Students´ Attitudes to Culture and Religion Diversity and Changing Conditions on Labour Market and in Education System

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Abstract

The presented paper deals with the repeated (after a year) questionnaire survey conducted by means of the Semantic Differential method in the group of students studying at School of Business Administration in Karviná, Silesian University in Opava. The research focuses on students´ attitudes towards some controversial aspects of the globalized society characterized by migration and plurality trends. The evaluation of the respondents´ opinions is especially related to the areas of religion and culture diversity as well as the education system and its ability to adequately react to the current changes. The survey has shown a shift in respondents´ opinions, which is closely interconnected with recent events taking place in Europe.
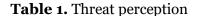
Keywords: attitudes, culture, diversity, migration, religion, security.
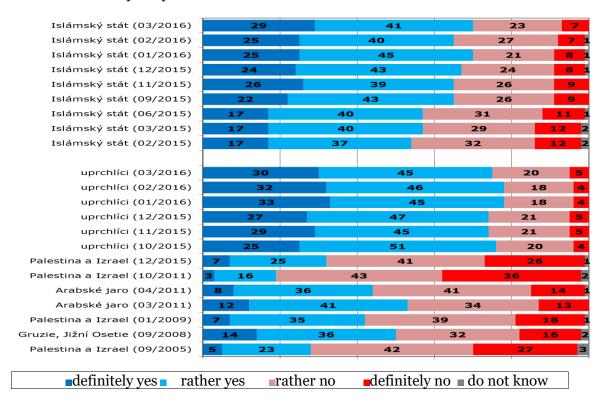
1. Introduction

Europe in the 21st century can be characterized by the crisis of cultures. Multiculturalism influences human identity on the individual and inter-individual levels from the point of view of objective determinants (Martínek 2011, 31). The old continent becomes a place where population from different continents flows. Sweden and Germany that have shown the friendliest attitude towards the migration problem are slowly beginning to change their media rhetoric. The most visible changes can be noticed in Sweden and Germany, especially after the incidents which took place at the end of the previous year in German cities. Concurrently, there appear opinions demanding better guarding of the Schengen Area. Meanwhile, media verbalise the end of the dream related to European security and warn about the danger of terrorist attacks, cyber wars between countries, attacks aimed at households through the "Internet of Things", and attacks to strategic infrastructure. For these reasons, it is interesting to watch the evolution of attitudes toward the problematic aspects of current events in Europe and the Czech Republic. Numerous surveys are attempting to analyze respondents´ values and attitudes related to education surroundings as well (Heinz, Orszulik, 2014).

The latest research aimed at the attitudes of Czechs towards the so-called Islamic State implemented by the Centre for Public Opinion Research within the Institute of Sociology have shown that interest in this topic is significant, but at the same time respondents state a slightly bigger interest in problems related to the refugee crisis (Červenka 2015, 2). Activities developed by so called Islamic State are considered by respondents as a threat for the security of the Czech Republic, security of the Czech Republic in connection with the refugee crisis is perceived as a threat, however, the research indicates an interesting finding about a great threat to European security caused by refugees.

According to Červenka (2016, 5) the perception of the threat for safety in the Czech Republic, Europe and in the world related to so called Islamic State rapidly increased. The development of the threat perception within the years 2009-2016 is shown in the following table:

Table 1. Threat perception

	definitely yes	rather yes	rather no	definitely no	do not know
Islámský stát (03/2016)	29	41	23	7	
Islámský stát (02/2016)	25	40	27	7	1
Islámský stát (01/2016)	25	45	21	8	1
Islámský stát (12/2015)	24	43	24	8	1
Islámský stát (11/2015)	26	39	26	9	
Islámský stát (09/2015)	22	43	26	9	
Islámský stát (06/2015)	17	40	31	11	1
Islámský stát (03/2015)	17	40	29	12	2
Islámský stát (02/2015)	17	37	32	12	2
uprchlíci (03/2016)	30	45	20	5	
uprchlíci (02/2016)	32	46	18	4	
uprchlíci (01/2016)	33	45	18	4	
uprchlíci (12/2015)	27	47	21	5	
uprchlíci (11/2015)	29	45	21	5	
uprchlíci (10/2015)	25	51	20	4	
Palestina a Izrael (12/2015)	7	25	41	26	1
Palestina a Izrael (10/2011)	3	16	43	36	2
Arabské jaro (04/2011)	8	36	41	14	1
Arabské jaro (03/2011)	12	41	34	13	
Palestina a Izrael (01/2009)	7	35	39	18	1
Gruzie, Jižní Osetie (09/2008)	14	36	32	16	2
Palestina a Izrael (09/2005)	5	23	42	27	3

Source: CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i., Naše společnost.

