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The English: An Image Changing in Polish Eyes

Abstract: The article analyzes certain results of a nationwide survey—*Poles and Others—30 years on*—conducted in June 2018. Focusing on how the English are envisioned in contemporary Polish society, we aim to prove that the conceptual category of "stereotype" should be replaced by a more complex one—"image" or "ethnic image." A striking feature is the rich and diverse description that the image of the English encompasses, hence interpretation of its complexity comprises the bulk of our considerations. Specific components of this ethnic image are seen as an outcome of direct and indirect interethnic contact: a consequence of migrations as well as progressively modernized, technological possibilities for interpersonal interactions. Interestingly, despite the image changing, the social distance towards Britons has not changed: the English continue to be perceived by Poles as one of the "closest" European peoples.

Keywords: the English, ethnic image, stereotype, concretized image, social distance.

Introduction

The aim of this article is to revisit the classic concept of "stereotype." It is already more rarely applied by sociologists, but remains in usage by psychologists who perceive it as the source of prejudices, discrimination, and other problems in intergroup relations (see Stangor 2014; Careem, Jussim, Rubinstein 2020), as well as by cultural studies scholars. Worth noting, too, is a long tradition in Poland of social sciences research into (especially) ethnic stereotypes (see Łaszkiewicz 2017 for a history thereof). We are inclined, nonetheless, to reconsider the stance taken by Zbigniew Bokszański who wrote that one of the "essential qualities of stereotype is that its shape depends to a great degree on non-personal experiences. The conditions for a stereotype should therefore be sought in historical-cultural, social or economic factors" (2001: 34).

Although these conceptual findings by Bokszański are valid, we maintain that this concept as a whole is no longer adequate in describing current ideas Poles have about other nations. Herein we will attempt to substantiate a claim that the conceptual category of the stereotype should be superseded by a term more multifaceted. We propose "image" (in the sense of a "portrayal"), or "ethnic image" that is primarily built upon a person's own social experiences. It is on that English nation as imagined that we focus, investigating how Poles today envision a Briton. Our findings disclose that the ethnic image is of a different

nature than the typical ethnic stereotype. What emerges is a more complex portrait of a representative of Great Britain—diverse in both content and identified character traits, ambiguous in terms of emotionality. That portrait has been created over recent years as a result of various types of knowledge accumulating from contacts that are direct (e.g., Polish immigration or tourism in the UK) and/or indirect (e.g., experiences of family members and friends as well as mass and social media missives). In turn, the ethnic image of the English influences the self-perception and the nature of the self-portrait Poles have of themselves.

The data we have collected and the research experiences we have behind us confirm the validity of such a thesis. Serving as our case study will be an analysis of contemporary depictions of the residents of Great Britain, seen as "the English." The imagined nation today emerges more from direct, personal experiences or those intermediated by a single degree of separation (e.g., family members, friends, acquaintances and/or others).

Our database was built by surveying a nationwide, representative sample (1004 persons) in the first half of June 2018. Designing the questionnaire ourselves, we then had Kantar Polska execute the face-to-face, personal interviews. Although this was the third in our *Poles and Others* research project series, longitudinally investigating the attitudes of Polish society with reference to various ethnic, national, and racial groups, this was the first time that we introduced the open-ended question: "What character traits do the English have?" The image of the English was treated here as a representative of a European state which neither bordered nor was associated with a burdensome, complicated history involving Poland. It should be noted that, over the past 25 years, British have been situated among the top 6–7 nations most liked (41–55%) by surveyed Poles (CBOS 2020: 3). In 2020 sympathy even reached 49%, whereas antipathy was expressed by only every seventh person (13%) and ambivalence by 32%. On a sympathy-antipathy scale ranging from −3 (minimum) to +3 (maximum), the average for the English was 0.79 with the highest value assigned to the Hungarians at 0.97 (CBOS 2020: 6–7).

