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## Collective memory and the cultural security

### Pamięć zbiorowa w kontekście bezpieczeństwa kulturowego

#### Streszczenie

Autor zwraca uwagę na problem nadmiaru i niedoboru pamięci zbiorowej jako wyobrażeń o przeszłości grupy. Wskazuje na „gęstość upamiętniania”, pamięć indywidualną i publiczną, dominującą i przeciwną, narzuconą i marginalną. Przedstawia różne interpretacje i rozumienie pamięci zbiorowej, problemy jej konstruowania, manipulowanie ją i ideologizację. Odróżnia pamięć zbiorową od historii, sytuując ją oraz poczucie bezpieczeństwa kulturowego w grupie podstawowych potrzeb rozwojowych człowieka i jego kultury.

Bezpieczeństwo kulturowe traktuje nie tylko jako brak zagrożeń w kultywowaniu tradycji ale także jako ustawiczną potrzebę prowadzenia działalności profilaktycznej i edukacyjnej. Ukazuje przykłady pamięci sprzyjające rozwojowi kultury grupy jak też doświadczenia i przeżycia pomijane przez główny nurt pamięci i tym samym powodujące utratę poczucia bezpieczeństwa kulturowego. Podkreśla, że lęki o bezpieczeństwo kulturowe, o utratę uznania są i były przyczyną wielu tragedii ludzkich, stąd edukacja międzykulturowa winna realizować zadania związane z niwelowaniem niebezpiecznego procesu ideologizacji narodu.

Słowa kluczowe: pamięć zbiorowa, bezpieczeństwo kulturowe, kultura, tożsamość, edukacja.

#### Abstract

The author pays attention to problems of the excess and the deficiency of collective memory, the latter understood as certain ideas of the past of given groups. He points to the “density of commemorating”, as well as individual, public, dominant, opposite, imposed and marginal types of memory. He introduces different interpretations and understanding of the collective memory, problems of its construction, manipulating by it, and the ideologization. He makes a clear distinction between collective memory and history, locating the first notion and the cultural sense of security within the group of the essential developmental needs of human and the culture.

Cultural security is treated not only as the lack in cultivating the tradition, but also as the constant need for preventive and educational activities. He portrays examples favouring the growth of the culture of a given group, pointing to experiences omitted by the mainstream of memory, consequently generating the loss of the cultural sense of security. The author emphasizes that anxiety linked to the cultural security, connected with the loss of the recognition, is the main cause of human tragedies, therefore cross-cultural education should perform tasks tightly linked to elimination of the hazardous process of ideologization of the nation.

Keywords: collective memory, cultural security, culture, identity, education.

I believe that the problem of collective memory is a phenomenon of great significance, tackled, among others, within the framework of hermeneutic thought, sociology, and understanding pedagogy. Manners of remembrance are connected with the whole range of emotions, as well as rational arguments. They exert essential influence on the identity of a contemporary man, processual character of the identity in interpreting the world, selection of its contents, the search for such content, interpretation, as well as attaching significance to it. Understanding and comprehending are fundamental for hermeneutics, whereas their accomplishment takes place through internal dialogue that one carries out on the basis of the external dialogue, what in turn conditions human existence in the world (Gadamer, 2004, p. 413 and next). Wojciech Burszta stresses that *“we used to live in the illusion that rationality and factual material are able to replace the ‘living processes’ which are taking place in the human memory. We forgot that it is not possible to hide all the demons stuck in every society, cyclically coming back to life. We are living now in the period when they all have become awoken. Moreover, they are being woken up deliberately!”* (Burszta, 2016, p. 9).

I think that at present we are dealing with the progressing process of the dominance of emotions, with the concurrent marginalisation of knowledge. We thought that activities within the range of cross-cultural education have brought changes to the spheres of cognitive and behavioural attitudes. It seemed that we were becoming more and more understanding and tolerant of each other, able to claim our rights based on rational arguments, understanding such prerogatives, and showing respect in this regard. Nonetheless, we can observe a sort of return to the past in the process of shaping identity of the contemporary generations, entailing abandonment of the critical thinking and resigning from the vision of a wider social perspective, contributing at the same time to the arousing mistrust towards one another, injustice, and resentments. Thus, I understand and acknowledge the stance of Burszta, who highlights that *“we lost the instinct of observing what is really happening to people, where the hate comes from, why people manifest their views differently, not communicating with each other”* (ibidem, p. 10).

