness to the needs of others. This region of Poland – Podlasie was chosen deliberately as well, the specificity of which has already been mentioned in this paper. The random strategy involved the students present at the academic classes on the day of the survey. The study used the diagnostic survey method, with survey and scaling being used as research techniques. All questionnaires were properly coded and subjected to statistical analysis. The statistical calculations were carried out using SPSS Statistics 22. The analysis included descriptive statistics (distribution, means, percentages, standard deviations etc.), and inferential statistics (Pearson's chi square) were calculated.

Attitudes of students from north-eastern Poland towards refugees

The common element of the rich representation of the definition of attitudes is that it consists of three elements. It is defined as a structure composed of a cognitive component (knowledge), an emotional-motivational component (emotional relationship) and a behavioral component (action or predisposition leading to action) (Turowski 2000, p. 45–50). Since “attitude is a permanent organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual and cognitive processes, related to some aspect of the individual's world” (Turowski 2000; Mądrzycki 1997, p. 19) we decided that the emotional attitude towards refugees can be recognized based, i.a., on what is associated with them. It should be stressed that in the light of the structural concept of attitudes, the emotional component combines higher feelings with psycho-social needs manifested in the motifs (Mądrzycki 1997, p. 25). While the other components do not have to be present in a given attitude, the emotional and motivational component is an element *ex definitione* of the concept of attitude, thus attitude does not exist without this component (Turowski 2000; Mądrzycki 1997; Marody 2000). This position is confirmed by concepts that refer to sociological tradition, including those of L.L. Thurstone, who understands

attitude as the degree of intensity of positive or negative feelings associated with a given subject. The emotional aspect of attitude is also highlighted by H.A. Murray, C.D. Morgan and M. Fishbein (as cited in Mika 1982). Thus defined attitude is a relatively permanent emotional or critical approach to a subject, expressed in positive, negative or neutral categories, or a predisposition to possess it (Major, Ulman 2011).

Social attitudes can be studied in a number of ways. The most popular techniques include observing behavior and asking questions. In the analysis presented, the study of students' attitudes towards refugees was carried out by distinguishing their direct associations with refugees which carried a certain emotional charge.

Chart no. 1 presents separate groups of associations related with the issue in question.

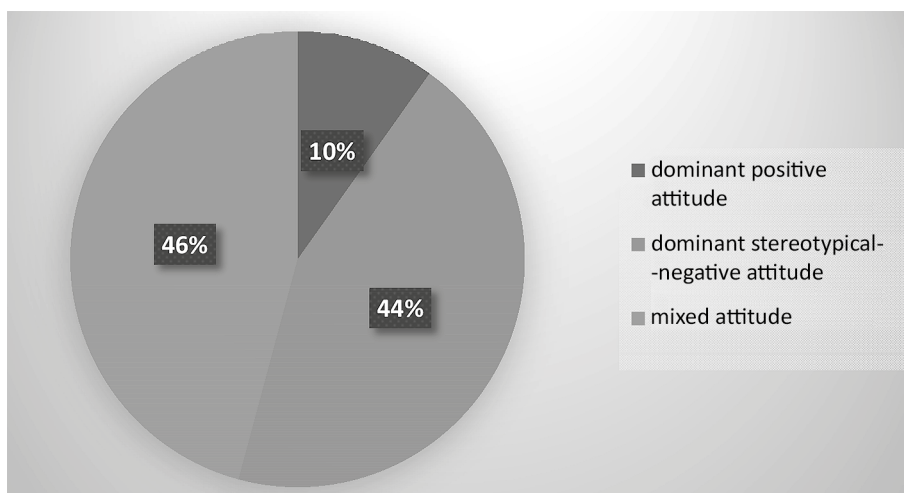


Chart 1. Type of respondents' attitudes towards refugees

Source: authors' own research.

As part of the research, three types of attitudes, i.e. positive, stereotypical-negative and mixed, were distinguished from the respondents' associations with the term refugee.

