

**Information about the authors:**

**Dr Joanna Fomina** – is a member of the European Studies Unit, IFIS PAN. Her research interests include migrants and immigrant integration, Polish migration to the UK, gender equality and European integration.

**Justyna Frelak** – Head of the Migration and Development Policy Programme at the Institute of Public Affairs, member of Zagranica Association since 2009, author of numerous publications and reports published in Poland and abroad. She specialises in integration, discrimination, economic migration (including emigration of Poles) and development policy. She has participated in the Open Society Institute Policy Fellowship Programme.



**INSTYTUT SPRAW PUBLICZNYCH**  
**THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

# The Perception of Poland and Poles in Great Britain

Joanna Fomina  
Justyna Frelak

*Translation: Dorota Szmajda*

*Proofreading: George Lisowski, Kinga Wysieńska*

© Copyright by Fundacja Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warszawa 2011.

The 'Perception of Poland and Poles in Great Britain' project has been co-financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland under the 'Promoting knowledge about Poland' Programme.



The print of the report cofunded by the British Embassy in Warsaw



**British Embassy  
Warsaw**

Instytut Spraw Publicznych  
ul. Szpitalna 5 lok. 22  
00-031 Warszawa  
tel. +48 022 556 42 99  
fax +48 022 556 42 62  
e-mail: [isp@isp.org.pl](mailto:isp@isp.org.pl)  
[www.isp.org.pl](http://www.isp.org.pl)

ISBN 978-83-7689-061-6

BADANIA • EKSPERTYZY • REKOMENDACJE

**Table of contents**

Main findings. .... 4

Introduction. .... 6

Setting the context. .... 7

Results of quantitative analysis ..... 20

Summary ..... 38

References ..... 38

## Main findings

- Poland's accession to the European Union and the opening of the British labour market to Poles have contributed to the intensification of contacts between Britons and the Poles and to a sharper image of Poland. Over half of those interviewed (53%) stated that they had had some contact with Poland and/or Polish people. At the same time, however, only 6% of Britons had visited Poland in recent years.
- Poland is slowly ceasing to be a little known country on the periphery of Europe. More and more Britons have formed an opinion on the subject of Poland as a country and are ready to share it. In comparison with results of a survey from 2001, there has been a clear drop in the number of people who do not have an opinion on Poland.
- Britons are generally aware of the fact that Poland is part of Europe. Almost 70% of Britons know that Poland is a member of the European Union. By comparison, less than 40% of Britons know that Slovakia is also a member of the European Union. Indeed, 15% of Britons are not certain whether their own country belongs to the EU.
- There is a certain dissonance in the perception of Poland by Britons. Most respondents have no doubt that Poland is part of the community of democratic nations that respect the civil liberties of their citizens. This belief is more widespread now than in 2001. At the same time, they consider that quality of life is not optimal due to bureaucracy, corruption, lack of rapid economic growth and the significant influence of the Catholic Church on social and political life.
- Poles have stopped being a little known and exotic nation for Britons. Intensification of contacts with Poland and Poles has helped Britons to form an opinion about them. Only 8% of respondents could not answer a question on whether Poles tended to be similar to or different from Britons. By comparison, nine years earlier, twice as many respondents could not answer this question. Furthermore, in the case of questions concerning social distance, the percentage of "difficult to say" replies did not exceed 5%. One third of Britons are of the opinion that Poles are similar to them, whilst a quarter consider that Poles are a little similar and a little different.
- Over half of those interviewed (52%) stated that Poles fit into British society well or very well. Almost all Britons unanimously accept tourist travel to the UK by Poles and have nothing against Poles as neighbours or friends. What is more, Britons accept Poles as family members. Somewhat more respondents would be against their company being managed by a Pole – although even in this case, less than a third of the population is opposed. Similarly, one third of interviewees do not want Poles to settle for good in Britain. 40% of Britons do not accept the granting of British citizenship to Poles. It is most difficult for the British to accept a Pole as a local councillor. Britons perceive the short term presence of Poles in the UK (economic migration) much more positively than their settling down for good and participating in social and political life.

- 
- Direct contact between inhabitants of the UK and Poles and the greater attention paid by the media has led to a distinctly warmer and generally improved image of Poles, in comparison with that presented in the survey carried out nine years ago. Britons who have had contact with Poland and Poles are significantly more ready to accept them not only as friends and family members, but also as fellow citizens or councillors.
  - British respondents' evaluation of the effects of migration of Poles to the United Kingdom is not unqualifiedly positive. Britons see the positive impact of the presence of Polish immigrants on the economic growth of the United Kingdom and also the increase in inflows to the state budget from taxes – so say almost 50% of interviewees. In the opinion of Britons, however, Polish immigration has a negative side. The influx of cheap and conscientious Poles has led to many Britons (60%) seeing it as the cause of the growth in unemployment. Poles are also accused of wage dumping and hence causing a general lowering of wages.
  - The typical Polish migrant is an unqualified worker – over 75% of respondents expressed such an opinion. What's more, not only do they undertake the most difficult jobs, but they also do them conscientiously and well: their work is highly regarded by employers. On the other hand, however, this conscientious and cheap worker is taking work from Britons – so say almost 60% of respondents. At the same time, according to nearly 70% of respondents, British employers are satisfied with Poles' work.
  - On balance, the presence of Poles in the United Kingdom is viewed positively: over half of Britons consider that opening of the labour market to Poles was the right decision, with one third of Britons strongly agreeing with this statement.
  - The *Polska! Year* programme helped to promote Polish culture to social elites and to demonstrate that Poland is not just good vodka and efficient workers. However, the broader British public were not generally aware of the programme – only 8% of British society had heard about the year of promoting Polish culture in Great Britain, and a mere 1% of respondents stated that they had actually taken part in cultural events organised under this programme.
  - The image of the Poland brand is still rather blurry. Although Polish products can now be found everywhere, there are still no leading brands with which Poland is associated abroad.
  - This study shows that Poles are good ambassadors for their country, shaping the image of Poland and Poles in a significant way. Poles are well-liked by the British in personal relations and accepted as members of British society. The influence of Polish immigrants on the perception of Poland and Poles in the United Kingdom should be appropriately reflected in Polish public and cultural diplomacy.

## Introduction

Poland's accession to the EU has not only had direct economic, political and social consequences, but also a momentous symbolic dimension, as it has formally confirmed Poland's membership of 'the West' – of a group of highly-developed, democratic states. However, actual changes do not always go hand in hand with changes in people's perceptions. With Poland having been a member of the European Union for several years, we wanted to take a closer look at the image/national brand of Poland. We wanted to see whether, in the eyes of the British public, Poland still remains 'a poor relation' and an underdeveloped Eastern European country or rather a dynamic new partner state and an EU member of equal standing. The study below was carried out six years after the British labour market was opened to Poles – which resulted in (large-scale) emigration of Poles to the United Kingdom. We paid particular attention to how this phenomenon is perceived and to changes in the image of Poles. We were also interested in how Poland is perceived as an EU member and in the international arena.

This report was prepared on the basis of a survey conducted in Great Britain by QRS Market Research Ltd on a representative group of 1,029 respondents, as part of "The Perception of Poles and Poland in the Great Britain" project, co-financed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs under an ongoing programme intended to promote knowledge about Poland.

This publication originated as part of one of the many projects analysing the perceptions of Poland and Poles abroad, conducted by the Institute of Public Affairs. Prior to Poland's EU accession, the Institute had carried out a survey on how Poland and selected EU countries (including Austria, UK, Sweden and France) perceive each other. The findings from this project, carried out in 1998–2001, were presented in the publication *Obraz Polski i Polaków w Europie*<sup>1</sup>. Following Poland's accession to the European Union, we conducted another survey on the perception of Poland in Germany<sup>2</sup>. The Institute also published reports on how Poland and Polish foreign policy were portrayed in the press of five EU countries<sup>3</sup>. In 2007 and 2008, we analysed the press coverage of Poland's and Germany's European policies<sup>4</sup>. The analysis of the coverage of the economic migration of Poles in the British press was presented in *NEXT STOPSKI LONDON. Public Perceptions of Labour Migration within the EU. The Case of Polish Labour Migrants in the British Press*, published in 2008<sup>5</sup>. As a follow-up to our research in this area, we ran an analysis of the German press, which resulted in a publication entitled *Polska migracja zarobkowa do Niemiec – fakty i mity*.

<sup>1</sup> L. Kolarska-Bobińska (ed.), *Obraz Polski i Polaków w Europie*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2003.

<sup>2</sup> M. Fałkowski, A. Popko. *Polacy i Niemcy. Wzajemny wizerunek po rozszerzeniu Unii Europejskiej*, Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warszawa 2006; L. Kolarska-Bobińska, A. Łada (ed.), *Polska–Niemcy. Wzajemny wizerunek i wizja Europy*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2009.

<sup>3</sup> M. Warchala (ed.), *Wizerunek Polski w prasie krajów Unii Europejskiej*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warszawa 2002; M. Fałkowski, (red.), *Pierwsze kroki w Unii. Polityka Polski w prasie europejskiej*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2004.,

<sup>4</sup> B. Ociepka, A. Łada, J. Ćwiek-Karpowicz, *Polityka europejska Warszawy i Berlina w prasie niemieckiej i polskiej*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2008.

<sup>5</sup> J. Fomina, J. Frelak, *NEXT STOPSKI LONDON. Wizerunek polskich imigrantów w prasie brytyjskiej*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2008.

*Polnische Arbeitsmigration nach Deutschland – Fakten und Mythen*.<sup>6</sup> What is more, simultaneously with the survey on the perception of Poland and Poles in Britain, we ran a similar project in Ukraine.

This report contains two chapters and conclusions. The first chapter introduces the context for discussing the research findings. Factors shaping the image of Poland as a country and as a member of the European Union, and also the Polish émigré milieu are described. The successive waves of Polish migration to Great Britain and how this immigration has been perceived up till now by the British public are also briefly discussed. Statistics relating to the post-accession migration (after 1 May 2004) are also presented, as is a profile of post-accession Polish workers and the economic results of this phenomenon. The Poland brand is dealt with separately.

Chapter Two presents the results of quantitative surveys: we have looked at how the mass presence of Poles in the UK has affected perception of Poland and Poles. A factor that should not be overlooked is that our perception of foreigners (and their country of origin) is influenced by the role in which we encounter them. Since 2004, Poles have not only been able to live legally in Britain, but have also enjoyed the full rights of EU citizens – they can take up any work, participate in local politics, and also claim social (welfare) benefits. In the analysis of the study, the perception of the effects of Polish migration and the perception of the Poland brand have also been discussed.

## Setting the context

The aim of the present chapter is to provide the social and political context for our survey. We discuss the internal situation in Poland, relations with neighbours and significant events on the international political scene that may have shaped the perception of Poland. Moreover, we attempt to shed some light on the history and situation of Poles in the UK as well as discussing public perception of immigration in general and the debate on the opening of the British labour market to Poles. Finally, we discuss the factors that shape the Poland brand, with particular emphasis on the year of Polish culture in the UK under the *Polska! Year* banner.

## The image of Poland vis-à-vis the Polish political context

The perception of the internal situation of Poland and its standing in the international arena is one of the main areas of our research. Over the last two decades, Poland has undergone a root-and-branch transformation, but the question remains as to whether the perceptions of Poland in other countries have followed suit. As the 2001 perception survey showed, these changes had not found their way into the awareness of the European ‘man in the street’ and the image of Poland was still based on the old clichéd way of thinking: ‘East vs. West’, ‘civilization vs. savagery’, with Poland sitting firmly on the wrong side of

---

<sup>6</sup> J. Frelak, A. Łada, K. Schwartz, R. Parkes (cooperation/Zusammenarbeit): *Polska migracja zarobkowa do Niemiec-fakty i mity. Polnische Arbeitsmigration nach Deutschland – Fakten und Mythen*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2009.

the *limes*<sup>7</sup>. Mateusz Fałkowski postulated that Poland would not be able to alter the way it was perceived by Europeans until it crossed this boundary officially, by its accession to the European Union.

Joining the EU club was tantamount to formal acknowledgement by other member states that Poland had fulfilled the Copenhagen criteria and therefore was a country founded on the rule of law, protection of minorities and a market economy. However, upon Poland's EU accession, the external political pressure to meet democratic standards was eased, as was Poland's internally-driven aspiration to put its best face forward in the international arena. As a consequence, Eurosceptic, populist parties – earlier kept at bay with a sort of 'cordon sanitaire'<sup>8</sup> for fear that their participation in power could hold up the accession process – rose to power in Poland and several other Central European countries. Even the mainstream parties themselves on more than one occasion were unable to refrain from populist slogans or political movements. After all, the motto 'Nice or Death', urging a Polish veto of the EU Constitutional treaty, came from the lips of the aspiring prime minister in a centre-right Liberal-Conservative cabinet.

The first years after EU accession were accompanied by slogans calling for 'repairing the Polish state', which first and foremost meant fighting corruption, hyped as the crucial problem eating away at the country's social and political life. In practice, this meant not only the setting up of a new institution specifically aimed at fighting corruption (the Central Anticorruption Bureau), which developed a reputation for involving big names from the world of politics, medicine and business in spectacular trials and for extending the lustration law, which effectively amounted to a restriction of civil liberties. The process of building a 'Fourth Republic' was accompanied by appeals for 'moral renewal', targeted at representatives of the intellectual, business and political elites, and in particular, sexual minorities. In 2007, the British public had a chance to see Poles determined to change this state of affairs, queuing for hours to get to polling stations in Polish consulates.

Ever since Poland joined the EU, it has been notorious for being an 'awkward partner': quarrelsome, overly focused on its own needs and obstructing various European initiatives. However, the new government installed in 2007 changed the way Poland's foreign and European policy was pursued. The several years of 'Dying for Nice', ultra-scepticism vis-à-vis the European Union and the confrontational approach to relations with Poland's neighbours came to an end. In the last few years, Poland has indeed made great efforts to change the way the country is perceived and promote itself as a reliable and responsible partner, one that values stability and intra-Community cooperation and sees the need for continued integration.

The greatest change has been the political discourse relating to Polish interests in the EU and worldwide, and the strategies whereby these interests could be furthered. The present Government has stressed the need to pursue the interests of the Polish *raison d'état* – however, not in conflict with EU interests, but rather within the framework of broader EU development<sup>9</sup>. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has emphasized that Poland should look for

<sup>7</sup> M. Fałkowski, *Polska jako Wschód and jako Zachód*, [in:] L. Kolarska – Bobińska, *Obraz Polski i Polaków w Europie*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2003.

<sup>8</sup> J. Kucharczyk, J. Zbieranek, *Democracy in Poland 1989-2009. Challenges for the future*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Prime Minister Donald Tusk's policy speech, [http://wyborcza.pl/1,90699,5239927,Expos%E9\\_premiera\\_Donald\\_Tuska.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,90699,5239927,Expos%E9_premiera_Donald_Tuska.html); [http://or.ka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter6.nsf/0/6372FE4B9619C127C125739D0053E245/\\$file/2\\_a\\_ksia\\_z\\_ka.pdf](http://or.ka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter6.nsf/0/6372FE4B9619C127C125739D0053E245/$file/2_a_ksia_z_ka.pdf).

effectiveness and not just 'assertiveness', as has been the case so far<sup>10</sup>. This rhetoric has been accompanied by specific actions to reinforce credibility, efficacy and Poland's solidarity with other countries in Europe and on the global scene.

Unlike its European neighbours, Poland went through the global economic downturn practically unscathed. In 2009, Poland was the only country in Europe to record economic growth. This has provided a premise for dispensing with the traditional East-West division and we can now speak about the reasonable and responsible North and the less fiscally level-headed South. Even though the economic crisis in Europe reinforced protectionist tendencies in EU countries, Poland was keen on promoting the solidarity of all European states. On the initiative of Premier Tusk, an informal meeting of Central European countries with the President of the European Commission among the attendees was organized to demonstrate that the new member states fully embraced the principles of the single market and supported the Commission's activities.

Furthermore, Poland has also proved that it can be an active player in European politics, if the interests of the Polish state so demand. The adoption of the Eastern Partnership by the European Union should be counted among Poland's major achievements in the European arena. This was the first time that an initiative proposed by a Central European country and a relatively new EU member was endorsed as a Community policy. Poland's criticism of the EU's excessively restrained response to the Russian intervention in Georgia and persuading the EU to take a more determined stance can be quoted as another example here. An extraordinary meeting of the European Council which helped develop more appropriate joint actions was held on the initiative of Prime Minister Tusk in September 2008. Poland was also able to skilfully make use of its EU membership in resolving problems with its eastern neighbour. For instance, the European Commission accepted the idea of European energy solidarity as one of the basic principles when negotiating a new agreement between Russia and the EU.

