

<https://doi.org/10.4467/2543733XSSB.24.027.20051>

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West Versus? – Review of Piotr Mazurkiewicz’s Article *Wielokulturowość a multikulturalizm* [Cultural Diversity versus Multiculturalism]
Mazurkiewicz P., *Wielokulturowość a multikulturalizm*, “Chrześcijaństwo-Świat-Polityka” 2020, no. 24, pp. 242–264, <https://doi.org/10.21697/CSP.2020.24.1.29>

The reviewed article is part of the twenty-fourth issue of the scientific journal “Chrześcijaństwo-Świat-Polityka”, which was published in August 2020. The author is Piotr Mazurkiewicz, Head of the Department of Political Theory and Political Thought at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. Mazurkiewicz’s research focuses on cultural identity, European integration and the social doctrine of the Catholic Church.

Distinguishing between the concepts of cultural diversity and multiculturalism is the aim of Mazurkiewicz’s article. The author explains that “cultural diversity” refers to a situation in which people with different cultural identities co-habit the same territory, while “multiculturalism” refers to “an ideology that promotes a particular model of relations between these individuals and communities”¹. In addition to the explanation given, the author reviews the work of selected theorists of multiculturalism and the social teaching of the Church, seeking answers to what lies behind the *multi* and *culti* elements of the concept discussed. The conclusion of the article is not only an answer to the author’s research question but is also an eschatological reflection on the imminent end of liberal democracy based on Christianity.

A definite strength of Mazurkiewicz’s article is the fulfillment of the research purpose he sets out in his introduction, i.e. to distinguish between cultural diversity and multiculturalism. It should be noted, however, that the author has managed to do this in just one paragraph of the text, which runs to a total of 23 pages. This is not surprising, as his remarks in this regard are not new to the theory of multiculturalism. Wojciech Burszta and Sławomir Łodziński, for example, have already made the same considerations². However, there are no relevant references in the text to the work of these or other researchers. The part of the article where

¹ P. Mazurkiewicz, *Wielokulturowość a multikulturalizm*, “Chrześcijaństwo-Świat-Polityka” 2020, no. 24, p. 243.

² Vide: S. Łodziński, *Wielokulturowość i prawa mniejszości. Zmieniające się wizje integracji imigrantów w Europie*, in: *Wielokulturowość – międzykulturowość – transkulturowość w perspektywie europejskiej i pozaeuropejskiej*, A. Barska, M. Korzeniowski (eds.), Opole 2007.



we get a de facto answer to the research question posed³ was therefore written based on the author's own knowledge in this area, but this conclusion remains speculative. In the following sections of the study, the author develops his analysis of the concept of multiculturalism by referring to sources specific to the Church's social doctrine (papal encyclicals, materials of the Congregation for Catholic Education) and to classics of sociology and political philosophy (Will Kymlicka, Alain Touraine or Immanuel Wallerstein). The bulk of the publication is therefore devoted not so much to an analysis of the relationship between the concepts of cultural diversity and multiculturalism, as the title and abstract might suggest, but rather to Mazurkiewicz's comments on the latter. An interesting part of the text is the section on multiculturalism in the Church's social doctrine – the combination of these strands is rare in the academic literature. Given Mazurkiewicz's social function, which combines the role of an academic with that of a Catholic presbyter, as well as the characteristics of the journal in which the reviewed article appeared, it is understandable that the issue under analysis is presented from the perspective of Roman Catholic social theorists. However, regarding to the rest of the author's considerations, several important reservations can be made.

The choice of literature appears at first sight to be deliberate and reliable, but reading into the text, one gets the impression that the author uses the selected items without understanding them. For example, through the words of Monika Bartoszewicz, he conducts a polemic with Kymlicka, pointing out the inaccuracies in the conceptualisation of *culture* proposed by the theorists of multiculturalism⁴. Surprisingly, the author does not refer to Kymlicka's work in which he introduces the concept of *social cultures*⁵, which is autonomous for his theory, but only to the researcher's earlier work. The problem raised in the text takes on a thoroughly different character when we turn to Kymlicka's book, in which he provides an appropriate conceptualisation. This shortcoming is all the more striking when one considers that the cited article was first published in 1996, i.e. twenty-four years before the publication of the reviewed article. It is noteworthy that Kymlicka's conceptualisation has also been subjected to criticism in the academic literature. However, this criticism has not been based on the premise of insufficient precision or a complete lack thereof. Instead, the criticism has been directed towards the incompatibility of the conceptualisation with social reality and the tendency to essentialise⁶. Moreover, the author's assertion that *culti* is absent from *multiculti* is inconsistent with the dynamic accounts of culture previously discussed, which emerge from the social doctrine of the Church. The researcher refers to the position of the Congregation for Catholic Education, pointing out that it does not use "stereotypical or folkloric" approaches in its activities and avoids "closing off as well as manifesting differences"⁷. Dynamic or narrative accounts of culture are based on deconstructing essentialist conceptualisations. In some cases, they even reject them altogether⁸. It loses its analytical sense to search for a clear explanation of what a *culti* is. It would be advisable for the author to indicate this discrepancy and adopt a stance

³ P. Mazurkiewicz, *Wielokulturowość...*, p. 243.

