

**FROM HOMOGENISATION TO ‘MULTICULTURALISM’:
SOCIALIST AND POSTSOCIALIST NATIONALITY
POLICY AND PRACTICE IN POLAND (1944-2010)**

DE LA HOMOGENEIZACIÓN AL «MULTICULTURALISMO»:
POLÍTICA Y PRÁCTICA DE LA NACIONALIDAD EN LA
POLONIA SOCIALISTA Y POSTSOCIALISTA (1944-2010)

Michael Fleming

Academy of Humanities and Economics, Lodz

Entregado el 30-6-2011 y aceptado el 18-1-2012

Abstract: This paper charts the shifts in Polish nationality policy in the period since 1944. The first part focuses on the ways the PPR (Polish Workers' Party) and later the PZPR (Polish United Workers' Party) pursued national homogeneity through population transfer, programmes of 'Polonisation' and assimilation, in the broader context of post-war and Cold War geopolitics, as well as recurring legitimacy crises. The second part of the paper discusses the limits to postsocialist 'multicultural' policy and practice by calling attention to the new logics of cultural homogenisation dominant under contemporary neo-liberalism. The paper discusses the relationship between changing values and the management of social anger in order to explain the contemporary cartographies of privileged / marginalised cultural communities and practices. Through an exploration of the logics of cultural homogenisation, the paper highlights: a. the particularities of the Polish case, b. the specificity of postsocialism and c. the manner in which the Polish experience relates to, and parallels, processes of cultural homogenisation elsewhere.

Key words: Cultural homogenisation, nationality, Poland, xxth century.

Resumen: Este artículo recorre los cambios en la política de nacionalidad polaca desde 1944. La primera parte se centra en las maneras en que el PPR

(Partido de los Trabajadores Polaco) y después el PZPR (Partido de los Trabajadores Unidos Polaco) persiguieron la homogeneización nacional a través de transferencias de población, programas de «polonización» y asimilación, en el contexto amplio de la geopolítica de posguerra y Guerra Fría y de repetidas crisis de legitimidad. La segunda parte trata los límites de la política multicultural postsocialista para llamar la atención sobre nuevas lógicas de homogeneización cultural bajo el neoliberalismo reciente. El artículo plantea la relación entre cambio de valores y gestión de la ira social para explicar las cartografías contemporáneas de comunidades y prácticas culturales privilegiadas/marginadas. A través de la exploración de las lógicas de la homogeneización cultural el artículo incide en a) las particularidades del caso polaco, b) la especificidad del postcomunismo y c) la manera en que la experiencia polaca se relaciona con otros procesos de homogeneización cultural.

Palabras clave: Homogeneización cultural, nacionalidad, Polonia, siglo XX.

Introduction

In this paper I wish to compare and contrast the processes of cultural homogenisation in socialist and postsocialist Poland in order to better understand the Polish case and highlight parallels and connections with other places. I also hope to isolate processes that transcend the state's boundaries and that are operative at the local, regional and global scales. A goal of cultural homogenisation, according to Conversi (2010:720), 'has often been to seek congruence between ethnic and political boundaries; that is, to forge cohesive, unified communities of citizens under governmental control'. And while homogenisation is a socio/political process, the assumed endpoint, homogeneity, as Conversi (2010:720) notes, is an ideological construct. The policies put in place to achieve such homogeneity have ranged from cultural homogenisation, in the sense of the state fostering greater homogeneity within its territory by encouraging / requiring assimilation to hegemonic norms through the standardisation of linguistic practices, universal education, military conscription, discourses of nationalism, amongst others; to the practice of ethnic cleansing whereby those deemed outside the conceived boundaries of ethnicity or nation are physically removed and, at the extreme, genocide, where non-members of a particular nation / ethnicity are physically liquidated. For Conversi (2007:388), '[c]ultural homogenisation is largely a subtractive process, involving the negation of the existence of separate groups, cultures, beliefs, languages, traditions and ideas within the same polity', indicating that any analysis of cultural homogenisation requires the examination of the mechanism(s) of subtraction.

However, it is important to note that the pursuit of homogeneity in itself is not always the primary aim of homogenisation policy. Other goals, such as greater economic efficiency, greater state control over a territory, increased ease of governance and power over the citizenry play important roles. In addition, as Ugur Ümit Üngör (2011:7) has recently argued, 'the dynamic of the state system' as constituted by nation-states 'is towards more homogenization'. This homogenising drift, unplanned, and produced dialectically between the general population and the political elite in the face of modernity's challenges (including increased speed of communication, changing divisions of labour, new relations of social production and reproduction) form an important backdrop to understanding the homogenisation policies articulated by political elites as they attempt to shape the present and the future. Üngör's (2011) reiteration of the connec-

tion between modernity (in particular, the development of the modern nation state and inter-state competition) and the pursuit of homogenisation is timely and his case study has many parallels with the historic experience of twentieth century East-Central Europe in general and Poland in particular.

But before exploring the varied methods of seeking cultural homogenisation in socialist and postsocialist Poland it is important to recognise a fundamental difference in the way in which governance and power in socialist countries and liberal democratic ones are apprehended by the populace. David Ost (2005) has recently argued that, since the party in socialist society (i.e. Communist Party) claims to control everything, power is transparent. Everyone knows that ultimately the party is responsible. In contrast, in liberal democratic societies power is opaque as the 'invisible hand' of the market makes it difficult to identify who, exactly, is responsible for social, political, economic and cultural difficulties and challenges. This has some important implications both for the management of social anger, which refers to the negative emotions that are created by every social system (Ost 2005, 21), and the manner in which cultural homogenisation practices are actually manifested. As noted above, cultural homogenisation practices vary, but they can, in part, be seen as serving particular social goals: firstly, as Ernest Gellner (1983) noted, they often form constituent elements of economic development (industrialisation) through, for example, mass compulsory education, and secondly, these practices help regulate and direct the social anger concomitant to the normal operation of the social system being discussed, in this case socialist and postsocialist systems respectively.

The key claim that I advance in this paper is that processes of cultural homogenisation can play an important role in sustaining the dominant social relations and organising the social anger regime that those social relations inevitably produce. As Ost (2005:21) notes, political authorities play a key role in defining 'what feelings we are able to express and how'. Identifying the *object* (national, ethnic, class identities, for instance) of homogenising pressures therefore provides a guide to the functioning of a particular social system.