As far as my opinion is concerned, the phenomenon of the collective memory is one of the key aspects of antagonizing cultures and people representing them, as it releases various levels of the cultural sense of security. Such conclusion results from numerous experiences and observation of diverse manifestations (reactions, behaviours and

activities) within this scope. Human behaviours and actions, as well as their attitudes, beliefs, principles and values orientating in life, can be understood in the context of the culture in which such individuals grew up, where they were able to acquire elements of the cultural legacy of the ancestors, carrying out and cultivating them without anxiety or fear. Thereby, **collective memory is established, i.e. a set of ideas of the past of a given group, entailing the pattern of commemorating given figures, events, and experiences from the past, accompanied by the discussion on character and the frequency of forms of commemorating, etc.** The momentum and particular care for given elements takes place with the concurrent resignation, denial, or even oblivion of other components. It leads to the dilemma of the “density of commemoration”, the meanings and symbolism assigned by one party in opposition to the other, including various governmental and non-governmental forms. It is accompanied by attaching meaning to the elements denied by the previous authority after the nationwide change in leadership. Yet, the problem occurs, when – as Paul Ricoeur points out (Ricoeur, 2007, p. 105–106) – a part of the society pays reverence and honour to the acts of violence, and when something for one is a source of joy and glory, whereas for others it implies humiliation and suffering.

Thus, we can observe the excess of the memory concerning certain events, contradicted with the deficiency of the memory of others. The issue of the relation between the excess and the deficiency of the collective memory can be interpreted in categories of resistance and compulsion of the repetition. According to Jacek Drozda *“the resistance has become an object of the common interest of scholars and journalists, as it reveals not only many crucial, but also previously partly hidden aspects of modern and postmodern societies, providing concurrently a chance to combine the analytical work with personal commitment and participation in the collective euphoria”* (Drozda, 2015, p. 43). The author, referring to the ethics of liberation by Enrique Dussel, indicates that the philosophy of liberation is rooted in the belief based on the encounter with the Other, and on the opening towards the Other, enabling the possibility of establishing more just social order. Such an idea requires from the individuals to recognize, respect, and even to promote the different culture, at the same time paying attention to the problem of existence, transmission, development and revitalization of the inherited culture, followed by the protection of own, unique values. In this context I clearly notice the dilemmas of the collective memory, securing elements crucial for the culture, cultural safety, commemorating, as well as the manners of the remembrance. It occurs that collective memory displays similar characteristics to the invented tradition. Both phenomena strive to acknowledge certain elements in the cultural legacy, revitalizing them and granting them value in the context of the current situation (i.e. anniversaries, signs, symbols, monuments in the public sphere, and etc). In that way a process of creation takes place, followed by inventing the tradition and assigning new meanings, both essential from the symbolic point of view of a given group. It implies a creation from the scratch in order to – for example – satisfy the needs of nationalist movements, or the activities of political institutions, as well as governmental or non-governmental organizations.

In the literature on the subject there are three types of invented traditions (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2008, p. 9–15):

1. The one establishing or symbolising social cohesion and collective identities,
2. The one establishing or legitimatising institutions and social hierarchies,
3. The one socialising people into particular social contexts.

These traditions constitute one of the key elements of the contemporary nation-states, as each nation tries to underline its longevity, embedment, and cultural significance. Collective memory is consciously used and shaped for the purpose of meeting the interest of particular political group. **The problems reside in the way the group perceives itself and the way it constructs its collective identity, i.e. whether it lays claims to the special treatment in relation to other groups, states, nations, in what scope and to what degree it is homogeneous in the way of perceiving oneself in relation to others, and last but not least – what does it differ in?** Traditions strive not to lose their power in the awareness of the citizens. Therefore, they are frequently and deliberately constructed, imposed upon members of a given community, whether it concerns different minorities, or the entire nation. They can be imposed institutionally by the group or the ruling party, state institutions or educational system, thereby serving the purpose of legitimizing the power, stimulating the sense of collective identity, bond, awareness of the common past, common destinies, symbols, figures, authorities, events, and etc.