⁴ Ibidem, pp. 249, 250.

⁵ W. Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship. A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, New York 2003, pp. 75, 76.

⁶ Vide: T. Modood, *Multikulturalizm*, Poznań 2014.

⁷ P. Mazurkiewicz, *Wielokulturowość...*, p. 246.

⁸ Vide: S. Song, *Justice, Gender, and the Politics of Multiculturalism*, Cambridge and New York 2007, S. Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture. Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*, New York 2002.

on it. In the absence of this treatment, the publication is weighed down by internal contradictions and understatements. It is also important to highlight that the concept of culture remains one of the vaguest in the social science literature. This underscores the necessity for particular caution when employing it.

Mazurkiewicz also refers to certain theories without presenting a critical analysis of the doubts that exist within the scientific community regarding their analytical value. He refers to Samuel Huntington’s theory of the clash of civilisations, which has been subjected to a considerable body of critical commentary in the literature⁹. One of the defining characteristics of the social sciences is the limited falsifiability of theories and hypotheses. Consequently, Huntington’s conclusions cannot be unequivocally refuted. Nevertheless, the integrity of a research paper is contingent upon the presentation of the accumulated literature, together with the polemics formulated against the items in question. This is particularly the case when the items in question are prominent and widely present in academic discourse.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Mazurkiewicz references several seminal authors on the subject without directly citing their original works, employing indirect citation instead. Although indirect citation is a common and accepted practice in academic contexts, it is always advisable to consider whether it is appropriate in a given situation. In some cases, it may be preferable to cite the original text directly. In his article, Mazurkiewicz refers to Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony and its accompanying political programme¹⁰ – but he does not quote or mention Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks*¹¹ or even theorists who draw directly on his theory, such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe¹². Instead, he cites Roger Scruton’s book¹³ on the thinkers of the so-called *New Left*, in which we find not only a rather cursory overview of many authors more or less loosely associated with left-wing thought, but also a one-sided critical assessment of them. It is therefore necessary to question whether reaching for such a position is sufficient to form any conclusions about the theory of hegemony. In my opinion, only a study of the source texts of the trend would be a legitimate basis for a scientific conclusion.

Leaving aside the choice of literature and the way in which it is presented, Mazurkiewicz uses anecdotal evidence several times in his publication to illustrate what he wants to say. For instance, he highlights the dearth of linguistic proficiency among Uber drivers with “Arabic, Georgian, or Chinese” features as an illustration of the absence of cultural rootedness among those migrating to major Western European cities¹⁴. He goes on to describe the story of a South American priest who, when applying for Polish citizenship, only had to answer a question about his food preferences for bigos and cucumbers in brine¹⁵, and then went on to question the nature of cultural differences on this basis. From, to use

⁹ Vide: M. Kufliński, *Eurocentrism in Samuel P. Huntington’s Concept of the Clash of Civilizations*, “Polish Political Science Yearbook” 2020, vol. 51(3), pp. 125–134.

¹⁰ P. Mazurkiewicz, *Wielokulturowość...*, p. 252.

¹¹ Vide: A. Gramsci, *1891–1937. Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, New York 1971.

¹² Vide: E. Laclau, C. Mouffe, *Hegemonia i socjalistyczna strategia. Przyczynek do projektu radykalnej polityki demokratycznej*, Wrocław 2007.

¹³ R. Scruton, *Głupcy, oszuści i podżegacze. Myśliciele nowej lewicy*, Poznań 2018.

¹⁴ P. Mazurkiewicz, *Wielokulturowość...*, p. 244.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 250.

