CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS

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Terminology of Cross-cultural awarness

The concept of multiculturalism represented a departure from the policy of assimilation, which promoted the absorption of migrants, minority cultures and languages into the dominant culture. The term "multiculturalism" was first advocated in Australia in 1973, and was premised on the assumption that diverse cultural groups should be able to express and celebrate their cultural identity, including language.

It is also the practice of acknowledging and respecting the various cultures, religions, races, ethnicities, attitudes and opinions within an environment.

Other definitions show that multiculturalism is the appreciation, acceptance or promotion of multiple cultures, applied to the demographic make-up of a specific place, usually at the organizational level, e.g. schools, businesses, neighborhoods, cities, or nations.

Multicultural policy and practice have been further developed within the Commonwealth, and within the eight states and territories.

In a political context, it is used for a variety of meanings, ranging from the advocacy of equal respect to the various cultures in a society, through a policy of promoting the maintenance of cultural diversity, to policies in which peo-

ple of various ethnic and religious groups are addressed by the authorities as defined by the group they belong to. A common aspect of many such policies is that they avoid presenting any specific ethnic, religious, or cultural community values as central.

Multiculturalism is contrasted with the concepts of assimilation and has been described as a "salad bowl","cultural mosaic", or a "melting pot."

We can distinguish between two forms of multiculturalism, "the term 'multiculturalism' has been used in a variety of ways, both descriptive and normative. As a descriptive term, it has been taken to refer to cultural diversity. As a normative term, multiculturalism implies a positive endorsement, even celebration, of communal diversity, typically based on either the right of different groups to respect and recognition, or to the alleged benefits to the larger society of moral and cultural diversity."

In contemporary society, different understandings of multiculturalism have resulted in two different and seemingly inconsistent strategies (DIAGRAM 1).
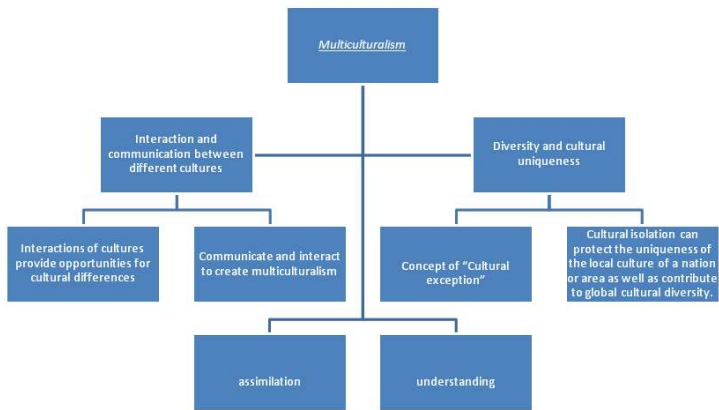

DIAGRAM 1. *Different understandings of multiculturalism*
Source: Own work

The concept of "cultural exception" proposed by France in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations (GATT) in 1993 was an example of a measure aimed at protecting local cultures.

These different understandings of multiculturalism are not absolutely distinct from each other. Moreover, the opposing understandings and strategies sometimes actually complement each other generating new cultural phenomena that embody the ideologies of individual cultures and the relationships between them.

One more definition of multiculture is *transculturation*. This term, coined by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz in 1940, indicates a transaction of one culture with another. Mary Louise Pratt coined the phrase "the contact zone" to describe cultural clashes and operations. In the cultural environment, they illustrated that cultures are not only interacted or isolated. Those two strategies work at the same time and apply to different aspects of cultures to create new forms of cultures. Multiculturalism can be defined in ways that go beyond human activities to give a vivid multi-dimensional understanding of cultural interaction, cultural isolation and phenomena between these two extremes.

For purposes of this elaboration, the terms such as: multiculturalism and transculturalism have been described as interculturalism - Cross Cultural Awareness (CCA).

After analyzing the terminology of multiculturalism, we must conclude that this is an ideological position showing the coexistence of populations that differing in terms of social and cultural aspects. Interculturalism can be recognized as the last stage of multiculturalism. This is the number of dependencies that interact to the highest degree. Moreover, it is a social phenomenon arising from a particular ideology, i.e. from the system of beliefs and values. It is essential for the reality that surrounds us.