The election of Jerzy Buzek as President of the European Parliament was an event which has had momentous consequences for Poland's position in the European arena. The former Polish Premier received support from three quarters of European Parliament members. His term of office coincided with the Lisbon Treaty coming into force, which considerably strengthened the European Parliament's role and reinforced its standing vis-à-vis other European institutions. The institutional changes as well as Buzek's personal qualities and activities have made the former Polish Premier the most prominent EP President in its entire history.

The presence of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin at the ceremony commemorating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of World War II, held at the Westerplatte memorial in Gdańsk, symbolized reconciliation with neighbours with whom Poland has never had easy relations. Prime Minister Putin publicly declared the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, which resulted in the partition of Poland, to be immoral. A year later, Prime Minister Putin's attendance at a ceremony commemorating the 1940 Katyn massacre, where thousands of Polish officers were killed by the NKVD, was widely received as a significant diplomatic gesture. In his address, Putin spoke of Stalin's direct responsibility for these killings. (Commemoration of and the ques-

---

<sup>10</sup> A. K. Cianciara, *The European Policy of Donald Tusk's Government*, Analyses and Opinions No. 8/93, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2009.



tion of responsibility for the Katyn massacre have constituted one of the most problematic areas in Polish-Russian relations).

The Smolensk plane crash – a catastrophe without precedent in contemporary history, which claimed the lives not only of the Polish President and his wife, but also of many other eminent Polish figures – attracted the attention even of those who had had little interest in international affairs. The history of difficult and painful relations between the two nations seemed to be resurfacing again. However, owing to the sympathetic response of the Russians, including many spontaneous signs of compassion and support from ordinary Russian citizens, the developments following the catastrophe could well be described as a genuine act of Polish-Russian reconciliation.

In recent years, Poland has on many occasions been portrayed as an ally of Britain, with Euroscepticism being the common denominator linking the two countries. The United Kingdom has praised Poland for a more free-market approach to the economy than that typically practised in the ‘old’ member states. Poland was also one of the last countries to ratify the Lisbon Treaty, which caused so much controversy in the UK. Contrary to the policy pursued by his government, President Kaczyński delayed the signing of the document until the eleventh hour. As regards the Charter of Fundamental Rights, Poland only subscribed to the so-called British Protocol, a pruned version of the instrument. It is also worth mentioning the cooperation between the conservative wings of the Polish and British political spectrum, particularly within the European Parliament. In 2009, a new EP political group was formed, the ECR, which comprises Poland’s Law and Justice, Britain’s Conservative Party and several other conservative groupings, with Michał Kamiński as its chairman.

It should be noted, however, that the Eurosceptic stances of the two countries were frequently founded on dissimilar premises and interests. The UK’s criticism of the European Union is predominantly focused on the alleged collusion of federalists, apparently keen to create a European super-state. In this sense, British Euroscepticism has a strong anti-Brussels edge. As regards our own homegrown Eurosceptics, Poland’s main fear is the domination of smaller countries by bigger ones – notably Germany. In Britain, one of the major concerns is related to the model of a ‘social Europe’ – if it was imposed, it would allegedly slow down the British economy, cripple the resilience of the labour market and the competitiveness of enterprises. In Poland, on the other hand, a ‘social Europe’ does not arouse so many worries. These ideological discrepancies are particularly visible in the context of the political marriage between the economically liberal British Conservatives and pro-social Law and Justice Party, consummated in the EU European Conservatives and Reformers political group. The radically divergent views on the Common Agricultural Policy held by the Polish and British political allies are a case in point here.

Likewise, it is difficult to find a common denominator between the UK and Poland in the context of the opposition of both countries to the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Whilst Britain has mainly harboured doubts of an economic nature (such as the concern that extensive employee rights might prove harmful to enterprises), Poland has predominantly had the socio-cultural dimension in mind. Poland’s primary concern has been a ‘backdoor’ introduction of a set of social rights, irreconcilable with Catholic values and often put by Polish conservatives on a par with the so-called ‘Western civilization of death’ – i.e. the right to abortion, the right to enter into marriage and adopt children by homosexual couples (rights which are guaranteed in the United Kingdom and do not give rise to any major controversy).

## The perception of Poles and Poland and the Polish émigré community in the UK

Polish émigrés are frequently viewed as ‘ambassadors of Polishness’ abroad. Garapich writes about the myth of the Polish Diaspora’s mission, whereby the Polish community abroad assumes the role of an ‘informal arm of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’<sup>11</sup>. In our study, we specifically focused on the role of Poles living in Britain in the shaping of perceptions about their native country. It is worth recalling that although prior to 2004 Poles had never come to the UK on such a massive scale, migration of Poles into Britain has a long history. Poles emigrated to Britain in the nineteenth century, just as they did in the wake of World War I. Contemporary Polish migration is traditionally divided into three waves: post-War emigration, post-Solidarity migration and post-accession migration. The first two are usually described as political, whereas the current, third wave is predominantly seen as economic. Garapich emphasizes that there is a clear hierarchy of motives underpinning emigration, and therefore of people driven by these motives: ‘We, people raised in Christian and Platonic values, find it obvious that things ideological should at all times prevail over things material, that spirit is superior to impure matter’<sup>12</sup>. In other words, political emigration is viewed as more respectable than economic migration, one in search of ‘a better life’. It should be noted that while the first and the third waves can be clearly defined, the second wave in practice encompasses the migration of Poles spanning the period from the 1960s until 2004, which means that referring to it as a post-Solidarity wave is not exactly precise. What is more, the economic and political divisions are not as clear-cut for all the three migration waves in question.

The first group comprises not only former Polish Army soldiers whom the end of World War II found outside their homeland, but also POWs (prisoners of war) and DPs (displaced persons)<sup>13</sup> from camps liberated by the Allies. Post-War emigration is seen as political, since the key motive for staying in Britain was a fundamental objection to the new regime installed in Poland and fear of repressions. Nevertheless, DPs recruited under the European Voluntary Worker Scheme were treated by the British government of the day as foreign manpower, as economic migrants with whom work contracts were initially signed for only twelve-month periods<sup>14</sup>.

The post-War Polish Diaspora frequently viewed themselves as victims of both Stalin and Hitler, ever bearing a grudge against Britain for its role in the Yalta Conference and the resultant subjugation of Poland by the USSR<sup>15</sup>. However, return to a communist Poland would have meant imprisonment or even capital punishment for a large part of the

<sup>11</sup> M. P. Garapich, *Migracje, społeczeństwo obywatelskie i władza. Uwarunkowania stowarzyszeniowości etnicznej i rozwoju społeczeństwa obywatelskiego wśród polskich emigrantów w Wielkiej Brytanii*, [in:] M. Duszczyk, M. Lesińska (eds.), *Współczesne migracje: dylematy Europy i Polski*, Centre for Migration Research at the University of Warsaw, Warsaw 2009, pp. 39-69, p. 50.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>13</sup> DP (displaced persons), so-called *dipisi* in Polish, refers to people whom the end of the War found outside their country.

<sup>14</sup> K. Sword, *Identity in Flux. The Polish Community in Great Britain*. School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, London: 1996; J. Zubrzycki, *Polish Immigrant in Britain. A Study of Adjustment*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 1956.

<sup>15</sup> J. Fomina, C. Husband, *Inhabiting Heteroglossic Media Spaces: Intra-group transitions, identity construction and the language-media interface of ‘Bradfordian Poles’*, (in) T. Moring (ed.) *Living languages in bilingual media environments*, NORDICOM, Helsinki 2011 (in preparation).

post-War emigration. On top of that, communist Poland was considered as an alien country, not to mention the fact that Poles who were born in the eastern regions of pre-War Poland had nowhere to go to as the lands where they were born and bred were now a part of the Soviet Union<sup>16</sup>.

According to Ostrowski, the decisions as to whether to return to Poland or settle in Britain were very painful. These people often felt betrayed by the United Kingdom, which, in their opinion, ignored their contribution to victory in World War II: they received no invitation to the victory parade, and Polish Army soldiers were treated as civilians<sup>17</sup>. At this point, it is worth mentioning the "Silver Brigade" – Polish officers and political activists whose military ranks and positions were not recognised after the war by the British authorities, who were often forced to take up unskilled jobs such as polishing silver in hotels.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the 'myth of return' to their native land helped many of these people to nurture Polish culture and language in their families, and encouraged them to build an infrastructure for the Polish community<sup>19</sup>. At the same time, the United Kingdom was a country where, despite various difficulties, they were able not only to settle down and settle in, but also in many cases, to achieve a relatively high economic and social status<sup>20</sup>. Education of children was a matter of paramount concern, and many émigré children became lawyers, teachers or physicians. The perception of Polish émigrés as brave allies as well as political refugees also helped establish their high status in British society. The influx of immigrants from the former British colonies also certainly played a part, as they took the spotlight off Poles, assuming the role of the 'alien' in British society<sup>21</sup>.

As regards the second wave of emigration, neither dubbing it 'post-Solidarity' emigration nor ascribing political motives is entirely accurate. In fact, Poles emigrated to the UK throughout the post-War period, and although some of these people did indeed leave and stay in Britain for political reasons, others did so in search of a better life for social and economic ones. Many of those who emigrated in the 1960s (during the so-called thaw) and later until 2004, had relatives or friends in the United Kingdom. The Polish Diaspora structures and the 'migration industry' played an important role here as they contributed to the emergence of quite populous Polish émigré communities even before Poland's EU accession. As Garapich noted, the 'migration industry', an infrastructure that allowed Polish emigrants to stay in Britain, often verged on the illegal, sometimes even involving breaking the law, which led to Polish workers being abused by their employers<sup>22</sup>. This was a period when Poles were associated with doing jobs that were inferior to their qualifications, often in a semi-legal context – even if in reality many emigrants were able to move out of

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*; A. Połczyński, *Z drogi i przydroża*, "Vipart", Warsaw 1997.

<sup>17</sup> M. Ostrowski, *To Return To Poland Or Not To Return – The Dilemma Facing The Polish Armed Forces At The End Of The Second World War*, unpublished work, <http://www.angelfire.com/ok2/polisharmy/>.

<sup>18</sup> This term was mainly used in relation to Polish staff at Claridge's in London, but also in relation to Poles in other cities such as Bradford.

<sup>19</sup> J. Fomina, interview with representatives of the second generation of post-War Polish Diaspora and with Polish post-accession migrants in Bradford, held as part of the project: *Bilingualism, Identity and Media (BIM)*, financed by the Academy of Finland.

<sup>20</sup> J. Fomina, C. Husband, *Heteroglossic Media Spaces...op.cit*; A. Połczyński, *Z drogi i przydroża...op.cit*.

<sup>21</sup> R. Miles, A. Phizacklea, *White Man's Country*, London Pluto Press, London 1984; Solomos, 2005; J. Fomina, BIM project interviews.

<sup>22</sup> M. Garapich, *The Migration Industry and Civil Society: Polish Immigrants in the United Kingdom Before and After EU Enlargement*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34 (5), 2008, pp. 735-752.

the 'grey economy', validate their Polish diplomas and certificates, acquire new qualifications and rise to a relatively high social status.<sup>23</sup>

As mentioned above, post-accession migration has predominantly been economic in nature. This is corroborated by the results of a Eurobarometer survey on geographical mobility within the EU. According to this survey, socio-economic issues (such as pay levels and access to health care) have been the key factors driving migration from the new member states<sup>24</sup>. However, it should be underlined that it is no longer unemployment that prompts Poles to leave their homeland, but better career prospects and new personal opportunities. Poles leave Poland because they want to leave and not because they feel compelled to do so, seeing no prospects for themselves at home. This has been confirmed, for example, by surveys conducted by the Centre for Migration Research at the University of Warsaw, which reveal that 47% of respondents who decided to leave had employment in Poland, as compared to 22% who were unemployed<sup>25</sup>.

Let us now look briefly at post-accession migration strategies. In addition to short-term migration, which is strictly economic in nature and involves accumulating some savings and then returning home, other strategies, sometimes termed 'innovative', are pursued. As well as so-called *storks* (typical seasonal migrants) and *masters* (migration as a one-time opportunity to accumulate capital)<sup>26</sup>, migrants also encompass people for whom opportunities to receive education abroad, learn a foreign language or have an adventure are as important as economic advancement. Described as *foragers* or *salmons* in the literature of the subject, they direct their efforts towards increasing their social capital, and accept work below their qualifications as a necessary and temporary phase in their career.

Post-accession migrants show more individualistic attitudes than do those who emigrated earlier; they also have a higher degree of social mobility. People who have left Poland first try to satisfy their own needs, and not those of their families at home, which is certainly linked to their young age as well as single marital status. In the UK and Ireland, 90% of the respondents spend their wages on everyday needs, 42% spend money on entertainment and journeys, while 30% of the respondents put some money aside<sup>27</sup>. The amounts and the beneficiaries of remittances to Poland can serve as yet more evidence of highly individualized migration. Only half of respondents send money they have earned abroad to their families regularly, while the other half do so just once in a blue moon. On the one hand, Poles are earning wages enabling a way of life that is beyond their reach in Poland, but on the other, they are taking on typical immigrant jobs, known as '3D jobs' (Dull, Dirty, Dangerous), and the increased remuneration can be seen as a form of compensation for this unpleasant work. It should be stressed that although Poles will often initially take jobs that are 'unwanted by the indigenous population' as they are easily accessible and require little command of English, this is not where the careers of most Polish immigrants

---

<sup>23</sup> J. Fomina, BIM project interviews.

<sup>24</sup> *Geographic Mobility in the context of EU enlargement*, [in:] *Employment in Europe 2008 report*, European Commission, Brussels 2008, p. 122.

<sup>25</sup> P. Kaczmarczyk, *Współczesne migracje zagraniczne Polaków. Aspekty lokalne i regionalne*, Centre for Migration Research at the University of Warsaw, Warsaw 2008, p. 230.

<sup>26</sup> J. Eade, S. Drinkwater, M. P. Garapich, *Polscy migranci w Londynie – klasa społeczna and etniczność*, Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism, University of Surrey 2006.

<sup>27</sup> M.P. Garapich, D. Osipovič, MIGPOL, *Badanie sondażowe wśród obywateli polskich zamieszkałych w Wielkiej Brytanii i Irlandii*, September 2007, p. 7.

end. Once they have gained a better understanding of the British labour market and have improved their knowledge of English, a considerable number of Poles find work in jobs for which they are qualified or, after completing the necessary training, will take up other higher-status employment<sup>28</sup>. Nevertheless, despite the considerable social mobility of new Polish migrants, earlier surveys conducted by the Institute of Public Affairs indicate that in Britain the word 'Pole' has come to mean a cheap and reliable worker. The media have emphasized that Polish workers are industrious, affordable and well-qualified<sup>29</sup>. Our survey sets out to investigate the opinions of Britons about the jobs that Poles take and the opinions held by British employers about Polish employees.

Interestingly, the hierarchized division into ideological and material motivations is also clearly visible in the way representatives of the post-War Polish community and twenty-first century migrants view each other<sup>30</sup>. Various surveys show that the older migrants sometimes find it difficult to understand how one can leave Poland of one's own free will. They frequently criticize the overly materialistic and demanding attitudes of new migrants<sup>31</sup>.

Poland's EU accession and the opening of the British labour market to Poles have played a crucial role in how Poland and Poles are perceived. Despite alarmist reports in the Polish media about the smear campaign directed at Poles living in the United Kingdom, a more thorough analysis of (British) press coverage has revealed that the perception of Poles in the British media is surprisingly positive. Even tabloids, with all their penchant for sensationalism and for causing anxiety among their readers, have often written about Poles in friendly or at least neutral terms. If Poles were portrayed in an unfavourable light, this was most frequently in the context of some criticism of the government driven by anti-immigration moral panic, and they were not criticized *per se* – this particularly concerned the Conservative *Daily Mail*, which at the time of Poland's accession was in opposition to the government.

The shaping of perceptions of another nation often involves a dichotomous division, – it is based on splitting people into 'us' and 'them'. It must be borne in mind, however, that, unlike Poland, the United Kingdom is a country of huge cultural diversity, which has become home to many ethnic groups. We can say therefore that perceptions of Poles have been formed not only by making comparisons between Poles and the white British, but also between Poles and other national, ethnic and cultural groups. Since the present study primarily focuses on the perception of Poland and Poles following EU accession, we did not ask respondents about their knowledge of or opinion on Poland's contribution to victory in World War II or to world cultural heritage. Instead, we asked how Poles were perceived in comparison to other ethnic groups living in Britain.

Significantly, representatives of the British elites have sent some signals to the Polish community indicating that Poles are the 'preferred' ethnic minority. For instance, the Conservative MP Greg Hands appealed to Polish migrants not to return to Poland, claiming that Poles were 'Britain's favourite migrants'<sup>32</sup>. Poles are good at making the best of a situ-

<sup>28</sup> J. Fomina, BIM project interviews.

<sup>29</sup> J. Frelak, J. Fomina, *Next Stopski London. Wizerunek polskich imigrantów w prasie brytyjskiej*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2007.

