

POLISH EMIGRANTS IN CONDITIONS OF INTEGRATION AND UNIFICATION OF THE WORLD

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The formation of the global civil community causes the effacing of division into “the natives” and “the strangers” within the framework of individual states. Integration and unification processes give a new dimension to such notions as: emigration, diaspora and national identity. Emigration is more and more often comprehended as civilization phenomenon¹. Its positive economic, political and cultural advantages are the focus of attention; the countries that receive emigrants very often reap the economical benefits and the emigrants themselves solve the problems of unemployment in their own countries; migrational movements, on the other hand, help solve political and social problems, make the global integration, and mixing of cultural and civilization norms easier. Emigration itself helps to achieve cultural compromises, get used to mutual dissimilarities and accept differences.

Globalization of civilization as well as integration of the world community is the process that recognizes cultural variety. But it is noticed that it must have one, common value; “Variety that doesn’t resolve into an individual means anarchy in the same way as homogeneity without variety means tyranny”².

¹ Cf. A. Chodubski, *Emigracja jako zjawisko polityczne*, “Zeszyty Naukowe. Nauki Polityczne Uniwersytet Gdański”, 1992, no. 11, pp. 131–140; This, *O współczesnej Polonii świata*, “Atheneum”. Polska w świecie” 1997, no. 1, pp. 119–134; This, *Współczesne oblicze Polonii świata*, “Głos znad Pregoly” (Kaliningrad) 1997, no. 6, pp. 9–11.

² Cf. K. Krzysztofek, *Uniwersalistyczne i pluralistyczne wizje pokojowego świata*, Warszawa 1990, pp. 9–11.

Polish diaspora called Polonia has a special place in the process of creation the global civil community. It is the fourth, regarding the number, national society living outside their own country, after the Chinese, the Germans and the Italians. It is estimated at about 25 000 000 people³.

Polish emigrants are often perceived through certain stereotypes. As far as economic aspect is concerned Polish people seem to be wasteful, undisciplined, they do not care about high material standards and they are not persistent enough to achieve their economical aims. From political point of view, they tend to be anarchic, revolutionary and emotional in making decisions. From cultural point of view, they are perceived as conservative, having complexes and devoted to religion and traditions.

In the stereotype of a Polish emigrant the following features are particularly stressed:

1. Lability and weak will, 2. Attachment to equality and freedom, 3. Tendency to debate, 4. Primacy of fight and games above work, 5. Lordly pride and envy, 6. Complex of not fulfilled possibilities, 7. Outlook of tolerance and hope.

In the emigration life it is noticed that there are many different examples of individual and family life successes and defeats. Generally however, the level of social and professional aspirations is decreasing. The following characteristics can be observed in the life of Polish emigrants: 1. Satisfying of economic and vital needs at an average level, 2. Taking of employment in traditional sphere of services, 3. Showing small interest in political life of the country they live in, 4. Attaching too much importance to religion and traditions, 5. Showing small interest in social and cultural life.

In the stereotype of contemporary emigration so called "taking a short cut in life" is particularly pointed out. It is aiming at a quick material success and life stabilization. Such an attitude is very often criticized by so called "old emigrants" and the countries of settlement. The problem was particularly intense in West Germany where the Polish people were scornfully called "Mark people", the ones whose only aim in life became German marks. At the same time the Poles were shown as the society afflicted by various pathologies such as alcoholism drug addiction, social sponging /that is living without learning and working/ and juvenile crimes.

In Poland emigration is perceived in a dichotomic way. On the one hand it has a positive dimension, i. e. "going out into the world", taking part in the world social, economical and political processes. On the other hand there is a negative aspect that is Polish provincialism. The Poles have the complex of inferiority and their poverty makes them infringe the law quite frequently. The life of Polish emigrants is very

³ Cf. A Chodubski, *Aktualne tendencje przemian zbiorowości polonijnych świata*, [in:] *Przemiany społeczne, kwestie narodowościowe i polonijne*, Toruń 1994, pp. 83–93.

often associated only with the performances of folk groups and choirs at occasional celebrations.

One of the most characteristic features of contemporary emigration is identification with Polish character in every second generation. It is not always willful but it is often a consequence of many circumstances and also the external pressure. In the fourth generation there can be observed a recurrence of ties national identity, and even the activity to help others identify with their Polish character.