In our research questionnaire, we consistently applied the etnonym of "the English" (*Anglik*). In our deliberations herein, we apply that descriptor (alternately "British" or "Briton") to designate an inhabitant of the United Kingdom defined less by citizenship, and more through the prism of ethnic and cultural belonging. We are aware of the complications such a classification entails when referencing the multicultural, multiracial, and multiethnic society of Great Britain; the quotation marks at first usage signal the distinct sense in which we apply it. We assume that the majority of our respondents will indiscriminately include in this category Scots, the Welsh, the Northern Irish, and nearly all other "white" inhabitants of the United Kingdom. Such is the tendency in the nationwide surveys carried out annually by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) in Poland, ranking the sympathy of Poles vis-à-vis various nations (CBOS 2020); this was also a predisposition in other research into the attitudes of Poles towards others (Jasińska-Kania 1989: 148–153). A familiar form of this etnonym—the word *Angole*—has even served as the title for a popular compilation of essays by Ewa Winnicka (2014) on precisely this topic of the most recent experiences of Poles in the UK. Furthermore, portending our results somewhat, among the responses we obtained on the subject of the English, no reference was made to physical (racial) differentiations within British society. This evidences the specific, limited

way in which the etnonym is understood by Poles—oblivious to persons of color residing on the British Isles.

Stereotype or Image?

Research into stereotypes (especially ethnic ones) has experienced something of a renaissance over the past quarter century. This is especially the case in the field of social psychology where stereotypes have been the subject of entire textbooks (Macrae, Stangor, Hewstone 1996; Stangor 2016). Overall, our analysis is concentrated on interpretation of the ways in which nations and ethnicities are perceived as a generalized image. Investigated empirically in this specific case of the shaping of an image of the English are: 1) the cognitive aspect found in responses and ways in which knowledge is manifested, and 2) the emotional-evaluative aspect found in the affectivity of particular phrasings which (per the structuralists) belong to the category of *parole*—the everyday, unsophisticated, and spontaneous language uttered in casual, noncommittal relationships.

The Conceptual Framework

Accompanying the transformations taking place in different areas of social life there must be transformations of the concepts applied in descriptions thereof. So, too, the popular, standardized term, stereotype must also succumb to a recasting in descriptions of interethnic relations. Stereotypes and images of ethnicities have been used as cognitive schemes (as generalized representations of a given social group) which have contributed to the drawing of certain "social maps" that facilitate better orientation and navigation in the social world. Research into these stereotypes and images have focused mainly on the social dimensions of sympathy/antipathy towards specific Others, the processes by which these attitudes arise and become fixed in a society, as well as the mechanisms by which stereotypes and images influence bearing and behavior in a society (Brandt, Reyna 2010: 8–12). Intriguingly enough, not much light has been shed on the content itself, usually divided into the black-and-white categories of positivity/negativity or sympathy/antipathy (Winiewski, Bulska 2019: 3–4).

   One of the approaches to this problem—captured in the Stereotype Content Model (SCM)—accents how intergroup relations depend upon the very content that stereotypes and images include, not just on the emotional feelings they arouse (Fiske et al. 2002; Winiewski, Witkowska, Bilewicz 2015: 68–69). This approach casts a spotlight on the content by referring to two key aspects by which a given group is described. The first pertains to traits referring to assumed warmth and intentions: for instance, conviviality, endearment, and a friendly attitude towards others, etc. versus enmity, hostility, unfriendliness, etc. The second aspect pertains to traits referring to competencies, talents, and skills: for instance, intelligence, capability, self-assurance, etc. versus stupidity, incapability, passivity, etc. A high value on both these axes (labelled "warmth" and "competence") is typical of the more positive stereotypes while a low value on both is typical of the more negative ones. The different combinations of these two aspects lead to four kinds of stereotypical attitudes: admiration, paternalism, envy, and contemptuousness.

