



I. THEORIZING THE CITY: CITY CULTURE AND ART

CITIES IN CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE IN THE THEORY OF MULTICULTURALISM

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The article presents the painting of cities of Central and Eastern Europe in perspective of theory of multiculturalism. Laid on Eastern civilization borderland cities are culturally heterogeneous. At present, “heterogeneous city” in perspective of theory of multiculturalism includes at least several transitional categories (subcategories), such as: culturally diverse city, pluralist city or multicultural city. The author believes, that using such concepts and many others ought to be related to the possibility to refer to a coherent theory which needs to be formulated – a theory of multiculturalism. Theory of multiculturalism is, in fact, a theory of a state and an advanced integration process in a society being culturally diverse. Multicultural city is the one which is prepared to welcome multicultural society willing to live and work there, in structural, organizational and intellectual terms. In conclusions author suggests that the communities and local authorities of the cities being the subject of the research ought to face the necessity to accept great challenges aimed at constructing multicultural environment in their cities.

Keywords: borderland, civilizational borderland, cultural diversity, multicultural city, multiculturalism.

Introduction

Although each contemporary large city is culturally heterogeneous, this fact is not always reflected in its inhabitants’ minds. A city that is culturally heterogeneous is an open and creative city, holding positive approach towards cultural diversity of both its residents and newcomers. These are culturally homogeneous cities that are becoming more conventional, traditional, even boring and not attractive enough to be a desirable place to live for the educated professionals willing to be the residents of new, open Europe. The definition of a city itself regards it as a kind of a community, the characteristics of which is its heterogeneous structure (Kwaśniewicz 1999: 228). It means that while considering the nature of a city its cultural heterogeneity is frequently not mentioned.

The concept of city heterogeneity needs to be treated as a dichotomous opposite of a possible homogeneity. At present, “heterogeneous city” category would need applying another theoretical position, since being treated as a dichotomous category towards homogeneity it includes at least several transitional categories (subcategories), such as: culturally diverse city, pluralist city or multicultural city. In my opinion, heterogeneous character of a city begins at the point, when there appears cultural diversity among its residents¹ and its complete dimension is achieved in multicultural city conditions.

I believe that using such concepts as: cultural pluralism, multiculturalism, multicultural society, multicultural city and many others ought to be related to the possibility to refer to a coherent theory which needs to be formulated – a theory of multiculturalism. This is a theory of a diverse society development. Theory of multiculturalism is, in fact, a theory of a state and an advanced integration process in a society being culturally diverse. Despite numerous varying theoretical positions concerning multiculturalism on which I do not intend to take a stance, it seems that various attempts to formulate a multiculturalism theory are based on several similar initial assumptions.

They do not accept any forms of returning to the ideas that were socially rejected, such as assimilation or a “melting pot” concept, they object to any forms of discrimination against social and cultural minorities and they assume that cultural diversity within societies is preserved, strengthened and developed as a social value and as an advantageous phenomenon for the society.

A traditional approach towards cultural diversity in particular societies as an autotelic value results from basic values shared by a democratic society, being especially devoted to such values as: human rights, equality and freedom. I assume that searching for technical and organizational solutions that concern their implementation into practice will be leading to more and more advanced and stately solutions concerning co-existing of culturally diverse individuals and communities. This issue, by analogy, considers culturally diverse cities.

At present, the so-called multiculturalism theory does not have even minimum elaborated notions².

An attempt to define multicultural city

A concept of multicultural city was formulated at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s when problems related to friendly co-existence between local inhabitants and large groups of culturally different newcomers appeared. Inflow of people of a lower material status and a different culture caused a lot of fears amongst residents. These fears

¹ In my opinion, cultural diversity among city residents occurs, when two or more culturally autonomous social groups live in a city, and each of them is enabled to maintain their cultural values.

² Nowadays the existing theory of multiculturalism is in deep crisis. In this article I do not ignore this important fact but the research of the crisis of multicultural theory here is not included. It will be the subject of the next article.

were related to job and lifestyle security as well as losing the identities of particular cities. Popularization of multiculturalism ideas, particularly in American and West European big cities, was supposed to be a kind of remedy for both real and imaginary fears experienced by local inhabitants.