Nowadays, opinions related to the mentioned above questions are available, for example Czech people´s attitudes toward immigrants have proved to be mostly negative and hostile (Scheu 2011, 117). A similar approach is traditionally expressed in connection with the Roma minority in the CR and this trend will probably be continued in the future as well. (Weinerová 2014, 8). In connection with multiculturalism it is necessary to mention basic relations between cultures:

1. Conservative multiculturalism where a stronger culture is dominating, which leads to the assimilation of a weaker culture.

2. A submissive relation between cultures with a weaker culture tending to assimilate.

3. Cultures are isolated, which results in marginalizing of a weaker culture.

4. Liberal relationship characterized by the equality of cultures (McLaren 2994, 57).

Numerous works present various opinions based on deep historical, economic and sociological analyses. P. Barša in his work Západ a islamismus (Barša, 2001) tries to discuss the clash of civilization and dialogue of cultures seeing the reason of the fight in the polarization of the wealth and poverty, power and impotence, development and fall, as well as self-confidence and inferiority. He claims that events related to the 11th of September made the West think over its relationship to former colonies and that then Islamism attacked a planetary hegemony of the Euro-American block and attempted to found Muslim states and communities based on Islamic principles. Islamism was analyzed as a phenomenon raising from the processes closely connected with colonization, de-colonization, and modernization of Muslim societies.

Barša lists a short history of events showing the rising threat of Islamism, beginning with the Iran Revolution in 1979. He argues that the crucial role in the history before this date is played by the process of two types of modernization typical for Muslim societies: the revolutionary modernization represented by Egypt and the liberal one in Tunis, and on the contrary, the "conservative" modernization implemented in Morocco. The mentioned approaches show an attempt to adapt to European modernity, however, Islamism as a political movement follows a programme of Re-Islamisation and is anti-modern and anti-Western. In spite of these facts, Barša´s opinion is that Islamism is modern in the way it was able to shift Islam from the position of being a religion or a culture to the position of a political ideology against three relatively

independent areas – ethics, economy and politics - that should be unified in one organic unit based on the Sharia formulated in the Koran.

Barša foresees two potential interpretations related to the future development stemming from the division into the wealthy and powerful North and the poor and weak South, a former colonizer and a colonized, who protests by demonstrating its national identity. The first one supposes that the West will have to face Islam because it has a different attitude towards traditional Western culture values, the other one requires criticizing its own imperialistic ambitions striving for a universal civilization.

Z. Bauman (Bauman, 2009), a sociologist, in his numerous works expresses an opinion that globalization not only valorizes the local in a cultural sense, it constructs the local as the tribal. Processes of geopolitical fragmentation give those in power even more room to maneuver. Glocalization involves the reallocation of poverty and stigma from above without even the residual responsibility of *noblesse oblige.* Geographical and social mobility are dichotomized – populations are refigured as tourists and vagabonds. Globalization thus reinforces already existing patterns of domination, while globalization indicates trends to dispersal and conflict on neo-traditional grounds. The privileged walk, or fly away, the others take revenge upon each other.

Bauman focuses on the process of diasporisation. He claims that each place on the earth is a set of ethnic and religious diasporas and on the places where they overlap people have to cope with the disparities and otherness, but at the same time they might enjoy different attitudes to life. He claims that currently, in the time of mass migration, diasporas and melange related to ethnic, religious and linguistic issues, it is obvious that people migrate to various destinations, for example more than 1 million Poles settled in the UK, while a million and a half British emigrated to Australia, a million to Spain, etc.

Nowadays, as Bauman states, immigrants do not have to assimilate with the target cultures, they want to keep their national identity and people have to cope with living with foreigners, which is demanding. It is a new skill people have to acquire. However, the process is exciting and adventurous and people are expected to participate in it.