Positive associations (10%), focused on the situation in which the refugees found themselves, e.g. difficult material situation, difficult living situation, being away from their country, wanting a better life, escaping from war, needing help, going to another country for help, fearing for their future and that of their family, being in danger, having problems, not having anything to go by. These are supplemented by the longer statements of the students surveyed, who emphatically assessed the situation in which the refugees found themselves, e.g. because these people are in need and have probably lost everything they had and were forced to flee in fear for their lives and their families (q. 109).

The positive associations of the students also referred to refugees as people. According to them, a refugee is: a person, that is poor, helpless, intimidated, persecuted, made redundant, unhappy, wronged, harmed, running away, in need, homeless, lonely, threatened. This group of attitudes also resulted from the situation in which the refugees found themselves, but were more personalized and individualized.

Nearly half of the students (44%) presented only negative associations with refugees. Some were offensive in nature and gave insight into attitudes towards “different people”, i.e. other persons. There have been negative attitudes towards the situation of refugees and attitudes towards refugees as persons. Negative associations related to the situation include: attacks, social benefits, diseases, threat. These terms can be treated at least as neutral, or even compassionate, if it were not for the further statements of their authors, which clearly indicate the negative perception of refugees and the situations they may create in the respondents’ opinion, e.g.

— *They will live off of our taxes, usually most of them do not work for formal reasons. Poland cannot afford such expenses* (q. 167);

— *In Poland people (Poles) should feel safe. Personally, when I see a refugee, I only have negative associations and many fears connected with them. I try to avoid them because I’m afraid I’m going to get hurt* (q. 46);

Negative associations also apply to the refugees themselves, and are predominant and varied. We shall present their examples as they illustrate the dominant attitudes in the emotional component. Refugees are presented in the statements as:

— *terrorists, thieves* (several mentions), *criminals, slobs* (several mentions), *rapists, violent, aggressive, mean* (the respondent does not know them directly), *liars, desperate, swindler, hooligans* (several mentions), *slackers, bomber, lazy, inept, exiles, kebabs, blacks, Arabs, Romanians, Chechens, bandits, extortionists, manipulators, bushmen, militants, fugitives, wanderers, paupers, mulattoes, darks, claimants, bad people, strangers, Pakis, kebab-selling Turks, dark skin, different skin, dark complexion, dirt, evil.*

— *Islamists, Africans, not Polish, Muslims, muslims.*

A refugee is also associated with: an animal, psychopath, “murdering” Christians.

As authors of this paper, we wondered whether to mention the last associations. However, we do not want to interfere with the collected data and do not want to indicate more or less unethical vocabulary. All the terms used by the respondents shall be presented for one more reason. We assumed that the young people surveyed, using the language of hatred, disregard, contempt, define their attitude not only towards a specific group of people – refugees, but also towards those they treat as “different”.

Clearly among the negative associations there are also those concerning otherness: strangeness, a foreign country, a man of a different culture, a stranger, an

alien, a person intolerant of certain rules; a person who is rejected by a large part of society, someone towards whom we should be negative, unwelcome. This group of statements is an example of an attempt to generalize the negative attitude by presenting it in a broad context, i.e. by referring to a broad opinion. Perhaps they are trying to justify, according to the concept of social proof of justness of one's own views (Cialdini 1994), their claims: if a lot of people think like me, it means that I'm right.

We have also distinguished a group of "mixed" associations (46%), i.e. the positive and negative ones mentioned in parallel. Although the negative ones were not offensive, they were clearly stereotypical. Thus, these students did not have an unambiguously positive or at least ambivalent attitude towards "different people". Some of the student respondents apparently showcased a mechanism described as cognitive dissonance resulting from the duality of information and feelings associated with them. We assume that, on the one hand, the images of refugee camps sometimes appearing in the media, showing their real, tragic situation, and, on the other hand, unambiguous, negative messages causing media panic lead to a cognitive dissonance (at least in case of some students). However, the statements show that a number of students were able to reduce this dissonance. "The reduction of dissonance in this case does not consist in eliminating the sense of moral responsibility, but in changing the scope of its applicability by reducing the moral community from all human beings to a nation. In this way we keep a good opinion of ourselves as morally responsible," as Barbara Pasamonik noted (2017, pp. 39–40). The arguments supporting the reduction of dissonance are to refer to the image of Poland open to the needs of others, e.g. in light of the growing number of Ukrainians in Poland. The argument silencing the dissonance is selectivity – let us help, but only to our own or those considered to be our own, e.g. Christians or repatriates.