Starting from the 19th century, i.e. from the coming into existence of the modern nation-states, collective memory has become a tool of constructing and supporting collective identities. When defining collective memory, the majority of authors pay attention to the individual and public memory, at the same time differentiating its dominant, main, imposed, opposite, and marginal types. Piotr Tadeusz Kwiatkowski points to the fact that in the course of the past several years there have been numbers of publications tackling the issue of collective memory (Kwiatkowski, 2008). In my opinion, amongst many of the proposals, particular attention should be drawn to the manner of presenting collective memory by Barbara Szacka (2006, p. 44–45), who considers it as a multidimensional phenomenon entailing:

- » dynamic system of the ideas on the past of own group constructed by its members,
- » contents of diverse character and varied genesis,
- » interactions and the involvement in public activities, participation in the discussions concerning the legacy, exchanging experiences in this regard, etc.

On the other hand, Michel Foucault analysed connections between the collective memory and the power, considering the first phenomenon as an idealized idea of the past of a given group, rooted and subject to reconstruction, depending on the current needs and circumstances. The existence and cultivation of such memory are conditioned by the power of the group exercising authority, the group shaping the mainstream of memory and tackling the issue of solving the ongoing conflict with the so-called “opposite memory”. Foucault emphasized, for instance, that the war events are presented according to the official formal regulations established by the state bodies, i.e. the considerable part of the narration is to be omitted, or doomed to oblivion. He also drew attention to the collective memory as a tool of dominance, applying various versions of the past, followed by a sophisticated pattern of its transmission, control over such transmission, and creation of the memory. Foucault brought attention to

the fact that higher education constitutes a part of the “social process of producing the memory”. In such a way and due to its prestige it can perform exceptional role, implying a common way of perceiving the past, as well as indicating the line of enquiry concerning it. He introduced the term “dominant memory” which links the perception of the past to the influence it exerts on individual persons, communities, groups, making reference to persuasion, relationships with the apparatus of power, dominating institutions, and the like. Within the framework of one country there can be a problem of domination by one memory, yet it can also encompass different forms of such memory, subject to specific dynamics and constant transformations. Communities can change the shape of the dominant memory, adding new elements considered significant under given social and political circumstances. Hence, the key issues entail what we consider significant, who recognizes it, what are – if they are any – differences between the groups, what kind of conflicts occur within, and why. The memory imposed by institutions at a central level embraces the entire nation, therefore Foucault stresses that educational system is one of the tools of constructing dominant memory in this regard (Pletnia, 2015).

Apart from central institutions, as for the public media, mass culture, private and grass-roots initiatives (associations, organizations, foundations, local self-government, and etc) they all matter greatly in forming collective memory, shaping the so-called “popular memory”. I would like to point out that collective memory is most effective when all these elements harmonize with each other, and when a close cooperation takes place between state institutions, media and the system of education. Political ideologies are tightly linked to the process of formulating collective memory, for political dominance is connected with the process of formulating ideas (visions) of the past. It should therefore come as no surprise that collective memory is subject to manipulation, as accentuated by Paul Ricoeur. He claimed that collective memory can become subject to ideologization, i.e. consciously becoming a part of the process of constructing collective identity by the means of the so-called “selective narration”. The latter attaches positive meaning to given elements of the culture (relevant figures) and negative to others, thus becoming a tool of legitimizing the current power. Frequently, the narration is constructed in a way, and in order to, portray positive links between the past and the present. Ricoeur pointed to the institutional memory, referring to it as the “taught memory”, or a memory extorted in the educational process encompassing anniversaries, celebration of various (national) holidays, presence of symbols in the public sphere, etc (ibidem).