Scholars who apply this model accent the fact that, in reality, it is rare for a group to be perceived as clear-cut positive or negative. Much more frequently, stereotypes appear to be ambivalent—one aspect evaluated high while the other is evaluated low. Evaluations along the two axes give rise to different emotions which might lead to correspondingly different motivations, attitudes, and actions. If a group is rated high along both aspects, it will rouse more admiration and respect. A group rated high on warmth, but low on competencies will rouse paternalism and pity. In turn, a group rated low on warmth, but high on competencies will rouse envy and rivalry. Finally, a group rated low on both aspects will rouse contempt and disgust (Fiske et al. 2002; Bukowski, Winiewski 2011: 45–53; Winiewski, Bulska 2019). This bi-dimensional approach permits, above all, a more precise delineation of the content of a stereotype, but it also permits capturing this functionally. Again, disparities in the appraisals and depictions of different outgroups can lead to the expression of distinctly different emotions and kinds of behavior towards each outgroup.

An important feature of SCM is its endeavor to explain the mechanism by which stereotypes arise on the basis of the nature of concrete intergroup relations. In this methodology, the warmth axis roughly represents attitudes on a continuum between competition and cooperation, whereas the competence axis is derived from the relative status of an outgroup, pivotal in seeing a potential competitor or cooperator as actually capable of achieving goals. Advocates of SCM accent the functionality of the contents found within a stereotypical image because that functionality constitutes an answer to a vital epistemological question about the Other: what are his intentions towards us—hostility or affability? Moreover, is he capable of following through with those intentions?

We do not delve deeper here into further developments of this concept, such as (among others) the creation of the "BIAS map" (Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2007; Bukowski, Winiewski 2011: 47–48). Instead our aim is, above all, focused on a cognitive description of the contemporary image of the English among Poles. Key in this will be categorization along two axes of warmth and competence. Further on in our deliberations we will make use of these axial dimensions because they are relevant to images of ethnic or national groups today. Although we believe stereotype to be conceptually unsatisfactory, we will not be disassociating from is as a word in the model's title. We will, however, point to yet other dimensions such as social distance—its numerous manifestations as well as its sociodemographic habituation.

The Ethnic Image vis-à-vis the Contact Experience

In our analyses we make reference to the concept of the ethnic image because it better fits the portrait of the English which we are researching in Polish society. The ethnic image can be interpreted in two ways: as the effect of an external perception of easily discerned traits or of internalized character traits which are seemingly expressed in fixed ways of doing things. All traits are considered by survey respondents to be rather permanent.

On the one hand, these characteristics are a sociocultural phenomenon; on the other hand, they constitute the fundamental components of a research construct created by scholars. Per the SCM approach, as the first dimension, we investigate characteristics associated with relationships with others; as the second dimension, we examine characteristics asso-

ciated with competencies assigned to the group (talents, skills, intellectual potential, etc.). Furthermore, we draw attention to the fact that the image (sketched by the specific traits indicated) is influenced, above all, by the contact experience (be that in Poland or abroad). Finally, the image may be dependent upon the sociodemographic traits (gender, age, education, etc.) of the survey respondents themselves. Thus, the collective image of the Briton is something of a mosaic composed of both traditional, cultural generalizations in Poland and the personal life experiences and social standing of the Poles responding to this study.

Interpreting the reactions of our respondents to specific queries posed in our questionnaire, we will refer to concepts which have operated for years in analyses of migration phenomena and cultural contacts. One of these is social distance whose roots go back to the definitive article by Emory S. Bogardus (1925), and which is applied in various forms and variations to this day (see: Ethington 1997; Wark, Galliher 2007). We also hark back to the classic, theoretical assumptions stemming from the concept of the Other and anchored in the famous treatise by Georg Simmel, *The Stranger* (1908/1975). Applied, too, will be two concepts—"social remittances" and "encounters"—recently shaped within the field of migration studies and employed effectively over the last decades in the specialized literature (Grabowska, Garapich 2016; Gawlewicz 2015a; Wessendorf 2013; Valentine, Sadgrove 2012; Valentine 2008; Amin 2002). Despite critiques, the hypothesis of intergroup contact is well established in the literature of this field (Boski 2009: 501). Contact between representatives of various, foreign groups can lead to reduction of mutual prejudices. Such contact meets specific situational-functional conditions such as equal social status, daily cooperation and collaboration, and the backing of the law and the authorities. Crucial in the influence of contact are also individual knowledge on the subject of the other group as well as cultural familiarity stemming from past experiences (Bilewicz 2006: 64–65).