As a result, we concluded that in the entire surveyed group, people representing negative attitudes towards refugees are definitely dominant.

The research shows that there is no statistically significant link between the type of attitudes towards refugees and personal acquaintance with refugees¹. People who have no personal relationship with refugees dominate in each of the groups of attitudes. However, it should be emphasized that every fifth person (20%) who represents a positive attitude towards refugees knows one or more refugees. Whereas in the case of stereotypical negative attitudes there is the highest percentage of people who do not know a single refugee personally (nearly 90%), which confirms the stereotypical nature of the associations mentioned. It should also be added that although most of the surveyed students had no direct contact with refugees, their statements were usually presented as if they knew the

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¹ The value of Pearson's chi square $\chi^2 = 7.870$, asymptotic significance coefficient $p = 0.446$.

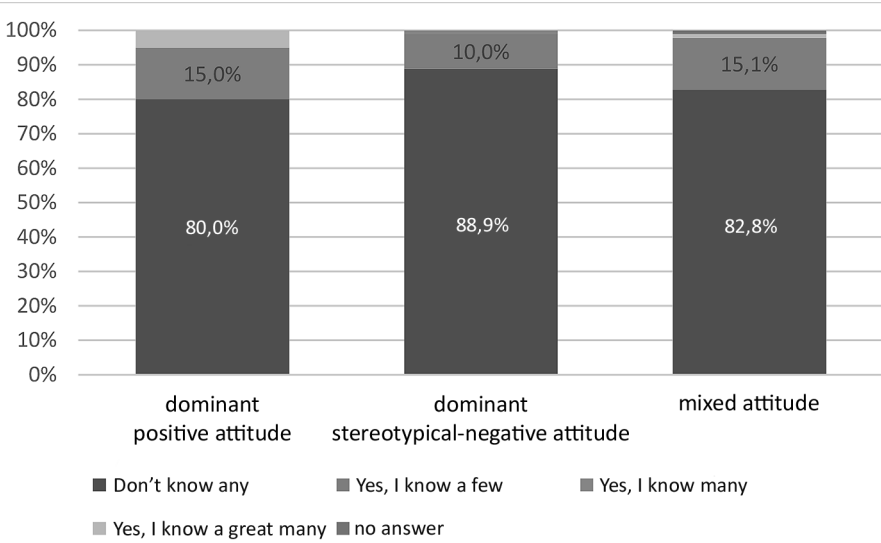


Chart 2. Relationship between the type of respondents' attitudes towards refugees and direct acquaintance with refugee(s)

Source: authors' own research.

people they were describing. The trends described above confirm the results of research on attitudes towards foreigners in Poland conducted in 2016 on a sample of 1,011 respondents. The questionnaire used contained questions concerning the assessment of Poles and their attitudes towards all foreigners residing in the Polish territory. The percentage of respondents declaring contact with foreigners during the year preceding the survey was 28%. At the same time, nearly 2/3 of the respondents showed concerns about the influx of foreigners to Poland, regardless of whether they had contact with foreigners in the last twelve months or not. 60% of respondents stated that foreigners are a threat to the country. Slightly more than 80% of them consider foreigners to be a security risk (IPSOS for IOM 2016, p. 8).

This data supplements the content on indirect "contacts" of the respondents with refugees, which we interpret as a message received about refugees from persons who had direct contact with them.

The collected data indicates that in each of the selected types of attitudes towards refugees, people with no indirect relationship with refugees dominate. However, among people representing a positive attitude towards refugees, there is the highest percentage of people who know refugees personally (10%), compared to about 3% of respondents with a stereotypically negative attitude, who declare indirect acquaintance with refugees. Although there is no statistically significant relationship between the type of respondents' attitudes towards refugees and in-