Multicultural city is the one which is prepared to welcome multicultural society willing to live and work there, in structural, organizational and intellectual terms. The characteristic feature of multicultural city is an absolute awareness of cultural diversity shared by its residents, the acceptance for this diversity and appreciating its autotelic values, rational management of cultural diversity, taking it into consideration in the practice of community life so as to use it in order to increase economic, social and cultural capital of the community.

The concept of multicultural city still needs to be elaborated. I will only mention the features that seem to be characteristic for a multicultural city in my opinion. Its residents' attitudes towards cultural diversity are changing. These are both tolerant attitudes and positive acceptance that are prevailing. It is an advantageous situation as it keeps transforming into capital supplies of the city.

In this city a principle of respect for its inhabitants' cultural autonomy is a dominant attribute. There is no place for enclaves, ghettos, areas of social exclusion and alienation in this city. An administration structure in a multicultural city promotes the diversity, allowing differences to be manifested and seen in public space. Diversity is cultivated through the number of institutions and activities aiming at maintaining and development of residents' heterogeneity.

This city functions are within multicultural social structure. Principles of equality and freedom in a cultural sphere have been absorbed both in this city and in the whole society. Equality seems to express the right of all cultural communities to function and develop in cities whereas freedom means the freedom of choice for each of them. I want to refute an opinion commonly appearing in the literature claiming that multiculturalism supposedly assumes the coercion to submit individuals to their ethnic affiliation. According to this opinion, multiculturalism, in the name of respect for group rights, forced even unwilling individuals wanting independence towards ethnicity (Buraś 2009: 7). On the contrary, multiculturalism assumes freedom of choice for all existing cultures, their values or even constructing new ones.

According to Kazimierz Krzysztofek, there are two tendencies forming the metropolis: transforming city centers into culture industry centers and taking advantage of multiculturalism and ethnic pluralism as developmental potential. The author stresses that city multiculturalization is an effect of globalization processes and that these are cities that are becoming an instrument of the integration of various social groups. Cultural industries developing in cities are orientated towards diversity that, in its various forms, is becoming a market product. The author then argues that these cultures that are able to "translate" their values into a performance, a market product, will be the winners. It is culture marketing that allows it to survive and to let ethnic cultures be introduced into a world circulation (Krzysztofek 2008: 37).

Specificity of cities in Central and Eastern Europe

Talking about cities in Central and Eastern Europe needs defining, what areas and cities I mean using this phrase. In my opinion, Central Europe is, and should be, distinctly set apart from Eastern and Western Europe. It constitutes a divided and diverse whole. Within this whole one can see distinct inner borders, still being transnational. I believe that Central Europe can be distinctly divided into Central-Western Europe and Central-Eastern Europe. Central-Western Europe consists of such countries and societies, as: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia and Slovenia. Central-Eastern Europe consists of such countries and societies, as: the Republic of Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Greece. The diversification factors are: Roman Catholic (Protestant) religion or Orthodox (Muslim enclaves) religion, cultural ties with, respectively, Roman or Orthodox culture, ethnic structure (national states and ethnically diverse states) and others. Additional factors of the diversity at present include dominant political and cultural attitudes that involve, respectively, bigger or smaller attachment to democratic values and bigger or smaller number of anti-Russian attitudes in political actions and social behaviors (Sadowski 2009).

My article refers to big cities located in Central-Eastern Europe. In the past, cities in Central-Eastern Europe were culturally heterogeneous. They were frequently referred to as multicultural cities, as they reflected, in their ethnic and cultural composition, a diverse social and cultural nature of the inhabitants of Eastern national, religious and even civilizational borderland. Cultural diversity of these cities before World War II needs conducting independent studies in historic sociology perspective.