Common definitions of "interculturalism" imply the harmonious coexistence in a society of differing cultural or

ethnic groups, the "society" should be understood here , however, as an organized collective political subdivision, so as to avoid using the term "state". Ethnic culture may be , institutionally isolated in such a society, though. Such societies can develop in line with the model of cultural pluralism, according to which national and ethnic groups have the full right and equal opportunity to maintain and develop their cultures. It is the coexistence of different cultural groups within the country which is connected with the problem of reconciling cultural differences, primarily in terms of the traditions, heritage, religion (beliefs), values, ethnicity, or the admission of ethnic, religious or sex aspects for equal participation in cultural and political life of the country. Interculturalism implies "recognition of the equality of all cultures, regardless of their geographical, racial or religious origin – no culture is higher or lower, the cultures are merely different".

When the phenomenon of interculturalism occurs the state of society is characterized by the following elements:

- acceptance of cultural relativism – the recognition that every cultural element should enrich and be considered only as part of the dominant culture, which it co-creates;
- classification differences – reflected in the fact that people from the same cultural circles have a clearly designated place of residence. An example of this can be the settlements or districts inhabited by representatives of the same cultural group. Creating enclaves or ghettos highlights the differences;
- the dominance of group rather than individual identity- or origin perceived through group priority. Emphasis is placed on highlighting the ethnic, religious or territorial differences;
- jurisdiction that guarantees certain rights to any person – legal recognition of minorities. This has both legal and administrative consequences.

The above mentioned components constitute a framework of contemporary interculturalism through the prism of problems described in heterogeneous societies. In the case of static multiculturalism, culture can be isolated from other components. Conflict may be a result of an ideological, territorial, economic or geographic expansion. The diagram below shows the pyramid levels of intercul-
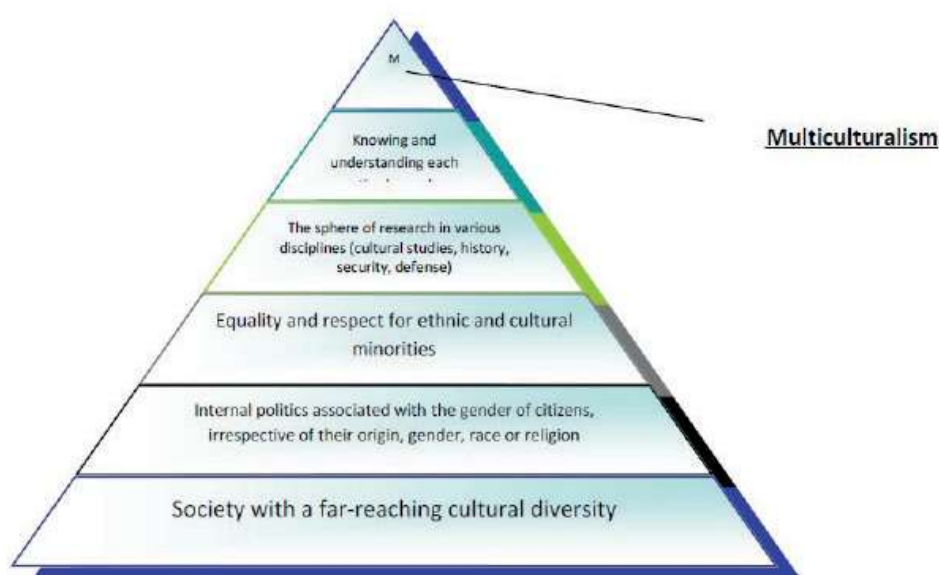

Diagram 2. *CCA interculturality pyramid*
Source: Own work

Levels of interculturality refer to several areas. Firstly, it is a plane of coexistence of many cultures in a given society. It also includes government policy, which aims to eliminate the risks associated with interaction of different cultures in the territory.

The term "interculturalism" is defined as a phenomenon and movement-related activities of minority groups to improve their situation and to increase participation in various spheres of life of the country (social, political and

cultural). Germany, France, Belgium or the Netherlands are examples of a typical intercultural society. One may say that the issue of coexistence of different cultures in the social context of European countries within one country does not occur anywhere else in such a way. Other examples include the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and as regards the Muslim countries: Lebanon, Morocco, Afghanistan and Egypt.

It is worth emphasizing once again that the terms interculturalism, or "multicultural" embody the principle of co-existence of cultural diversity in a single state organism ("multiplicity in unity"), while the termsmulticulturalism, pluralism are often likened reversely based on the principle of *e plurbis – unum* – unity in diversity.