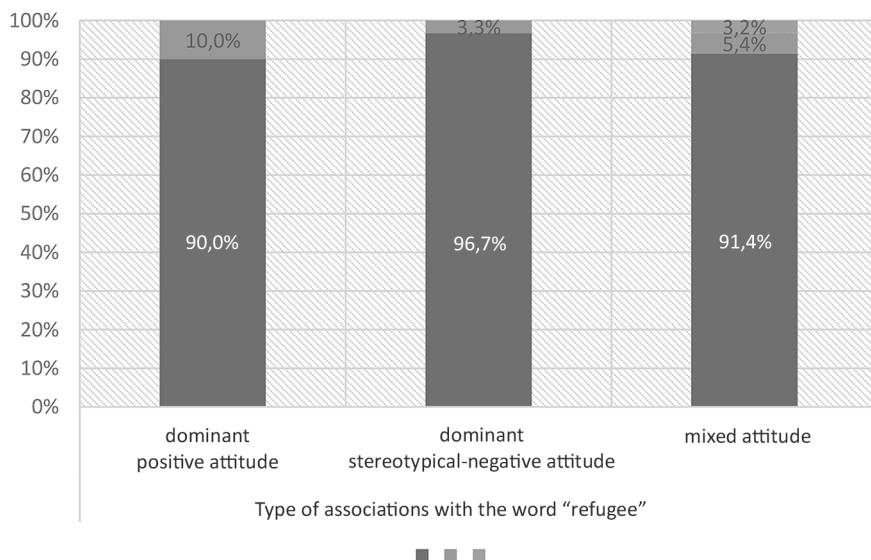


Chart 3. Relationship between the type of attitudes towards refugees and indirect acquaintance with the refugee(s) among respondents

Source: authors' own research.

direct acquaintance with refugees², this difference is confirmed by the results obtained, i.e., by Magdalena Nowicka and Łukasz Krzyżowski (2016) as part of the TRANSFORMIG project, concerning the attitude of Polish emigrants towards "different people", persons representing different cultures and lifestyles. This indicates that moving abroad alone is not enough to change the attitude towards "different people". In other words, previous prejudices do not change as a result of contact with representatives of other cultures and religions, if these people are not among their loved ones. Thus, if Polish migrants only have seen such persons "around" but do not know them personally, they do not change their prejudices and stereotypical judgments. A negative opinion about a single individual from the group of "different people" is also enough to transfer it to all of their representatives. If, however, the respondents made direct contact with the "different people", they changed their prejudices into positive attitudes. Positive relations resulted in a change of attitude towards the entire group.

The research also shows that attitudes of Polish emigrants towards refugees is varied. They considered that possible help should be given to a Christian woman fleeing war and discrimination, but it is much less common to help a Muslim man running away from starvation. It was found that attitudes towards refugees

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² The value of Pearson's chi square $\chi^2 = 5.262$, asymptotic significance coefficient $p = 0.261$.

depend i.a. on the type of partner relationship. If the person's partner was a foreigner, tolerance and willingness to help refugees increased.

In the analyzed own research, the basic variables that can determine the type of attitudes towards refugees, including age, place of residence and the declared material conditions, were also taken into account. The gender variable was deliberately omitted due to the specificity of the field of study in which the research was conducted (97.5% of respondents were women). The average age of the studied group is 23 years, the youngest person included in the study was 20 years old, the oldest 37. The standard deviation for the age variable was 2.274.

Chart 4 presents the relationship between the type of respondents' attitudes towards refugees and their place of residence.

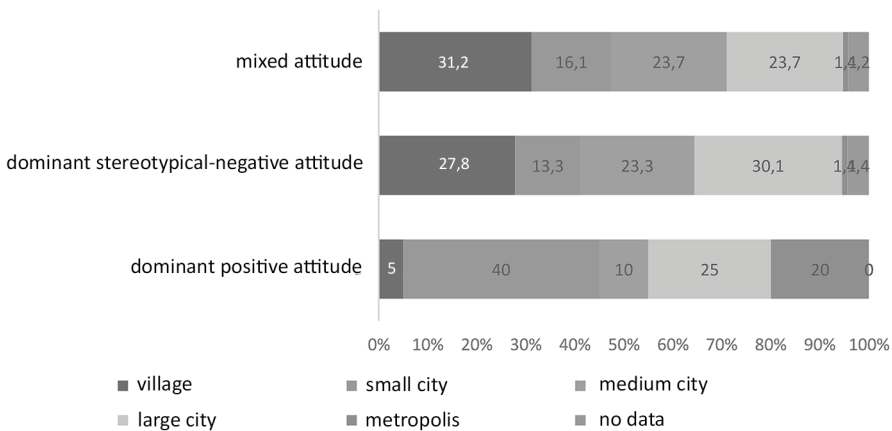


Chart 4. Relationship between the type of respondents' attitudes towards refugees and their place of residence

Source: authors' own research.