<sup>30</sup> J. Fomina, BIM project interviews.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>32</sup> M. P. Garapich, *Migracje, społeczeństwo obywatelskie ...op.cit.*

ation and use the fears related to the challenges of multiculturalism – including fear of home-bred terrorism – to their own advantage and emphasize their cultural ‘affinity’ as compared to other ethnic groups. This was the context in which, in the wake of the 7/7 terrorist attacks, the London office of the Polish Tourism Agency exhibited a poster showing a Polish pilot with the caption reading: ‘Londoners, we are with you again<sup>33</sup>’. On top of that, Polish émigrés themselves usually harbour a strongly-rooted notion that, by comparison with others, they are more liked and respected on account of their willingness to blend into British society, their industriousness, readiness to learn English, affiliations with European culture and –not least – the colour of their skin<sup>34</sup>.

### Perception of immigration in British society

The British are generally regarded as an extremely liberal society, open to people with different cultures and viewpoints. British multiculturalism is constantly presented as a model to follow as far as dealing with cultural diversity and integration of immigrants is concerned. At the same time, however, the British public has long viewed immigration as a key challenge and a social problem that neither the government nor local authorities can cope with.<sup>35</sup> This is particularly striking when set against other European countries.

The *Transatlantic Trends* survey<sup>36</sup> indicates that immigration is one of the most serious problems for one fifth of UK citizens (as compared to 35% a year earlier), with the EU average being 11%. And it has to be borne in mind that the EU average has been considerably pushed up by Italy alone (18%), as only 5-7% of respondents in the remaining EU countries see immigration as a problem that should be addressed urgently. Interestingly enough, the upward trend began towards the end of the 1990s. In the mid-1990s, a mere 5% of the public regarded immigration as a major challenge facing British society.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, the highest negative immigration perception levels in the EU could be observed in the UK, with 66% of interviewees feeling that immigration was more of a problem than an opportunity. Also, British citizens’ estimate of the number of immigrants in their country was nearly three times higher than the actual number. Similarly, half of the respondents expressed the belief that immigrants bring down wages of British employees, and more than half agreed that immigrants take away jobs from native-born workers. In particular, the British were worried about low-skilled migration, with 58% of respondents in support of restricting immigration of people with low qualifications and skills. Being aware of the ‘migration myths’ which have gained considerable currency in British society, we decided to examine in more detail whether, and to what degree, these myths apply to Polish immigrants.

What is particularly important in the context of our report is that 47% of British citizens believe that there are ‘too many’ immigrants from other European Union countries, and this certainly applies to the new member states, including Poland. The alarmist British

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> J. Fomina, *Światy równoległe – wizerunek własny Polaków w Wielkiej Brytanii*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2009. J. Fomina, C. Husband, *Heteroglossic Media Spaces...op.cit.* Cf. M. P. Garapich, *Migracje, społeczeństwo obywatelskie...op.cit.*

<sup>35</sup> J. Frelak J., Fomina J., *Next Stopski London...op.cit.*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw.

<sup>36</sup> *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration*, German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2009.

<sup>37</sup> A. Thorp, (ed.), *Impacts of Immigration*, House of Commons Research Papers 08/65, 25 June 2008.

press reports about the growing number of newcomers from Eastern Europe, Poles in particular, have certainly played a role in this<sup>38</sup>. For this reason, our survey included a question on how the 2004 decision on the opening up of the labour market to Polish persons was received by the British public.

Various surveys show that opinions about immigration vary from region to region and depend more on the perceived rather than the actual impact of immigration. Other factors which correlate with attitudes to immigration include social status, contacts with ethnic groups, political discourse and media coverage.<sup>39</sup>

It should also be observed that support for giving legal immigrants the same social (welfare) benefits as native-born citizens is much lower than the EU average (50% to 72%). No such discrepancies are visible, however, when it comes to supporting immigrants' political rights, as the percentage of British citizens who would give immigrants the same right to political participation is nearly on a par with the European average. Significantly, assessment of the British government's management of immigration was the most negative of all countries polled<sup>40</sup>. In their paper, Carey and Geddes go as far as to show that belief about the Government being unable to handle migration has largely been responsible for the recent government change in the UK<sup>41</sup>.

### **Consequences of post-accession migration to the UK: objective analyses, media, public opinion**

As already mentioned above, migration is frequently analyzed in terms of its social and economic consequences. More often than not, however, such analyses contrast somewhat with opinions held by the native population about immigrants themselves. This is certainly the case in Britain, where, as earlier studies carried out by the Institute for Public Affairs have shown, Polish immigrants are viewed much more favourably than Polish immigration as a whole. However, detailed knowledge about this is rather limited, and opinions can change depending on the political or economic climate, e.g. during an election campaign or a period of economic downturn. Invariably, the most heated debates concern such issues as the influence of immigration on the labour market and unemployment figures, and these aspects should be probed in more detail.

Many independent expert studies have confirmed that the liberalization of the labour market begun in 2004 had a small but positive impact on the economies of the host countries. One such study estimated that the flow of people within the EU-8 in the period 2004–2007 increased the aggregate GDP of the enlarged EU by approximately 0.17% in the short term and by 0.28 % in the longer term<sup>42</sup>.

The opening of the labour market has not led to the forcing out of the native population from the labour market. Instead, workers from the 'new' member states have helped to fill

<sup>38</sup> J. Frelak J., Fomina J., *Next Stopski London...op.cit.*

<sup>39</sup> A. Thorp, Arabella (eds.) *Impacts of Immigration,...op.cit.*

<sup>40</sup> *Transatlantic Trends...op.cit.*

<sup>41</sup> S. Carey, A. Geddes, *Less Is More: Immigration and European Integration at the 2010 General Election*, Parliamentary Affairs 63 (4), Oxford University Press 2010, pp. 849-865.

<sup>42</sup> *The impact of free movement of workers in the context of EU enlargement. Report on the first phase (1 January 2007 – 31 December 2008) of the transitional arrangements set out in the 2005 accession treaty as requested according to the transitional arrangement set out in the 2003 accession treaty*, European Commission, Brussels 2008.

the skills gap in host countries, including the UK. Despite prevalent views about immigrants bringing down wages, the advent of Poles has not led to the lowering of pay levels in Britain. On the contrary – workers from the ‘new’ member states tend to choose other sectors of the economy and do not compete with the native workforce. On the other hand, however, when people take up jobs at the lowest rate on a mass scale, this can occasionally be reflected in the overall pay levels on the local labour markets<sup>43</sup>.

On the whole, immigrants from the ‘new’ member states of the EU did not rush to collect welfare benefits across the EU. Do Poles contribute more to the British social welfare system than they take from it? A report published by the British Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration (CreAM) makes it very clear that Poles and immigrants from other ‘new’ member states pay more into the state budget than they receive from it. This is due, amongst other things, to higher employment rates and the fact that they seldom apply for welfare benefits. By comparison, 90% of immigrant men and 74% of women work, whereas the corresponding figures for the working-age British population are 78% for men and 71% for women<sup>44</sup>, respectively. Moreover, according to CreAM, the probability that migrants from the A8 countries (who have worked at least a year in Britain) will collect welfare benefits or live in council housing is 60% smaller than in the case of native British citizens.

On the other hand, however, in some cases immigration does indeed strain British public services and housing services at the local level. This problem has on many occasions been picked up by the British media. The press have provided extensive coverage of the resultant burden on the public services sector and criticized the authorities for their unpreparedness to deal with this matter<sup>45</sup>.

With the onset of the recession and rising unemployment, however, Poles, just like other immigrants, provided an easy target for the media, primarily the tabloids<sup>46</sup>. For instance, *The Daily Mail* reported that: *Jobs dry up but Poles stay to reap the benefits*<sup>47</sup> and that: *Foreign workers surge by 114,000 ... but the number of Britons with jobs falls*<sup>48</sup>. The year 2009 saw several industrial actions in the UK to protest against employing immigrants, including Poles (e.g. at power stations), organized under the slogan: *British jobs for British workers*.<sup>49</sup> Poles also came under attack from the extreme right-wing organization Combat 18 in Northern Ireland, which summoned Poles and other immigrant minorities to immediately leave its territory, declaring that Northern Ireland was for white Britons only<sup>50</sup>.

In a period of economic downturn, Poles, like other immigrants, may be perceived as an even greater threat to the labour market – this is due, amongst other things, to the fact that native-born workers are forced to take up jobs which had earlier been done by immigrants, e.g. in agriculture<sup>51</sup>. These negative attitudes may also be fostered by employers’

<sup>43</sup> Cf.: S. Lemos, J.N. Portes, *New Labour? The Impact of Migration from Central and Eastern European Countries on the UK Labour Market*, Institute for the Study of Labor, Bonn 2008, p. 32.

<sup>44</sup> C Dustmann, T Frattini, C. Halls, *Assessing the Fiscal Costs and Benefits of A8 Migration to the UK*, Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration, London 2009, p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> Frelak J., Fomina J., *Next Stopski London...op.cit* Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw, p. 49.

<sup>46</sup> A. Koziński, ‘Bezcenni imigranci’, *Polska The Times*, 31 July 2009.

<sup>47</sup> *Daily Mail*, 9 January 2009.

<sup>48</sup> *Daily Mail*, 12 August 2010.

<sup>49</sup> R. Booth, ‘Mediators called in as wildcat strikes spread across UK’, *The Guardian*, 31 January 2009.

<sup>50</sup> D. McKittrick, Belfast immigrants warned: ‘Get out by tomorrow – or you die’, “Independent” 10 July 2009.

<sup>51</sup> S. Bates, ‘British workers compete for seasonal jobs as recession bites’, *The Guardian*, 14 April 2009.



preferences, as they would rather give work to immigrants, owing to their modest pay expectations, greater flexibility and determination to retain their job<sup>52</sup>.

A pertinent issue in this context is so-called 'brain waste', i.e., working below one's qualifications. Poles tend to choose typically immigrant niches, as that is where the demand for labour is in the host countries. According to surveys, this is true for 40% to 80% of Polish emigrants. Such a situation in the longer term may ultimately lead to devaluation or a total loss of qualifications and deteriorate the labour market situation both abroad and at home. On the other hand, Poles take up such jobs for a limited period only; as their language competences and experience increase, they are very likely to look for jobs more in line with their aspirations.

## The Poland brand

A country's image is largely defined by the way its activities and its products are perceived in other countries. Its image evokes responses which have a bearing on the public at large and on consumer decisions and attitudes. 'Buyers appraise products on the basis of their "country of origin"'.<sup>53</sup> How a given country is perceived comes to be strongly associated with a brand and frequently underpins buyers' decisions. The importance of this issue should not be underestimated, as is shown by the rewards reaped by brand owners who capitalize on the renown enjoyed by given products from their country e.g. Japanese cars, Italian clothes or French wines<sup>54</sup>.

What is the popular perception of the Poland brand? Information on how Poland is viewed in comparison to other countries is provided by the Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index. The ranking, which covers 50 countries, calculates the reputation of each individual country based on six composite measures: people; exports; governance; tourism; culture and heritage; and investment and immigration. In the 2008 ranking, Poland was placed 30<sup>th</sup>, between China (29<sup>th</sup>) and the Czech Republic (31<sup>st</sup>)<sup>55</sup>.

Poland was ranked the highest in the 'governance' dimension, which measures public opinion on the competency and fairness of the government, observance of civil rights and foreign policy. In the ranking of 'exports' which shows how a country's brands are perceived, we were placed 25<sup>th</sup>. Poland is ranked at the bottom of the list in two areas, 'tourism' and 'culture and heritage'. We can therefore say that Poland is not generally perceived as an attractive tourist destination or a country with interesting historical monuments or cultural assets, while Polish products are ranked somewhere in the middle of the scale.

Surveys by the Polish Tourism Agency (POT) indicate that 'the perception of Poland is not negative but rather bland or blurred'. On top of that, Poland does not have a cohesive and distinct image.<sup>56</sup> *This is certainly largely due to how the country's image is managed: it is*

<sup>52</sup> R. Ford, 'Britons vie with immigrants for low-paid jobs', *The Times*, 16 March 2009.

<sup>53</sup> P. Kotler, *Marketing*, Gebethner i Ska, Warsaw 1994.

<sup>54</sup> *Analiza wyników badań wizerunku Polski i postrzegania polskiej marki na świecie. Założenia i rekomendacje do pozycjonowania Polski jako kraju docelowego podróży turystycznych na lata 2009-2015*, Polish Brand Institute, Warsaw 2008, p. 72.

<sup>55</sup> W. Smoczyński, 'Polska: kraj bez twarzy', *Polityka*, 30 June 2009.

<sup>56</sup> *Analiza wyników badań wizerunku Polski i postrzegania polskiej marki na świecie. Założenia i rekomendacje do pozycjonowania Polski jako kraju docelowego podróży turystycznych na lata 2009-2015*, Polish Brand Institute, Warsaw 2008, p.72.

divided into a host of constituent components, which, however, do not make up an integral whole. Aspects which do not need advertising or even consolidate old stereotypes are often promoted (e.g. folk crafts).

As Polish migrants arrived in the UK, they were followed by many food products, which are now available across Britain. Due to their numbers, Poles soon became a significant group of consumers, which is corroborated by statistics showing food exports from Poland to the UK. At the end of 2003, Poland's food exports to the UK totalled PLN 619 million.<sup>57</sup> By comparison, in 2009 Polish exporters brought food products into Britain with a total value of PLN 2.9 billion (approx. GBP 630 million). Poland is one of the four countries alongside China, India and Ireland which in fact boosted their UK exports in the crisis year 2009<sup>58</sup>. Polish-British trade exchange is largely driven by Polish entrepreneurs, who set up their businesses in Britain, specializing in catering, warehousing and retail.

One can find a Polish store in nearly every little town, while bigger supermarkets (Sainsbury's, Morrisons, Asda or Tesco) have opened special sections offering Polish food products. The Tesco chain currently has 200 Polish products on offer, and this range is constantly expanding. Producers of sweets, cold meats, juices and beverages are currently the most active on the British market. Similarly, Polish beers such as Tyskie, Lech and Żywiec are also available both in British supermarkets and pubs. The products are mostly purchased by Poles. Moreover, Poles spend 67 pounds on food per week on average, 30% of these funds being spent on Polish products. When doing so, they distinctly prefer shops specialising in the sale of such foods.<sup>59</sup> The strength of this market is shown beyond any doubt by the spectacular profits of Polish breweries which export their products to Britain. Unlike other Polish products, Polish beer is enjoying an increasing popularity among British consumers too, as they have developed a liking for beer from other countries, until recently considered exotic. We decided to check knowledge of Polish brands among the British public in more detail and find out whether they are willing to buy products 'made in Poland'.

While the British can obviously associate vodka and beer with Poland, do they have any knowledge of Polish culture? *Polska! Year*, an initiative by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was started in the spring of 2009 and continued until the end of 2010. *Polska! Year* encompassed a series of cultural events organized across Britain. Its aim was to promote Poland by offering opportunities to the British public to learn more about Polish achievements in culture and to strengthen contacts between culture professionals in the two countries.

According to the organizers, diversity and cooperation were to be the hallmarks of the initiative. While Chopin is a name familiar to many (though not necessarily in association with Poland), Mickiewicz or Kieślowski probably only rings a bell to the more educated members of the British public. Contemporary Polish culture, popular music, theatre and art, however, are practically unknown outside Poland. The organizers set out to improve this situation and thereby to help shape the perception of Poland and Poles and show Poland as a modern country which not only keeps up with new trends in culture and art, but also co-creates them. This was also intended as an attempt to reverse the stereotypes and negative perceptions of Poland and Poles. As part of the project, there have been hundreds

<sup>57</sup> 'Polskie marki w Wielkiej Brytanii – skazane na polskie półki?' *Cooltura/Polarity UK*, 15 October 2010.

<sup>58</sup> *Mimo kryzysu rośnie polski eksport do Wielkiej Brytanii*, PAP, 5 March 2010.

<sup>59</sup> 'Polskie jedzenie częścią brytyjskiej kultury', *Cooltura/Polarity UK*, 7 June 2010.

of exhibitions, screenings of feature films, cartoons and documentaries, concerts of classical, jazz and contemporary music, meetings with famous Polish artists, theatre performances, conferences and seminars.

*Polska! Year* received very good coverage in the media. The press – mainly quality newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *The Financial Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* and publications focusing on culture and art – dwelt extensively on individual cultural events. Press reports were very enthusiastic, without a touch of condescension. We must bear in mind, however, that *Polska! Year* has mainly been orientated towards elites and ambitious individuals who are not only interested in culture, but are also sufficiently open to be willing to experiment with the cultural products of New Europe, and choose the Polish option from the extensive cultural range available. In our study, we assess what proportion of the British public has actually taken part in the *Polska! Year* events and their reaction to them. However, we cannot hope to be able to assess any deeper impact of the programme – to do so we would have to carry out qualitative research.