Lately, a rising interest in the topic related to the clash of Christianity and Islam has been observed. J. Roux (Roux, 2015), for example, presents an opinion that currently we live in the post-Christian world and Christianity is not a leading power any more. Looking back at the history of wars, the author states that religion could not be the only factor influencing the never ending conflict, but there existed other ones, nationalism, a desire for adventure and wealth. Recent events connected with Iraq, for example, show that in spite of the intervention of the West, or because of it, the gap among communities living there becomes deeper and terrorism still continues. Roux expresses an opinion that the mentioned war has been existing for 1345 years and will definitely go on in the future.

The goal and hypotheses

The presented text is a continuation of the article published in 2015 (Bobáková, Heinz, 2015) and based on the survey conducted among students at School of Business Administration in Karviná, Silesian University in Opava a year ago. It focused on their attitudes to some controversial aspects of the globalized society characterized by migration and plurality trends and especially on evaluation related to the respondents´ answers in the areas of religion and culture diversity, but also on students´ opinions about the education system and its ability to react to the current changes adequately.

The mentioned questionnaire survey was repeated after a year in the same educational institution and it can be presumed that there will occur a shift in respondents´ opinions closely interconnected with recent events. It is possible to presume that in the first part of the questionnaire survey related to culture diversity students´ answers will be different due to the influence of factors like media, politics, public opinion, etc. and that respondents perceive changes in religion and culture diversity in a different way. The shift in students´ views can be related to the following areas:

- perceiving religion and culture diversity as a threat to people´ s lives,
- feelings of empathy and tolerance can be substituted by fear,
- preferring a mono-cultural society as it is the guarantee of security,

• perceiving problems occurring in multicultural societies as being connected to the religious radicalism of ethnic minorities or rather to their social status.

In the second part of the questionnaire survey, the shift in students´ opinions related to the changing European reality and education was analyzed in terms of:
• students´ awareness about the influence of current political, social and culture processes on their professional life,
• perceiving the fact that the system of education does not provide sufficient preparation for changing conditions in Europe,
• students´ opinions related to the system of education preparing them for changing conditions on the labor market.

Respondents were also expected to express more negative associations about the concepts of migration, religion and tolerance than in the previous survey.
On the basis of the mentioned facts and in accordance with the views expressed in specialist literature the following hypotheses were submitted:

• H1 Religion diversity will be perceived rather as a threat,
• H2 The attitude to other ethnic groups will be rather related to a fear,
• H3 The concept of a multicultural society will not be perceived in a positive way,
• H4 Respondents will express an opinion that current political, social and culture processes will influence their professional lives,
• H5 Respondents´ opinions about the system of education being prepared for changing conditions in Europe will be rather negative,
• H6 Respondents´ opinions about the system of education being prepared to react to changing conditions on the labor market will be rather negative,
• H7 Gender interconnection with the attitudes will not be proved.

The above listed hypotheses were verified in the beginning of the summer term 2015/2016 in the questionnaire survey conducted among 149 students of School of Business Administration in Karviná, Silesian University in Opava.

2. Results and evaluation

Table 1. Culture and religion diversity and their impact
Culture and religion diversity is connected with

enrichment of various aspects of life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	danger threatening in various aspects of life
	3	21	40	53	18	9	5	

Source: own processing
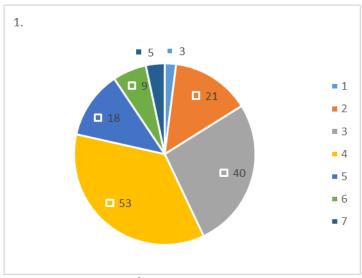
Source: own processing

Fig. 1. Culture and religion diversity and their impact

In the answers to the question about students´ attitudes to culture and religion diversity, the majority of students answers are placed in the middle of the scale within the scale positions 3-5, which shows that they are not able to determine their position, but a number of students is inclined to see aspects enriching their life in the scale position 2. At the same time scale positions 6 and 7 indicate that danger connected with diversity is for them of less importance with the number of respondents of 9 and 5 in the scale positions 6 and 7.

