

# **Managing Hate Speech Report on Muslims in Polish Media 2015–2016**



**Joanna Subko, Adam Puczejda**

**Equinet Capacity Building Seminar Rome 19–21 XI 2018**

# **Joanna Subko**

---

Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights  
Poland

# Adam Puczejda

---

Kultura Liberalna  
Poland

# Schedule

---

1. Introduction. Why and what? (5 min.)
2. Interactive exercise (20 min.)
3. Short report presentation. What we have learned? (20 min.)
4. Recommendations. What we can do? & Q&A (15 min.)

# Problem

---

- 12% of respondents have had any personal contact with Muslims, most of Poles encounter Muslims only via media
- 67% declare their dislike of Arabs
- 30% increase in acts of violence against Muslims in 2016.

**Problem:** How to talk about social problems & challenges without stigmatisation?

Data: CBOS, Prokuratura Krajowa

# Problem

---

**Problem:** radical content formulated by radical political groups is slowly seeping into the rhetoric of centrist groups (Marine Le Pen on „bacterial immigration” & David Cameron on Syrians as a „swarm”).

**Problem:** aggressive language slowly becomes the norm of consciously planned political campaigns with the aim to mobilize and polarize different groups even if that means an increase in prejudice, esp. directed towards minorities

# Aim of the research

---

- describe the language used in the Polish press and online publications in relation to representatives of the Muslim community
- analyze the political and journalist rhetoric, which uses informal terms and expressions as a tool of political combat – both in the right-wing and left-wing media

# Researched press publications and online portals

---

The publications and portals were selected on the basis of a number of criteria:

- impact factor (they were placed highest in citation rankings)
- popularity (highest number of unique users or copies sold)
- profile (publications described as right-wing, liberal or centre-left).

Only articles, no user comments.

# Researched titles

---

- 3 daily newspapers: „Fakt”, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, „Rzeczpospolita”
- 4 opinion weeklies: „Do Rzeczy”, „Newsweek”, „Polityka”, „wSieci”
- 4 online portals: NaTemat.pl, „Dziennik Opinii” (KrytykaPolityczna.pl), Niezalezna.pl, Fronda.pl

# What we have observed

---

- examples of stigmatization of persons from Muslim communities in Poland were relatively rare
- *package thinking* – participants of public discussion use ready-made sets of words, argumentation and images, in which various elements are combined and evoke combined associations, despite the almost non-existent or minimal connection between them.

# What we have observed

---

- hyperbolisation and „hijacking” of words – neutral terms are gradually replaced with increasingly negative equivalents during a discussion e.g. *wave* -> *flood* -> *tsunami* -> *attack* -> *raid* -> *invasion* -> *war*
- Muslims are in turned into a “polemic device” and *used* in a political discussion

# Negative image of Muslims in Polish media

---

- characteristic feature of the right-wing and conservative milieu/media and language, but it also infiltrates left-wing and liberal media
- based on few very distinct set of words, images and arguments about Muslims
- very little evidence of the existence of the positive image of Muslims

# Metaphor of a wave, invasion

---



The cover of the *wSieci* weekly (2015, no. 37) – Muslims leaning against a Polish border barrier. They pose in a way that evokes a symbolic picture from September 1939 showing German soldiers breaking a Polish border barrier.

# Metaphor of a wave, invasion

---



The historical photograph,  
Gdańsk, September 1939.

# Muslims as terrorists

---

“Not knowing enough about Islam and perceiving it as something alluringly exotic, makes the West, already overpowered by being forced into tolerating all that is different, powerless in the face of an invasion – yes, an invasion – of Islamist terrorists. (...)”

Terrorist attacks are not organised by Muslim dropouts, but by religious Muslims to whom hundreds and thousands of others regularly pay alms”.

Katarzyna Gójska-Hejke, *Nie miejmy złudzeń*, Niezależna.pl, republished: „Gazeta Polska Codziennie”, 23 marca 2016 r.

# Sexual jihad

---

“If we don’t take matters in our own hands (and not just hands), Muslims will defeat us. Not through terrorism, though, but with the uteruses of their women.”