## Results of quantitative analysis

The perception of a given country and its citizens is based on a combination of many factors. It is generally acknowledged that direct contacts with citizens of a given nation are not needed to fuel national stereotypes. In fact, thanks to direct personal contacts, such stereotyped notions can not only be modified, but also cease to be as ideological and emotionally charged<sup>60</sup>. Meetings with foreign nationals provide us with an opportunity to demythologize the image of a given nation and transform it on the basis of our own impressions and experiences. It can be expected that six years after Poland's accession to the EU, the perception of our country and its inhabitants will have changed radically – that Poland in the eyes of Britons is now a modern and developed country, situated firmly 'within the pale', and that Poles are less exotic and distant. Due the mass migration of Poles to the UK, the intensity of contacts between Poles and Britons has certainly changed. In this chapter, we will look at the influence of Poland's accession to the EU on the perception of our compatriots by the British: whether Poles are seen as very similar and close – as "us Europeans" or still as others, aliens – "them". We will see how Britons perceive the results of the opening of the British labour market and how they view the typical Pole. We are also interested in the image of Poland as a country. Furthermore, we will take a closer look at the degree to which changes in Polish political and social life have filtered through to British public opinion and have been 'incorporated' into the general image of our country. In our survey we asked Britons their opinions on the subject of various aspects of the internal situation of Poland (e.g. the Catholic Church, corruption and economic growth) and selected issues linked with Poland's position in the international arena. Finally, we will look at Polish product recognition (including cultural products) and what effect this has on the Poland brand in the United Kingdom.

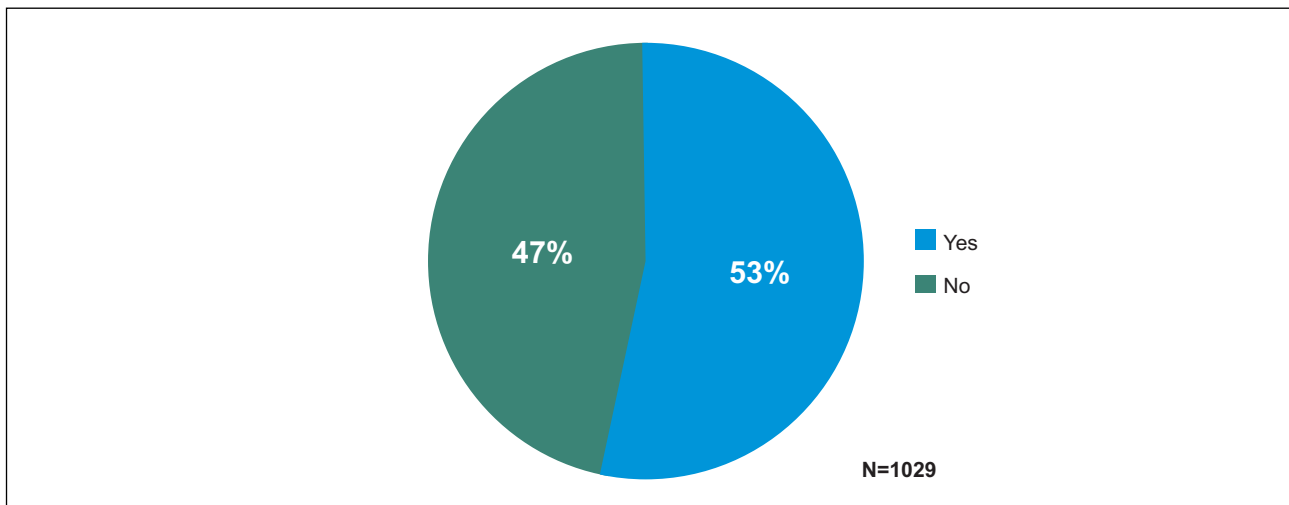
---

<sup>60</sup> J. Konieczna, *Polacy-Ukraińcy, Polska-Ukraina. Paradoksy stosunków sąsiedzkich*, Stefan Batory Foundation, Warsaw 2003.

## Contacts with and public perceptions of Poland and Poles

Poland's accession to the EU and the opening of the British labour market to Poles has increased the intensity of contacts between citizens of these two countries, and in consequence made the image of Poland more clear-cut. Owing to such contacts, and increased interest on the part of the media, Poland is becoming an increasingly recognizable, close and familiar country. Moreover, over half of the interviewees declare that they have already had some forms of contact with Poland and Poles (Fig. 1).

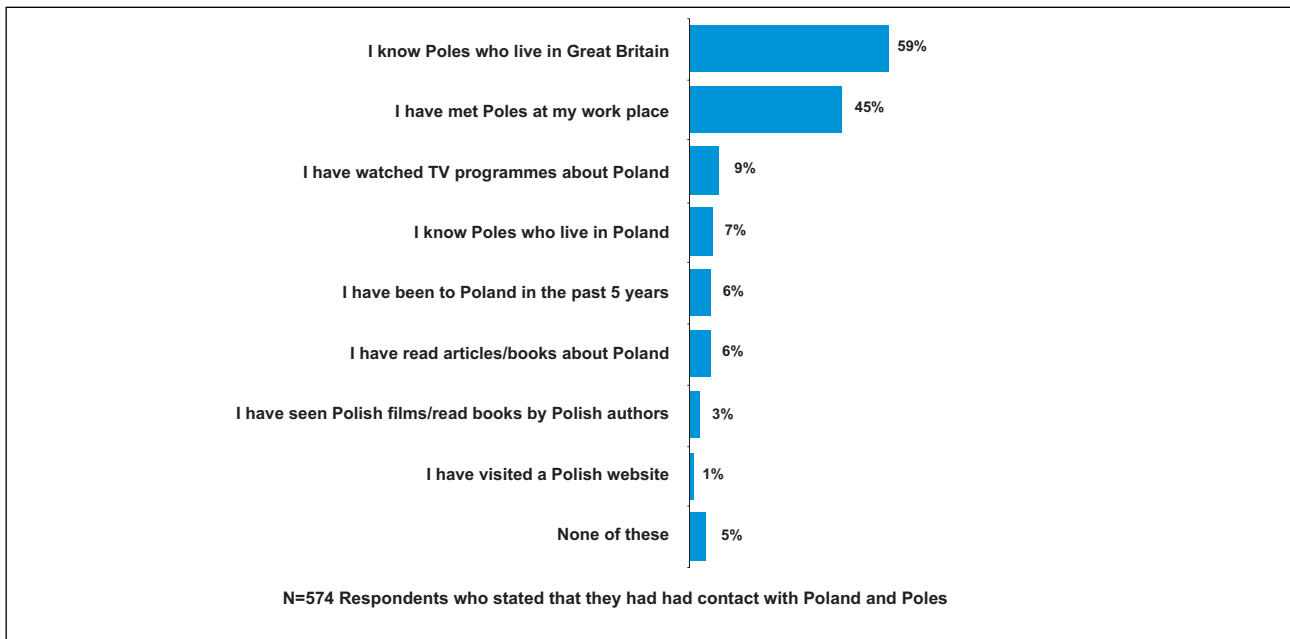
**Figure 1.** Have you had any contact with Poland and Poles?



Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

Significantly, nearly 60% of respondents who have had such contacts know some Poles who live in the UK. The workplace is a frequent site for contacts between Poles and the British; it has been so for half of the interviewees who have had contact with Poland and Poles. Interestingly enough, no clear differences in terms of age (a slightly larger number of young people), social group or type of occupation can be observed. This may be due to the fact that Polish workers can be found in practically the whole of the labour market. By contrast, mass media, books, cultural books and products are a much less significant source of knowledge about Poland and Poles.

A relatively small number of the British have had direct contact with Poland, as only 6% of the interviewees have visited Poland over the past few years; most frequently these are people aged 25-34. This is quite likely due to the trend among the British public to stage stag and hen parties in 'exotic' Central European cities, which are easy to access by low-cost airlines. As compared to other age groups of British society, nearly two times as many people from Britain in this age group have been to Poland (Fig. 2).

**Figure 2.** Which of the following statements describe your experience?

Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

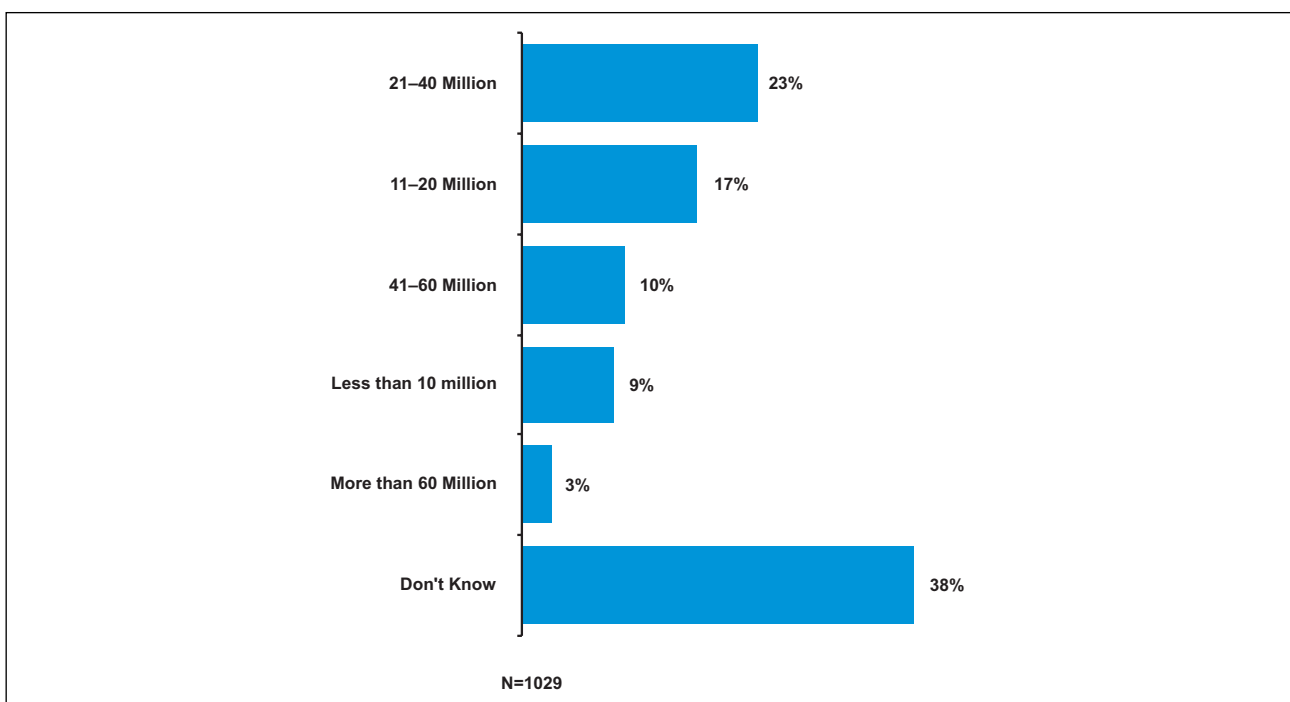
Changes in the way Poland is perceived by the British following its EU accession cannot be evaluated in unambiguous terms. The first and foremost conclusion is that Poland is slowly ceasing to be an obscure country somewhere at the far reaches of Europe. More and more British citizens have their own opinion about Poland as a country and are willing to share it with others. In comparison to the 2001 findings, there were noticeably fewer interviewees who did not have an opinion at all or chose an ambivalent answer in response to questions about Poland's internal situation and its standing in the international arena. For instance, in 2001, 44% of respondents chose the answer 'Difficult to say' and 18% opted for the answer: "I neither agree nor disagree" to the question as to whether Poland was a parliamentary democracy, as compared to only 32% and 12%, respectively, nine years later. A similar trend could be observed for questions on the levels of corruption and 'red tape', the economic situation, respect for civil liberties and assessment of Poland's relations with other countries within and outside the EU.

Very importantly, having firm views about Poland and Poles is strongly correlated with having earlier contacts with Poles. For instance, as regards their opinion about corruption in Poland, 42% of the respondents who have never had any contacts with Poland or Poles do not have an opinion about this, as compared to only 26% who have had such contacts and still did not feel competent to answer this question. A similar correlation could be observed in the case of ambivalent answers: those respondents who had had earlier contacts with Poland and Poles had had more opportunity to form an opinion about our country. There are also visible differences of opinion in terms of gender, with male respondents more often having a distinct opinion about Poland's internal situation and its international standing than female ones. Similarly, the youngest respondents felt the least competent in this regard, and the level of declared knowledge increased with age, to slightly fall among the oldest representatives of British society.

## The image of Poland

One of the basic aspects of a country's image is how it is perceived in terms of size. The British still find it very difficult to assess the number of inhabitants of Poland. Nearly 40% of respondents answered: 'Difficult to say' to the question on the size of the Polish population. One quarter of interviewees were able to correctly choose the correct range for the population of Poland. Most frequently, these were better educated, middle-aged people who had had earlier contacts with Poland and Poles. There was an observable tendency to understate rather than overstate the size of the population: 17% of respondents were of the opinion that Poland had less than 20 million inhabitants, and 10% - over 40 million (Fig. 3).

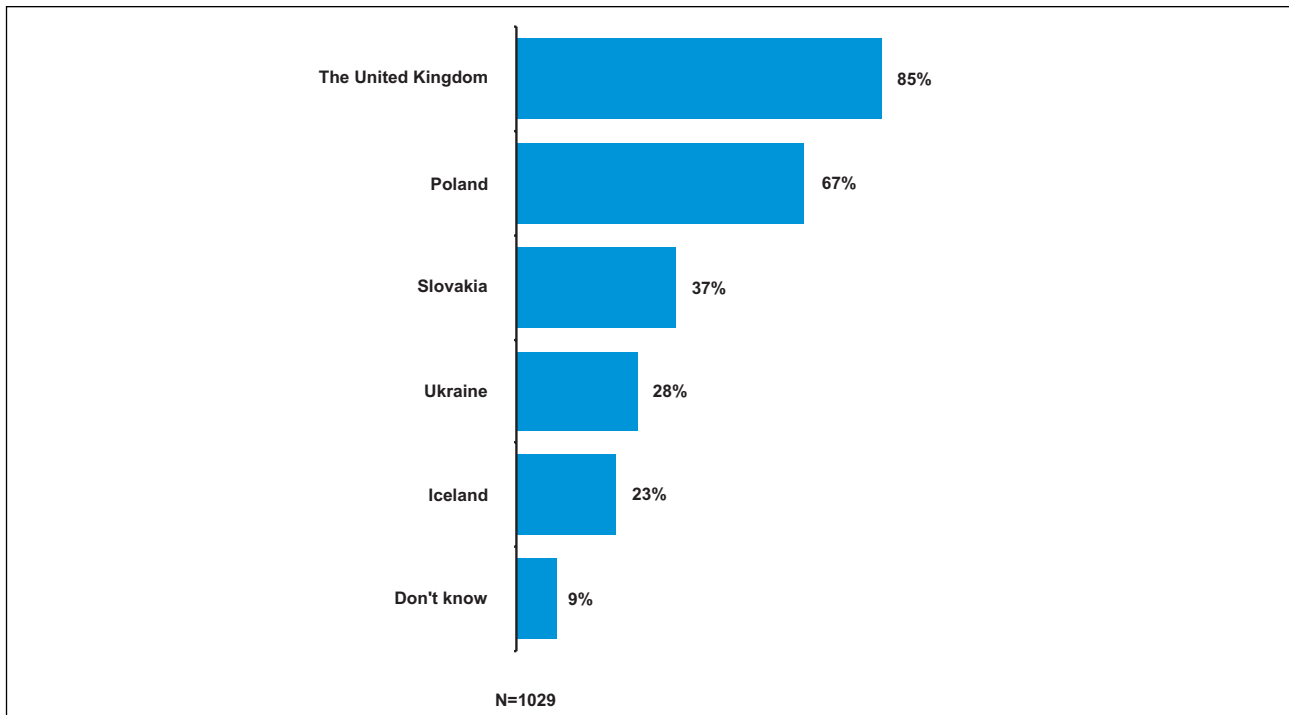
**Figure 3.** How big is the population of Poland in your opinion?



Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

The British have no doubts whatsoever about Poland belonging to Europe both officially (EU membership) and practically (respect for liberal democracy principles). Nearly 70% of the interviewees were aware that Poland is an EU Member State. This result is especially pertinent when we compare it to results concerning other countries listed in the question. A mere 40% of the British public knew that Slovakia is an EU member; what is more, 15% of interviewees were not certain if their own country is a member of the European Union. At the same time, 28% of respondents were convinced that Ukraine is also a member of the EU (Fig. 4).