Of particular interest to us is the research conducted by Anna Gawlewicz among Polish immigrants in Scotland. Her study examined whether and to what extent direct contact with ethnically and/or racially different persons can influence openness or closedness in the attitude of the perceiver (Gawlewicz 2015a; Gawlewicz 2015b). Such is the case among educational, academic, business, and other economic Polish migrants returning from the UK. Gawlewicz's respondents told her how close, direct contact influenced their perceptions of those ethnically and racially different from Poles. Those influences were both positive as well as negative, but changes resulted in a complex image and varied attitudes—an outcome found in our research as well. Nonetheless, in her search for the impact which the encounter has on openness or closedness, Gawlewicz did not distinguish between the real-time experiences of the migrants and the ensuing cognitive process by which those migrants incorporated elements into a picture of the group with which some kind of contact had been made. She did, however, underline the fact that frustration with a lower socioeconomic position as an émigré (especially among individuals with lower levels of education) did lead to a psychologically rationalized aversion to interaction.

Hence personal contact experiences can vary: they can be better or worse. Nevertheless, their intellectual rethinking—the use of knowledge acquired through piecemeal experiences in the construction of a generalized picture—is contingent upon preexistent mental capabilities, including (above all) those for individual self-reflection. Therefore, we can state that during personal contacts there is movement away from a simple stereotype, to-

wards a concretization of mutual attitudes, opinions, and depictions. Newly encompassed by those depictions can be information about a foreign land and its inhabitants as well as a heightened degree of interest in diversity. Still, reflexivity and a wealth of inferences in an ethnic image can be the result of either or both of two elements: 1) direct contact accompanied by personally gained knowledge about cultural differences, and 2) the level of education accompanied by a person's cognitive competencies.

The subject of contacts, meetings, and encounters between members of a homogeneous society (such as the Polish) with members of a heterogeneous society (such as English is well covered in scholarly literature, but little attention has been paid to geo-historical and cultural circumstances affecting perceptions of difference (see Mayblin, Piekut, Valentine 2016: 62–64). Individual experiences with real-time contact can alter attitudes but this is not always accompanied by a tendency to translate new convictions over to the whole group. Additionally, as studies have shown, it is relatively easier to extrapolate from negative, strongly emotional experiences than positive ones. Yet again, the lower economic or employment status of many émigrés leads to a closemindedness with regards to diversity; among those less educated and working below their qualifications an inclination towards antipathy is greater.

As can be concluded from Gawlewicz's as well as our own research, decisively influential in the depiction of an individual's dealings with another group are, on the one hand, personal contacts with the experiences resulting therefrom, and, on the other hand, a person's preliminary orientation in the world, reflexivity, and comprehension of the social world—what we call a "cognitive readiness" (Gawlewicz 2015b: 207–208). One of the most important questions is whether the intensity of intercultural contact has direct bearing on a decrease in social distance and/or a more positive change in the image of the Other (Amin 2002; Valentine 2008).

The Image of the English in Polish Society: Stereotyped Tradition vis-à-vis the European Encounter

As we have already indicated, we will investigate the socially differentiated descriptions of the imagined English currently found in Polish society. In Poland up until the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, that image bore an exclusively stereotypical nature. It was built upon fragments of school knowledge along with bits and pieces of media communications; among the oldest generation, it was based, too, upon historical and familial accounts about the connections between Poland and the United Kingdom during the Second World War. Even at the beginning of the 21st century mutual knowledge possessed by Poles and Britons about each other was "above all shaped by mass media or literature" (CBOS 2001b: 6).