As already mentioned, collective memory is linked to different forms of commemorating, yet **the history of places is not the same as the memory about them. History is reconstruction, thus the memory is accomplished and triggered in given, specific situations, conditions, circumstances, and period of time.** Therefore, all forms of commemoration perform significant function for the collective identity of the group. Spontaneity and variety constitute the essence of the memory. The latter can disappear and appear, be rebuilt, modified, or revitalized, referring to problems of experiencing fears and anxiety, concerning peace and the sense of safety, as well as growth and prospect for the future. **The memory creates ideas, concepts, institutions, but also forms role models, authority and cultural texts in order to**

**provide the cultural sense of security for the group, followed in the process of shaping identity by the conviction on values of the group and welfare. In this context I perceive cultural security and collective memory through the prism of the group of human needs, such as the essential developmental, activity-related, existential, creative, as well as cultural ones.** Notwithstanding, it should be bore in mind that cultural sense of security is not homogeneous. On one hand, it encompasses motivation for creating the memory (mainly of institutional, organised, and national origin), followed by satisfaction from its realization and attachment of indispensable value to such memory. Yet, on the other hand, a process of resignation and escape from remembering and creating of the collective memory can take place in the view of the lack of threats, or the lack of the need for continuation, or/and transmission. It, consequently, generates the problem of the awareness and considering the cultural legacy valuable, i.e. the issue of its recognition as a value, what – irrespective of the sense of security – makes others organise themselves, gather, establish associations or foundations (which can support the cause and secure the state, government, European and worldwide organisations), or quite the contrary – such problems can result in lack of attention, lack of support and no protection for cultural rights of the citizens of given countries.

Considering the above, I believe that the cultural sense of security, and presence – or absence – of the sense of thereat in this regard are dynamic, unpredictable, subject to change in the time, depending on the political, economic, and even military context. It is accompanied by a subjective conviction on the existence of threats or their lack. The latter, however, is not equivalent to its objective existence in fact. The essence of the sense of cultural security is the expression of the identity, the guarantee of freedom within the forms of cultural expression, tradition, religion, and last but not least – liberation from the restrictions in cultivating own culture. **Cultural security implies not only the lack of threats, but also preventive activities not allowing such treats to occur, creating conditions and situations where culture can be fulfilled, developed and fully accomplished.** It implies on one hand protection, yet on the other the growth, cultivation, enculturation and adaptation to new conditions are strongly favoured.

I acknowledge the fact that collective memory is not permanent, hence subject to transformations. Namely, some elements become indispensable, whereas others are subject to oblivion and withdrawal. This, in turn, entails the issue of their value and the emotional level of engagement of the members of such culture in the memory narrations. It is subject to involvement from the educational system, so that a joint perception of the reality in the context of the pursued policy can be created and shaped. Certain events from the past, irrespective of whether their witnesses live or not, can provide a ground for the narration concerning the past of the group, becoming a key component in their collective identity. It is subject to the manner how they are passed on to next generations, i.e. whether as traumatic, tragic, or – quite the contrary – noble and joyful events.

The institutional collective memory also generates symbolic violence, understood by Pierre Bourdieu as the process of imposing meanings in such a way that they become bidding and ‘natural’ in the public reception. The processes of imposing and relation

of power within both remain hidden (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 60). Therefore, functions of the collective memory are crucial, for they are treated as the tool of uniting members of a given community, and as the tool of creating national identity through the belief concerning the shared, exceptional origin. Reference to historical events, followed by their propaganda upon given celebrations sanctioned by the state, directs towards the feeling of historical community thus can become one of the key elements of the cultural syntagma, determining the uniqueness of a given, national culture. Memory about certain events can acquire features of an indispensable, indigenous value, as accentuated by Jerzy Smolicz, since preserving the culture and strong feeling of the national identity both condition its existence (Smolicz, 1990). However, there is also the “opposite memory” besides the mainstream, treated often as a memory of the minority groups, which is not always taken into account in the “main memory”. It has its source in the local community, stemming from the direct experience of this group. This allows to draw attention to other experiences, which are most often omitted within the framework of the mainstream memory.