Recent scholarship on the socialist regimes of East-Central Europe has drawn attention to the nationalist policies and practices of the various communist parties of those states in the aftermath of the Second World War. Mevius (2005), for example, talks of 'patriotic socialism' in the region and argues that what may be described as the ethno-nationalism of

the various communist parties was an attempt to secure a modicum of legitimacy from populations which frequently, and with good reason, saw the communists as 'agents of Moscow'.

In Poland, Marcin Zaremba (2001) has highlighted the nationalism of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR). Brubaker's (1996) 'nationalising nationalism' in the context of post-war East-Central Europe has been discussed and analysed from a range of perspectives. In addition, the difference between centrifugal and centripetal aspects of PPR nationality policy has been explored in order to highlight the manner in which homogenising policies and practice are intimately connected with the way governing elites (in this case the PPR) attempt to manage social anger and stabilise (regulate) society's social relations (Fleming, 2010). 'Patriotic socialism' therefore should not simply be understood as a response of communist parties to establish some link with the population or to counter claims that the communists were emissaries of Moscow, rather 'patriotic socialism' was the key method by which social anger was managed in societies where that anger was automatically directed against the communist party since it claimed to control everything —from work and housing to transport and leisure—. In short, 'patriotic socialism' has to be seen as a response to the transparency of power, which not only affirmed the ethnic core population, but provided 'legitimate' targets for antipathy —mainly national and ethnic minorities—.

In contrast, in the postsocialist period, policies have been put in place in order to protect national minority communities. These have taken shape as the countries of East-Central Europe have joined institutions such as the Council of Europe, NATO, the EU, amongst others, which have emphasised that adherence to European 'norms' of tolerance is crucial. A new minority rights regime has been established in Europe as signalled by the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995). In this new regime social anger has to be managed, and exclusions explained and justified, by political and social leaders and activists.

David Ost (2005:180), in the context of Poland, argues that Solidarity activists through the 1990s supported the redirection of social anger at the decline in living conditions to symbolic and mythical figures such as 'communists, crypto-communists, liberals, non-believers, 'foreigners' (often defined as Poles who did not fit «Polish Catholic» norms), criminals, and other assorted «aliens»'. Throughout the postsocialist period the (re) direction of social anger has been fairly complex, not only reproducing in

a new context the socialist practice of targeting minorities (for example, the phenomenon of antisemitism in the absence of a significant Jewish minority (Ambrosewicz-Jacobs and Orla-Bukowska, 1998)) and narrowing the scope of Polish authenticity, but also reconfiguring values around lifestyle, work and class identities. Indeed, arguably, the current political opposition of the culturally conservative Law and Justice party and pluralist Civic Platform can be understood, at least in part, as a debate as to exactly where social anger should be directed, which cultures require either homogenising to the mainstream or exclusion from the social / political body. As I will argue later, the two positions in this debate are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but can be seen as complementary in that they both inhibit the expression of anger in an appropriate economic direction. The consequence is that the advancement of neoliberalisation is not challenged, even though neoliberal processes are fundamental to the structural formation of contemporary social anger.¹

In the second part of this paper I will map out some of this complexity, highlighting the very real limits of current 'multiculturalism' as processes of cultural homogenisation continue to operate, to regulate and to direct social anger. But first I consider processes of cultural homogenisation in the Polish People's Republic.

Legitimizing cultural homogenisation

Processes of cultural homogenisation in post-war Poland can be approached in several ways. Firstly, due weight has to be given to the post-war context and the regional geo-political configuration; secondly, attention needs to be paid to the historical context which placed primacy on the formation of nation-states after the perceived failure of the League of Nations minority rights regime; thirdly, awareness of the varying roles and goals of key actors in the country such as the Roman Catholic Church, as well as the Polish Workers' Party is required; and fourthly, the actions and inactions of the population in Poland have to be considered.

¹ Following Peck and Tickell (2003:168) neoliberalisation is here conceived as the 'mobilisation of state power in the contradictory extension and reproduction of market (-like) rule'

Minorities as a problem

Through the second half of the Polish Second Republic national minorities were increasingly conceived of as being problematic, a tendency accentuated by the increased influence of national democratic thinking within the polity. In 1934, for instance, Colonel Beck (Polish Foreign Minister) declared before the League of Nation's assembly that 'pending the introduction of a general and uniform system for the protection of minorities my Government is compelled to refuse...all cooperation with international organizations in the matter of supervision of the application by Poland of the system of minority protection'. In 1935, the small Communist Party of Poland shifted its position on nationality issues to become less supportive of minorities, especially in relation to those in northern Poland and Silesia. This was due to the changing international climate, where it was politic for the party to distance itself from any German minority secessionist demands, as well as a desire to broaden the party's appeal in the fight against Fascism. However, where geopolitical demands were less pressing, vocal support for minorities was still expressed, such as in May 1936 at the Congress of Cultural Workers in multiethnic Lwów (Shore 2006:128). However, the shift in the general policy of the Communist Party was indicative of a more pronounced movement against minorities in Poland that became increasingly evident as the 1930s wore on.

Toleration of minority populations collapsed during the war, as reports sent to the Polish Government in Exile in London by Jan Karski in 1940 and Roman Knoll in 1943 indicate. In a January 1941 letter to Stanisław Kot, Prince Radziwill noted that the broadcast of the Polish Minister of Information, Stanisław Stroński, in which Stroński promised equal rights for Jews in post-war Poland 'made a disastrous impression in Poland, even among the workmen belonging to the Polish Socialist Party'.²

At the international level, there was support from all the allies fighting the Axis powers for the creation of homogeneous nation-states in East-Central Europe by 1944. There were no voices calling for the re-establishment of the League of Nations' regime of minority protection. Winston Churchill famously endorsed population expulsions from Poland once the war had been won in a speech to the House of Commons on 15th December 1944.

² FO 371/26723 C278 (9th January 1941).