In 2001 (i.e., three years before Poland's accession into the European Union), the Centre for Public Opinion Research was commissioned by a think tank in Poland, the Institute of Public Affairs, to conduct research into how the United Kingdom and its inhabitants were imagined in the consciousness of Polish society (CBOS 2001a, 2001b). According to the results of that study (open-ended questions permitting respondents to spontaneously formulate answers), the UK principally brought to mind a monarchy with the queen heading

the state and an island country with a climate unique to it. It also summoned up comments about prosperity and a higher standard of living: "life is better there than here" or "there is low unemployment." The UK was further described as an important country in international affairs (CBOS 2001b). In addition to remarks about the state, about 14% of the respondents instinctively pointed to particular character traits, components of the stereotype of the British: an attachment to tradition and conservatism (3%); phlegmatic, stoic, and sluggish, albeit elegant and gentlemanly (4%); and possessing a quirky sense of humor (1%). The Polish respondents listed positive traits such as diligence and honesty (4%), as well as negative traits such as arrogance, self-aggrandizement, parsimony, xenophobia, etc. (4%) (CBOS 2001b: 2–3).[1]

Respondents with an elementary school education associated Great Britain mostly with prosperity and global prominence; lower on their list was the island geography, unique character traits, and touristic attractions. Oddly enough, nearly every fifth of these respondents (18%) could not think of anything that was particularly English. Likewise, for individuals with a vocational-technical education, the UK primarily signified prosperity and an important country, though football and touristic attractions were also on the list. However, those questioned who had completed secondary school or tertiary degrees linked the British Isles first and foremost with the traits of its inhabitants and touristic attractions (20% and 25% respectively) (CBOS 2001b: 4–5).

This 2001 nationwide study also posed a direct question about the image held in the Polish mind's eye: "A typical Briton is…?" Participants in the study assessed over a dozen descriptors (i.e., educated, neat, modern, backward, enterprising, disciplined, effective, responsible, hardworking, abstaining from alcohol abuse, honest, tolerant, kind, and religious) on a 5-point scale whose maximum and minimum represented extreme forms of a given attribute (e.g., 1—very hard-working, 5—very lazy) (CBOS 2001a: 12–13). The image of the typical English that emerged from the perceptions of nearly two-thirds of the respondents was someone educated, neat, and modern (63%, 63%, and 62% respectively). In the opinion of roughly half the respondents, the British were also enterprising, disciplined, effective, and responsible (59%, 52%, 51%, and 49% respectively); in addition, roughly two-fifths of the Poles saw the archetype as hardworking and abstaining from alcohol abuse (41% and 38% respectively). Lower down, approximately a third felt that the English are honest, tolerant, and kind (36%, 35%, and 30% respectively). Noticeably, negative traits were assigned to the English more rarely: about one fifth of those surveyed saw Britons as intolerant (19%) and unkind (18%); one quarter saw them as irreligious (26%). Thus, the image was quite homogenous and positive, especially in the assessment along the competence axis (categorically high on admiration). In the summary of the study report, we can read that, "the opinions of Poles about the British are not only more developed than the British have about Poles, but those opinions are also more flattering overall. Concurrently, the image of 'the Briton' among the Poles is not only more incisive, but it is decidedly different from the perception the British have about the typical Pole" (CBOS 2001a: 12).

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[1] The sum of these percentages exceeds 14% because some respondents listed several "English" traits belonging to disparate categories (CBOS 2001b: 2).

At the same time, Polish respondents were, to a significant degree, aware of their distinctness vis-à-vis the English: only 11% was of the opinion that Poles are similar to the English while 46% was of the opinion that the two are dissimilar. Here it should be added that the post-accession Polish emigrants to Great Britain have upheld a particularly positive image of England and its inhabitants. As two researchers noticed:

"it is thus not surprising that all of the cultural iconic representations of the UK in Poland were associated with high culture, excellence in education and heights of civilizational development. The economic and cultural factors made the UK an attractive destination for tourism as well as migration, despite the fact that other features of Britishness such as distant and reserved attitude among people or boarding schools for young children were considered rather alien if not appalling" (Horolets, Kozłowska 2012: 151).