In such context, I would like to tackle the narration of the “opposite memory”, exemplified by, among others, a statement of Olga Tokarczuk, living nearby Wrocław, in the town of Nowa Ruda. In one of TV programmes, making reference to the literary Nike prize award she received in 2015 for a historical novel “Księgi Jakubowe” she said: *“we will have to face our own history and try to re-write a bit, not hiding these all terrible things which we did as colonizers, i.e. the national majority which suppressed the minority, as slaveholders or the murderer of Jews”*. This, and other statements of such manner, direct the thinking and reactions of many people towards the phenomenon of cultural security, and this is also what happened. The right-wing web portals were outdoing each other in expressing hatred towards the writer, accusing her of anti-Polonism. She was warned she would never feel safe in Poland again, and referred to as “the Jewish rag, Ukrainian harlot...”, and etc. “Księgi Jakubowe” is a piece of work portraying the reality of the eighteenth-century Poland, and this is far from the Sienkiewicz-like glorification of the age of Vasa dynasty, i.e. the mainstream, institutional memory. As Tokarczuk remarked, she was ashamed that the serfdom was abolished as late as in the 19th century under the pressure of invaders, accompanied by the hostile attitudes of the “real” Poles. As she also said, she observed with terror the permanence of the anti-Semitism during the times of the Polish People’s Republic. Pope Francis reminds of the commandment “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”, openly calling to the aid for refugees, whereas our Polish Catholics refer to him as a naïve, old man. Writing about the 18th century, Olga Tokarczuk emphasizes the permanence of our national superstitions, as well as the permanence of the hostility towards others.

It all leads to the dilemma whether we should consider these problems in our collective memory, or – as far as the sense of well-being is concerned – rather forget them. In my opinion, educational process should embrace these issues, and they shall become a part of the collective memory shared by all the members of community. The opposite memory acknowledges and pays attention to the events, which have been denied and sunk into oblivion because of their contradictory character, compared to the mainstream. Wojciech Burszta underlines that *“in the sphere of mentality we are frozen at the stage of the myth of the society, which is of patriarchal and post-slavery*

character... *We still preserve the myth of national identity which directly refers to the noble concept of the nation and visions of the chosen nation*" (Burszta, 2016, p. 8).

In the context of the social and political changes taking place constantly, certain statements acquire new meaning, becoming more and more dangerous, and – as a result – a matter of concern. For instance, I can recall here the statement of one of the Members of Parliament claiming we should require from atheists, members of the Orthodox church and Muslims declarations they are familiar with, and undertake to fully respect the Polish Constitution, recognizing values considered in Poland important. Consequently, lack of execution of these requirements should provide a clear-cut reason for the deportation. In view of this statement many questions about the cultural sense of security arise. It should come therefore as no surprise that the representatives of The Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius of the Orthodox church reacted accordingly, replying that such a statement violates the freedom guaranteed for every citizen of our country, their dignity and respect. Words of such kind expressed by this politician have nothing to do with the Gospel, nor the Christian faith. They are simply the hate speech, revealing blindness, complexes and pride. They prove to be marked with hate, intolerance and religious fanaticism.

The current disturbing phenomenon of undermining the paradigm of coexistence of people representing various cultures, also entailing the culture of thinking and acting in favour of others, is becoming evident. However, there are no other potentialities of growth than through experiencing other cultures, as only in such way it is possible to understand own culture, one's place and role within. It should be remembered that the contemporary man, as Bogusław Śliwerski highlights, is inherently a part of *"...the pluralistic society, diversity of cultures, values, systems of the orientation and organizational structures, experiencing on one hand the right to different behaviours, tendencies and identifications, driven by different interests and values, and on the other coming into conflict with that multitude and contradictory criteria towards own views or stances, becoming aware of the effort, or even the lack of the agreement or conciliation"*. The author points out that being a pedagogue of the democracy implies explicit stance in favour of *"the deep diversity of the everyday world of life, permanence of the heterogeneity, the multitude of paradigms, cultures, spheres of science, and politics"* (Śliwerski, 2014, p. 26).

In my opinion, current issues in this regard tackle the mutual respect and recognition, releasing on one hand the defensive energy protecting own cultural identity, and on the other encouraging to maintain an ongoing dialogue with the representatives of different cultures in order to learn the humbleness, empathy, and common, critical sense, avoiding fanaticism in consequence. I think that in the context of the cultural sense of security, local collective memories used to be, and still are, subject to distinct contradictions, generating conflicts. For example, after reading the stories on the Augustów man-hunt, i.e. one of the greatest post-war tragedies in our country, often referred to as the second Katyń (Stalinist crime from July 1945) and so far unexplained, it is hard to understand and explain human behaviours stored in the collective memory (Kaczorowska, 2015). There are seven documentaries presenting the genuine experiences of many people, their dramas, tragic fates, and suffering. Many of them remember, suffer and still wait for explanation (investigation), and to be indicated