**Figure 4.** From the following list of countries, please tell me those that are members of the European Union

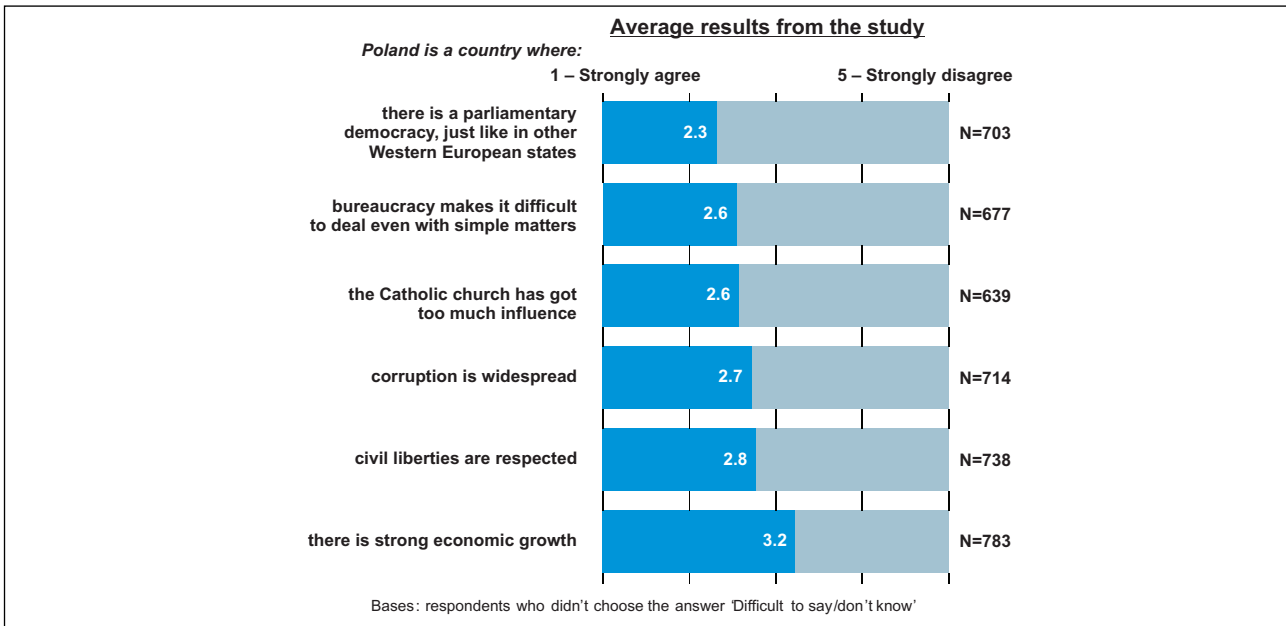


Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

Poland is the largest of all the new EU member states. Very frequently, when the consequences of the 2004 EU enlargement and the opening of the British labour market to the citizens of the new member countries are discussed, Poland and Poles are mentioned (Fomina, Frelak, 2008). In addition to this, Poles are the most populous group amongst new EU member citizens who arrived in Britain after 2004. These factors have been largely responsible for shaping the awareness of the British public concerning Poland's EU membership. As might be expected, the likelihood that the respondents know that Poland is an EU member increases with their social status and age. The lowest percentage of respondents to provide the correct answer on Poland's EU membership (55%) could be observed among the youngest age group. Likewise, young Britons less frequently know that the UK is a member of the EU.

A certain discrepancy can be observed in the way Poland is perceived. The majority of the respondents did not have any doubts as to Poland being a member of the community of democratic states which respect the civil liberties of their residents. More importantly, this conviction has become much more widespread as compared to 2001. Nevertheless, respondents continue to consider that quality of life in Poland is not very good on account of excessive bureaucracy, widespread corruption, lack of fast economic growth and the major role that the Catholic Church plays in social and political life. Such a dual perception of Poland emerges from the results of the weighted average answers offered to specific questions (Fig. 5).

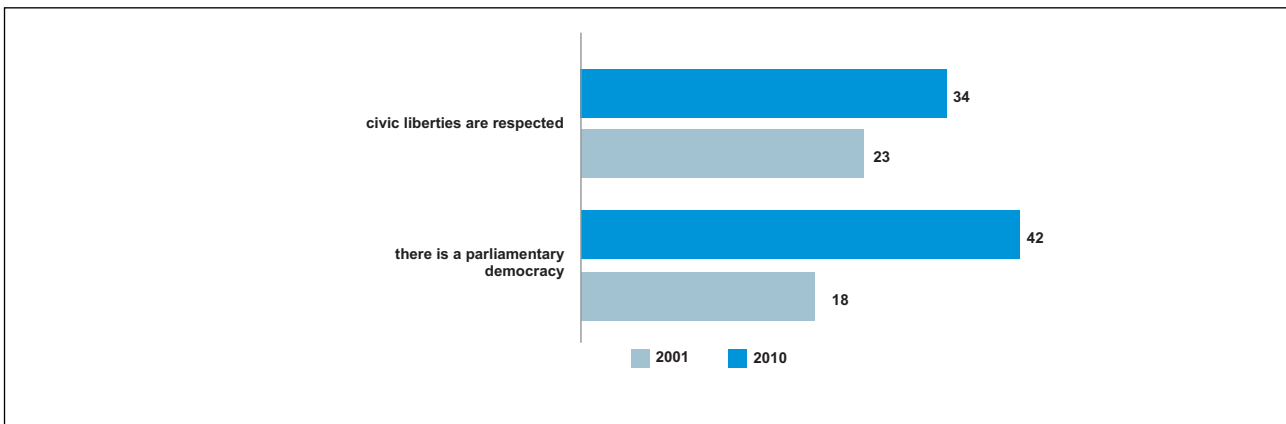
**Figure 5.** How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement?



Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

Moreover, interesting changes seem to have taken place in the way Poland is perceived as compared with nine years earlier. The number of people who agree that Poland is a parliamentary democracy just like other Western European countries has increased more than twofold; currently only 12% of respondents do not agree with this statement. Likewise, the number of respondents who are convinced that civil liberties are respected in Poland has grown considerably, from 23% in 2001 to 34% in 2010 (Fig. 6). Similarly, the overall view on Poland's economic development has improved, despite the continued prevalence of sceptical opinions on this subject: 25% of interviewees agree that Poland is enjoying rapid economic growth as compared to 33% who do not share this opinion (Fig. 7). Interestingly, such opinions can be encountered despite the widespread view that Poland, in comparison with other countries, has emerged from the global economic crisis practically unscathed (Fig. 8).

**Figure 6.** Poland is a country where: (answers from 2001 and 2010)



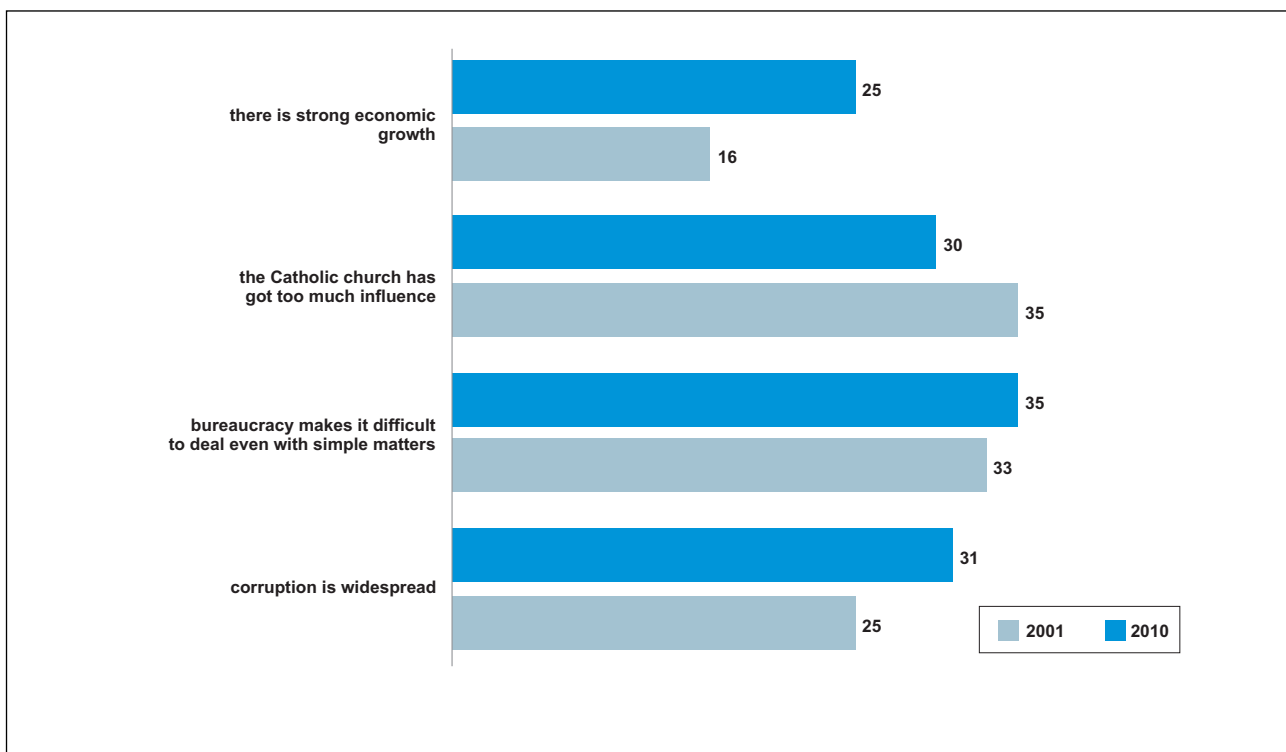
Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.



Opinions about the functioning of the Polish state have not changed considerably, as about one third of the British public are still convinced that corruption, bureaucracy and the excessive influence wielded by the Catholic Church are sources of problems for Poles. Such a view may be linked to the mass emigration of Poles to Britain: ‘after all, if everything was so going so well in their country, who would want to leave’ is what the British respondents may be thinking. It is just as likely that Poles themselves, in their direct contacts with members of the British public, complain about various aspects of life in Poland, thereby trying to justify their decision to come to Britain.

The equivocal results of our survey largely overlap with the results of country rankings, e.g. the Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index. According to the experts involved in this ranking, Poland is a country where the political and economic situation is actually better than is popularly believed. Poland is an example of a country which is in fact bigger than frequently perceived, has faster economic growth than is widely thought, etc.<sup>61</sup>

**Figure 7.** Poland is a country where: (answers from 2001 and 2010)

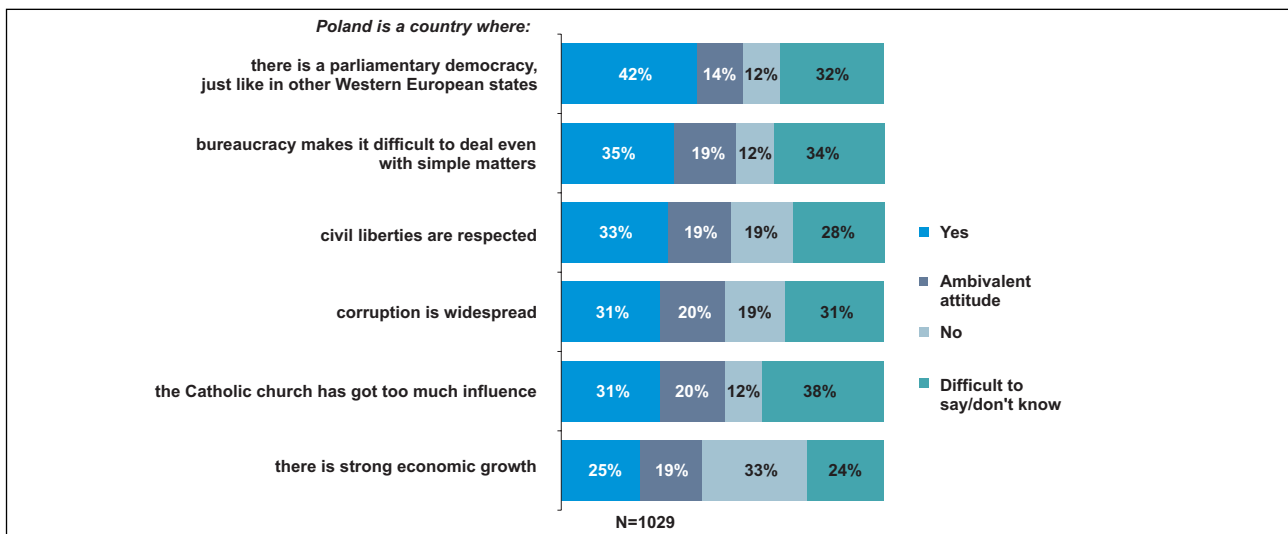


Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

The interviewees were in two minds as regards their evaluation of Poland’s foreign and European policy. They had the least doubts as to whether Poland is able to maintain good relations with its neighbours. Nearly 40% of the respondents are of the opinion that even if Poland had strained relations with its neighbours earlier, it has been able to reconcile the differences, as compared to only 12% of the respondents who do not agree with this opinion.

<sup>61</sup> W. Smoczyński, *Polska: kraj bez twarzy*, “Polityka”, 30 June 2009.

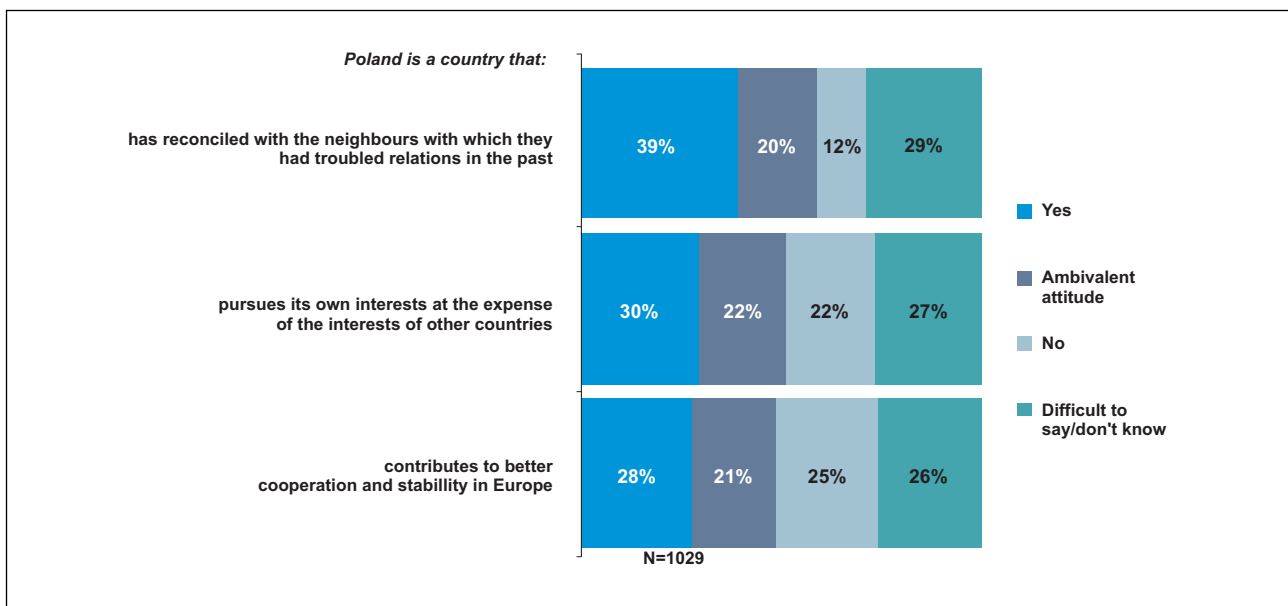
**Figure 8.** How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

Very likely, reports by the BBC and other mass media on the Polish-Russian reconciliation in the wake of the Smolensk catastrophe have played a part in this. As regards Britons' evaluation of European cooperation and pursuing its own interests, a comparable percentage of the respondents expressed radically different opinions. On the one hand, there are respondents who think very highly about the way Poles manage their foreign policy, and on the other hand there are those who are very critical. Nearly one third of respondents believe that Poland is trying to pursue its own interests at the expense of other countries' interests. The survey suggests that half of these respondents do not subscribe to the opinion that Poland contributes to better cooperation and stability within the EU (Fig. 9).