Expulsion is the method which, so far as we have been able to see, will be the most satisfactory and lasting. There will be no mixture of populations to cause endless trouble...A clean sweep will be made.³

German minorities were conceived as being part of a fifth column easing Nazi conquest in East-Central Europe. The leader of the Polish Government in Exile, Władysław Sikorski, in 1942, further argued that transferring the German population would protect the State from fifth column activities and eliminate ‘from international relations the source of recurring friction due to the activities of German minorities’.⁴ Herbert Hoover (1942:315) maintained that population transfers could play a key role in stemming war in Europe, and population transfers were widely seen as part of a legitimate policy mix to enhance the homogeneity of nation-states.

While the British and the Americans were largely concerned with the stability of the state system in Europe, Polish politicians were also cognisant of social sentiment in Poland itself and sought both to create a stronger state and respond to society’s demand for increased national homogeneity.

Anti-minority sentiment was high in the aftermath of the war. Belarussian and Jewish minorities were, for instance, popularly identified with communism, and the wider society drew on pre-war stereotypes promulgated by factions linked to National Democracy to marginalise these communities. The British ambassador to Poland, Victor Cavendish-Bentinck’s note to London on 18th December 1945 highlights the anti-minority climate at that time: ‘[b]efore the war the Poles had on the whole been strongly anti-semitic...The Poles appear to me to be as anti-semitic as they were 25 years ago’ despite the fact that ‘[t]he Jewish population has decreased from 3,250,000 in 1939 to 80,000’⁵ This level of anti-minority sentiment thrived in an environment in which no significant institution, party or individual acted consistently to vigorously defend minorities’ interests, or to explain the complexity of the historical conjuncture in a way that did not accuse minority communities of committing a range of harms against the conceived national core (i.e. Poles). Indeed, increased

³ Hansard: *House of Commons*, 15 December 1944, pp. 1484.

⁴ See Siebel Achenbach (1994:34): This memorandum can be found at the National Archives at Kew. NA.FO 371/31091.

⁵ NA.FO 371 /57684 WR15.

homogeneity was accepted across the political spectrum as a panacea for the trauma of six years of war and a way to inhibit future conflict, but the way to achieve this through population transfer, and border changes, in both the west *and* east was subject to much debate. The border issue and the Allied endorsement of the Curzon line as Poland's eastern frontier ultimately led to the collapse of Mikołajczyk's Polish Government in Exile in November 1944. Accepting the reality of the Curzon line, Mikołajczyk reasoned that:

Such a Poland [cropped in the east, compensated in the west] would undoubtedly have a hard existence, but the national substance preserved, with its demographic and great economic potential, nationally homogeneous, without minorities, is a foundation for a strong Poland in the future and a fairly acceptable place for the development of the nation.⁶

The Soviet Union strongly endorsed national homogeneity and the congruence of nation with state borders in East-Central Europe. In relation to Poland it was, in part, a geo-political strategy to secure her eastern reaches. The USSR legitimated its invasion of Poland on 17th September 1939 by arguing, incorrectly, that eastern Poland was ethnographically dominated by non-Poles. In October 1939 rigged elections were staged, and delegates elected to the Assemblies of West Ukraine and West Belarus called for incorporation into the USSR. The return of the Soviet Army to these areas in 1944 'returned' them to the USSR. Almost immediately the Soviets initiated programmes of population transfer.

The Soviet nationalising vision was reflected in the creation of an 'initiative' group in Moscow in 1941 at Stalin's request. This initiative group was later to become the Polish Workers' Party (PPR) and from the very beginning it affirmed the priority of the Polish population *vis à vis* national minorities. For example, according to the minutes of this group, it did not call itself communist because of, amongst other reasons, the imperative 'that the masses see in our party an organization linked with the Polish nation and its most vital interests and that our enemies will not be able to refer to us as agents of a foreign power'.⁷ The domination by the

⁶ Quoted in Kersten (1991:113) and (1986:93). The point that Mikołajczyk makes is clear, despite the syntax of the despatch.

⁷ Quoted in Polonsky and Drukier (1980:128).

PPR of the Polish Committee for National Liberation (PKWN) — the *de facto* provisional government in Poland during the autumn of 1944— allowed transfer agreements to be signed between Poland and her Soviet neighbours. The Polish Government in Exile, based in London, was very concerned by these agreements, and Polish Foreign Minister Tadeusz Romer wrote to the British Government on 7th October 1944, arguing that those agreements ‘do not cover the repatriation of Polish citizens deported into the interior of Russia in 1939-1941 which seem to indicate that in this case the Soviet Government had a purely political effect in view’.⁸ He also expressed concern at the ‘unilateral decision to change the traditional ethnographical face of these territories by arbitrarily moving masses of millions of people.’

Population transfer / expulsions

Population transfer had been part of Soviet policy in the Polish lands from the beginning of the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland, with hundreds of thousands of people from ‘suspicious’ classes and elites deported to the depths of the Soviet Union between 1939 and 1941.⁹ The return of Soviet forces in 1944 saw population transfer introduced as the main mechanism to ensure national homogeneity in eastern Poland, western Belarus and Ukraine. On 9th September 1944, transfer agreements between Poland, Belarus and Ukraine were signed.¹⁰ These transfer agreements regulated a speedy transfer of populations to their respective nation-state lasting from 15th October 1944-15th February 1945. This tight timetable was soon recognised as overly ambitious —especially in the harsh conditions of winter, and the transfer window was extended until June 1946—.

On 7th October 1944 the key institution which would organise and regulate the transfer process, the State Repatriation Office (PUR) was established. Population transfer was, in theory, voluntary; in practice, coercion was frequently used to encourage people of the ‘wrong’ nationality

⁸ Letter from Polish Foreign Minister T. Romer to the British Government, 7 October 1944. PISM A.11.49/Sow/6. Reprinted in DPSR vol. 2, number 235:400.

⁹ The generally accepted figure is 300,000. Sanford (2005:29).

¹⁰ The signatories were Edward Osóbka-Morawski (Poland), Panteleimon Ponomarenko (Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic) and Nikita Krushchev (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic).

to move. The only minority allowed to return to Poland were members of the Jewish minority.