The list of variables gives grounds to conclude that people from larger agglomerations tend to have more positive attitudes towards refugees. Every fifth respondent indicating a metropolis as their place of residence (a city of more than 500,000 people) presents the dominant positive type of attitudes towards refugees. In turn, in the case of the other groups of associations, people living in the largest cities constitute only a small percentage (1.1%). A relatively high percentage of people from rural areas was recorded, on the other hand, among those showing negative-stereotypical and mixed emotions related to refugees (26.8% and 31.2% respectively)³. Perhaps these differences are due to the fact that per-

³ There was no statistically significant correlation between the associations with "refugees" variable and the place of residence of the respondents (Pearson's Chi square value $\chi^2 = 8.275$, asymptotic significance coefficient $p = 0.875$).

sons living in more populated areas have a higher chance to come into direct contact with refugees, which in turn creates a dominant positive image of this group (see chart on the link between the type of attitudes towards refugees and direct acquaintance with the refugee(s)). Our observations are consistent with the results of research conducted by Piotr Radkiewicz (2012), who noted that the higher social status, education, income level, place of residence, the lower the level of social Darwinism. The author defines this social Darwinism as a set of beliefs about the exclusively antagonistic nature of social relations, according to which, in order to succeed in life, one must be an absolute egoist (Radkiewicz 2012).

Our own research shows that the distinguished attitudes are influenced by the place of residence of the students. Podlasie is a region with an unfavorable economic situation, with a small production base. Many citizens of the Podlasie region move to more affluent areas (including the nearby Warsaw) as well as abroad, continuing the strong trend of emigration, especially from the 1990s. The professional frustration of some of the region's citizens may be a source of their aversion to refugees (and more broadly – economic migrants from e.g. Ukraine in the light of unquoted own research), who in their opinion may take their jobs.

We also assume that anti-immigrant attitudes and behaviors may result from a sense of threat to cultural and religious identity. The statements of the surveyed students clearly indicate their ethnic orientation. We base this observation on the results of research analyzed by Krystyna Skarżyńska (2019), which show that political orientation strongly determines ethnic orientation, which is characterized by “homogeneity of community and moral superiority to other nationalities, a tendency to impose our values and lifestyles on other communities, and an unwillingness to cooperate with other nations” (Skarżyńska 2019, p. 136, as cited in: Billing 1996; Smith 1981; Skarżyńska, Golec de Zavalá 2006). When discussing the issue, it is impossible not to mention the global trend (which is becoming increasingly pronounced in Europe) of the growing importance of parties with decidedly right-wing views, whose importance is confirmed by the elections to individual parliaments. Podlaskie voivodship (apart from its capital, Białystok) is an enclave for the election of right-wing representatives.

The following variable was also included in the study: “the declared financial situation of the respondents”. In the group of people who present the dominant positive type of attitudes towards refugees, the relatively highest percentage of respondents assessing their own economic situation as good and very good was recorded (55% and 35% respectively). Only one in ten respondents showing positive emotions towards refugees described their material situation as average. In turn, in the group of people presenting stereotypical-negative attitudes towards the described reference group, every third respondent declared average material conditions. In this group nearly 8% of the respondents describe their economic situation as very bad and bad. The justification for the above result should be sought in the causes of negative connotations of Poles related to the influx of