**Figure 9.** How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



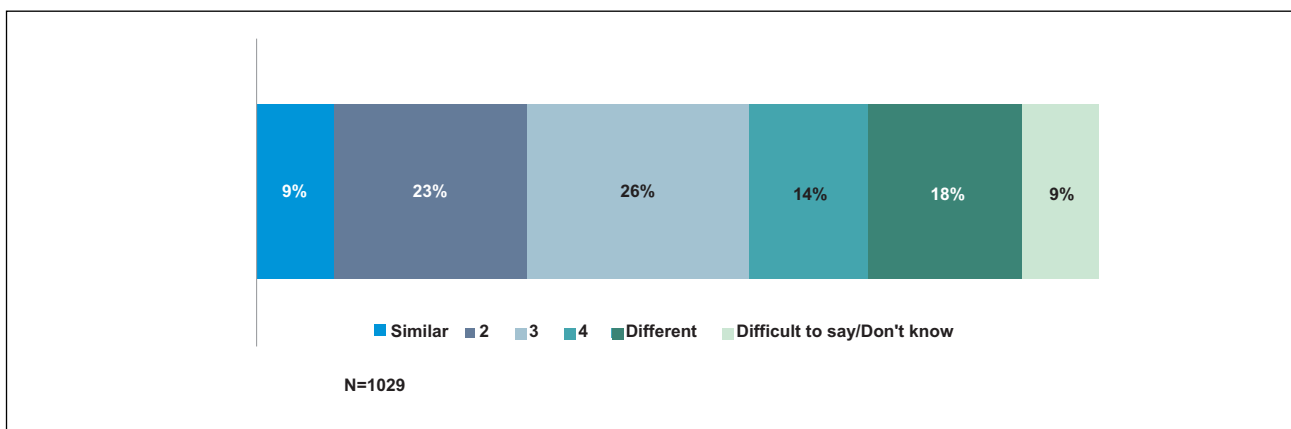
Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

It may be expected that the way Poland is perceived has been influenced by the opinions on the coalition that was in power in the years 2005-2007, when Poland opposed the ratification of the EU constitutional treaty. It should be emphasized that the British media show little interest in European matters, unless something out of the ordinary happens. Therefore, if the period following the last parliamentary election brought a change in Polish political discourse and in Poland's international activity, these changes were not necessarily instantly visible to British society. What is certainly observable is that the probability of a favourable opinion about Poland increases in tandem with declared earlier contact with Poland and Poles (and hence with a better knowledge of Poland).

### Social distance: the Polish immigrant – almost one of us

Stepping up contacts with Poland and Poles has helped the British public to form a favourable opinion about our compatriots. Poles are no longer seen as a foreign, exotic nation that confounds understanding. Only as few as 8% of respondents could not answer a question about whether Poles are rather similar to or rather different from the British. Nine years earlier, there were twice as many such interviewees. Similarly, for a series of questions concerning social distance, the percentage of 'Don't know' answers did not exceed 5% (Fig. 10).

**Figure 10.** In your opinion, are Poles rather similar to the British or rather different?

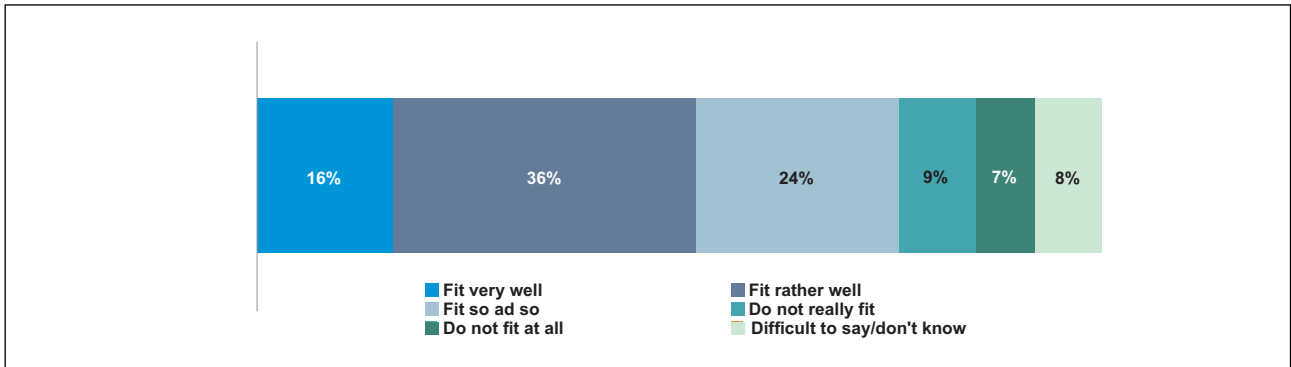


Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

The survey reveals that the British are very open to Poles. One third of respondents were of the opinion that Poles are very much like the British, with another quarter believing that Poles have some similarities with the British, but are different in other respects.

Poles are also viewed favourably in comparison with other ethnic groups. More than half of the respondents agreed that Poles fit in well or very well in British society. Those least convinced about this were less-educated respondents performing blue-collar jobs. This is a significant result when we take into account the generally sceptical attitude of the British to immigration. Those British citizens who have had direct contacts with Poland and Poles are more prone to think that Poles are rather similar to the British and are better integrated with British society as compared with other ethnic groups (Fig. 11).

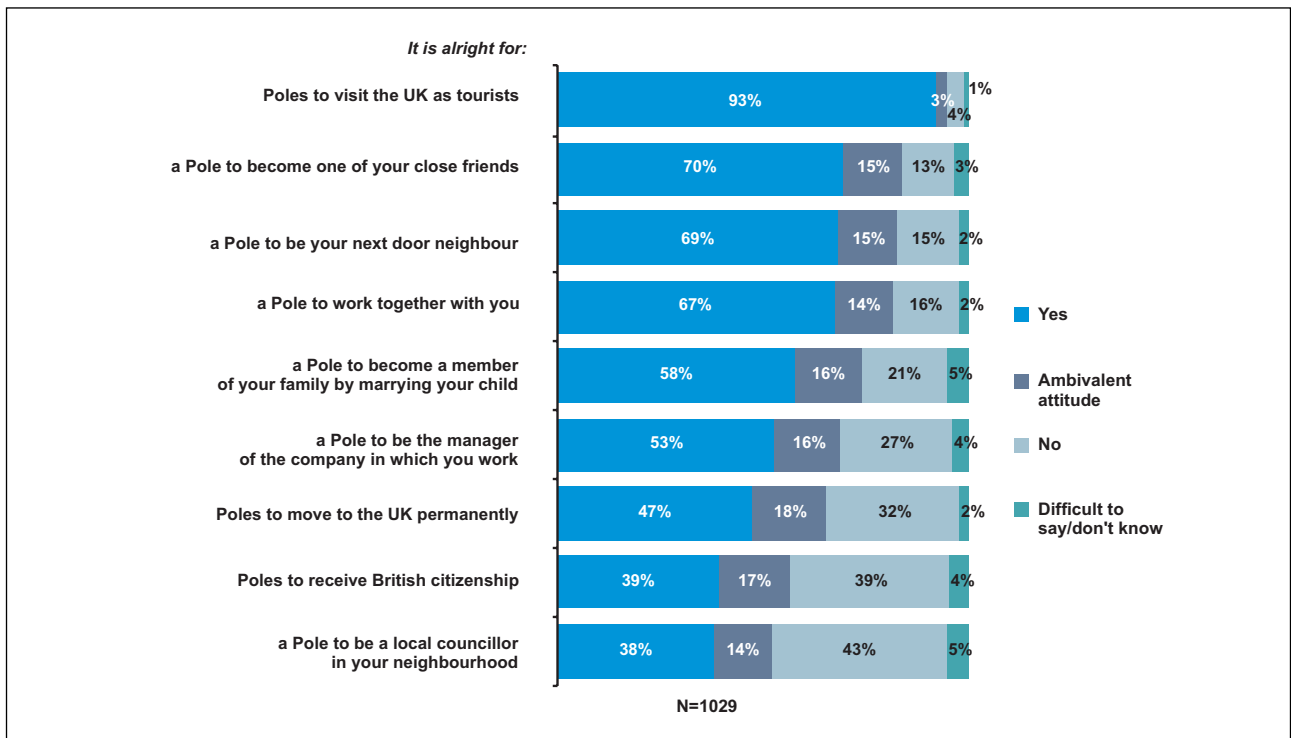
**Figure 11.** How well do Poles living in Great Britain fit into British society, in comparison to other ethnic minorities?



Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

Whilst the British are very open to Poles in personal contacts, they tend to maintain more distance in the institutional and political sphere. Nearly all the respondents agree that Poles should have a right to come to Britain as tourists; they also accept having Poles as good friends or neighbours. Even more importantly, they would accept a Pole as a member of their family; only one in five respondents would not agree to marriage between their child and a Polish man or woman (Fig. 12).

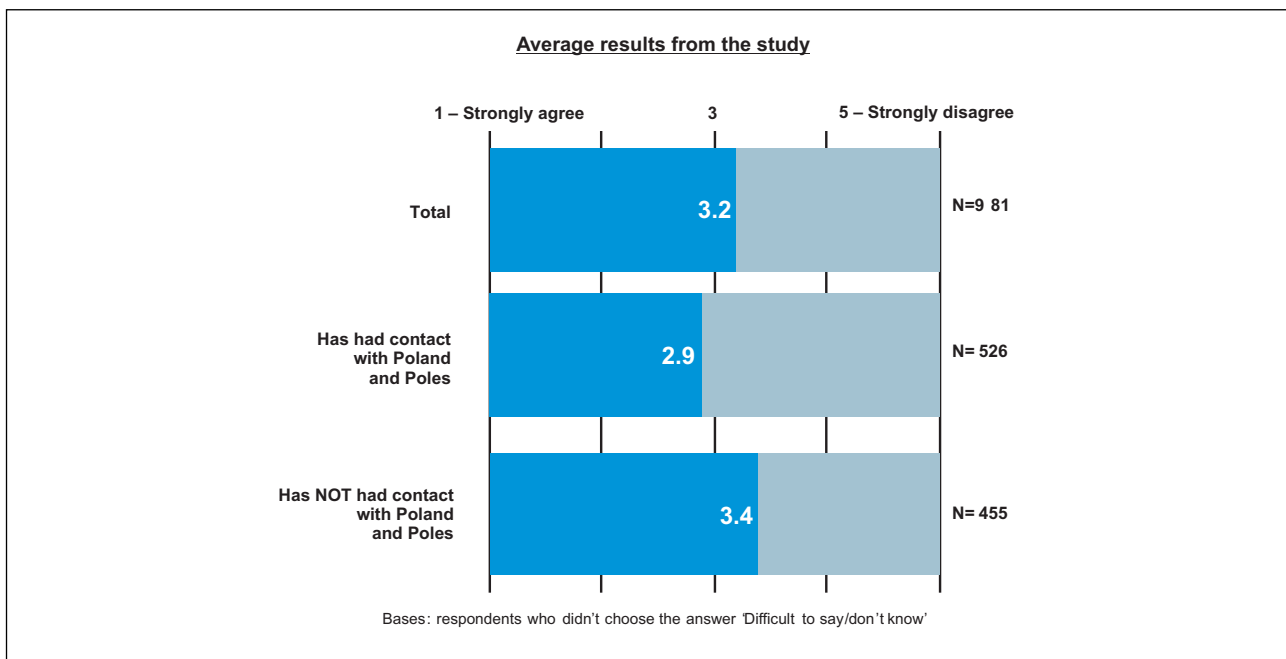
**Figure 12.** How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

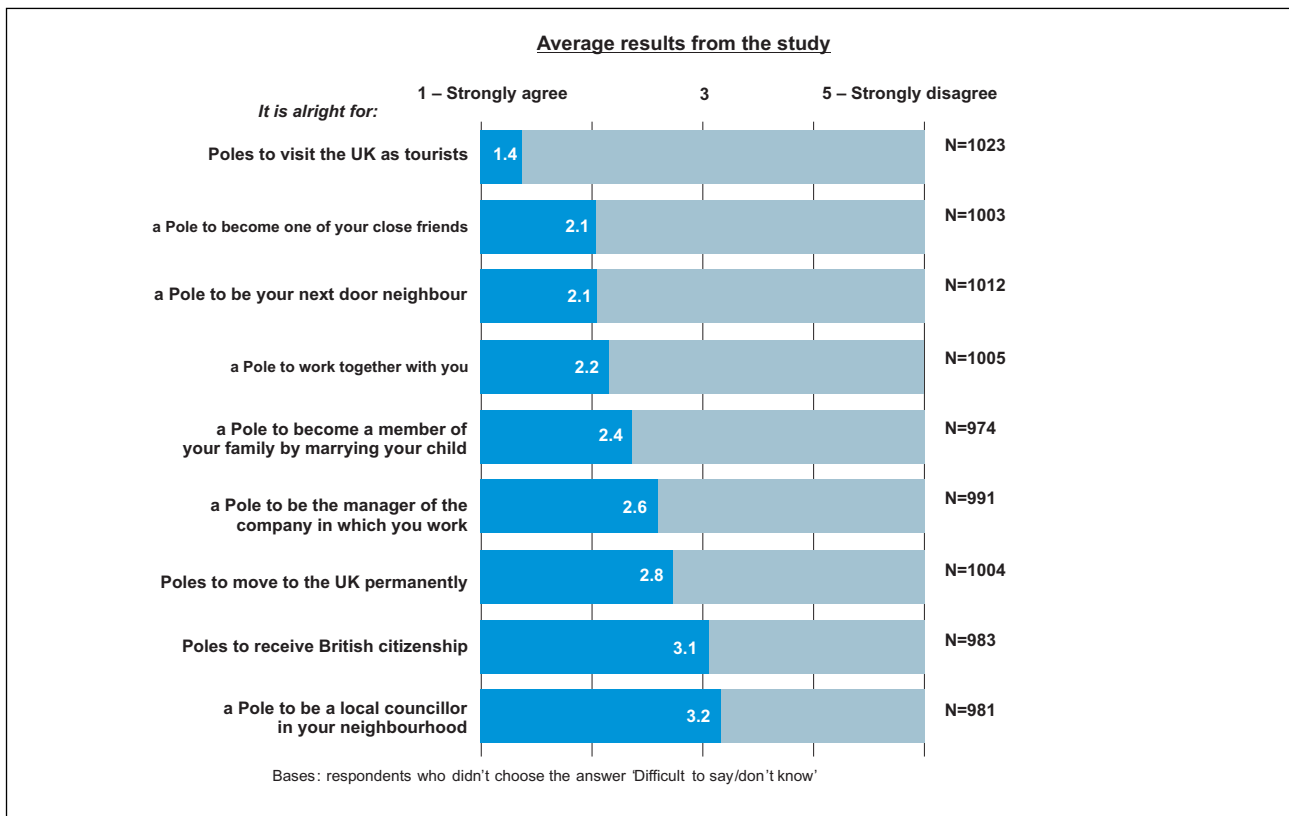
On the other hand, a relatively higher number of respondents would not welcome a situation where their company was managed by a Pole, though even in this case opponents represent less than one third of the public at large. Similarly, another one third of respondents would not like Poles to move permanently to Britain, and almost 40% of respondents do not approve of granting British citizenship to Poles. What respondents found most difficult to accept was to see a Pole as their local councillor. This was the only situation where the percentage of respondents who would not like to see Poles in a specific role was higher than that of respondents who would. Interestingly, this result is mostly due to the answers of people who have never had contacts with Poles or Poland (Fig. 13).

**Figure 13.** How strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

If we look at the average results of the study (Figure 14), we see that there is a slight prevalence of sceptical attitudes in only two cases – granting citizenship to a Pole and a Pole serving as a councillor. Serving as a local councillor means not just being an ordinary citizen, but also having additional powers and taking an active part in shaping the life of the local community. According to respondents, this is still the preserve of ‘their own kin’. In this context, we should recall the respondents’ reservations concerning the high level of corruption and bureaucracy in Poland, which may partly explain the respondents’ objections to discharge of social or economic functions by Poles. Importantly, however, more than half of interviewees do not strongly oppose Poles as members of British society. Interestingly, a local Polish councillor does not raise so much controversy among those British persons who have had earlier contacts with Poland and Poles. In this category, there is a predominance of interviewees who see nothing wrong with it.

**Figure 14.** How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

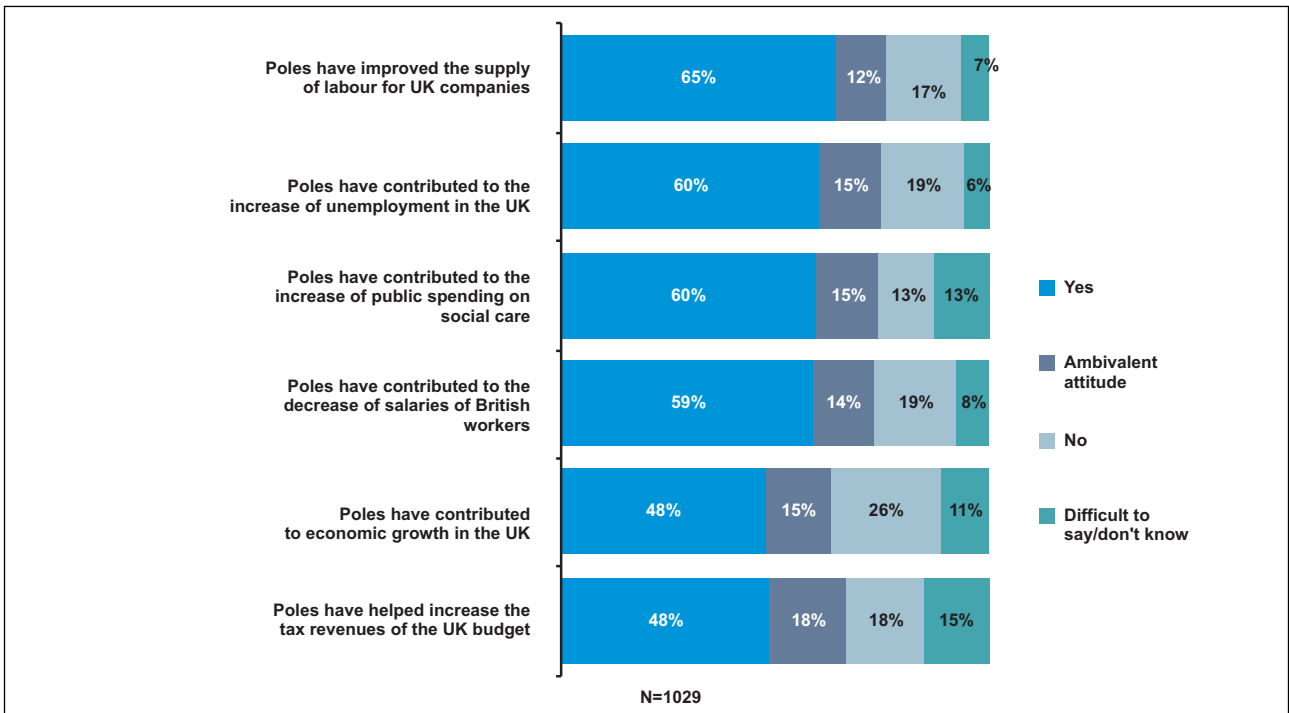
Direct contacts with Poles and increased media coverage have certainly improved the image of Poles; it is now much more favourable than that emerging from the survey of nine years ago. Respondents who have had contacts with Poland and Poles are definitely more willing to accept them not only as friends and family members, but also as fellow citizens and councillors. Contacts with Poland and above all direct contacts with Poles unquestionably help foster a positive image of Polish people. Poles serve as very good 'ambassadors' of their country.