In the final three months of 1945, 201,330 people were transported into Poland from the east, and 144,703 in the following three months.¹¹ Around 482,000 Ukrainians were removed from Poland in the period 1945-1946 (Ther 2001:56). The Ukrainian transfers were marked by serious violence, with Soviet-backed forces clashing with underground Polish and Ukrainian soldiers. Research conducted by Subtelny (2001:164) shows part of the human cost of the operation, with 4,670 Ukrainians killed and 305 villages burnt.

After the end of the transfer programme in 1946, some 150,000 Ukrainians remained in Poland. The Ukrainian SSR would not agree to extend the 15 June 1946 deadline for the completion of the transfers, nor would it provide transport. Those who remained in Poland were forcibly dispersed in 1947 from south-east Poland to the 'Recovered Territories' in the north under the rubric of 'Operation Vistula'. A key objective of this operation was to divorce the Ukrainians from their traditional lands, proximity and contact with the border and with each other in order to facilitate rapid assimilation. Significantly, the Ukrainians dispersed to the north were placed under the surveillance of the Security office (UB) and their requests to establish Orthodox churches were closely vetted and routinely rejected, whereas if the population was deemed to be Polish, permission was frequently granted.

In the West, the forced expulsion of Germans began almost immediately after the allied victory in May 1945. The expulsion of Germans had the support, in principle, of the US, Britain and the USSR since the Tehran conference of 1943. In the region east of the Oder River, Polish Army units began a period of 'wild expulsions' from the area which the Polish State sought to incorporate. The actions of June and July 1945 allowed the emerging Polish State to claim that the key western border areas were German-free, strengthening their claims that the Polish western border should run along the Oder. In late July and early August 1945 the Potsdam conference regulated the expulsion process to be conducted in a 'humane and orderly' manner. The British agreed to take 1.5 million Germans from Poland to its zone of occupation in Germany. It is estimated that in total over 7.4 million Germans fled or were expelled

¹¹ See Czerniakiewicz (1987:56).

from former German territory in the east and from Poland (Nitschke 2004:60).¹²

Significance and social meaning of the expulsions / transfers

The population transfers and expulsions of 1944-1947 together with the redrawing of state borders made Poland increasingly homogeneous. By 1950 minorities constituted a mere 3 percent of the population, compared with around 35 percent in 1931 and 14 percent in 1946.¹³ Politicians both communist and from the Polish Government in Exile recognised that broad sections of the Polish population considered that national minorities simply did not belong in the country. The population transfer process allowed the Polish Workers' Party (PPR) to demonstrate its Polish credentials and alignment with Polish sentiment. At the same time, the transfer programme officially endorsed the view that some people had no right to be in Poland and had to leave. Those that remained were conceived as legitimate targets for disdain and indeed violence. As a consequence, the PPR was able to direct social anger from itself to minority communities.

In addition, in both the east and west there remained the thorny issue of identifying who exactly was non-Polish and ascribing nationality to autochthonic populations such as Silesians, Kashubians and Mazurians. For the Catholic writer Władysław Grabski, verification and 'repolonisation' programmes could

liberate the Slavic blood flowing in the veins of Germanised Silesians and Pomeranians ...disinfecting them and returning them to health by teaching them the native tongue in order to incorporate them back into the mother country, not as prodigal sons but as victims rescued from the ultimate outrage.¹⁴

¹² The transfer of Germans was mandatory, but many Germans were incarcerated in labour camps in the immediate post-war period. In Upper Silesia there were 86 camps, and it is estimated that at least 60,000 people died in these camps (Borodziej 2000:11).

¹³ The 1950 census indicated that there were 50,000 Jews, 160,000 Belarusians, 170,000 Germans, 150,000 Ukrainians and around 30,000 people from other minority groups including Lithuanians. These figures should be treated with caution, given the nationality policy of the PZPR. See Eberhardt (2000:76).

¹⁴ Cited in Kulczycki (2001:207).

In practice no universal 'verification' programme was initiated and local leaders had a wide degree of discretion, with local authorities expelling people in 1944 and 1945 whom the central government may have wanted to remain, including industrial workers and specialists — vital given the widespread labour shortages—. The difficulty, as Kulczycki (2001:209) notes, was that 'Polish *raison d'état* and the social consensus demanded both the widest possible inclusion of German citizens of Polish origin and the strictest exclusion of all Germans.' Thus, in determining the 'foreignness' of particular individuals, religion played a crucial identifying role. Under the leadership of August Hlond, and later Stefan Wyszyński, the ethno-religious policy of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland buttressed the State's ethno-nationalist homogenising policies.

It did so in several ways. Firstly, Hlond removed German Catholic bishops from the 'Recovered Territories' (those areas formerly German), allowing the State to point to the presence of the Polish Church in those areas as evidence of their Polishness in the aftermath of the Second World War. Secondly, the Church encouraged the view that Catholicism was an integral part of Polishness. Non-Catholics were thereby marginalised and seen as non-Polish. As late as 1949, in Mazuria, local Catholic clergy continued to promote the view that 'a Pole is a Catholic, an Evangelical is a kraut' (Polak to katolik, a ewangelik to szwab).¹⁵ Greek-Catholics were patronised and, as Syrynk (2007:245) argues, the sentiment guiding many within the Roman Catholic Church was both related to the issue of nationality (Pole versus Ukrainian) and to a sense of religious superiority as expressed in the Latin phrase: *greca fides nulla fides* (Greek belief is no belief).

In relation to the Jewish population, the Catholic Church's actions were particularly unhelpful. Not only did many priests openly express antisemitic sentiment, but even Wyszyński, in the aftermath of the Kielce pogrom on 1946, seemed to give some credence to the myth of ritual murder despite Pope Innocent IV's 1247 papal bull declaring such accusation against Jews as false. Two weeks after the pogrom, Wyszyński in a conversation with a delegation of Jewish leaders suggested that 'the matter of blood was not definitively settled' (Gross, 2006:149). Overall, the Church provided restricted (and restricting) content to 'Polishness', which

¹⁵ AAN PZPR 237 /VII / 2619 / 111 (point 3) Voivodship Committee of the PZPR in Olsztyn 6/11/1949.

positioned non-Catholics outside the legitimate community. Since these groups were frequently the same people the State sought to transfer, and later assimilate, (Orthodox-Belarusians/Ukrainians, Protestants-Autochthones) the Church was a key actor in furthering the State's homogenising policies — policies which, as highlighted in the introduction, helped the PPR redirect social anger from itself to national minorities —.