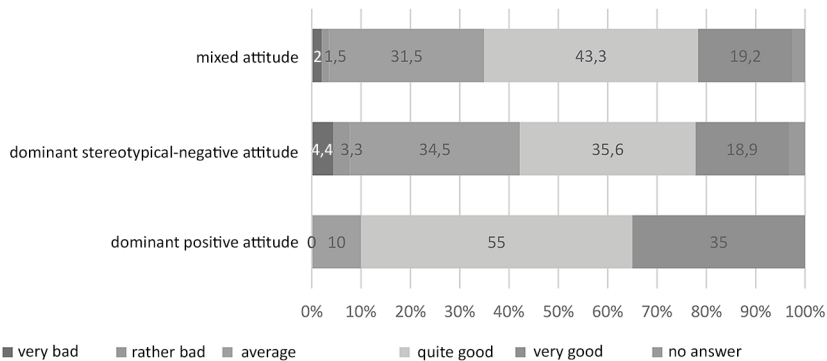


Chart 5. Relationship between the type of attitudes towards refugees and the declared material situation of respondents

Source: authors' own research.

foreigners into Poland, as noted in other studies. The previously quoted IPSOS studies carried out for the Organization for Migration in Poland shows that almost half of Poles (45%) negatively assess the impact of foreigners on the Polish economy and labor market, manifested, i.a. in employment of foreigners in Poland (IPSOS for IOM, 2016, p. 8). The surveyed respondents are probably of the opinion that their unsatisfactory financial situation is caused by the reduction of availability of jobs caused by employing foreigners, including refugees, in the country. In this way, they reiterate the stereotypical thinking of refugees as a group that migrates for work purposes.

Podlasie is an agricultural region, with a strong connection to traditional family life patterns. Since the family influences the attitudes of their members, children in particular, we shall also treat this variable as the one conditioning the attitudes recognized by the students surveyed. What was learnt in the family home remains in adults' memories and play a role in the formation of their perception of others (Cambell 2008; Lyons 2017 as cited in: Skarżyńska 2019). The conducted research (e.g. Sears 1993) shows that emotions are created in families through (family) upbringing practices, which by observing parents and their verbal and non-verbal messages (e.g. joy, anger, exasperation) provide the child with information about their values, preferences, attitudes. Therefore, if parents present specific attitudes, the likelihood of their adult children repeating them is high (Grondon 2003; Deci, Ryan 2000 as cited in: Skarżyńska 2019).

Perhaps the reasons for the presented attitudes of the students are the affective scripts acquired in the socialization process (Tomkins 1963; Robinson et al. 1999; Stone, Schaffner 1997; Skarżyńska 2019, Ch. 8). We assume that students with negative and mixed attitudes present a normative script, and those with positive attitudes present a humanistic script.

In the analyzed survey, an attempt was also made to answer the question concerning the sources of obtaining information on refugees. The reasons for including the “sources of information” variable were the concerning data recorded by CBOS in years 2015–2017, regarding attitudes towards providing assistance to refugees in the light of Polish public opinion polls. While the results of CBOS’s May 2015 survey showed a considerable openness to international migration and the presence of foreigners in Poland (66% of the respondents supported the opinion that the presence of foreigners enriches cultural diversity and makes people more open to others), the survey conducted in May 2017 showed that 63% of the respondents would not accept refugees in the country. Even more radical opinions were presented towards refugees and immigrants from Islamic countries, where as many as 60% of the respondents spoke out against accepting this social group into Poland (Górny 2017, pp. 82–83). It is worth remembering that it was at the turn of 2015 and 2016 that a change in the social atmosphere towards refugees and migration occurred, which at the same time translated into radicalization of the language and increased presence of manifestations of “hate speech” in the media, the Internet and other sources of information, accompanied by increased public visibility of acts of physical and symbolic violence directed mainly against refugees and Muslims (Winiewski et al. 2016, p. 3–9). It has already been confirmed that the media may not only promote the dehumanization of immigrants and refugees by highlighting potential threats to the host society, but also provide ready-made, stereotypical justifications for negative attitudes towards people coming from other countries (Esses, Medianu & Lawson 2013, p. 531).

In the presented survey, the respondents were asked to mark the sources of knowledge with an indication of the level of their use (assessment using a five-level scale, where 1 meant very rare and 5 meant very frequent use of a given source). Average indications of the respondent sample are shown in Chart 6.

Respondents make the greatest use of three publicly available sources of information, including information on refugees: the Internet, national television and radio. The average result of indications concerning the respondents’ use of the Internet is nearly 4. It can therefore be concluded that students use this source of information most frequently when obtaining information on refugees. A slightly lower rate was recorded in the case of national television. In the surveyed group, on average, the least frequently used media are national newspapers ($\bar{x} = 1.56$) and foreign media – TV and newspapers (the average $\bar{x} = 1.97$ and $\bar{x} = 2.04$ respectively).