### The perceived effects of migration

Respondents' evaluation of the consequences of opening the British labour market to citizens from the new member states and the resultant influx of Polish workers to Britain is not unequivocal. Nearly 50% of respondents are aware of the positive impact of Polish immigrants on Britain's economic growth and increased tax revenues. According to over 60% of the people polled, the influx of workers from Poland has improved the standing of British enterprises (Fig. 15). Interestingly, this opinion reflects the actual state of affairs, because at the time of Poland's EU accession, the number of reported vacancies was 650,000. One in four entrepreneurs had difficulties with filling vacancies.<sup>62</sup>

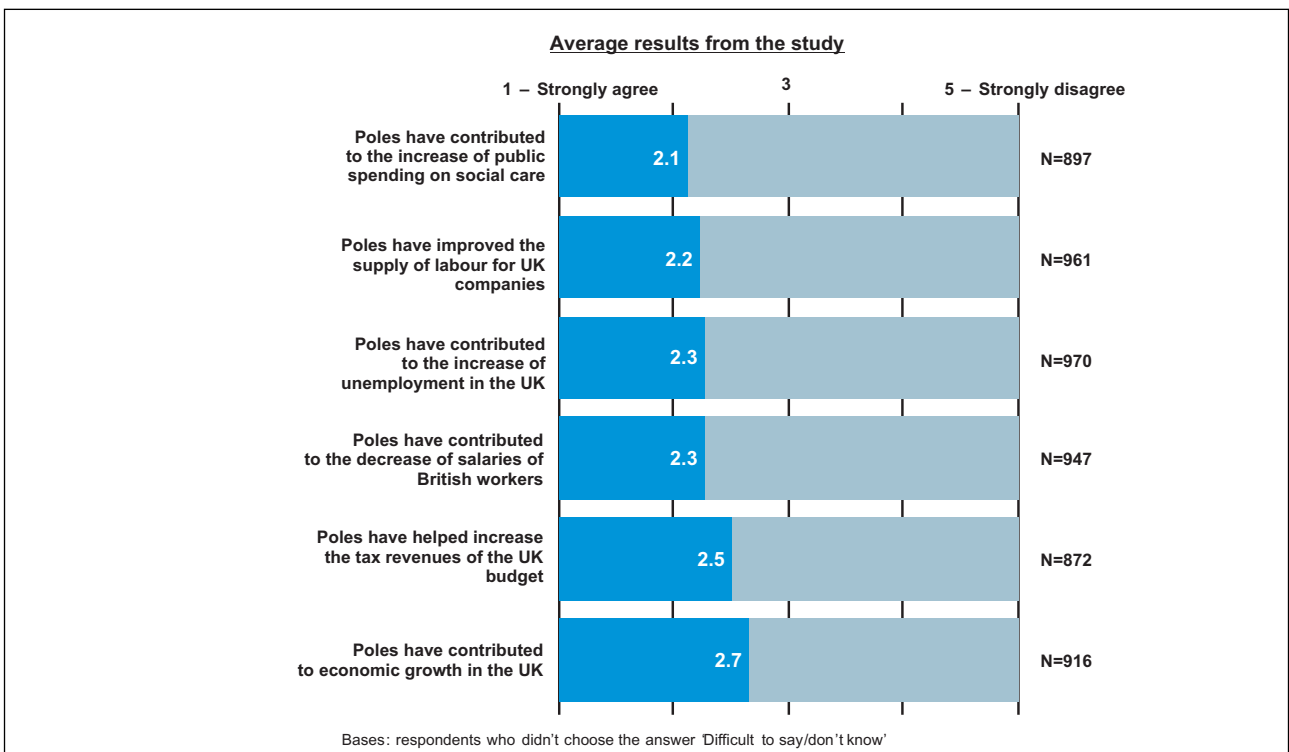
<sup>62</sup> Fidel, A., & Piętko, E. *Funkcjonowanie polskich migrantów na brytyjskim rynku pracy*. Warsaw Centre for Migration Research at the University of Warsaw, Warsaw 2007, p. 4.

**Figure 15.** How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

**Figure 16.** How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



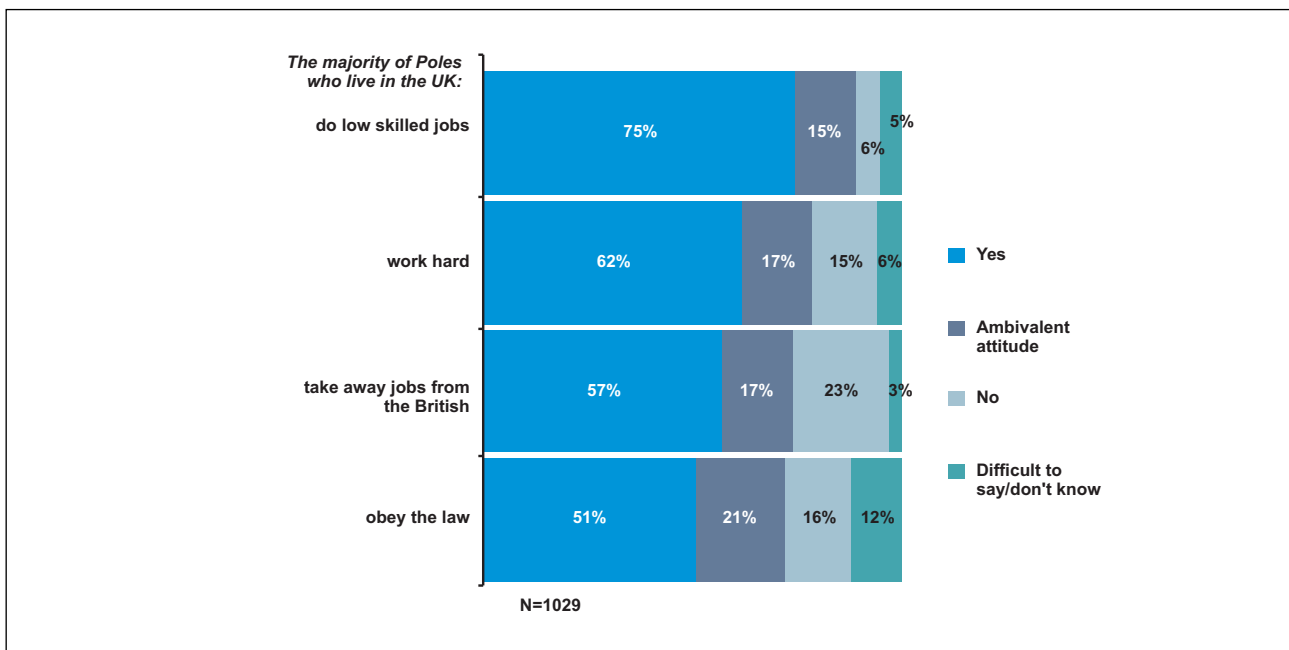
Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

However, there is a negative side to Polish immigration. According to the respondents (60%), the supply of cheap and efficient labour from Poland has resulted in an increase in unemployment. Poles are also accused of wage dumping, which in turn drives down wages in general. About 60% of interviewees claim that cheap Polish workers ‘take jobs’ from the British. Such opinions may arise due to the fact that workers from the A8 countries are willing to work for much lower wages than native-born workers, which is confirmed by statistics comparing average salaries. Nevertheless, it has to be borne in mind that jobs done by immigrants usually do not enjoy great popularity among the indigenous population.<sup>63</sup>

Despite their positive impact on the economy, nearly 60% of respondents equate Polish immigration with increased social welfare spending. However, official statistics do not confirm any allegations about Poles or workers from other new member states being a burden on the British social welfare system. Starting from 2004, immigrants from these countries have contributed more to the state budget than they have received from it. For instance, in the 2008-09 fiscal year alone, they paid in 37% more (as direct and indirect taxes) than they took out. The huge scale of Polish migration (especially in the first few years after liberalization) – which was not foreseen by the government – has certainly had a big influence on the above mentioned opinions. The burden on British public services (e.g. schools) and housing at a local level has also been significant.

According to the majority of respondents (75%), typical Polish immigrants are unskilled workers (Fig. 17). Moreover, not only do they accept the most difficult jobs, but they also perform them diligently and reliably, which is recognized and appreciated by their employers.

**Figure 17.** How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



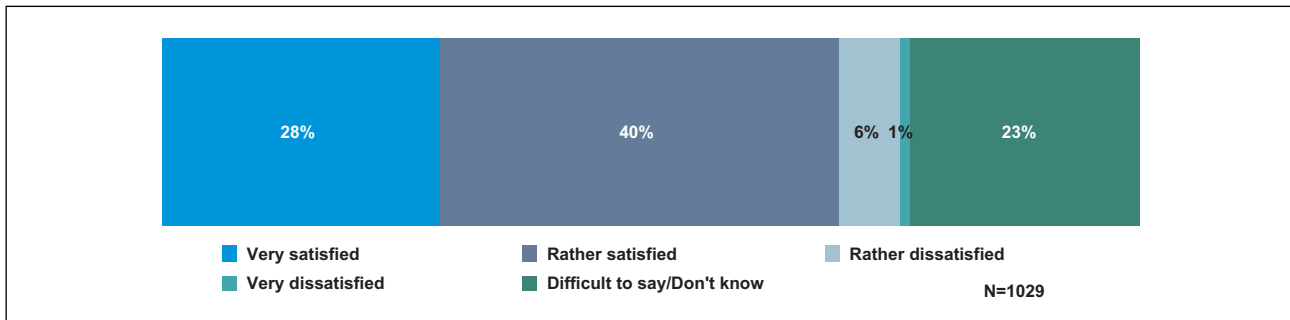
Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

<sup>63</sup> H. Reed, M. Latorre, *The Economic Impacts of Migration on the UK Labour Market*, Institute for Public Policy Research, London 2009.



According to 70% respondents British employers are satisfied with the work done by Poles (Fig. 18). This should not come as a particular surprise since, despite their low wages, Poles are among the hardest-working people in Britain, working on average 41.5 hours a week. The proverbial Polish industriousness is more frequently appreciated by those who know Poles personally and probably have contacts with them at the workplace. According to half of respondents, Poles obey the law.

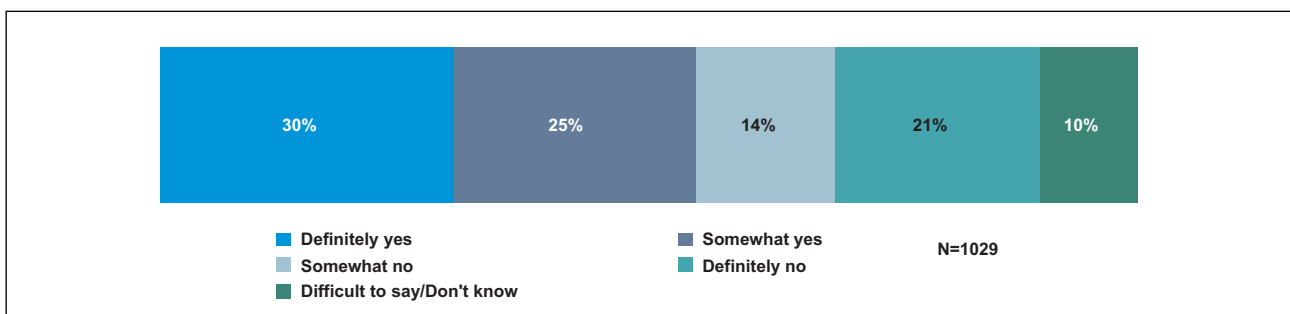
**Figure 18.** In your opinion, are companies that employ Poles rather satisfied with their work, or not?



Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

Six years after Poland joined the European Union, we asked British respondents how they evaluated the liberalization of access to their labour market (for Poles). More than half of them viewed this decision favourably (55%). However, some of the interviewees (21%) emerged as strong opponents of liberalization (Fig. 19). As previously, there are more proponents of liberalization among respondents who are already familiar with Poland and Poles and among better-off respondents.

**Figure 19.** In 2004 the UK opened its labour market for Poles. Since then, Poles who work in the UK have had the same rights as British employees. On the whole, would you say it was the right decision to take?



Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

The contradictory views on Polish migration expressed by the respondents reflect the typical myths spawned by migration, including exaggerating the real number of immigrants, the assumption that they take jobs from the native workforce and make fraudulent social security claims. However, the opinions of Britons, also expressed by the media, con-

trast with the official statistics.<sup>64</sup> These inconsistencies also stem from the different perception of the influence of migration on a macro level – in other words on economic growth – and on a micro level, from the perspective of a given person: an employee of a given company and inhabitant of a given district. Although Britons appreciate the positive influence of the presence of Polish workers on economic growth, they can at the same time consider that for them personally the situation has not improved. The local dimension is not without significance here – the costs of immigration have been borne to a large extent by local communities.

According to statistics of November 2010, the scale of influx of immigrants from new member states has stabilised and we should not expect a significant increase as in 2005 and 2007<sup>65</sup>. A number of factors have had an influence on this situation, such as the recession, the drop in the value of the pound in relation to, for example, the zloty, liberalization of the labour market in other countries and finally the short term nature of the migration. For example, the number of Poles who registered on the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) from January to September 2010 was 50 thousand (from January to September 2009 it was 60 thousand). In the same period, applications by workers from Lithuania and Latvia increased by several thousand<sup>66</sup>.

At the same time, however, many Poles are deciding on long-term migration and this may constitute a challenge of sorts for the state. For, on the one hand, hundreds of thousands of Poles have been received and even ‘absorbed’ exceptionally well, which is confirmed by the results of studies. On the other hand, the reservations expressed in this survey as to Poles settling, taking on citizenship or having an active influence on the local life of the community raise a question mark as to how Britons may react in the future to such long-term migration.

### **Polish products for Poles only?**

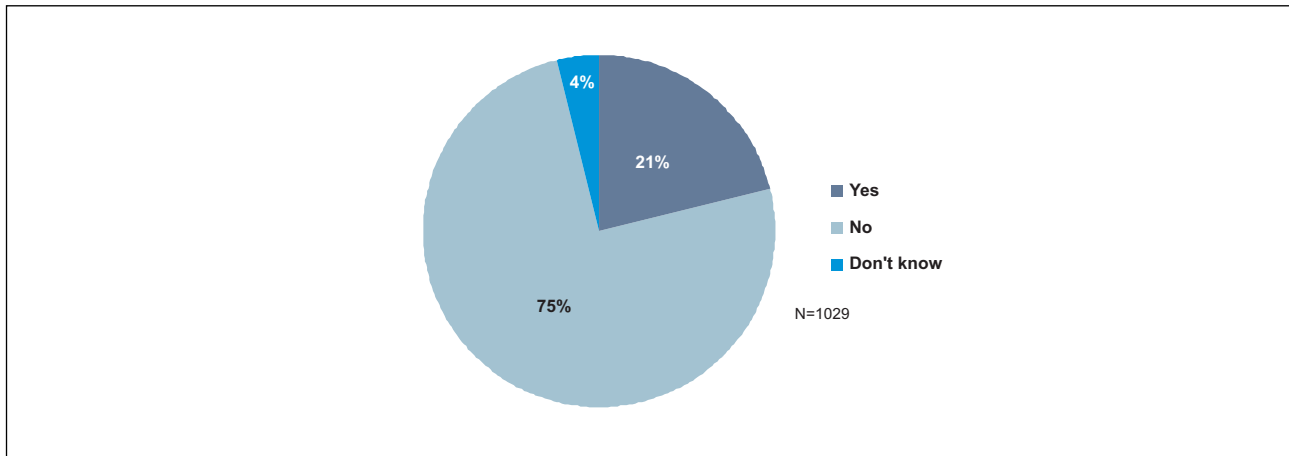
Opinions about products and brands associated with a given country represent a significant part of how the country is perceived by others. While the British have already formed an opinion about Poles, they do not have one as regards Poland. Only one in five respondents gave a positive answer to the question about familiarity with Polish products (Fig. 20). Quite unsurprisingly, knowledge of Polish products increases with knowledge of Polish people: one third of the respondents who have had earlier contacts with Poland and Poles claim that they are familiar with Polish products. Owing to Polish immigration to Britain and cheap airline connections with Poland, more and more British people have become familiar with the taste of *bigos*, *barszcz*, Polish beer and Polish vodka.