The Church therefore played an important role in the organising of social anger, which allowed the PPR and later the PZPR to achieve and sustain hegemony. In short, by identifying non-Catholics as targets of disdain, the Roman Catholic Church gave the imprimatur of sanction for action by the populace against these people, and, counter to its own longer-term interests, supported the redirection of social anger to targets congruent with the needs of the State (PPR/ PZPR). The Catholic Church sought to consolidate its dominant ecclesiastical position in Poland by gaining from the rival Churches. For example in a 1945 letter to the vice-voivod of the Silesia-Dąbrowskie voivodship, the Bishop of the Katowice diocese called for the liquidation of the Augsburgian Church on the grounds of its anti-Polish orientation.¹⁶

The anti-Jewish proclamations of Roman Catholic Church clergy effectively organised social anger against Jews, the only minority which was not scheduled for population transfer. The PPR was therefore free to cautiously condemn antisemitism, while doing relatively little to defend Jewish communities from assault. These assaults and the wider unwelcoming climate helped fuel Jewish migration out of Poland, and thereby increase the homogeneity which the PPR/State sought. Szaynok (2004:193) has argued that PPR policy towards the Jews was conditional on its own strategic needs. For example, outrages against Jews, in the immediate post-war period, could easily be blamed on sections of society loyal to the Polish Government in Exile in London. Such accusations were believable given that the issue of antisemitism had dogged that government in relation to its armed forces in Britain and in various theatres of war. In the battle for legitimacy, discrediting the Polish Government in Exile was an important objective of the PPR.

The PPR and the Church accentuated the Polish population's low tolerance for minorities following the Second World War through their

¹⁶ Urban 1994:73. AAN MAP 1057. Letters from Bishop Adamski to vice-voivod Ziętka 20th February and 27th March 1945.

ethno-nationalist and ethno-religious policies respectively. Prestige and legitimacy was lent to the homogenising project by the West (Britain and the US in particular) through their endorsement of the expulsion of the Germans, and, in the case of Britain, practical involvement — British liaison teams were stationed at departure points in Poland throughout 1946—. The overall impact of the official endorsement increased homogeneity was to accentuate antipathy towards minorities. In its extreme form this antipathy was expressed through the beating, murder and rape of members of minority communities, which in turn engendered fear amongst minority communities to the extent that they were encouraged to leave the country, or, in the case of Belarusians in the north east, declare themselves to be Polish. Thus the 'subjective' violence of the Polish population, in addition to state violence, fostered homogeneity in the immediate aftermath of the war. It is estimated that in the period 1944-1946 between 500-600 Jews were murdered (Engels 2005:425) and around 422 Belarusians in the Białystok voivodship (Iwaniuk 2005:101).

In addition to transfers, cultural homogenisation was encouraged in the second half of the 1940s through the education system. Illiteracy in the areas inhabited by Kashubians and Mazurians was combated through Polish language courses. In the north east, Belarusian schools were closed, and in the west, the speaking of German from 17th April 1946 in public and at home was forbidden, with the police empowered to arrest people speaking German as 'provocateurs of our national feelings'.¹⁷ Place and street names were changed into Polish.

Cultural homogenisation and responses to legitimacy crises

Policies of cultural homogenisation often play an important role in regulating and directing social anger. The foregrounding of the need for cultural homogenisation, as in the immediate post-war period, immediately highlights a hierarchy of cultural practices and identities, which can be varied according to political and social expediency.

Through the course of the Polish People's Republic legitimacy crises were recurrent. Both the crises of 1956 and 1968 saw antisemitism used to redirect social anger, and claims by those PZPR members opposed to

¹⁷ Cited in Naimark (2001:134).

the leadership of the PZPR to be the repository of the 'true' Poland. The intensity of the anti-Zionist campaign in 1968, for example, can be understood, at least in part, as an attempt of the PZPR leadership to reaffirm its Polishness in a context when fidelity to a particularly narrow definition of Polishness was very important. The reason for both the saliency and narrowness of national identity was the fact that there was widespread sentiment that the PZPR was a Soviet interloper, dominated by Jews, and the structural limitations that allowed social anger to be expressed in the lexicon of nationality, but not in other registers (for example, a purely economic register). Thus, when faced with a challenge from within the Party, the leadership sought to reaffirm its authority by reaffirming its Polishness. It did this by targeting a group that a part of the population and the internal opposition saw as not truly Polish. In short, it sought to enhance its legitimacy by redirecting social anger, and thereby outflank the internal opposition's nationalist agenda.¹⁸

The 'anti-Zionist' campaign of 1968 saw 20,000 people with Jewish heritage leaving Poland under duress, many having lost their jobs. Other defined groups were also targeted for antipathy as narrow conceptions of Polishness were promoted. During these crises, minority groups in the north-east (Belarusians) or in the west (Silesians / Germans) retreated into their own communities to avoid undue negative attention. The irony of course was that political demands for homogeneity produced its opposite, in that some people were seen as unable to assimilate, as each legitimacy crisis focused on their alleged difference and alleged simulation to Polishness. The issue was not so much about cultural homogenisation as a need to resolve and ease the social and political tension in the body politic. Since the PZPR was the natural target of social anger, given its dominant role in society, alternative targets had to be found. Through the PRL, these were most frequently 'minority' communities, as alternatives (such as the 'fraternal' USSR) could not be criticised in the Cold War context.

Post socialism

The collapse of socialist regimes across East-Central Europe in 1989 instituted radical social, political and economic transformation, introduced

¹⁸ For indepth analysis of 1968 in Poland see Głuchowski and Polonsky (2009).

forms of structural violence common in liberal democratic societies and reconfigured the social anger regime. It also encouraged changes in the value systems of these states, most vividly expressed in the negative apprehension and degrading of the former 'leading' class (Tarkowska 2009). And since 'culture is about values, which include attitudes, prescribed behaviour and expectations as expressed in symbols and as preserved in the nation's material heritage' (Conversi 1997:1), these changes have had an important impact on mechanisms of cultural homogenisation.