Mazurkiewicz's nomenclature, the "cucumber in brine test", he proceeds to answer the question posed in a very smooth but not fully comprehensible way for the reader, formulating strong opinions on so-called oppressive cultural practices, without citing any sources in this area. As a side note, I would like to point out that the choice of literature here is both varied and rich¹⁶. Anecdotes and other rhetorical devices appear regularly in the text. They also take the form of vivid comparisons framed by thesis questions. For example, considering mockery as a political tool¹⁷, Mazurkiewicz refers to Chantal Delsol's work on the limits of political correctness. As an illustration of the theme, he poses three rhetorical questions in turn, juxtaposing what, in his view, is met with ridicule or exclusion in the discourse and what is hidden "under the umbrella of political correctness"¹⁸. The author compares multi-child families with "the sight of a half-naked man in a bra"¹⁹, pointing out that the former is an object of social ridicule, while the latter cannot even arouse surprise. Quite apart from the accuracy of this juxtaposition, there is a serious question mark over the use of this kind of rhetorical device in a scientific study published in a scientific journal. It would appear that the most suitable format for this kind of reflection would be a journalistic essay or a column, which this article is not, or at least should not be. I am not saying that the use of an anecdote or a rhetorical question is completely excluded in scientific literature, on the contrary, it can be a tool to illustrate the phenomenon being described or to interest the reader. However, I believe that this should be done in moderation and certainly with a subsequent explanation supported by the relevant sources. It is worth noting here that the author of the text under review also relies on dubiously apt analogies coined by other scholars, comparing, for example, the failure to include information on Europe's Christian tradition in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to the denial of the Holocaust²⁰.

It should be recalled that the article under review was intended to address the relationship between the concepts of cultural diversity and multiculturalism. The author cannot be blamed for failing to address the second of these, while taking the opportunity to portray this ideology as hostile, even hateful, towards Western civilisation. On the side of the ideology of multiculturalism, interpreted as the recognition of the coexistence of cultural differences, he argues, are thinkers who see Western civilisation as "the source of all humanity's woes"²¹. Mazurkiewicz, citing other similarly minded scholars, writes about the urge to deconstruct everything Western, as well as everything traditional and universal, which is said to prove Europe's "suicidal tendencies"²². The reinterpretation of certain social categories associated with postcolonial thought does not seek to reject and degrade everything Western and European. Rather, it seeks to create a social space in which mental and institutional models respond to the characteristics and needs of different groups of people, including those who do not fit into the traditional Eurocentric matrix. The sociological, anthropological and historical literature is replete with publications on Europe's

¹⁶ Vide: M. Grzyb, *Przestępstwa motywowane kulturowo. Aspekty kryminologiczne i prawne*, Warszawa 2016; B. Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism. Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, Cambridge 2000.

¹⁷ P. Mazurkiewicz, *Wielokulturowość...*, p. 254.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 255.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 253.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 256.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 258.

colonial past and its effects, up to the present day²³. The author of the article under review would not have to look far for an explanation of the postulates he so clearly criticises – Immanuel Wallerstein, whom he quotes several times, built his world-systems theory on them. Although I am aware of the limitations imposed by the form of the research paper, I am not convinced that the failure to include an in-depth reflection on the post-colonial roots of multicultural politics in Europe is due to this kind of technical obstacle. As I have already mentioned, using Wallerstein as an example, Mazurkiewicz collects and refers to adequate sources in this respect, while at the same time refraining from reflecting on his own critical theses. One gets the impression that the researcher is trying to sketch out an eschatological, dangerous vision of the death of Western civilisation, based on the Christian tradition, at the hands of thinkers and experts in the politics of multiculturalism. At the same time, he testifies to the lack of understanding of this concept. In doing so, it not only fails to meet its own purpose and its own research question, but it may also fail to meet the purpose of scientific work in general.

In my view, Mazurkiewicz repeatedly departs from the intended purpose of his research and uses the platform of a research paper to articulate his own views on multiculturalism. The author presents multiculturalism as an ideology hostile to Western liberal democracy, which seeks to put an end to democracy and liberalism, and which makes a mockery of Europe’s Christian civilisational roots. Leaving aside for the moment the assessment of the validity of this thesis, the way in which the author argues is, in my view, highly questionable. Mazurkiewicz’s text presents an unstructured overview of views on multiculturalism, bearing resemblance to a stream of consciousness accompanied by an abundance of footnotes, rather than a reliable research paper. Combining this conclusion with the previously expressed approval of the part of the text dealing with the issue of cultural diversity and multiculturalism in the social doctrine of the Church, I would like to express the opinion that it is on this thread that the author could have stopped during the writing and editing of the peer-reviewed article.

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²³ Vide: R. Connell, *Teoria z Globalnego Południa. W stronę ogólnoświatowej nauki o społeczeństwie*, Kraków 2018; D. Chakrabarty, *Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton 2000.