places where their beloved ones had been buried. Analysing the experiences and actions of people in the context of cultural security one is unable to understand for example such a man, who being involved in the Armia Krajowa (Home Army) and as an eager Catholic, at some point became a thug. He was able to slaughter in a bestial way the closest co-workers from the undercover resistance community. During the “Hunts” he accompanied the Soviet secret police in making lists and appointing victims. Thus, in such view we should make analyses and interpretations of the actions and behaviours taking place nowadays, reflecting over how members of the ethnic or religious groups feel towards stigmatizing statements and hostile behaviours. For example, the Belarusian community in Hajnówka and nearby places has recently been experiencing clearly manifested hostility given the existing controversies linked to the period of the Second World War. The lack of sense of security of this group predominantly results from the organization and course of the patriotic marches taking place last year on the occasion of the National Remembrance Day of the “Cursed Soldiers” of the Polish Home Army (the Day established in 2011). In Hajnówka and the nearby places the problem concerns the “good and bad memory” regarding Romuald Adam Rajs, *nom de guerre* “Bury”, the commander of a unit that burnt the villages of Zaleszany, Zanie, and Szpaki, murdering in a forest thirty cart drivers in January 1946. From an investigation conducted in the years 1997–2005 by IPN (The Institute’s of National Remembrance) it shows that the unit carried out executions of seventy-nine persons, including women and children of Belorussian origin, followers of the Orthodox church. It was proved that on one hand “Bury” was a distinguished soldier of the Home Army, yet on the other he was the commander who carried out executions on civilians. The public prosecutor conducting the investigation collected testimonies of 169 witnesses of the events, members of the families of victims, as well as former soldiers of the commander’s unit. After having performed the analysis of documents from those times he stated that felonies are of the ethnic cleansing nature. Yet, on one hand we deal with a constantly vivid memory of the residents of these villages and the region, and on the other we witness annulling charges concerning pacifications of the villages (the decision of the court and the act revoking sentences towards persons victimised for the activities for the independent Polish state). It has been acknowledged that they had acted under the circumstances of absolute necessity which forced them to take not always ethically explicit actions. Therefore, the family received compensation and “Bury” became a part of the group of the “Cursed Soldiers”. In the documentary “Sieroża”, Jerzy Kalina – a journalist of a TV Bielsat, points to the constantly vivid collective local memory, memory of families and closest relatives, which is not acknowledged nor respected, particularly during the celebration of the Day of the Cursed Soldiers. It is evident that some disregard the IPN investigation results, recognizing exclusively rehabilitation of “Bury”, i.e. the decision of the military tribunal. Therefore, they organize meetings with young people, teaching about the activities of this unit in the region in the past, portraying “Bury” as a role model for pupils, at the same time omitting facts provided by The Institute’s of National Remembrance.

In January 2016, members of the ONR (National Radical Camp) Białystok and National Hajnówka, prior to 70th the anniversary of the pacification of the villages, declared a joint organisation of the 1st Hajnówka March of the Cursed Soldiers, posting

on Facebook the image of “Bury”. In the Facebook invitation the organizers wrote: “it is easy to manifest in cities, where authorities and the local population are largely sympathetic to the subject matter of the Cursed Soldiers. Yet, revering the memory of the indomitable in places, where the communist propaganda is still functioning, requires courage”.

In the context of the tackled subject, I would like to pay attention to the occurring process of the revitalization of contradictory memories in this cultural region and borderland of cultures (as well as in others). A little group of persons with the priest of Orthodox church went out to meet members of those marching to pay homage to the Cursed Soldiers, disapproving of such approach to the memory of the murdered victims. They carried icons and the inscriptions “*worshiping persons like “Bury” is a stupidity or provocation*”. I think that in the process of the ideologization of the nation we miss the local problems of the collective memory, not making effort to respect the human fate, nor reflecting over the human suffering and over the sense of justice of other people, i.e. Polish citizens of other faith or nationality. In view of the principles of cross-cultural education, we should more often analyze, make reflection and inquire how our citizens of other faith or other nationality feel in terms of their sense of cultural security, how they fulfil themselves as citizens, and whether indigenous, personal values can be cultivated without anxieties or fears. It should be also thought over whether they can cultivate their cultural legacy, pay homage and give reverence to their ancestors that have for centuries lived in that area, and contributed to the development of the culture in this culturally diverse borderland. Thus, in the forthcoming years cross-cultural (and intercultural) education should undertake and perform tasks of this type, i.e. within the framework of eliminating dangerous, in my opinion, processes of the ideologization of nation. As Rev. Leon Dyczewski concludes “*the ideologization of own nation is a transition from recognizing it as the core social and cultural value to a superior value, assigning to it all the excellence and dominance, followed by the conviction of being the chosen ones, accompanied by the sense of the mission towards other ethnic groups, resulting in ethnocentrism, megalomania, nationalism, xenophobia, and chauvinism. By so, the nation, acquiring the highest social and cultural values in the consciousness of its members, takes form of the superior political worth. Thus, it demands to strengthen its position within the framework of the state it exists, and amongst other nations. In majority of cases it is accompanied by the Manichaeian division of the ethnic groups and nations between good and bad, developed and undeveloped, friendly and hostile*” (Dyczewski, 1993, p. 24).