Present Polish emigration is a young community. In the 80's over 1 000 000 people left the country and about 70% of a total number of emigrants were not over 35. Above half of them were physical workers technically educated, about 25% graduated from universities, the process of adaptation abroad was easier in case of people with technical and medical jobs than in case of people with humanistic or very specific jobs for example military ones. They did not find the employment relevant to their qualifications. In this situation they usually started work in the sphere of services. The work raised their material status in comparison with the one they had had in their motherland, but it definitely lowered their social status.

Perceiving the complexity of exodus, the officials in Poland took steps to restrain the emigration. The special structures were created next to the social and political organizations. The Church also expressed the opinion about these aspects. Pope John Paul II during his second pilgrimage to motherland said: "I watch – this means also: I feel responsible for this great common heritage which is called Poland. [...] We may sometimes envy Frenchmen, Germans or Americans, that their name is not connected / with such cost of history... I will say / only, that this cost is just the value. It is not possible to be truly free without reliable and deep relation to values. Let's not desire such Poland, which would cost us nothing"⁴.

The Poles abroad are distinguished by the high level of organizational life considering other nations and ethnic groups. Organizational structures are strongly hierarchical and quite often related to worldwide structures. In their activity they are attached to centralistic rules and they frequently express their negative attitude to the politicians of their countries and their work. The people from these structures detect different meanings and behaviours in the biographies of politicians. They perceive them as village people, penetrated by totalitarian ideology.

Despite disclosing many features of backwardness, Polish emigrants are typical diaspora community of the world. They easily adapt themselves to new social and economical conditions and they are typical allochtonic community open to civilization transformations, showing large activity in new places of settlement, having no special interest in local traditions and breaking certain rules typical for the inhabit-

⁴ Jan Paweł II w Polsce 1979–1983. *Homilie i przemówienia*, Warszawa 1986, p. 200.

ants of a given area. Such attitudes permit allochtones to integrate and take significant social, economic and sometimes political position.

Polonia as a typical diaspora community declares for a new global order. Propaganda is one of the most important elements. It is omnipresent in public places and media. It replaces an emotional order with the rational one⁵. The most convincing model for Polonia comes from the USA where coexistence and multiculturalism are of primary importance.

In the life of Polish emigrants there is a characteristic dichotomy of attitudes towards modern trends. On the one hand they accept modern technologies, changeability and diversity. They express this in buying modern equipment, cars, telephones etc.; as well as becoming more and more anonymous in their private, family and professional life. They also follow the advertisements that promote different ways of spending free time and show how to realize the social and professional aspirations according to the reality of the place of settlement. On the other hand, the Poles are attached to the traditions of motherland and family life values. They are very conservative and tend to be extremely thrifty, which is a consequence of the memory about material shortages. Polish emigrants are observed to accumulate a lot of used and useless things, they often do shopping in second-hand shops; purchase the products of lower quality, usually cheaper and produced by broadly well-known companies; in home life they are attached to national cuisine that is often hidden even from distant relatives and acquaintances; they prepare meals according to religious traditions, and so e. g. on Fridays they do not consume any meat meals, on Sunday they serve confectionery and desserts; there is a difference among particular family members when eating meals; women do not take part in eating meals in the same way as men do, they most often do not eat main courses and do not seat at the table together with other members of the family. This observation is true in case of both wealthy and indigent families, within West-European and American culture as well as in Africa, Asia and Eurasia.

Polonia is a community fully confirming the global model of employment. From the end of XIX century Polish emigrants have taken particular interest in the sphere of services that is at present thought to be the civilization challenge; it comprises both the services in industry, agriculture and social services⁶. In the past the Polish got employed in this sphere to adapt themselves and assimilate, now they do this because of their qualifications, aspirations and the prospects of the oncoming generations. It is characteristic for the latest emigration movements. The well-educated

⁵ Cf. E. Polak, *Przemiany cywilizacji współczesnej w sferze kultury materialnej*, Gdańsk 1996, p. 134.