Western European states were concerned about the revival of nationalism in East-Central Europe and, through a series of mechanisms, encouraged former communist states to adopt and promote multicultural policies that defended the rights of minority communities. This was done through several key organisations which made the good treatment of minorities a condition of membership, including NATO and the EU. At the same time social anger had to be organised and redirected so that neo-liberalising policies could proceed, more often than not, without popular endorsement.

Since minorities now enjoyed the attention of the wider European and transatlantic communities, they were no longer 'official' targets of social anger, though particular political actors, parts of the Church and sections of the populace continued to marginalise and discriminate against them. Rather, during the postsocialist period, the regulation of social anger has bifurcated: on the one hand, practices followed in the socialist period have been adapted and reused in the context of new social relations and, on the other hand, new practices which promote bourgeois values and seek to undermine working class cultures and traditions have taken shape. These two types of regulation ensure that anger is diverted away from the socio-economic tensions that give rise to it, and allow neoliberalisation to proceed and be domesticated. New processes of cultural homogenisation have therefore been set in motion. But before discussing these processes I turn my attention to the new minority rights regime.

The new minority rights regime

The new minority rights regime describes a series of initiatives undertaken in East-Central Europe to ensure that national minorities enjoy the full benefits of citizenship like any other group within the state. At the international level this has included support from the Organisa-

tion for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), NATO, whose 1994 'Partnership for Peace Document', for example, requires member states to affirm the Helsinki Final Act and all OSCE documents, including those concerning national minority rights, and the Council of Europe, whose 1995 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is the most far reaching document and is important since all EU members have to be members of the Council of Europe. The Framework convention was finally ratified by the Sejm in 2000. Article 4.2 of the Convention states:

The parties undertake to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities.

Polish law has also been changed so that anti-minority action can be discouraged and penalised. Provisions from the Framework Convention have been incorporated into the Polish law dealing with national minorities (2005). Polish law has also recognised some of the challenges faced by minority communities and incorporated provisions for minorities in some legislative acts. This includes the Parliamentary Election Law of 28th May 1993, which allows candidates representing a national minority party to enter parliament despite failing to achieve 5% of the national vote that other parties require.

However, despite Poland's subscription to the new minority rights regime, the ability of minorities to sustain their communities has been uneven. The economic difficulties of north-east Poland, the lack of kin-state support and negative stereotyping, for example, continue to encourage Belarusian assimilation to the Polish mainstream (Fleming 2002). Other communities, such as Germans and Jews, have benefited from significant NGO assistance and have been able to effectively communicate their needs at multiple levels —local, regional, state and international—.

While certain 'historic' minorities enjoy recognition and are able to mobilise government agencies to combat negative stereotyping, for instance, new minorities such as immigrants from south-east Asia are not recognised under the minority regime as 'national' minorities. This has important implications as highlighted below.

'Multiculturalism' and neoliberalism

'Multiculturalism' can be conceived as one plank in an Europeanisation agenda to bring the countries of East-Central Europe in line with dominant cultural practices in the West, as well as a security focused package to inhibit destabilising nationalist sentiments. In addition, 'multiculturalism' can be viewed as a method to reject the communist past and its values, and 'reconnect' with a pre-communist 'Golden Age' and its values, and to reinvigorate particular places and cities. For example, the former President of Łódź (1994-1998), Marek Czekalski, noted in 1996:

From the beginning as President I was searching for an idea on how to revitalize Łódź. Local history became the source of my inspiration. I have read a great number of books about old Łódź and have selected those elements from its history that constitute chief-markers of Łódź's identity. Local traditions are one of the best assets of the city. The current inhabitants of Łódź have inherited the memory of an urban centre which developed in a rapid manner, was inclusive of people of various nationalities, and was open toward foreign capital... I think that those traditions are good for our times, since, like one and a half centuries ago, we too are witnessing a major transformation.¹⁹

In this vision, 'historic' minorities are privileged even in places such as Łódź, where they barely exist today, (new minorities are generally marginalised), as part of an effort to reshape the image of the city and attract investment and tourists in order to develop the economy. As Michlic (2005:17) argues, 'The city's political and cultural elites have turned to the pre-1939 past to conceive and create a new post-communist, forward-looking European entity, where bourgeois and multicultural narratives are privileged'.

These bourgeois and multicultural narratives both in Łódź and nationally play a key role in the organisation of social anger and in engendering processes of cultural homogenisation. On the one hand, social anger continues to be organised to target minority communities by key leaders within culturally right leaning parties such as *Law and Justice* (PiS).

¹⁹ Wojciech Górski's interview with President Marek Czekalski «Nieznana ziemia», *Magazyn Rzeczpospolitej* 12 (1996): 2. Cited in Michlic 2005:10. This romanticised view of the past depends on the suppression of conflict both class and national, which characterised the emergence of Łódź as a major industrial centre within the Russian Empire.

Negative discourses about minorities continue to circulate quite freely, whether in discussions about current social and economic problems, or in understandings of the post-war period more generally. For instance, in the right leaning newspaper *Nasz Dziennik*, the historian Jan Wysocki in 2001 argued that the myth of Jew-Communist was, in fact, a social fact.²⁰ Such views continue to have a receptive audience. On the other hand, multicultural narratives, like those officially promoted in Łódź, fetishize the past (the past's complexity is rarely portrayed and the real tensions between different groups rarely mentioned) and do not pay much attention to new communities in the city. So while such multicultural narratives are important in retrieving previously sanctioned pasts, they do not at present fully address the rightful demands of new communities to be recognised and shown respect.

The current form of multiculturalism does speak loudly, however, to the more culturally liberal elite of *Civic Platform* (PO), and to more enlightened / politically astute members of PiS who consider the promotion of a particular form of multiculturalism as a means to attract investment and tourists, and to reframe the image of particular places in the context of the demands of Europeanisation (including, for example, adherence to the new minority rights regime). However, the promotion of multiculturalism produces real tensions. Social anger is still organised to target some minorities, but it is countered by the opposing tendency to ensure that 'historic' minorities are respected. The outcome is that those communities that are seen to continue to vent their social anger against minorities, especially 'historic' minorities, are themselves targets for marginalisation by liberals and broad sections of the media. So while attempts to curtail xenophobia are to be applauded, the current transfer of liberals' (i.e. PO and its supporters) social anger to lower class communities (and football followers) merely adds additional complexity to how and on to whom social anger is transferred. Discourses frame the working classes, and football supporters in particular, as backward and ignorant, and their contestation of the limited multicultural agenda (limited in the sense that neither living working class cultures nor the cultures of new minorities are celebrated) is often seen as an inherent 'pathology' rather than a response to a specific socioeconomic and sociocultural context (Podgórska, 2004).