Negative experience of World War II, including both German and Soviet occupation, War and post-war migrations and other factors, was the reason for significant transformations in ethnic and cultural composition of these cities. These transformations were related to the elimination (Holocaust) of Jewish minority, compulsory exodus of German minority and representatives of political elites of past neighboring empires. Moreover, victimized groups were capitalist social strata, being the carriers of cultural diversity before the War, due to – among other factors – their different lifestyle. They were deprived of their capital and property, frequently sent to labor camps, relocated or victimized in other ways. The huge number of reprisals directed to inhabitants being culturally different, even if they managed to avoid them, made them accept acculturation or assimilation to dominating majorities directly after World War II.

World War II was a period deeply changing political affiliation, size, social and ethnic structure of the cities being the subject of my research. Pre-war culturally heterogeneous cities became culturally homogeneous ones. The reason for this transformation was not ethnic and cultural structure becoming homogeneous. The reason was that cultural diversity being the result of new migration and other processes appearing after the War was victimized by new political institutions of power, resulting from simplified ideas of constructing national or transnational states (and cities-AS), often of socialist character. Certain explicit cultural structures were transformed into

hidden ones, formal into informal ones, towards new kinds of diversity. This kind of policy was maintained by numerous representatives of new cultural majorities.

After World War II cities in Central-Eastern Europe reconstructed their ethnic and cultural composition. In a post-war period these cities increased their population both by “imported” elites and newcomers from nearby villages. These newcomers were culturally different from earlier native inhabitants of cities. It needs to be added that big cities of Eastern borderland were predominantly inhabited by people of ethnic origin being dominant in the states, they maintained their state and national nature, being surrounded by smaller towns and villages inhabited by local peasants. Their national, regional and local identities often differed in the ethnic substratum from politically and culturally dominant city inhabitants. I mean such cities, as: Vilnius, Hrodna, Białystok, Brest, Lviv, Uzhgorod, Debrecen, Oradea, Novi Sad, Sarajevo, Trieste and other cities in the Eastern and Southern part of Eastern civilizational borderland of Western and Eastern Europe. In post-war period these cities experienced a heavy inflow of residents of neighboring areas of different ethnic, religious and national character, which resulted in a new cultural diversity in the cities being the subject of the research. In a situation when particular cities were put into new political and state structures, the representatives of pre-war minorities became the representatives of ethnic majority in the cities. It was only then, when their mature national identity was formed. In these cities a real exchange of dominant and subordinate positions among respective minorities and majorities occurred. It was undoubtedly formed on the basis of previous discrimination, humiliation and injustice.

Even if the analysis excludes a large number of facts and actions being deliberate discrimination forms against religious and national minorities practiced by particular states, the feelings of injustice and humiliation were certainly present. It resulted from various reasons: living in a village perceived as worse than living in a city; limited or impossible directions of individual or social advancement; sense of deprivation related to cultural traits being treated as worse and reducing the access to socially desirable goods and values or the lack of required cultural competence to establish social relations based on partnership in the cities. I mean mass Lithuanian migration to Vilnius, Belarusian migration to Hrodna and Brest, Ukrainian migration to Lviv, and others. Their possible dislike was directed towards dominant Polish majority residing there previously, and after changing the borders becoming Polish minority.

It needs to be kept in mind that forming post-war borders in Europe, especially in Eastern borderland, was connected with a policy of violent ethnic cleansing, the consequence of which was widespread belief in ethnically homogeneous states (and cities). People, migrating from smaller towns and villages to the cities becoming the centers of new states in new post-war political conditions, strengthened their ethnically homogeneous character and reduced their pre-war heterogeneous dimension.

People representing ethnic and religious minorities in new conditions, migrating to the cities (people of Polish origin in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine) tended to hide their real cultural identities, accepting new assimilation identities. In practice they adopted the tasks of acculturation, modifying their cultural traits in order to be melted

into urban societies. In the initial stage of new city ethnic structure being formed, minority representatives were identified with nationalities that were dominant earlier, with citizens of previously dominant states, which caused high level of intolerant attitudes towards them. During the Soviet rule, people of Polish origin in Vilnius, Hrodna, Brest and Lviv were subjected to Russian acculturation, which could be perceived as a spontaneous or deliberate strategy of ingenuity in conditions of cultural submission, or the acculturation to Polish culture being distant to the cultures of new national states. After Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus gained independence, Polish minority paid high price for group ingenuity they had applied. Generally, Polish minority was imputed to practice either pro-Russian or pro-Polish affiliation.