That notwithstanding, the contemporary image of Britons is the effect of direct contacts connected with the migration of Poles to the UK. These closer contacts have been varied in form—ranging from tourist trips, to temporary residency for work or study, all the way to taking up permanent residence in that country. There are also secondary contacts, shaped from a distance by knowledge about or impressions of the British relayed by a person who has (currently or in the recent past) been to England; that type of information is subsequently relayed to Poles who have not participated in that route of EU mobility. Here we also emphasize the strength and breadth of the information passed on by contemporary mass and social media. Also taken into consideration is the status of the English language as a global leader in interpersonal communication as well as a symbol of civilizational development. In Poland English is taught at all levels of education and is dominant among all foreign languages; moreover, fluency in this tongue is an obligatory standard in many careers, not only in Poland. While learning this language, pupils not only plumb the depths of its vocabulary and grammar, but also come into touch with many elements of British culture. This, in turn, indubitably influences the position and significance of Englishness broadly understood.

Connections between Poland and Great Britain have taken on avalanche speed over the last three decades. This was initially an effect of Poland's opening up towards Western Europe upon departure from the communist bloc in 1989 and, subsequently, Poland's entrance into the European Union in 2004. Both of these factors contributed to a mass Polish emigration to the British Isles. Over 30 years have passed since 1989 and 15 since 2004, leading to a situation in which the immigrant Poles have become rooted in the UK, forming a minority community of over one million. In 2018, the British Office for National Statistics estimated the numbers at 905,000 persons. Despite the recent Brexit decline Polish nationals accounted for 15% of the total non-British residents in the UK in 2018 (Office for National Statistics 2018). As Polish scholars have underscored, "not only various Polish worlds, but also the Polish and British worlds have begun to increasingly interfuse. Serving as evidence can be numerous mixed marriages as well as conversions to other religions amidst the Polish community" (Pędziwiatr, Brzozowski 2018: 4). From the beginning of their residency there, Polish immigrants have been subject to the impact of the culture and living standards in UK society; some of that impact has, of course, been associated with adaptation to an institutional and cultural order quite strange to them.

In the course of the last decade or so, an extensive body of literature has been published regarding various aspects of the post-EU accession emigration from Poland to the United

Kingdom (*Społeczne skutki poakcesyjnych…* 2014). Dominating among the sociological studies are publications which primarily analyze the adaptation and acculturation processes of Polish immigrants in Great Britain or their migration strategies (Garapich 2008, 2010, 2013), the role of social remittances and cultural inflows from the UK (Grabowska, Garapich 2016), as well as the implications of contact with the culturally diverse British society for the attitudes, plans, and life goals of Polish immigrants (Gawlewicz 2016, 2015a, 2015b; Bielewska 2013; Piętka 2011). Of relatively little interest, however, has been the issue of whether and how that immigration from Poland—accompanied by increasingly numerous and diverse social contacts in Great Britain—has influenced the way in which England and its native inhabitants are perceived in Polish society back home.

Demonstrated here will be that the present-day image of the English has been vastly enriched, diversified, and concretized as a consequence of various levels and types of contact—and this means that, as representatives of British society, Britons have become more familiar and closer (and thus less strange) for the Poles. The wealth of descriptors which we uncovered in responses to queries about characteristic traits of the English indicate that our respondents did not take shortcuts: rather than a rigid, non-empirically based stereotype, they created a picture rooted in knowledge drawn from many different sources.

This phenomenon can be examined at a few levels. First of all, it can be seen as a symptom of a general upsurge in the amount of information and knowledge about the United Kingdom, its society, and its culture. Secondly, it can be the effect of an enhanced and socially more concrete image of the inhabitants of that country (albeit not entailing full acceptance or a positive assessment of all aspects). Thirdly, it can also be viewed as a chance to compare lifestyles between the United Kingdom and Poland—something that can lead to increased criticism of and/or positive reflections upon Polish culture and society. Fourthly and finally, it can mean changes in thinking about the significance of cultural, ethnic, racial or other diversity when in contact with British society.