⁶ Cf. A. Toffler, *Trzecia fala*, Warszawa 1997, pp. 572–576.

emigrants of the 80's who could not find any work relevant to their qualifications got employed in the services; their children in reality of their new settlement very often do not aspire to be well-educated but only want to get the education which would guarantee the stability at the job market, hence they usually work in the traditional sphere of services. Any changes in this aspect can be observed in the fourth or fifth generation of emigrants, who are fully assimilated in the country of settlement⁷.

Polonia as a community open to educational transformations. There is a tendency of leaving the narrow specialization on behalf of multidisciplinary education. The Polish usually choose alternative directions in secondary education adjusted to the needs of market as well as to the interests and qualifications of the learners; in education they attach much attention to the practical skills and knowledge obtained from authorities. Educational centers are of primary importance in this aspect. They offer courses, seminars, workshops and correspondence teaching organized by different groups such as universities, corporations, churches, military organizations and even subcultures. One of the organizers is the association of Polish emigrants. In the last few years there can be observed very significant changes in this aspect.

Polish organizations dealt with conducting their own schools and courses at the end of XIX and the beginning of XX century, in the interwar period and in the first years after the II World War; From the 50's Polish education practically ceased to exist. The Polish lost interest in education, claiming that it made the process of assimilation more difficult, closed them in ethnic ghettos and as a consequence alienated them from the civilized life. . The intellectuals, mainly teachers, who emigrated in the 80's were of quite a different opinion. They claimed that lack of education led to denationalization; in the 90's there can be observed the great comeback to Polish education in the emigrational societies. In western Europe it is connected with the process of building European structures, and first of all with the process of European integration which recognizes the equality of different nations, cultures and languages; in this situation Polish language starts gaining a new meaning in European education and as a result Polish organizations have started opening Polish schools and organizing various highly specialist courses in Polish⁸. This initiative has gained a lot of interest from the Polish who meet a great language barrier in the country of settlement, coming from both the new and the older generation of emigrants. The language barrier has made it impossible for many people to take part in many courses and specialist workshops serving either self-realization or just social satisfaction.

⁷ Cf. A. Chodubski, *O źródłach konfliktów współczesnej emigracji polskiej*, [in:] *Konflikty społeczne w procesie transformacji systemowej*, edited by K. Piątek, Toruń 1996, pp. 79-88.

⁸ Cf. *Oświata polskojęzyczna za granicą. Stan obecny i perspektywy rozwoju. Materiały z I Forum Oświaty Polonijnej*, edited by J. Mazur, Warszawa 1997.

Present educational system of Polish emigration contributes to integration of particular groups; educational system is often connected with celebrations of traditional national holidays, sometimes they sum up the tasks undertaken in the process of education etc. There can be observed a great comeback of weekend education especially within the area of the former Soviet Union and the well-developed countries of Western Europe. The education is of primary interest to younger children and their parents who got involved in making the activities more attractive and take part in ceremonious meetings performances and concerts. It contributes to the integration of local Polish society and helps to develop closer family, professional and social contacts.

Polish emigration is a community characterized by civilization modernity in relation to political and state institutions and any other collective forms of social life. It is a result of Polish political culture⁹. Polish emigrants, as well as the Polish in the motherland, keep distance towards the structures of authorities that is often defined as Polish anarchy. It is often expressed in individualism of attitudes and behaviours. There is a global phenomenon in contemporary civilization; communities give up the forms of indirect democracy on behalf of direct one¹⁰. Societies tend to have more significant and direct influence on their own affairs and want to break free from hierarchic order.

The activities of Polish organizations reflect the reality. The meaning of organizations that came into being in the XIX and the beginning of the XX century is constantly decreasing. They were established to consolidate all the Polish communities in different countries all over the world. They had their own hierarchic structures relevant to the world ones¹¹. They realized a set of specified political and social aims; considered themselves to have been the representatives of Polish nation abroad and some of them were in official relations with their native authorities.

In contemporary times there are different aims of Polish organizations abroad; national consolidation is still important but it definitely does not mean any alienation from the place of settlement or closing in national ghettos. Contemporary organizations have autonomic structures that group people according to their interests and other criteria. One of the most important aims of such organizations is the promotion of Polish character in a given area and refutation of the stereotypes about Polish

⁹ Cf. A. Chodubski, *Kultura polityczna współczesnej emigracji polskiej (na przykładzie zbiorowości polonijnych w Niemczech, Szwecji i Włoszech)*, [in:] *Kultura polityczna w Polsce. Przeszłość i terażniejszość*, edited by M. Kosmana, Poznań 1996, pp. 161–174.