Determinants of cross-cultural awareness

Basically, the phenomenon of cross cultural awareness has always accompanied men. Nevertheless, the perception of this phenomenon has changed dramatically, as regards the name, social attitudes and a way of its identification. It all started with cultural anthropology in which the concept of multiculturalism originated, then there appeared very fashionable abbreviations and terms that were supposed to reflect the occurrence of the phenomenon of culturally different people in one area. Anyone analyzing this theme will find all sorts of metaphors, such as the melting pot, rainbow coalition, "orchestra where each instrument is different," salad bowl, as well as such concepts as "multi-kulti, "mulitethnic" and "multilateralismus".

Determinants of CCA arise not only from the identification of this phenomenon but also from projects implemented in this area. For example, initiatives such as: "Year of Multicultural Dialogue", Multicultural Warsaw Street Party Cross-Culture Warsaw Festival, the Continent of Warsaw – Warsaw of Many Cultures, the action of painting

the "Pillars of multiculturalism", "Multiculturalism return-ees," or taking part in the "Poland for all" competition organised at the initiative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Radoslaw Sikorski. Furthermore, numerous conferences and seminars have been held in order to emphasize the need for examining the phenomenon of CCA.

In view of the above, while identifying the determinants of interculturalism, it should be emphasized that interculturalism is a form of voluntary groups of contact that are included in a common geographic space, not necessarily of their own volition, but are trying to create a new form of common culture. Therefore, any interaction and the desire to establish contacts should be referred to as interculturalism rather than multiculturalism. This concept stresses the aspects that unite us, rather than those that show our "otherness" or diversity. Moreover, it is about something more, something much deeper than establishing contact or communication. The concept of interculturalism is to emphasize the relationship between the unity of society and differences between groups. The essence is the visibility of unity, with a simultaneous vision of diversity and options. Interculturalism is a kind of a community that begins to create, protect and open up new spaces suitable for the development of diverse cultures

All these elements that make the society multicultural become indicators, and then the phenomenon of interculturality comes into play. Moreover, it is assumed that there must be parallel. There is no fixed division into the more important or less important determinants. All have the same scale of impact and are not to be ignored. Here are the basic determinants of interculturalism:

• "image" - how to present the community;
• education;
• acceptance;
• cultural pluralism;

- tolerance, understanding, respect;
- identity;
- double identity;
- diversity: customs, traditions, religion;
- integration – synthesis;
- understanding the phenomenon of acculturation;
- intercultural communication.

In summary, we must answer the basic question, namely, "What are the determinants of interculturalism and what is its essence?".

First of all, it is a stable and adequate communication among diverse cultures and its participants. It leads to discovering and understanding the differences and similarities in the so-called "Other/Alien"group, which contributes to coping with new conditions offunctioning in a multicultural society.

The essence of interculturality is adoption and maintenance of an appropriate system of attitudes towards a particular situation. Moreover, it consists in strengthening the internal dispositions of the partners to establish and maintain dialogue.

An extremely important aspect is to be aware of the existence of:

- levels of cross-cultural situations;
- levels of interculturalism;
- problematic international situation;
- cultural relativism;
- cultural differences;
- cultural differences that hinder and sometimes prevent peaceful relationships.

Interculturalism is also a determinant of the effect of interaction of cultures and cultural differences. It is also

important to integrate differences appearing in "Other", "Alien" in various situations, bearing in mind that it is often necessary to form the basis of similarity in order to determine the differences. Another element is categorization, designed to go from general to specific in the treatment of detail regarded as part of the whole. Furthermore, cross cultural awareness is based on thorough preparation for the volatility of the situation and not dealing with problems in terms of limits, and differential treatment is not an exclusionary characteristics.

Cross-cultural communication. With increasing globalization, national borders are becoming blurred, and the notion of an individual having only one homeland is fast becoming outdated. These changes have contributed to the need to redefine the concept of 'citizenship'. In recognition of this fact, the Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000 encompasses a broader definition of the term 'citizenship'.