Tomasz Terlikowski, *Terlikowski: Papież niezwykle mocno o tym, że Europejczycy sami proszą się o śmierć*, Fronda.pl, 15 września 2015 r.

„Sexual jihad” – T. Terlikowski, *Seksualny džihad*, „Do Rzeczy” 2016, nr 7, s. 72–73.

# Social jihad

---

[Title] “We have social jihad to look forward to. The great march for benefits”.

Grzegorz Wierzchołowski, *Czeka nas socjalny dżihad. Wielki marsz po zasiłki*, Niezależna.pl, republished: „Gazeta Polska”, 17 września 2015 r.

# Metaphor of the so-called ideology of multiculturalism

---

“Belgium (...) is making attempts at following modern trends by the book. These mainly include political correctness and multicultural policies. In the name of the latter, the country accepts ever newer demands of the Muslim community by gradually rejecting its own traditions and values. This approach could be understood as an encouraging factor by radical Muslims who put forward ever greater demands”.

Elżbieta Kuźma, Dominika Ćosić, *Parada burek w Brukseli*, „Do Rzeczy” 2015, nr 44, s. 76.

# The so-called ideology of multiculturalism

---

“There is also the issue of the not-so-colourful experiences of uncontrolled multiculturalism in Western countries, which have resulted in both bloody terrorist attacks and the creation of enclaves full of estranged, frustrated people who experience the sense of being unable to fulfil their aspirations within a culture they do not accept”.

Wiktor Świetlik, *Tak hejtują elity III RP*, „wSieci” 2015, nr 39, s. 32–33.

# A “breeding ground for Jihad”

---

“The politics of integration has broken down. The resentment and frustrations of descendants of immigrants are on the rise. In Paris, Brussels and London there are entire districts that have become the breeding ground for Jihad”.

Jacek Pawlicki, *Suma wszystkich strachów*, „Newsweek” 2016, nr 2, s. 49–51.

# Clash of civilizations

---

“We are witnessing the clash of two civilizations in ‘old’ Europe – Western and Muslim. They are two civilizations which have not ceased to fight one another for the last 14 centuries”.

Aleksandra Rybińska, *Piekło Europy*, „wSieci” 2016, nr 7, s. 21.

# Europe's suicide

---

“It is unfortunate for our Western neighbors that the new government in Warsaw clearly puts more emphasis on the interests of its own nation. What is even worse is that these interests rarely go hand in hand with those of Europe's greats, who would rather put their heads under machetes outside mosques in the name of sick ideologies than look after the safety of their own mothers, wives and daughters. Recently, this has been clearly visible in Cologne, Hamburg, as well as in Berlin, which has been trying to paper over Arab banditry on German streets.”

Krzysztof Feusette, *Achtung, Polen!*, „Do Rzeczy” 2016, nr 9, s. 45.

# Polemic device

---



The cover of the *wSieci* weekly (2015, no. 38) depicting Ewa Kopacz in Arab dress with explosives around her waist; flames can be seen in the background. The caption reads: “Ewa Kopacz urządzi nam piekło na rozkaz Berlina” [Ewa Kopacz will make hell for us under orders from Berlin].

# Conclusions

---

- publications analyzed showed that words and phrases such as *Muslims, Arabs, migrants, refugees* were used interchangeably and often in conjunction with words such as *terrorism, terrorist, Islamist, fundamentalist, etc.*
- “negative thinking about Muslims” package: uncontrolled influx of Muslim immigrants + islamization + refugees’ attack + multiculturalism + clash of civilizations etc.

# Conclusions

---

- the image of Muslims was, in many cases, and for rhetorical reasons, a handy tool in arguments on other issues, e.g. Poland's sovereignty or decision-making mechanisms in the European Union, which was used to mobilize readers or the electorate
- radicalization of the public debate – divisive issues organize the debate -> politics

# Thank you!

Email: [adam.puczejda@kulturaliberalna.pl](mailto:adam.puczejda@kulturaliberalna.pl)  
[adam.puczejda@gmail.com](mailto:adam.puczejda@gmail.com)