---

<sup>64</sup> S. Mulley, *Immigration and Employment: Anatomy of a media story*, Institute for Public Policy Research, London, August 2010.

<sup>65</sup> See *Migration Statistics*, Institute for Public Policy Research, London, November 2010.

<sup>66</sup> *Migration Statistics Quarterly Report*, Office for National Statistics, London, November 2010

**Figure 20.** Do you know any Polish products or brands?

Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

Poles act as ambassadors of Polish brands; they willingly get involved in raising brand awareness by recommending products, places where they can be bought and restaurants which are worth visiting. In the case of Polish products, although 'word of mouth' is truly invaluable, it remains limited to a relatively small circle. Market research polls confirm the low awareness of Polish brands among the British public: the majority of the 37% of respondents who had bought Polish food products due to their Polish origin were not able to name any specific brands.<sup>67</sup>

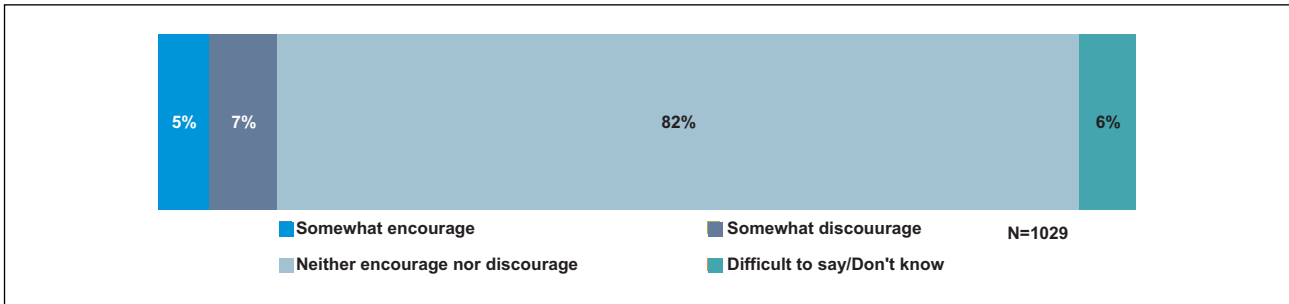
On the one hand, this is hardly surprising as there are only a few Polish products that are sufficiently exceptional to appeal to a British clientele. Polish sauerkraut (*kiszona kapusta*) or Polish juices can hardly compete with curry sauce or Chinese vegetables. Likewise, Polish cuisine is not fashionable in the way Italian or Asian cuisine is. Poland does not have such characteristic brands as, for example, Volvo or Nokia. On the other hand, however, it seems that more often than not it is Polish producers and manufacturers that show little interest in 'pitching' their products to the British, and focus their marketing strategies mainly on the Polish Diaspora.

Given this situation, we should not be surprised that respondents for whom Polish products had no obvious associations were not able to say whether a 'made in Poland' label would encourage them to buy a product or rather discourage them. In fact, about 80% of respondents simply could not say (Fig. 21). Another factor that makes this response unsurprising is the great distance still existing between Polish brands and global leaders in terms of recognisability. According to the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index, Polish products/brands are ranked 28<sup>th</sup> out of 50 countries surveyed.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> 'Polskie marki w Wielkiej Brytanii – skazane na polskie półki?' *Polarity UK*, 10 October 2010.

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.simonanholt.com/Research/research-introduction.aspx>.

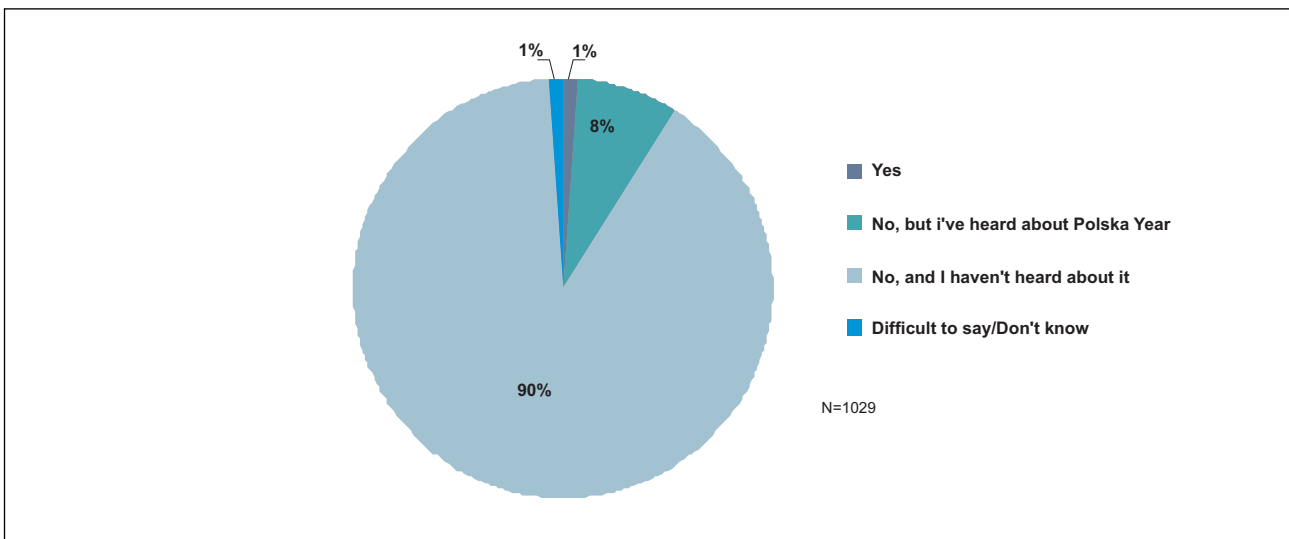
**Figure 21.** Would the information that a given product was made in Poland somewhat encourage or discourage you from buying it?



Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

The same could be said about respondents’ interest in, or familiarity with Polish culture. According to the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index, Poland is only ranked 30<sup>th</sup> in terms of culture and heritage.<sup>69</sup> With the British public being so unknowledgeable about Polish products in general, it is hardly surprising that only a relatively small number of respondents were aware that for 13 months they had had an opportunity for contact with Polish culture under the *Polska! Year* project. Only 8% of the British public had heard about this initiative aimed at promoting Polish culture in the UK, and just 1% of respondents declared that they had taken part in cultural events organised as part of this project (Fig. 22).

**Figure 22.** Did you take part in any of the events which were organized as part of the Polish culture year in the UK (*Polska! Year*)?



Source: The Institute of Public Affairs 2010.

In spite of the fact that this initiative attracted a lot of coverage in the British press, this information only reached those people who were both culture buffs and had an interest in

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.simonanholt.com/Research/research-introduction.aspx>.

Poland. Our survey also indicated that this was still an elite event. Knowledge about *Polska! Year* is much more widespread among respondents with the highest social status.

## Summary

As we can see, referring to Poles who live and work in Britain as ‘an arm of the MFA’ is not completely unfounded. Our survey shows that Poles can act as excellent ambassadors for their country and that they shape (and will continue to shape) a positive image of Poles and Poland. Poles are generally liked by the British at the level of personal contacts, and are accepted as members of British society. Also importantly, in the general anti-immigration climate, the opening of the labour market to citizens of Central and Eastern European countries (with Poles as the largest and most visible group) is widely viewed as a good decision.

On the other hand, the Poland brand still remains blurred. Polish products can be found almost everywhere today, but there is still no leading brand (or brands) with which Poland is associated abroad. Since Polish companies often do not have the necessary means to promote their products abroad, and since, furthermore, there is a lack of promotional strategies concerning particular groups of regional products, the significance of the Polish Diaspora as a “Polish ambassador” should not be underestimated.

The *Polska!Year* promotional programme certainly helped raise awareness of Polish culture amongst the social elites and demonstrated that Poland is not just good vodka and conscientious workers. However, it failed to reach a broader audience: the general public in Britain, for the most part, remained unaware of the programme.

## References

### Monographs/studies:

- Analiza wyników badań wizerunku Polski i postrzegania polskiej marki na świecie. Założenia i rekomendacje do pozycjonowania Polski jako kraju docelowego podróży turystycznych na lata 2009-2015* (Analysis of research results on the Polish image and the perception of the Poland brand abroad. Recommendations on the positioning of Poland as a tourist destination from 2009 to 2015), Polish Brand Institute, Warsaw 2008.
- Carey S., Geddes A., *Less Is More: Immigration and European Integration at the 2010 General Election*, Parliamentary Affairs 63 (4), Oxford University Press 2010.
- Cianciara A. K., *The European Policy of Donald Tusk’s Government*, Analyses and Opinions No. 8/93, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2009.
- Dustmann C., Frattini T., Halls C., *Assessing the Fiscal Costs and Benefits of A8 Migration to the UK*, Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration, London 2009.
- Eade J., Drinkwater S., Garapich M. P., *Polscy migranci w Londynie – klasa społeczna i etniczność (Class and Ethnicity: Polish migrants in London)*, Report, Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism, University of Surrey 2006.

- Fałkowski M., *Polska jako Wschód i jako Zachód (Poland as the East and the West)*, L. Kolarska – Bobińska (ed.), *Obraz Polski i Polaków w Europie (The Image of Poland and Poles in Europe)*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2003.
- Fałkowski M., (ed.), *Pierwsze kroki w Unii. Polityka Polski w prasie europejskiej (First steps in the European Union. Polish politics in the European press)*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2004.
- Fałkowski M., Popko A., *Polacy i Niemcy. Wzajemny wizerunek po rozszerzeniu Unii Europejskiej (Poles and Germans. Mutual perceptions after the European Union Enlargement)*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2006.
- Fomina J., Husband C., *Inhabiting Heteroglossic Media Spaces: Intra-group transitions, identity construction and the language-media interface of 'Bradfordian Poles'*, T. Moring (ed.) *Living languages in bilingual media environments*, NORDICOM, Helsinki 2011.
- Fomina J., Frelak J., *Next stopski London. Public perceptions of labour migration within the EU. The case of Polish labour migrants in the British press*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2007.
- Fomina J., *Parallel worlds – self-perception of Polish migrants in the United Kingdom* Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2009.
- Frelak J., Łada A., Schwartz K., Parkes R., *Polska migracja zarobkowa do Niemiec-fakty i mity. (Polish migration to Germany – facts and myths)*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2009.
- Garapich M. P., *Migracje, społeczeństwo obywatelskie and władza. Uwarunkowania stowarzyszeniowości etnicznej and rozwoju społeczeństwa obywatelskiego wśród polskich emigrantów w Wielkiej Brytanii" (Migration, civil society and power. Conditions for creating ethnic associations and civil society among Polish migrants in Great Britain)*.
- Duszczyk M., Lesińska M., (eds.), *Współczesne migracje: dylematy Europy i Polski (Contemporary migrations: European and Polish dilemmas)*, Centre for Migration Research at the University of Warsaw, Warsaw 2009.
- Garapich M., *The Migration Industry and Civil Society: Polish Immigrants in the United Kingdom Before and After EU Enlargement*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34 (5), 2008.
- Garapich M.P., Osipovič D., *MIGPOL. Badanie sondażowe wśród obywateli polskich zamieszkałych w Wielkiej Brytanii i Irlandii (Survey research among Polish citizens living in the United Kingdom and Ireland)*, September 2007.
- Geographic mobility in the context of EU enlargement*, [in:] *Employment in Europe 2008 report*, European Commission, Brussels 2008.
- Kaczmarczyk P., *Współczesne migracje zagraniczne Polaków. Aspekty lokalne i regionalne (Contemporary foreign migration of Poles. Regional and local aspects)*, Centre for Migration Research at the University of Warsaw, Warsaw 2008.
- Kolarska-Bobińska L., Łada A. (ed.), *Polska–Niemcy. Wzajemny wizerunek i wizja Europy (Poland – Germany. Mutual perception and vision of Europe)*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2009.
- Kolarska-Bobińska L. (ed.), *Obraz Polski i Polaków w Europie (Image of Poland and Poles in Europe)*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2003.
- Konieczna J., *Polacy-Ukraińcy, Polska-Ukraina. Paradoksy stosunków sąsiedzkich (Poles – Ukrainians, Poland – Ukraine. Paradoxes of neighbourhood relations)* Stefan Batory Foundation, Warsaw 2003.

- Kotler P., *Marketing*, Gebethner i Ska, Warsaw 1994.
- Kucharczyk J., Zbieranek J., *Democracy in Poland 1989-2009. Challenges for the Future*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2010.
- Lemos S., Portes J.N., *New Labour? The Impact of Migration from Central and Eastern European Countries on the UK Labour Market*, Institute for the Study of Labor, Bonn 2008.
- Migration Statistics*, Institute for Public Policy Research, London, November 2010.
- Migration Statistics Quarterly Report*, Office for National Statistics, London, November 2010
- Miles R., Phizacklea A., *White Man's Country*, Pluto Press, London 1984.
- Ociepka B., Łada A., Ćwiek-Karpowicz J., *Polityka europejska Warszawy i Berlina w prasie niemieckiej i polskiej (European politics of Warsaw and Berlin in the German and Polish press)*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2008.
- Ostrowski, M. *To Return To Poland Or Not To Return – The Dilemma Facing The Polish Armed Forces At The End Of The Second World War*, unpublished work, <http://www.angelfire.com/ok2/polisharmy/>
- Położyński A., *Z drogi i przydroża*, "Vipart" Publishers, Warsaw 1997.
- The impact of free movement of workers in the context of EU enlargement. Report on the first phase (1 January 2007 – 31 December 2008) of the transitional arrangements set out in the 2005 accession treaty as requested according to the transitional arrangement set out in the 2003 accession treaty*, European Commission, Brussels 2008.
- Solomos J., *Race and Racism in Britain*, Houndmills Palgrave, Macmillan 2003.
- Sword K., *Identity in Flux. The Polish Community in Great Britain*. School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, London 1996.
- Thorp A., (ed.), *Impacts of Immigration*, House of Commons Research Papers 08/65, 25 June 2008.
- Transatlantic Trends: Immigration*, German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2009.
- Warchala M. (ed.), *Wizerunek Polski w prasie krajów Unii Europejskiej (Representation of Poland in the press of the EU member states)*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2002.
- Zubrzycki J., *Polish Immigrants in Britain. A Study of Adjustment*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 1956.

### Press articles:

- The Daily Mail*, 9 January 2009.
- The Daily Mail*, 12 August 2010.
- Bates S., *British workers compete for seasonal jobs as recession bites*, *The Guardian*, 14 April 2009.
- Booth R., *Mediators called in as wildcat strikes spread across UK*, *The Guardian*, 31 January 2009.
- Ford R., *Britons vie with immigrants for low-paid jobs*, *The Times*, 16 March 2009.
- Koziński A., *Bezcenni imigranci (Priceless immigrants)*, *Polska the Times*, 31 July 2009.
- McKittrick D., *Belfast immigrants warned: "Get out by tomorrow – or you die"*, *The Independent*, 10 July 2009.
- Mimo kryzysu rośnie polski eksport do Wielkiej Brytanii (Despite of crises Polish export to Great Britain is growing)*, PAP, 5 March 2010
- Polskie marki w Wielkiej Brytanii – skazane na polskie półki? (Polish products in the Great Britain limited to Polish shelves?)* Cooltura/ Polarity UK, 15 October 2010

---

*Polskie jedzenie częścią brytyjskiej kultury (Polish food as part of the British culture)*, Cooltura/Polarity UK, 7 June 2010.

Smoczyński W., *Polska: kraj bez twarzy (Poland: faceless country)*, Polityka, 30 June 2009.

**Other sources:**

Premier Donald Tusk's expose of 23 November 2007, [http://wyborcza.pl/1,90699,5239927,Expos%E9\\_premiera\\_Donalda\\_Tuska.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,90699,5239927,Expos%E9_premiera_Donalda_Tuska.html), access 25 November 2010.

J. Fomina, interviews with representatives of the second generation of the post-War Polish Diaspora and with Polish post-accession migrants in Bradford, held as part of the project: *Bilingualism, Identity and Media (BIM)*, financed by the Academy of Finland.