For many years, government agencies used 'non-English speaking background'
as a broad term to describe the target population group for their multicultural policies and programs. This term is still appropriate, where it describes:

- the clientele of English as a Second Language (ESL) programs;
- clients who require the assistance of interpreters to communicate with a government agency;
- situations where language or literacy issues present barriers to accessing and engaging with government services and programs.
- Currently, the term 'culturally and linguistically diverse' has come into common usage among government agencies as a broad descriptor for groups and individuals who differ according to religion, race, language and ethnicity.

When the phenomenon of cross cultural awareness and communication occur, the state of society is characterized by the following elements:

- acceptance of cultural relativism – the recognition that every cultural element should enrich and be considered only as part of the dominant culture, which it co-creates;
- classification differences – reflected in the fact that people from the same cultural circles have a clearly designated place of residence. An example of this can be settlements or districts inhabited by representatives of the same cultural group. Creating enclaves or ghettos will highlight the differences;
- the dominance of group rather than individual identity – or origin perceived through group priority. Emphasis is placed on highlighting the ethnic, religious or territorial differences;
- jurisdiction guaranteeing certain rights to any person – the legal recognition of minorities. This has both legal and administrative consequences.

These components provide a framework of contemporary interculturalism through the prism of the problems described in heterogeneous societies. In the case of static multiculturalism, culture can be isolated from other elements. Conflict may be a result of an ideological, territorial, economic or geographic expansion. Interculturalism appears against such a specific background of internationally operating environment. Participants in operations may meet with different approaches to the situation of cultural diversity. In order to properly interpret them, let me briefly introduce the operation "Enduring Freedom" in Afghanistan, the "Iraqi Freedom" (2003–2008) and the NATO Training Mission (2005–2011) in Iraq.

In 2003-2008, the command of the Polish contingent was also in charge of the Multinational Division Cen-

tral-South (WDC-P) and initially teamed up with 22 other states. After 2008, a dozen Polish officers remained in Iraq, making up until 2011 the Military Advisory Liaison Team (MALT). A multicultural environment zone of operations conducted in 2003 is presented below.
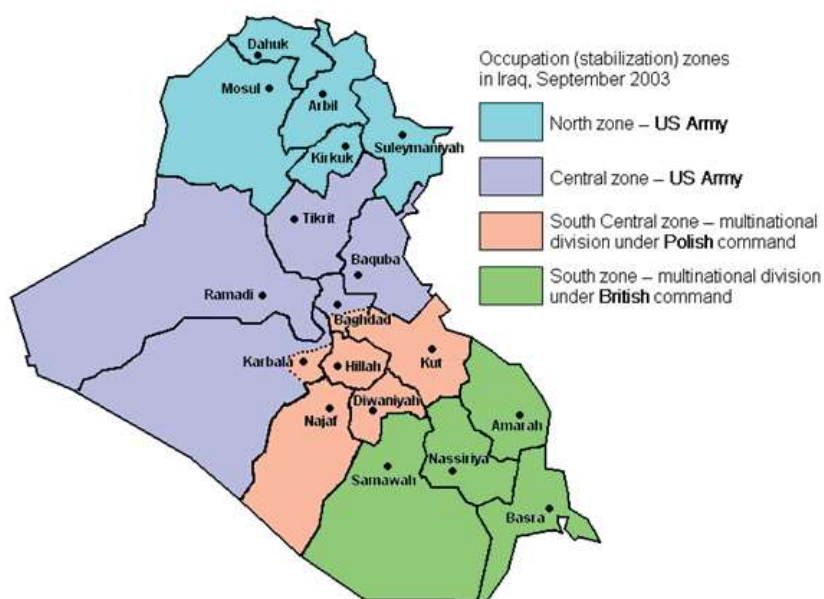
MAP 1. *Gaza Operation Iraqi Freedom stabilization in 2003*
Source: Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq, Brookings Institution.

Interpersonal communication involves participants in an ever-lasting process of preparation for the volatility of the situation rather than in dealing with problems in terms of limits and differential treatment is not an exclusionary characteristics. Because of the differences and the diversity of cultures, even in our immediate neighborhood, we are confronted with different value systems and this