Table 2. Compassion and tolerance towards other ethnic groups
Do you prefer

compassion and tolerance towards other ethnic groups?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Compassion and tolerance are not important.
	12	37	45	28	12	7	8	

Source: own processing
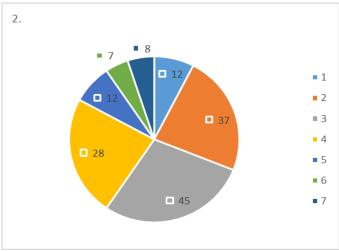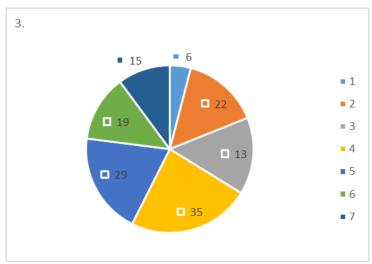

Source: own processing

Fig. 2. Compassion and tolerance towards other ethnic groups

In the answer related to compassion and tolerance students have distinctly chosen the left side of the offered spectrum stating that compassion and tolerance are very important for them – the number of 45 respondents in scale position 3 and the number of 37 in the scale position 2 of the scale. Only 8 students think that compassion and tolerance are not important at all in the scale position 7 and 7 students expressed similar opinions in the scale position 6.

Table 3. Concept of multicultural and monoculture society

Do you tend to agree with the concept of multicultural society?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Monocultural society is the guarantee of security.
	6	22	13	35	29	19	15	

Source: own processing

Source: own processing

Fig. 3. Concept of multicultural and monocultural society

The biggest number of students have chosen the scale position 4 in the offered spectrum, which probably means that it is difficult for them to state their opinions in this topic. Nevertheless, a relatively big number of students agree with the concept of multicultural society with 22 students in the scale position 2 and 13 in the scale position 3. The right side of the spectrum is represented by slightly higher numbers of 29 answers in the scale position 5 and 19 respondents in the scale position 6. For 15 students in the scale position 7 a monocultural society is the only guarantee of security.

Table 4. Religious radicalism of ethnic minorities
Current problems in multicultural societies are caused by

religious radicalism of ethnic minorities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Problems in multicultural societies originate in the social status of ethnic minorities.
	20	32	45	27	12	9	4	

Source: own processing
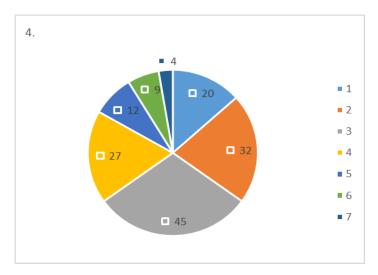
Source: own processing

Fig. 4. Religious radicalism of ethnic minorities

In answers to question four students have clearly stated that religious radicalism of ethnic minorities is responsible for current problems in multicultural societies. The left side of the spectrum is distinctly dominating with the numbers 45 in the scale position 3,32 in the scale position 2, and 20 in the scale position 1, which strongly supports the mentioned idea. The right part of the scale shows relatively low numbers of 12 in the scale position 5, 9 in the scale position 6, and only 4 in the scale position 7.

The next part of the review was aimed at students´ opinions related to the current system of education in connection with the changing social and cultural conditions and at comparing the results of surveys conducted in 2015 and 2016. The results of the 2016 survey have shown that students´ opinions are diversified showing prevailing placement of answers in the middle of the semantic differential scale, which can be interpreted in two ways: the students were not sure about their answers or they are partly satisfied with the education system, but they can see its drawbacks.

If we compare the number of answers in the left and right parts of the scale, we can state that negative evaluation is dominating. Distinctly positive opinions related to the education system were expressed only by 1 respondent, 8 students have chosen the scale position 2 and 25 students the scale position 3. In the right part, 27 respondents have decided for the scale position 5, 46 students for the scale position 6, and 7 students are definitely not satisfied with the education system in the scale position7.

Table 5. Preparation of students for changing social and cultural conditions
Does the education system prepare students for changing social and cultural conditions in Europe?