¹⁰ Cf. J. Naisbitt, *Megatrendy. Dziesięć nowych kierunków zmieniających nasze życie*, Poznań 1997.

¹¹ Cf. A. Chodubski, *Emigracja polska w warunkach realizacji procesu integracji ogólnoeuropejskiej*, [in:] *Polityka społeczna na drodze do Unii Europejskiej*, Włocławek 1997, pp. 145–159.

conservatism. Such organizations are very often short-lived and it is connected with some financial conditions and the activity of individual people involved in the realization of their aims.

The leaders are very important in establishing organizational structures. They are usually characterized by a high level of organization and intelligence. However, they are not preferred in democratic system in which the most important position is achieved by the people of an average caliber¹². In the former structures the leaders had usually secondary education, they were not very rich and they realized the aims of an average organizational level¹³. In our times the leaders are creative, well educated individuals/ usually with academic degrees/who had been active in their native land. In their activity they tend to achieve high results that would attract the attention and acceptance of public opinion in the country of their settlement and even worldwide opinion. The members of the organizational structures are not always able to cope with such creative aims and that is why some of the organizations stop working.

This is a typical process for contemporary civilization changes. In the Polish community centre the role of the elite in exile has changed¹⁴. Its existence emphasised II World War. It had been exerted the influence on political life of the Polish community centre since 1989. At that time, the Polish elite in exile was mainly created by strong Polish opponents criticising political system after the war. They objected to any co-operation with official authorities of the country they emigrated from. Polish community in Britain was evident in the leadership of this elite. There was majority of Polish both political and community organisations seated in London. There were also bases of Polish emigration executive offices like: the President of Poland in exile, Prime Minister, the Office of Cabinet, National Council, Main Commission of Treasury and world-wide Polish organisations working outside the boundaries of Poland: Association of Polish Veterans, Polish Students Association abroad, Circle of ex –soldiers of National Army, Polish Scouts Association, International Red Cross and the Head Office of Research. After the year 1989, when the Polish President in exile handed the insignia over to the President working in homeland, the role of political life outside the country was rapidly limited. It became a part of private sphere of some individuals and narrow groups of intelligentsia. It resulted also from the elite representatives' age being pre-war politicians.

¹² M. Król, *Słownik demokracji*, Kraków 1989, p. 93.

¹³ Cf. A Chodubski, *Widziane z Polski. Tendencje przemian Polonii niemieckiej*, "Bundesstrasse 1" 1995, no. 4–5.

¹⁴ Cf. A Chodubski, *Elity polityczne współczesnej emigracji polskiej* "Przegląd Polonijny" 1994, book 1, pp. 95–105.

This community admitted post-war refugees reluctantly. The situation has changed a little after the year 1981. Political elite showed their interest in “Solidarity” structures, their creation and activity, as well as expressed their support, while at the same time keeping a distance from “Solidarity” activists, who left the Poland after the year 1981 and tried to join in the social and political activity in exile. Generally, the twilight of political elite is observed all over the world. Societies lose confidence in political parties and state organisations, further people become passive and indifferent to political events. They do not identify with process occurrence. The election abstinence is also well visible. The parallel trend among Polish community members is also noticeable. Generally, they do not pay enough attention to political matters, whereas they are far more interested in finance and improving their living conditions. Not infrequently they distance from political issues ostentatiously. Especially this situation is characteristic of a generation in a working age.

The matters, which arouse interest of the Polish community as a whole, were human rights. The interest in their interpretation and the obeying regulations included in international documents now are commonly noticed, both in the country of settlement and the homeland. Such attitude is a consequence of the Polish community’s openness to transformations’ civilisation in political life and its attachment to political culture, having crucial components: defence of progress and opting for such ideas like: freedom, equality and brotherhood. The Polish community centre keenly responds to each case, when human and citizens’ rights are being disobeyed.