Fears concerning cultural security and the loss of recognition for centuries have contributed to human tragedies, which we should remember. It should be bore in mind, especially that the human “*...constantly remains in contacts with strangers (Others). Since the range of such contacts has significantly increased, the extension of own culture became a natural necessity (...) yet, it is possible only through revealing the rules, according to which it functions*” (Hall, 1984, p. 7). Such opening is possible through the process of sensitizing, understanding the past, and memories encrypted in the past. Hence, in the recent years I have been paying particular attention to the problem of the awareness, as well as to the individual and collective memory, so that such situations would not repeat itself like, for example, the one presented by Bohdan Korzeniewski

(1993). The author writes that *“pondering over our times, it is clear that the memories grew from anxiety, and will probably last for some years, if not for centuries. Such times arise amazement best expressed by hands pressed to the mouth and eyes asking ‘how it could have happened’. I wish people reading these pages made such a gesture of terror”* (ibidem). Korzeniewski analyzes the issue of crudenesses and barbarities, in a similar manner as Albert Schweitzer, awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize, the author of the principle of life reverence, ethics of the reverence for life, and the phenomenon of neoprimitivism (Schweitzer, 1981). He shows that the barbarity applies its unique system of values, extremely different from ours. *“When we opt for freedom, it goes for authority, where we express mercy, it applies cruelty, where we display sympathy, it shows off loud and brutal mockery”* (Korzeniewski, op. cit., p. 12).

Presenting own curriculum vitae, Felicja Raszkin-Nowak (2008) constantly poses the question, makes reflections and attempts to find response in the face of a terrible fate she experienced. She writes how insignificant were the real values of the mind and heart, how much depended on the appearances, but first of all on the origin and religion. Analysing the problems of the hosts giving her shelter, she remarks that each and every authority punished them for the act of coming to the human's aid, despite the fact all good deeds are the duty of every man. She shows how her identity was taken away from her, how she became deprived of citizenship, making her entire family no longer the citizens of the state in which they had been born. In the end, after 1968 everything was made so that the memories were the worst possible. She wonders why she herself and many others lost their lives, although their energy and work could have been utilised better. She portrays the system of degrading the defenceless people only because they were Jews. She presents people forced to tragic choices of sacrificing one for another, with the false hopes that somebody can perhaps survive.

I think that there will always be the issue of the honour of given nations and the problem of shame, disgraceful moments in history, as well as moments worth the reverence. I also believe that the role of the education is to support in facing various periods of the history in a range and manner we regard appropriate, in accordance with our national conscience and collective memory. Hence, it is of paramount importance to establish conditions and situations favourable for the above context. I have been repeatedly paying attention to the process of creating the “good memory” in contacts with the Lithuanians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians. Yet, in order to build upon it, one should confront the “bad memory”. I believe that we have nowadays favourable conditions to prepare children and young people to live in a multicultural society, to arrange encounters of the dominant culture with the culture of the minority, for we enjoy the natural possibilities to accomplish oneself according to the principles of tolerance, respect of differences, shaping attitudes of approval, sensitivity, empathy, and so on. Children have the chance to understand own culture through the contacts with others, eliminating unwillingness and fears towards them, acquiring dialogic skills in the communication with others, promoting own culture and tradition, emphasizing the importance and the value of own culture in interaction with others. The issue is, however, why we use these abilities to such a small degree and range, why motivation for work in such field is weakened comparing to the first post-Solidarity years, why we do not establish conditions showing to pupils the abundance of various cultures,

we do not prepare for dialogic interactions, we do not teach to perceive other cultures as sources of knowledge and the value, why we do not teach to understand the causes for various (cultural) conflicts, or to approach problems of the world creatively, so that the growing children were able and wanted to take the active and creative participation in the peaceful process of negotiating conflicts?