The question concerning the types of group ingenuity of ethnic minorities during a significant political and social change still remains open. These strategies mainly appear in culturally diverse cities.

The processes of forming heterogeneous society in the cities that remained in the same countries but fell into the Soviet zone of influence (new submission) were different.

What I mean is Belarusian minority in Białystok, Lemko minority in the cities of Western Ukraine, Ukrainian and even Polish minority in North East Romania (Suceava) and Hungarian minority in Romania (Transylvania).

For example, Belarusians who moved from their villages to Białystok as a result of post-war migration, underwent clear assimilation processes towards Polish culture. Despite post-war processes of cultural diversification among city residents for at least two post-war generations, including generations of social elites, these cities became culturally homogeneous. It did not only result from the deprivation of their heterogeneous cultural substratum, but mainly because the policy of restitution of their cultural homogeneity was conducted there. Under the banner of socialist society being constructed, where no ethnic and religious conflicts were supposed to occur, these were nationally homogeneous cities that were formed. They were especially big cities of Eastern Polish borderland, Western cities of the Soviet Union but also other cities located on the civilizational borderland between Western and Eastern Europe that were perceived as political and national ramparts and symbols of the extent of dominant ethnic and civilizational cultures. As a consequence of activities aiming at political and cultural homogeneity of cities, new or strengthened egocentric and xenophobic attitudes towards “others” were created.

It needs to be emphasized that their restitution in post-war cities was relatively easy, as it referred (implicite or explicite) to negative examples of cross-ethnic relations in particular cities during an interwar period and earlier. Negative experience related to cross-ethnic relations accumulated for a long period formed numerous stereotypical images of our neighbors and the prejudice being their consequence, which no-one tried to change in a rational way. Stereotypes and prejudice to other nationalities and religions were aggregated in social consciousness and passed from generation to generation in form of myths, legends or, to a large extent, mythologized facts and events. As a result, positive opinions about “dark” ethnic conflicts and problems from

the past being finally removed from public city space as a consequence of such historic events, as Holocaust, were expressed.

It needs to be stressed that not only are these opinions unethical but they are also inhumane while talking about our past. They ought to be morally condemned. It seems that in their structure the sources of a certain dislike to discover the heterogeneously complex past in cities of Central-Eastern Europe can be found; the sources and conditions of contemporarily existing attitudes of appropriating multiethnic past, present in group and individual historical memory, by one ethnic group.

From the perspective of a cultural structure of Central-Eastern European cities, the new situation, initiated by democratic changes, was formed at the beginning of the 1990s. Generally, social and cultural city structure was released, i.e. hidden and undemonstrative diversity was strengthened in social and political terms.

City inhabitants' rediscovered cultural diversity became more and more significant. Its characteristic feature was institutionalization. Numerous institutions and organizations preserving inhabitants' cultural diversity were established. I would put forward the hypothesis that a large number of organizations and institutions of national and religious nature is characteristic for inhabitants' public life institutionalization in the cities being the subject of the research rather than other civic structures. Past prejudice towards culturally different ethnic groups, transmitted to contemporary generations as cultural heritage, is an important factor influencing many city inhabitants' problems and obstacles related to opening to "others".

It cannot be forgotten that an intellectual structure shared by contemporary city inhabitants in Central-Eastern Europe does not include an empty socio-cultural space concerning the past; contrary, this space is permeated with stereotypes and prejudice against the neighbors from the past. These stereotypes and prejudice are not likely to make concessions to accepting attitudes in a short time spontaneously, just through increasing cross-cultural contacts. Their transformation requires a lot of organizational and educational efforts in order to prepare the residents for new, heterogeneous nature of modern cities. What I mean is initiating the programs of cross-cultural education, cross-cultural dialog initiatives, constructing the legal and moral norms that would explicitly condemn racist, anti-Semitic, jingoistic and similar attitudes being culturally intolerant.

These actions are being taken in Central-Eastern Europe, in some cities at least two dichotomous patterns of group attitudes towards culturally different co-inhabitants or newcomers have been formed.