In a satisfactory way	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	In an unsatisfactory way.
	1	8	25	27	35	46	7	

Source: own processing
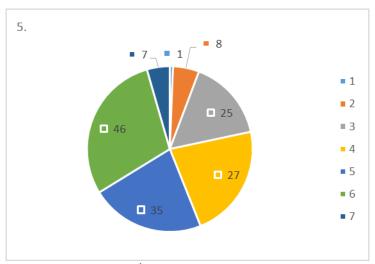
Source: own processing

Fig. 5. Preparation of students for changing social and cultural conditions

Answers to the following question dealing with the preparation of the education system for changing conditions on labor market also showed diversified students´ opinions. The biggest number of respondents decided for the scale position 3 (40 answers) while the numbers of answers related to the scale positions 3 (40), 4 (37), and 5 (34) were almost the same. No answer appeared in the scale position 1, but there were 7 answers in the scale position 7. It is necessary to take into consideration the fact that almost half of the respondents have reservations to the education system in connection with the changing conditions on labor market. The mentioned results are indicated in the graph below.

Table 6. Preparation of students for changing conditions on labor market
Does the education system prepare for changing conditions on labor market?

In a satisfactory way	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	In an unsatisfactory way.
		12	40	37	34	19	7	

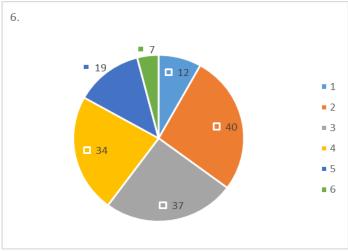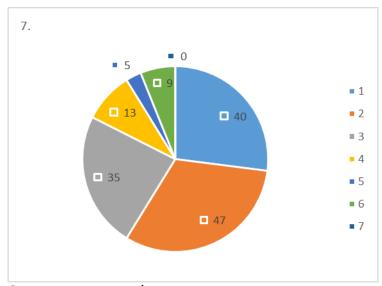*Source*: own processing

Source: own processing

Fig. 6. Preparation of students for changing conditions on labour market

Answers to the next question related to the significance of political, social and culture processes in Europe and their influence on students´ future jobs have proved that students are aware of the mentioned processes as students´ answers have been concentrated between the scale positions 1-4, with almost one third stating important influence (40), while 47 students placed their answers in the scale position 2, 35 in the scale position 3, and 13 in the scale position 4. Only 5 students decided to choose the scale position 5 and 9 students expressed the opinion that current changes will not influence future jobs in the scale position 6.

Table 7. Influence of political, social and cultural processes on future jobs
Will current political, social and cultural processes in Europe influence your future job?

Definitely, they will.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Definitely, they will not
	40	47	35	13	5	9		

Source: own processing

Source: own processing

Fig. 7. Influence of political, social and cultural processes on future jobs

The question number 8 was aimed at the problem of the national identity[*] (Czechs, Slovaks, etc.) where 64 students are convinced that they rather belong to the Czech or Slovak nation than to the Europeans, 33 students have chosen the scale position 2, 12 students the scale position 3 and 19 respondents the scale position 4. Only 7 answers were placed in the scale position 5, 11 in 6, and 3 respondents chose the scale position 7.

Table 8. National identity

Do you feel to be rather a Czech, Slovak, etc.?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	rather a European?
	64	33	12	19	7	11	3	

Source: own processing

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[*] Na OPF studují také zahraniční studenti ze Slovenska
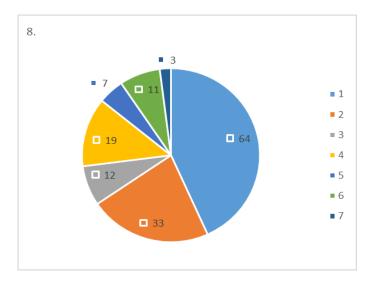
Source: own processing

Fig. 8. National identity

1 Associations

The next part of the research focused on generating associations to the concepts of migration, religion, and tolerance.

Students were able to generate numerous associations, most of them being synonymous, therefore the following paragraphs comprise only one of the synonyms occurring in students´ answers. All associations have been listed beginning with positive ones, continuing with the neutral, and finishing with the positive ones. However, the number of the negative ones is definitely prevailing.