Well, perhaps the answer lies in the fact that we ourselves have not developed cross-cultural communication competencies, so we are unable to be driven by empathy, respect, and principles of tolerance. We have not learnt interpersonal abilities, openness in the process of getting to know others, nor cognitive flexibility while processing information. Mirosław Sobecki rightly notices that “*Despite of rich traditions of multiculturalism in Poland, there has been no sensible scheme established that would change the awareness of the entire generations towards recognition of values stemming from contact with the difference*” (Sobecki, 2016, p. 277).

In my opinion there is a disturbing phenomenon manifesting itself as a dangerous activation of indoctrination, that takes place at public schools on number of occasions. For example, one of the issues of the “*Szczecin Voice*” described a situation of the public primary school in Lubczyn. Running of this facility was entrusted to the Saint Faustina Foundation. The chairwoman of the Foundation took up the post of the headmaster and introduced new rules: compulsory prayers during breaks, checking children’s sandwiches on Fridays, investigating whether all teachers live in sacramental relationships. The school motto is the statement by the Rev. Piotr Skarga “*timid Catholics are the most harmful, as they do not burn the just and saint flame in the defence of the reverence of God, lacking zeal and standing as scarecrows*”. It seems irrelevant that the constitution clearly states that while teaching religion at schools no freedom of conscience or confession of others can be violated. The religious education scheme (*Directorium Directorium cant, ionsnnessesas lyl that the atechisticum*) implies that “*as a part of teaching religion at school one should undertake tasks of the new evangelization or the pre-evangelization, with reference to the unbaptized or those lacking contact with the church*”. It proves that in reality the scheme surpasses constitution, i.e. there are crosses hanging in the class rooms, the school year starts and finishes with the Holy Mass services, the course of teaching is subject to regular interferences because of the retreat, preparations for the First Holy Communion or confirmation, and etc. Polistrefa Foundation for Diversity prepared a report “*Between tolerance and discrimination*”, pointing to how the situation unfolds in this regard at schools of the Lesser Poland voivodship. The report is accessible online and I shall not discuss it here. I only wish to mention that it contains, among others, the analysis of the text books for Polish and history. Summing up, for instance, the Enlightenment is referred to as the age which contributed to the disturbance of human minds and sowed doubts into the real faith.

ZHP (The Polish Scouting and Guiding Association), which as the secular organization should be friendly towards atheistic children and youth, provides another example. In the oath, the teenagers declare that “*The scout loves God and Poland*”. Next, the boy scouts announce they have a sincere will to serve with their entire life to God and Poland. Until the mid-1990s ZHP had two versions of the oath, i.e. for the religious believers, and for the atheists without appealing to God, but then the latter was

cancelled on the ground of the “unhealthy dualism”. I would also like to draw attention to the process of acquisition of other spaces. I think that non-Catholics can also experience problems with adoption of children. In 2011 public adoption centres were handed over to local authorities, i.e. marshals of provinces or district administrators. They, in turn, willingly “got rid” of this duty for the sake of foundations or Catholic institutions. At present, ¼ of institutions are Catholic centres, where specific principles are in force, e.g. providing certification from the parish priest that the parents-candidates practice Catholicism, certificate of the church wedding, declaration that children will be raised in a Catholic faith, and so on.

The above cannot be ignored nor shall lack firm reaction within the educational process, as this is our obligation to shape and instill cross-cultural competencies, which “...are more important than ever, as they allow to acknowledge and get to know the causes of some most troublesome issues affecting the modern societies particularly in the view that discrimination, racism, and hate speech lie at the bottom of the cultural, social, ethnic and other differences” (Brotto & Huber & Karwacka-Vogele & Neuner & Ruffino & Teutsch, 2014, p. 5).

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