may give rise to dilemmas and ignorant misunderstanding, since evaluation of others entails the use of a catalogue of rules and values. The forms and mechanisms of social behavior are caused by differences and a variety of cultures - what in one culture is evident, in another - even if it occurs in the culture of the neighborhood, is not so obvious and understandable. We may even react more strangely outside Europe, where the smallest gesture may be as potentially perceived as offending or amusing. Every interpersonal interaction is based on norms of behavior or rules which contribute to the creation of ethics. Participants in crisis response operations are a fairly specific group of respondents. Their interactions are not a form of voluntary contacts. They have specific tasks to perform, which cannot be completed without the knowledge of others. In case of emergency operations, the other man is from a different cultural area, speaks another language, and professes a different religion. And each religion has many factions and sects, which tenets are very different from the basic assumptions. Anthropologist of religion Mircea Eliade divides people into those living in the so-called "holy time" set by the Gods and lay people who find themselves in the "historical present". Not every person who lives in a country where religion dominates must be a religious man. Therefore, you should do everything possible to understand each other and communicate. To accomplish this, you must specify the differences/cultural differences, or what characterizes your own culture and in terms of what aspects you may be different from the others. It is important not to treat one set of beliefs as the only possible and real one. You cannot take the view that your traditions, culture and beliefs are the best, either. To define the cultural differences you need to know their culture, traditions, customs and general principles of functioning in society. In addition, you should be aware of their expectations concerning other people's way of think-

ing and acting. Only then the time comes to pinpoint the cultural differences. In the context of cultural differences, there are fewer dissertations that relate primarily to the European society and Muslims. The differences relate to the following components:

- respect for ethical principles;
- the law;
- principles of interpersonal obligations arising from (universalism and particularism);
- respect for the individual and the group (individualism and collectivism);
- behavioral (restraint and emotionality);
- perception of the world (and the totality of segmentation);
- how to determine the social status (achieving a status assignment);
- relation to time;
- relationship to the environment;
- ways of handling events;
- religion;
- language;
- social behavior;
- prohibitions and injunctions.

The above issues and their perception by people from different cultural backgrounds should be emphasized in detail in terms of very important religious influences. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are not uniform and comprise a wide variety of attitudes based on the socio – cultural factors.

Conclusion

The multiplicity of cultures has been an element of the process of working out and systematizing the so-called

"cultural variables". In this context, the most important are the relationships between different cultures operating according to international transactions. Therefore, we can distinguish eight different kinds of cultures, the culture of business contacts or negotiations, ceremonial and hierarchical cultures, as well as the egalitarian, polychrome, restrained and expressive cultures.

An implicit manifestation of an increasing importance of cultural issues is the growing number of ethnic, religious and social conflicts. Society feels increasingly threatened by the influx of migrants, flood of foreign cultural models, and the loss of national identity and respect for tradition. Another problem is diminishing ability of the state to provide cultural security for the citizens. If the situation continues, we are likely to experience even more serious problems - the states will be increasingly turning into a source of threats to the cultural identity of ethnic and religious groups.

The growing importance of the cultural factor does not mean, however, the loss of the traditional importance of the security dimension. It should be noted that all of its components are interrelated and artificial separation of one element is justified only by analytical and purely scientific purposes. This especially concerns the relationship between political security, culture and military. Safety culture is political because of the defining values to be protected, threats and actors of a political act. Besides, giving specific cultural phenomena of the security dimension legitimizes specific government policy. Despite the growing political importance of non-state actors, we should be aware that they are still the key players on the international arena.

[...] *The very concept of multiculturalism is now being called into question in much of Europe. Danish writer and journalist Helle Merete Blix is among those who think it has failed - Because multiculturalism does not produce more pluralism. What it produces is parallel societies. It has to be a main cul-*

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ture that you sort of integrate into. And if too many people suddenly speak out they want Shariah law, they do not want democracy, that is a major problem in every European country. Multiculturalism, though still all the rage in popular circles, was falling out of favor in academic/intellectual circles. In addition to the "parallel societies" problem. Baucom pointed out that the fundamental problem with multiculturalism is that it effectively involves various "minority cultures" receiving some sort of approval from a dominant culture or group, with the necessary result being a sort of unintentional ghettoization of these "minority cultures," marked out as "different" from the mainstream. The grand irony is that multiculturalism – in large measure a product of western postcolonial guilt – essentially winds up being a new sort of colonialism, in which the dominant culture's control is exerted in giving approval to those groups it marks out as not a part of itself.

Given these recent developments in Europe, has that already begun to happen? What then will fill the ideological void in the West?[...][1].

NOTES

1. *A different mirror. A history of multicultural America*, Back Bay Books/Little, Brown and Company New York 2009, p. 75.