Poles who live in exile are mostly considered to be religious. Many civilisation transformations are being observed in the religious structures right now. It is the result of leaving the institutional participation in the area of religious practise in favour of very emotional religious practise, that means structures and forms being alternative in comparison with traditional institution of religion, by many world societies. Poles attached significance to church much more than other societies do, nevertheless more and more Poles leave the personal Churches, often called Polish Churches, which gather their compatriots. The Polish community members participate in activities of parish Churches, which are in their neighbourhood.

The Polonia’s participation in the religious practice very often depends on social and political reality of their settlement place. The extent of the Polish community members’ participation in religious activities is totally different in well-developed countries than in countries of Africa and South America. Taking into consideration this matter, there is also peculiar situation in Ex-soviet Union’s countries¹⁵. Participa-

¹⁵ Cf. *Polacy w kościołach katolickich w ZSRR*, edited by Rev. Edward Walewander, Lublin 1991.

tion in religious life is treated as a sign of arising Polish origin awareness and intimacy.

The Polish priests play a great role in the religious life of Polish community members. They are often devoted to matters of the Polish community centre. Except fulfilling their religious duties, they are frequently creators and organisers of cultural undertakings for Polish community society. Currently their activity is peculiarly visible in the ex-Soviet Union's countries. They participate in reconstruction of religious life on their living territory. Polish priests also build temples, bring charity organisations into existence and are the main originators of numerous social and cultural events¹⁶.

Priests' activity has also a missionary character mainly in the area of Polish clusters abroad. Their duties usually are not only closely connected with parish activities, but great part of them concern issues not related to Church directly. Polish priests are especially missionaries in societies, where universal and ethnic religions predominate. There is an arising interest in priests' activity treated as an alternative movement for/towards the change of present system of moral values in West European societies. Their activities are frequently an alternative for various sects which still appear.

Polish communities being conscious of challenges, caused by transformations of civilisation re-evaluate their internal attitudes and behaviours. Among important tendencies the following trends need to be mentioned: 1. Giving new purposes and tasks for Polish organisations and associations abroad, 2. Creating new model of leading style for Polish communities, 3. Moulding new ways of social and political activities, 4. Developing new co-operation ways with official authorities, 5. Changing the role of Roman Catholic Church¹⁷.

Both, transformations of global civilisation and new quality of Polish community formation influence trends coming out. In the 80's, Polish community was brought new blood into, that means that a lot of young and well-educated people decided to emigrate. They took their need of political activity from their homeland. Every fourth Pole took part in activities of various structures of the "Solidarity", this fact is mentioned very often.

¹⁶ Cf. *Odrodzenie Kościoła katolickiego w byłym ZSRR. Studia historyczno-demograficzne*, edited by Rev. Edward Walewander, Lublin 1993.

¹⁷ Cf. A. Chodubski, *Aktualne tendencje przemian zbiorowości polonijnych...*, p. 89. This, *Die Gesaltung des neuen Gesicht der polonia in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, "Miscellanea Anthropologica et Sociologica", 1994, no. 3, pp. 39–48; This, *Aktualne tendencje przemian zbiorowości polonijnych w Skandynawii na tle przeobrażeń cywilizacyjnych świata*, [in:] *Polacy w Skandynawii*, edited by E. Olszewski, Lublin 1997, pp. 63–76.

Mutual relationship between Polonia and Poland is also characteristic. The interest in tightening relationship with the Polish societies abroad has been observed among Polish official authorities since the 80's. That situation results from cultural circumstances, which emphasise the fact that Poles in homeland and in exile make up one national community, whose cultural achievements determine Polish identity in the world. The economical circumstances are also essential as they attract the attention of Polish community members and make them support Poland in its economic transformations. They are encouraged to invest in Poland, too. Their political attitude has a significant importance for the transformation which took place in their homeland. Their favourable judgements and their approval of changes in Poland, especially during election campaigns, cannot be omitted and should be treated as crucial.

The attitude of Polish community members to Poland is far more complicated. People, who left their country for political or economical reasons, regard themselves as disappointed and bear a grudge against their homeland to large extent. It requires some explanation, the attitude of those who have not adapted themselves to foreign reality yet, is called "newest emigration". Their attitude to homeland is totally different than the attitude of Poles who have been living in foreign land for a few dozen of years or their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The fourth or the fifth generation of Poles living abroad obey the local system of moral values unreservedly.