Chart 7 presents detailed sources of information on refugees used by the respondents in obtaining information on refugees.

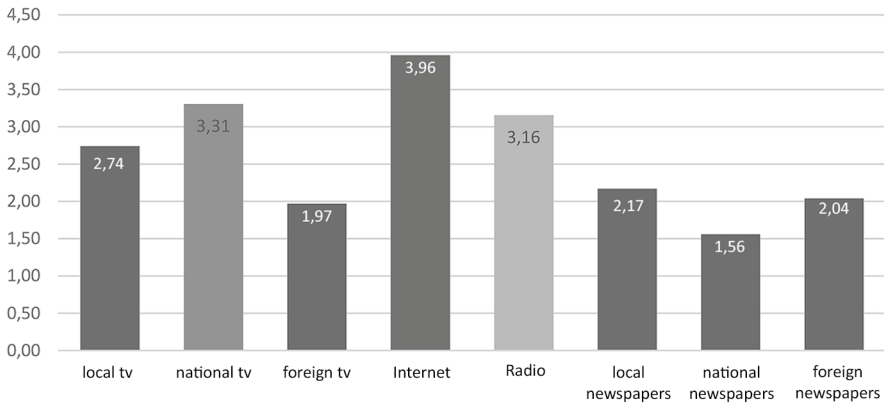


Chart 6. Sources of information on refugees obtained by the surveyed students
Source: authors' own research.

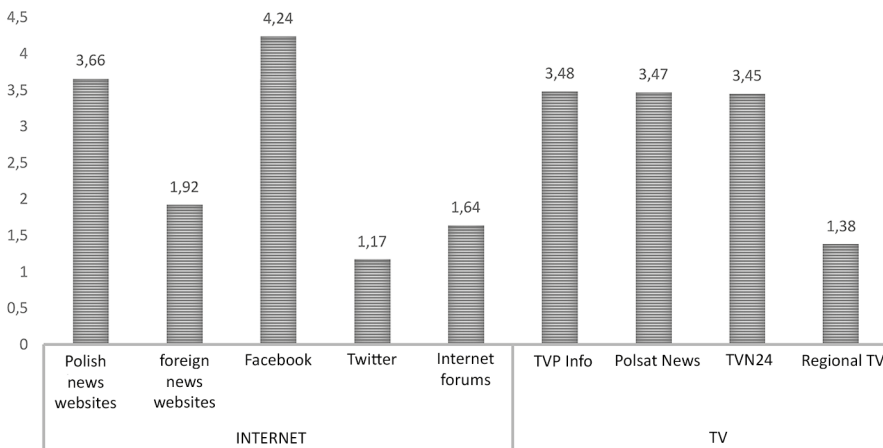


Chart 7. Detailed sources of information on refugees obtained by the respondents
Source: authors' own research.

Internet sources of information dominate among the respondents, such as Facebook social networking site, which enables the exchange of information between both users and national news portals at the same time. The least popular source of information among the surveyed students is Twitter, which in Poland is not as widespread as in other countries. In this case the average of the indications is $\bar{x} = 1.17$, which indicates that the respondents very rarely use this type of medium as a source of information about refugees. Among TV sources, national