²⁰ See *Nasz Dziennik* 19/3/2001 (http://www.naszawitryna.pl/jedwabne_371.html) Last accessed 31/11/2011.

Thus, the organisation of social anger in postsocialist Poland is somewhat more complex than in the socialist period; it has bifurcated. On the one hand, the anger of those most exposed to the harsh winds of neoliberal transformation are encouraged by PiS and other culturally right leaning parties to redirect their anger to 'mythical figures' and minorities. On the other hand, those who have benefited from the new economic configuration have responded to discourses about individual achievement and arguments about the less successful having inherent problems. The less successful are often viewed as marring the enjoyment of specific places for others, but they also contribute to elite worries about how Poles are perceived in international contexts. The assertion that lower class xenophobia is an expression of their ignorance (which in turn explains their low class status) has been appealing. But it is clear that the bifurcation of the organisation of social anger is useful in the context of neoliberalisation. It provides the winners with a convenient narrative legitimating their success, and provides the losers with a narrative to explain their marginalisation. Neither brings into question the social relations that produce and reproduce society's economic arrangements and concomitant inequalities. Like in the socialist period, social anger is redirected. Today, it is redirected from the appropriate register that could encourage meaningful positive change and social justice.

However, there are good reasons to be optimistic. The current multicultural agenda, though narrow, could fairly easily be expanded to incorporate respect for new minorities and living working class communities. Work by NGOs such as *Nigdy Więcej* (Never Again), which campaigns, amongst other activities, against racism at football matches, together with growing awareness amongst lower class communities of the complexity of Poland's multicultural past, hinder the transfer of social anger to minority communities. Furthermore, the economic migration of over a million Poles to Western Europe since 2004 and their exposure to capitalism outside Poland has provided many with a practical education in the structural inequities of the capitalist mode of production. It is possible that such an education provides people with sufficient knowledge to resist attempts to redirect social anger resulting from economic inequities to minority communities. This is not to underestimate the scale of the task: the wider tolerant impulse of multiculturalism has been fairly weak. But it may be the case that inhibiting anti-working class discourse will be more difficult, given that our current conjuncture stimulates and accentuates status and social insecurity.

At the moment, however, the division of labour in organising the redirection of social anger is shared by Kaczyński's *Law and Justice* (PiS) and Tusk's *Civic Platform* (PO). The former directs anger towards minorities, former communists, and by affirming traditional gender roles. The latter marginalises working class identities, solidarities and practices. Both inhibit the expression of class-for-itself subjectivities, and the expression of social anger, derived from the socio-economic configuration, in its appropriate register. This division of labour facilitates the advancement of neo-liberalisation, but accommodates the very different values and attitudes to be found in contemporary Poland.

Cultural homogenisation: Parallels

The Polish experience of cultural homogenisation in the aftermath of the Second World War mirrored that experience in neighbouring countries of East-Central Europe – population transfers and expulsion, programmes encouraging assimilation, the repression of independent cultural institutions. However, these processes were not just restricted to the east of the Iron Curtain. The demand that the nation-state be congruent is a key feature of much of 20th century history, as Üngör (2011) shows in relation to Turkey, and which reached another murderous nadir in the Balkans in the 1990s. Physical removal of problematic groups was very much seen as a legitimate part of a policy mix in the 1940s, both in the West and East. The scope for minority communities to express themselves was very much limited – by social and political pressures, lack of financial wherewithal, as well as the nationalising impact of state education systems and military service.

More recently, the problems and limits of the current forms of multiculturalism in Poland are far from unique. If, as Tariq Madood (2007) has argued, multiculturalism is composed of three central concepts: difference, equality (in the sense that all have the same rights in law, and their differences and needs should be respected) and multi (in the sense that groups are different in different ways), then the limits of multiculturalism in Poland should surprise no one. There are problems on all conceptual levels: the recognition of difference – new minorities are barely recognised as such; equality – their needs and differences are frequently not respected, nor are those of working class communities (like in many other places); and the different ways groups are different are not fully apprehended, allowing for racist and classist stereotypes to be promulgated.

Cultural homogenisation thereby proceeds, in part, in Poland and elsewhere (including in Britain) by limiting 'legitimate' differences, and coercing groups to conform through social (stereotypes, marginalisation) and economic (low wages, unemployment) pressure. In the countries of the European Union we may well be far from the coercive transfers of population and linguistic monopolies of the twentieth century, but the market and the need to regulate social anger ensure that some processes of cultural homogenisation proceed relatively unchallenged.

Conclusion

The main argument made in this paper has been that cultural homogenisation often functions as a means of regulating social anger. As such it serves to sustain the dominant social relations. In Poland and elsewhere in East-Central Europe 'patriotic socialism' played an important role in facilitating and sustaining the hegemony of various communist parties. Periodic crises of legitimacy were temporarily resolved through the redirection of social anger to minority groups and others, including 'imperialists' and the 'bourgeoisie', through propaganda and purges. Minority groups were claimed to be insufficiently Polish, and the content of Polishness, at least according to the PZPR/State, had a distinct workerist content. This increased pressure on communities to conform to the mainstream and take on symbols of Polishness, including language, diction, religion.

In the postsocialist period I have contended that the form of cultural homogenisation has changed. Limited multicultural policies coexist with the demand that the population subscribe to bourgeois norms and that new minorities 'Polonise'. The relative complexity (compared with the socialist period) of the regulation of social anger can be accounted for by the differential impact of neoliberal economic policy and the political demands that (historic) minority populations are protected.