The attitude of Polish community members to their homeland depends on various adapting and assimilating factors in the place of their settlement. The first two generations do not try to maintain good relationships with the official authorities of a country of their emigration. Individual relationships, which include family contacts, are also limited. The first generation in exile tries to avoid using Polish language in every day's life. The language they use is different in comparison with the language used by completely assimilated societies and, moreover, totally different from a language used by native speakers living in these countries or regions. It is a principle that the first generation in exile tries to keep either a distance to foreign land or indifference to political and economical reality in that land. The third and further generations, which are created by pensioners, recall their memories of Poland and furthermore they show an increasing interest in their homeland situation. They perceive it through their own experiences, not paying enough attention to all changes, which occur as a result of civilisation process. They commonly use stereotypes to condemn both the political authorities and political system. It is not an exception that they reveal their moral attachment to traditions and customs, emphasising their superiority to reality in a new place of existence. A lot of people in the pensionable age decide to come back to places of their births. In the majority cases, the main reason of such decisions is a will to be buried close to their relatives and acquaintances.

In 90's the representatives of intelligentsia, whose political activity comes from the past political reality (XIX and the beginning of XX century and the time between WW I and WW II), began to show their interest in changes taking place in Poland. They also expressed their willingness to fulfil their function as experts and advisers in the process of political transformation in Poland. They show their distinct activity in scientific or economic fields. As experts they tried to transfer experiences from countries of their settlement to Polish conditions, simultaneously disregarding all Polish experiences from the time of 1945–1989. They took information about the reality of following years mainly from the mass media or indirect reports, as they were not used to visit Poland that time.

The relationships between Poles living abroad and those living in Poland have changed recently because of scientific and technical progress. Modern equipment enables them better communication – for example – the Internet. Such use of technological achievements is especially characteristic of young generation people, who are interested in genealogical issues and want to re-establish relationships, which were broken because of the lack of direct meetings.

The Polonia as a whole is an example of industrial society¹⁸, which can be characterised by: opting for the universal in economic and social life, functioning in short-term structures, subscribing to rationalisation of all actions, appreciating work experience; opting for profit as a main criterion of company efficiency; opting for free competition and market mechanisms; succumbing to fascination of mechanisation in production; opting for creating middle class in human relationships; treating the needs of individual satisfaction as a prosperity factor.

In political attitudes: subscribing to liberal option, opting for economic individuals /homo economicus/, solving economic problems on a free market, minimising the state role and its political structures in economic and social relationships creation, rejecting collective life and opting for individualism in all changes of civilisation.

Generally, Polonia is concentrated on present and future matters. It judges continuous progress in civilisation changes and economic as well as political development necessary. It also treats all negative situations, failures and even disasters with great calmness. There are portrayed typical behaviours for borderland societies, showing abilities of adaptation to unfavourable political reality, high psychological resistance, pragmatism in work, changeability in achieving professional and social aims in those attitudes.

¹⁸ Cf. D. Bell, *Nadejście społeczeństwa postindustrialnego*, Warszawa 1975; E. Polak, op. Cit., chapter III–V.

Despite various manifestations of tradition attachment, conservatism, the Polish community in exile is generally open to all challenges connected with the process of world globalisation. It shows the fact that knowledge and information are the most expensive “goods” and basic factors of progress. It understands that the present and future of economy is decentralised management, web structures, no mass production (keeping standardisation, specialisation, synchronisation and maximising), variety and short life of products. In the political sphere: opting for society to state autonomy, spontaneous people gathering. In moral value sphere: tolerance to different moral value systems, opting for superiority of human rights to state legislation, activity concentrated on present and future time.

The youngest generation of Poles in exile is mainly interested in world globalisation process. It may have its justification in the youngest generation’s motives of emigration. The most important of them was the participation in progress of developed civilisation, but also the political and economic ideas realisation cannot be omitted. The Polish community is on high level in comparison with some other world societies, who are definitely enthusiasts of radical civilisation changes, modern solutions in science and technology, industry, culture and opt for changes in moral values sphere.