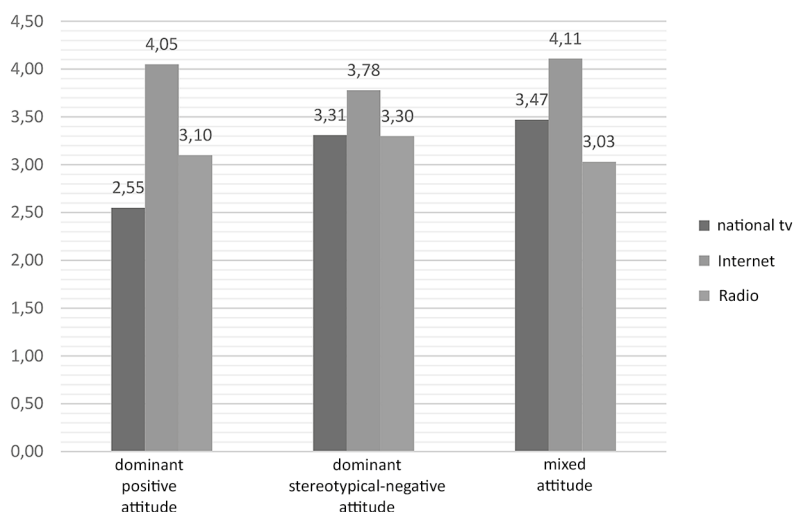


Chart 8. Correlation between student attitudes towards refugees and the preferred source of information

Source: authors' own research.

news channels such as TVP Info, Polsat News, TVN24 dominate. There were no significant differences between the average frequency of students using these TV channels as a source of information on refugees, the results oscillate around the average of $\bar{x} = 3.5$, indicating relatively frequent use of national television.

In the presented survey, an attempt was also made to answer the question to what extent the use of the most popular sources of information correlates with the attitude towards refugees. This relationship is illustrated in Chart 8.

There is a clear tendency for students to use the Internet. It should be noted, however, that the rate of using this medium is higher among the respondents who expressed positive or mixed associations with the refugee in the survey ($\bar{x} = 4.05$ and $\bar{x} = 4.11$ respectively), than in the case of the respondents who made stereotypical-negative associations, where the average was $\bar{x} = 3.78$. In turn, this group of respondents is characterized by relatively frequent use of media such as television and radio. It is also important to note that in the group of people with a predominantly positive attitude towards refugees, the rate of using TV as a source of information about the phenomenon is relatively the lowest ($\bar{x} = 2.55$). The obtained results can be referred to the research carried out by Nowicka and Krzyżowski (2016), concerning Poles living in Germany. The goal of the research was to study the influence of watching Polish and German television on attitudes towards refugees and it was found that the influence of television differentiated the attitude to others to the greatest extent. This fact confirms statement about watching TV as a variable differentiating attitude towards the phenomenon of migration, including exile, especially in the face of the radicalization of language

described in the previous section and the increased presence of “hate speech” in this medium, which took place at the turn of 2015 and 2017. These young people grew up in the first decade of the 21st century, when terrorist attacks and other dramatic events took place. Thus, they grew up in a time of media panic. These were accompanied by the development of the Internet and social media. These technological developments in the field of IT are mainly used by young people. The formation of “limited” communities such as Facebook, which bring together like-minded people, using the same sources of information, redirect the same pages, addresses, sources. This is facilitated by the anonymity of the expression of opinions, which triggers freedom of expression of the previously quoted opinions.

Summary

We are aware of the extremely complicated political situation in which the European Union finds itself as a result of the refugee crisis. However, we are convinced that respect for every other person should always be part of being a human. In connection with this summary of the presented fragments of the survey, we are primarily interested in drawing attention to the educational implications arising from them. The multicultural world requires actions which will cause the other person to be viewed from the perspective of their universal rights, i.e. the rights all people have. It also requires the development of intercultural competences, which according to the intercultural communication competence model include the following areas:

1. Knowledge (information about the world, which facilitates adaptation to changing conditions, knowledge about cultural products and social practices).
2. Awareness of differences and similarities between cultures and the processes of social interaction.
3. The ability to observe, communicate, interpret and establish mutual relationships, analyze cultures from a historical, geographical and social perspective.
4. Attitudes (communication readiness, including inquisitiveness, openness, tolerance, readiness to rid oneself of prejudices) (Byram 1997, pp. 53–65, as cited in: Szczurek-Boruta 2013).

To acquire such competences, an educational offer at all levels of education is essential. We treat it as a grassroots work based on the introduction of a global narrative and intercultural education as a compulsory part of the school curriculum.

We also believe it is necessary to introduce the same educational offer at academic level as a matter of urgency. It is a means of extinguishing the spreading fire. The obligatory introduction of intercultural education classes in all teacher education courses should start this process of educational work. Working with students who return to their local environment and become teachers, social workers, etc. can be the beginning of building a new society open to seamless coexistence

of people of different cultures, religions, races, political orientation, sexual orientation and others.

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