The relevance of the Polish case to situations elsewhere is the fact that the relationship between neoliberal economic policy and the regime of socio-cultural regulation (in East-Central Europe – the new minority rights regime) can have a significant impact on how social anger is managed and the types of cultural homogenising processes that are actually manifested. The demand that the working class adopt bourgeois norms (affirm individualism, accept the justice of competition and the inequities of the labour market, etc.) is by no means confined to East-Central Europe; and

its corollary – the stereotyping, marginalisation and rejection of working class identities and communities —is evident in all countries undergoing neoliberalisation—.

Work on the issue of cultural homogenisation can be enriched by exploring the parallels, similarities, contrasts *and* connections between homogenisation taking place in different registers —national, ethnic, class, for example—. In mid-twentieth century East-Central Europe, the costs of ‘national’ homogenisation were high. Today, the costs of ‘class’ homogenisation have yet to be calculated, though, as scholars ranging from David Ost (2005) to Chantal Mouffe (2004) have reminded us, the inability to express social anger in its appropriate (economic) register encourages illiberality in the political culture, not to mention the unseen costs of neoliberal structural violence (underemployment, unemployment, differential life expectancies between classes, new geographies of alienation and suicide). One of the key theorists of nationalism reminded us over a decade ago in a different context ‘that classes without ethnicity are blind; ethnicity without class empty’ (Gellner 1998:61). It remains as important as ever to explore the mutual relations between national, ethnic and class production, reproduction and homogenisation.

References

- Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, J. and Orla-Bukowska, A. (1998): «After the fall: Attitudes towards Jews in Post-1989 Poland», in *Nationalities Papers* 26 2 265-282.
- Borodziej, W. and Lemberg, H. (eds.) (2000): *Niemcy w Polsce 1945-1950. Wybór Dokumentów*, vol. 1, Warszawa: Neriton.
- Brubaker, R. (1996): *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge: CUP.
- Conversi, D. (1997): *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilization* University of Nevada Press, Reno.
- Conversi, D. (2007): «Homogenisation, nationalism and war: should we still read Ernest Gellner?», in *Nations and Nationalism*, 13, 3:371-394.
- Conversi, D. (2010): «Cultural Homogenization, Ethnic Cleansing and Genocide», in Robert A. Denemark (ed.): *The International Studies Encyclopedia*. Oxford/Boston, MA: Wiley-Blackwell/ ISA, vol. 2, pp. 719-742.
- Czerniakiewicz, J. (1987): *Repatriacja ludności polskiej z ZSRR 1944-1948*, Warszawa: PWN.
- Eberhardt, P. (2000): *Przemieszczenia ludności na terytorium Polski spowodowane II Wojną Światową*, Warszawa: PANIGiPZ.

- Fleming, M. (2002): «The New Minority Rights Regime in Poland: The experience of the German, Belarussian and Jewish minorities since 1989», in *Nations and Nationalism* 8(4): pp. 531-548.
- Fleming, M. (2010): «The ethno-religious ambitions of the Roman Catholic Church and the ascendancy of communism in post-war Poland (1945-1950)», *Nations and Nationalism* 15, 4 p637-656.
- Gellner, E. (1983): *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Gellner, E. (1998): *Nationalism* Pheonix, London.
- Głuchowski, L.W. and Polonsky, A. (2009): *1968: Forty Years After Polin Studies in Polish Jewry*, volume 21, Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, Oxford.
- Kersten, K. (1986): *Narodziny systemu władzy: Polska 1943-1948*, Paris: Libella.
- Kersten, K. (1991): *The Establishment of Communism in Poland, 1943-1948*, trans J. Micgiel and M. Bernhard, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kulczycki, J. (2001): «The national identity of the "natives" of Poland's Recovered Lands», in *National Identities*, 3, 3:205-129.
- Madood, T. in JPR (2007): «What future for multiculturalism?». <http://www.jpr.org.uk/news/detail.php?id=65> (last accessed 13/11/2010)
- Mevius, M. (2005): *Agents of Moscow: The Hungarian Communist Party and the Origins of Socialist Patriotism 1941-1953* Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Michlic, J. (2005): «Łódź in the Post-communist Era: In search of a new identity», *Center for European Studies Program on Eastern and Central Europe Working Paper Series #65*.
- Mouffe, C. (2004): *On the Political*, London: Routledge.
- Naimark, N.M. (2001): *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Nitschke, B. (2004): *Wysiedlenie czy wypędzenie? Ludność niemiecka w Polsce w latach 1945-1949* Toruń: Marszałek.
- Ost, D. (2005): *The Defeat of Solidarity: Anger and Politics in Postcommunist Poland*, London: Cornell University.
- Peck, J. and Tickell, A. (2003): «Making global rules: Globalisation or neoliberalisation?», in *Remaking the global economy: Economic-geographical perspectives*, ed. J. Peck and H. Yeung, 163-81. London: Sage.
- Podgórska, J. (2004): «Nie Robim, bo się Narobim». *Polityka* 8.5.04, pp. 3-10.
- Polonsky, A. and Drukker, B. (1980): *The beginnings of communist rule in Poland*, London: Routledge.
- Sanford, G. (2005): *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, justice and memory*, London: BASEES / Routledge.
- Shore, M. (2006): *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968*, London: Yale University Press.
- Siebel-Achenbach, S. (1994): *Lower Silesia: From Nazi Germany to Communist Poland 1942-1949*, New York: Macmillan/St Antony's College, Oxford.
- Subtelny, O. (2001): «Expulsion, Resettlement, Civil Strife: The fate of Poland's Ukrainians 1944-1947» in

- Ther, P. & Siljak, A. (2001): *Redrawing nations: Ethnic cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Syrnyk, J. (2007): *Ludność ukraińska na Dolnym Śląsku 1945-1989*, Wrocław: IPN.
- Szaynok, B. (2004): «Komuniści w Polsce (PPR/PZPR): wobec ludności żydowskiej (1945-1953)» *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 2 (6):185-204.
- Tarkowska, T. (2009): «Polska bieda poniżona» (The Polish poor degraded). *Gazeta Wyborcza* 4 September 2009.
- Üngör, U. (2011): *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950* Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Zaremba, M. (2001): *Komunizm, legitymizacja, nacjonalizm: Nacjonalistyczna legitymizacja władzy komunistycznej w Polsce*, Warszawa: TRIO.