



‘To Be a Minority or Not’
Multiculturalism in Poland Between
Europe and the Past

European Master’s Thesis in Human Rights and Democratisation (E.MA)

Academic Year: 2013/2014

Author: Nicole Staiger

Supervisor: Prof Zdzislaw Kedzia

ABSTRACT

The concept ‘multiculturalism’, minority protection and universal human rights are linked on the basis of liberal democratic principles. Poland has a complicated history of extreme approaches towards minorities from peaceful coexistence and tolerance to forced assimilation. International and European standards of minority protection developed after communism, have served as external models for Poland’s domestic implementation of minority rights. EU membership, economic success and growing immigration including the revival of the Silesian identity have challenged Poland’s narrow definition of ‘minority’ as well as its ethnic homogeneity. Despite racist and xenophobic incidents, Polish society has been evolving to increasingly accept cultural diversity. Multiculturalism in Poland differs from Western Europe, since encounters with foreign cultures remain abstract, removed from social reality. While historical minorities are small and well assimilated, immigration and integration policies have not yet sparked major public debates, albeit the increasing awareness of policy-makers. The most probable future path of Poland will be the gradual extension of its existing framework for old minorities towards inclusion of new minorities to accommodate the needs of an ever-changing reality. This dissertation maps the issue of multiculturalism in Poland in terms of laws, policies and reality – adding the Polish perspective to the European discourse on multiculturalism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
<i>PART I: MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES</i>	5
1 The Concept ‘Multiculturalism’	5
2 Multiculturalism and Minority Rights.....	11
<i>PART II: THE POLISH CONTEXT</i>	18
1 The Multicultural Past.....	18
2 A Culturally and Ethnically Homogenous Society?	20
3 Multiculturalism and Minorities after Communism.....	24
3.1 Policy Shift Towards Minority Protection	24
3.2 The Minority Landscape	27
4 The International Dimension.....	30
<i>PART III: STANDARDS AND IMPLEMENTATION</i>	34
1 Minority Protection under International Law.....	34
1.1 International Standards.....	34
1.1.1 General Human Rights Instruments	34
1.1.2 Minority-Specific Mechanisms	37
1.2 Regional Standards.....	40
1.2.1 Setting the Foundation	41
1.2.2 Legalizing the Norms	43
1.2.3 Strengthening the Implementation	47
2 Minority Inclusion in Poland.....	48
2.1 National and Ethnic Minority Protection	48
2.1.1 The Constitution.....	48
2.1.2 The Minority Act.....	50
2.1.3 Additional Measures	52
2.2 New Minorities: Immigration and Integration	54
2.3 Claiming Minority Protection: The Case of the Silesians.....	60
3 Assessment.....	65
<i>PART IV: SOCIAL ATTITUDES</i>	69
1 Populism of Political Parties	69
2 Tolerance, Xenophobia and Racism.....	71
3 Debates on Multiculturalism in the Media.....	75
Conclusion	78
BIBLIOGRAPHY	83
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	96

2014

þÿ To be a minority or not : multiculturalism in Poland between Europe and the past

Staiger, Nicole

<https://doi.org/20.500.11825/477>

Downloaded from Open Knowledge Repository, Global Campus' institutional repository