The Traits Encompassed by the Ethnic Image of the English
in Contemporary Polish Society (2018)

In our research performed in June 2018, we altered the approach. We posed open-ended questions before the participants in our nationwide sample, asking them to specify character traits of different nations, including the English (see Table 1 below). In the process of coding, we obtained over 1,300 responses drawn from the 1004 persons encompassed by our sample. The overwhelming majority (79%) did have a formulated opinion on the subject of the British although just over a fifth (21%) was unable or did not want to grant an answer (responding "I don't know," "don't know any" or "hard to say"). From the last subgroup it can be deduced that this segment of Polish society either has no knowledge or envisions no clear portrait of a Briton, although it is certainly likely that some people in this category simply wish to avoid generalizations or declarations about a nation as a whole. Among those who replied with a "don't know" were both individuals with an elementary education (19%) or a tertiary education (18%). Noteworthy is that the 2001 CBOS research also yielded a comparable contingent (19%) with no associations regarding the United Kingdom (CBOS 2001b: 4).

Table 1

Traits of the English according to frequency of indication (2018)

Trait category labels (sample answers coded within the category)	Percentage (real nrs)
1. **Positive traits in interpersonal contacts** (*uprzejmi, otwarci, uczciwi*)	**14%** (141)
2. **An Englishness, typically English characteristics** (*zasady angielskie, z królową, gentelmeń-scy, staromodni, five o'clock*)	**13%** (131)
3. **Lazy** (*leniwi, ospali, niedbali*)	**9%** (95)
4. **Coolness in interpersonal relations** (*zimni, oschli, obojętni, sztywni*)	**9%** (94)
5. **Sense of superiority** (*aroganccy, zarozumiały i pewni siebie, lubiący się wywyższać*)	**9%** (92)
6. **Even-tempered** (*spokojni, małomówni, ułożeni*)	**9%** (92)
7. **Cheerful** (*wyluzowani, umiejący się dobrze bawić, weseli*)	**7%** (73)
8. **Hardworking** (*pracowici, sumienni, solidni, skrupulatni*)	**6%** (59)
9. **Comparable to Poles** (*tacy sami jak my, tacy normalni, tacy jak my tyle, że grubsi, kiepsko jadają i mają ciągle brzydką pogodę*)	**4%** (42)
10. **Negative character traits** (*źli, egoiści, nieuczciwi, chamy*)	**4%** (40)
11. **Positive character traits** (*zdecydowani, odważni, honorowi*)	**3%** (35)
12. **Positive attitude towards their own country and tradition** (*patrioci, przywiązani do własnego kraju i tradycji, umiłowanie narodu i historii*)	**3%** (35)
13. **Wealthy** (*bogaci, kolonialni właściciele, żyjący w dobrobycie, szczęśliwi*)	**3%** (33)
14. **Positive intellectual traits** (*inteligentni, nowocześni, wykształceni, sprytni, zdroworozsądkowi, rozsądni*)	**3%** (30)
15. **Tolerant** (*szanują odmienność innych ludzi, są tolerancyjni, otwarci*)	**2%** (22)
16. **Individualism** (*indywidualiści, ekscentrycy, wolni, liberalni*)	**2%** (22)
17. **Drunks** (*pijacy, za dużo piją alkoholu, lubią pić, piwosze, pijaństwo, pijaki, alkoholicy, dużo piją*)	**2%** (21)
18. **Negative behavioral traits** (*porywczy, rozrabiacy, hałaśliwi, rozpustni*)	**2%** (18)
19. **Positive traits associated with frugality** (*zaradni, aktywni, operatywni, pragmatyczni*)	**2%** (16)
20. **Negative aesthetic appraisal of appearance** (*nieładni, troszkę byle jacy, niechlujni*)	**1%** (13)
21. **Europeans** (*typowi Europejczycy, poprawni politycznie, bliscy nam, europejscy, poprawni politycznie, są jak większość Europejczyków*)	**1%** (11)
22. **Heterogeneous** (*są różni Anglicy, też różni, są dwie kategorie Anglików: jedni to skrajne brudasy i niechluje a drudzy nad wyraz eleganccy i dumni*)	**1%** (9)
23. **Positive aesthetic appraisal of appearance** (*przystojni, eleganccy, czyści*)	**1%** (9)
24. **Familial** (*rodzinni, dbają o dom i rodzinę*)	**0%** (4)
25. **Negative intellectual traits** (*głupi, naiwni, mało elastyczni*)	**0%** (4)
26. **Different at home and different abroad** (*w swoim kraju to spokojni, flegmatyczni, tradycjonaliści, ale swoje wady pokazują za granicą*)	**0%** (3)
27. **Hard to say** (*trudno powiedzieć, nie interesuję się, nie miałem styczności, nie znam żadnego Anglika*)	**3%** (27)
28. **Do not know** (*nie wiem, nw., nie, nic, brak*)	**18%** (182)

* Percentages do not total 100% due to multiple choices; sample responses, provided in the original Polish here for the sake of accurate representation, will be discussed in English below. Source: original analysis.