The first pattern is an attitude open to others, creative, promoting cultural diversity, conducive to competition and new challenges, including stabilization and accustoming the newcomers. These attitudes preserve complex, or even painful, memory of the past, but it is done not to revive long forgotten conflicts but rather in order to construct the image of heterogeneous (multicultural) past of the city as a shared value for all its inhabitants. This city is genuinely open for all who wish to refer to its multicultural past and develop it accordingly to new challenges.

The other pattern is constructing city life as a rampart where patriotic values are defended and the memory of victims and suffering from neighbors – both from the East and the West – is still alive, as the place of deportations, displacement and ethnic cleansing, as the place of offense against the enemies, numerous victories and periods of dominance in the past. This place requires endless celebration, the aim of which is constructing contemporary national identities. It is the right of each nation to shape its citizens' national identity. However, it is important to remember that continuous referring to the past using the discourse and rhetoric of a victim culture, culture of mourning and distrust towards neighbors, culture of readiness to defend one's territory and people with no real danger existing – all these ingredients forming national identity will only stimulate or strengthen xenophobic and jingoistic attitudes, including this type of attitudes directed towards culturally different neighbors in cities.

Conclusions

I do believe that both the communities and local authorities of the cities being the subject of the research ought to face the necessity to accept great challenges aimed at constructing multicultural environment in their cities.

There are at least several tasks for both elites and residents of particular cities in Central-Eastern Europe that can be hypothetically outlined as a part of projects aimed at constructing their multicultural image:

1. reconstructing the concept of cities being culturally heterogeneous, both in the past and at present, in social consciousness;
2. in order to achieve this aim it is necessary to provide social consciousness with genuine knowledge of history concerning the heterogeneous past in particular cities and the reasons why it was lost;
3. a serious intellectual challenge needs to be accepted in order to indicate both outer (relatively easy to be assimilated by social consciousness) and internal reasons and conditions resulting in losing heterogeneous nature of a city. These latter ones are connected with negative experience of cross-ethnic relations, which became more intense during the period of ideological and political polarization of Europe and strengthening national identity among city residents, being ethnically and religiously diverse earlier;
4. educational background needs to be provided for city residents to make them ready for contacts with newcomers. City residents need to acquire new competencies to establish long lasting cross-cultural contacts. These competences, being a part of social capital, will be critical for further development of cities.

At present, these are the cities of multiculturalism brought to life again.

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VIDURIO-RYTŲ EUROPOS MIESTAI DAUGIAKULTŪRIŠKUMO TEORIJOJE

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje piešiamas Vidurio ir Rytų Europos miestų poveikslas daugiakultūriškumo teorijos perspektyvoje. Rytų civilizacijos paribio miestai yra kultūriškai heterogeniški. Nūdien „heterogeniškas miestas“ daugiakultūriškumo teorijos perspektyvoje apima mažiausiai keletą skirtingų tarpinių kategorijų (subkategorijų), tokių kaip kultūriškai skirtingas miestas, pliuralistinis miestas ir daugiakultūris miestas. Autorius tiki, kad tokių ir daugelio kitų konceptų vartojimas turėtų būti susietas su galimybe nurodyti nuoseklią teoriją, kuri turi būti suformuluota – su daugiakultūriškumo teorija. Iš tikrųjų ši teorija yra vertybės ir pažangaus integracijos proceso kultūriškai skirtingoje visuomenėje teorija. Daugiakultūris miestas – tai toks miestas, kuris pasirengęs sveikinti daugiakultūrę visuomenę, tikintis ten gyventi ir dirbti struktūrine, organizacine ir intelektualine prasmėmis. Išvadose autorius teigia, kad miesto bendruomenės ir vietinės valdžios kaip tyrimo subjektas turėtų būti neatsiejamas nuo būtinybės priimti didžiulius iššūkius, siekiant konstruoti daugiakultūros aplinkas miestuose.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: paribys, civilizacijos paribys, kultūrinis skirtingumas, daugiakultūrinis miestas, daugiakultūriškumas.

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