Associations related to the migration involved concepts related mainly to new culture phenomena, including the negative ones, security threats, adaptation, and also nationalities connected with the concept of migration:

Migration:
Chaos, moving, Muslims (a word with a negative connotation used in Czech), dirt, mess (a word with a negative connotation used in Czech), damaging European culture, Christianity, refugees, problems, riots, violence, illnesses, terrorist attacks, raping danger, fear, war, change, mistake, journey, Merkel, Africa, Middle East, education, and striving for a better life.

Religion:
Fanatism, islamisation, radicalism, racism, division of society, lack of tolerance, war, no Islam, belief, Christianity, culture, tradition, trust, attitudes, keeping up customs, rituals, church and rules.

Tolerance:
Lack of empathy, stupidity the EU, law, respect, willingness, sympathy, sincerity, ethnic minorities, justice, friendship, living together, accepting others, allowance, understanding, and preserving traditional values.

3. Discussion

1. In comparison with the previous survey it can be stated that students have generally expressed similar opinions to those acquired in the previous one. The highest concentration of students´ answers are like last year in the middle of the spectrum, especially in the scale positions of 3 and 4, but at the same time the numbers of respondents´ opinion in the left part of the spectrum are higher, which indicates a slight shift towards the feeling of being threatened. It can be stated that the perception of culture and religious diversity as a threat to various aspects of life has increased.

2. When comparing answers to question 2 to the previous survey results, it can be summarized that the results related to the old and new surveys are similar, i.e. the highest concentration of students answers are located in the left side of the spectrum with the biggest number in the scale position 4, in the scale position 5 there can be observed only a relatively small number of 12. Generally it can be stated that there is a very slight shift of numbers towards the right part of the scale.

3. In comparison with the previous survey it can be summed up that generally students expressed similar opinions to those acquired in the previous one. However, the right part of the scale shows bigger numbers than last year, which gives evidence about changing opinions of respondents and their slight preference for a monocultural society. Moreover, only 6 students´ answers were placed in the scale position 1 related to a clear preference for a multicultural society.

4. Comparing the current results to ones acquired last year, there can be observed a fair shift of respondents´ opinions towards the left side of the scale, which means that students are aware of the fact that current problems in multicultural societies are caused by religious radicalism of ethnic minorities. Only a very low number of students think that the mentioned problems are connected with the social status of ethnic minorities.

5. In comparison with the previous survey related to 2015, we must state that the number of respondents positively evaluating the preparation of the education system for changing conditions has decreased. Respondents also expressed them not being satisfied with the education system in a more distinct way than in 2015.

6. The survey has shown that in comparison with the results related to 2015 fewer respondents have evaluated the preparation of the education system for changing conditions on labour market in a negative way. It is possible to state that the numbers of students evaluating the preparation of the education system for changing conditions on labour market in a positive and negative ways are nearly the same.

7. The answers to question 7 related to current political, social and cultural processes in Europe influencing students´ future jobs have indicated that respondents´ attitudes have not changed significantly in comparison to the results in 2015. Students have expressed opinions that political, social and cultural processes in Europe will definitely influence their future. However, the number of respondents who suppose that there will be no influence has slightly increased.

8. In the answers to question 8 related to students´ nationality it has been shown that there has not occurred any shift in attitudes. Respondents seem to be convinced to belong to Czech and Slovak nations.

4. Conclusion

The presented article is a continuation of the text published in 2015. It is based on the survey conducted among students at School of Business Administration in Karviná, Silesian University in Opava in the spring of 2016 evaluating students´ attitudes to selected controversial aspects of the globalized society characterized by migration, plurality trends, religion and culture diversity, and also students´ opinions about the education system and its ability to react to the current changes adequately.

Having compared the survey results related to years 2015 and 2016 it can be stated that in accordance with our estimation the questionnaire survey results indicate a shift in respondents´ opinions created under the influence of media, politics, public opinion, etc. The associations the students generated also indicate the fact that their attitudes towards the researched phenomena have deteriorated.

It can be estimated that in the future a negative perception of culture and religion diversity will continue. A diversification of the society based on culture and religion differences can lead to stronger feelings of threat to security in various areas related to changing conditions on labour market, fear connected with the loss of job, and an increasing dissatisfaction with the education system that is not able to react to the changing conditions in a flexible way.

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