The responses we gained were then divided into three groups: those containing positive, neutral, and negative characteristics (see Table 2 below). Dominant in the description of Britons were positive traits; such were over half (59%) of the all responses. These favorable descriptions referred above all to interpersonal relations, diligence in work, and a devotion to one's own country and its traditions. Traits of a more neutral nature constituted 24% of all responses, and chiefly referred to a typically understood Englishness. In turn, unfavorable

descriptions were 36% of the whole with a lack of industriousness (laziness), coldness in interpersonal relations, and a sense of superiority as leading characterizations. It needs to be underscored that, in comparison to the 2001 CBOS survey, we did not offer a ready list of characteristics from which to choose. Our 2018 respondents were given free rein to articulate their own opinions in their own words and, therefore, the picture we obtained is more variegated, spontaneous, fuller, and, most importantly, more authentic.

Table 2

Traits of the English categorized as positive, neutral, and negative

Positive Traits	Neutral Traits	Negative Traits
1. Positive traits in contact with others	Englishness and characteristics considered typically English	Lazy
2. Even-tempered	Comparable to Poles	Coolness in interpersonal relations
3. Cheerful	Wealthy	Sense of superiority
4. Hard-working	Individualism	Negative character traits
5. Positive character traits	Europeans	Drunks
6. Positive attitude towards one's country and its traditions	Heterogeneous	Negative behavioral traits
7. Positive intellectual traits	Different at home, different abroad	Negative aesthetic appraisal of appearance
8. Tolerant		Negative intellectual traits
9. Positive traits associated with frugality		
10. Positive aesthetic appraisal of appearance		
11. Familial		

Source: original analysis.

Positive traits

Among the auspicious responses, most often named (14%) were traits associated with interpersonal contacts. These included: good-hearted; open; straightforward; kind; friendly; smiling; polite; cultured; tactful; amicable; accommodating; convivial; cordial; helpful; affable; agreeable; peaceful; cheerful; very congenial; sincere; sociable; well-mannered; hospitable; joyful; optimistic; fair at work; shares responsibilities half-and-half; appreciative of others; good; fair and square (very good to work with); honest; and decent people. All of the above pertain to a disposition towards other human beings that constructively affects interpersonal relationships. Grouped here, therefore, were simple character traits (those generally seen as warm) made manifest in behavior that expressed an open, optimistic attitude towards others as well as direct descriptions presenting the English as contributing to a good atmosphere in group or work situations.

Included among the positive aspects conducive to coexistence were also responses depicting even-temperedness as well as other traits or manners of behavior that simplify social life (9%). Included here were: calm; balanced; muted; quiet; orderly; nostalgic; home-lovers; prudent; stable; gallant (following etiquette); subdued; well-organized; serious; diplomatic; collected; well-mannered; preferring peace, harmony, and order like the

Germans; avoiding conflict situations; a well-balanced nation; reasonable; and people living slowly, peacefully, and patiently. Contrasting with these descriptors were responses about the British which accented their carefree attitude towards life, sense of humor, and ability to have fun (7%). Encompassed under this label were such expressions as: funny; possessing a sense of humor; laidback; fun-loving; happy; entertaining; people who like fun and alcohol; not completely conventional; taking everything at ease; cool; interesting sense of humor; generally it is heard that they're people who don't hurry; they live at ease; they are cheerful; a treat-life-lightly attitude; living relaxed; living only with fun in mind, not thinking seriously about life; they have a funny accent; they have an effortless approach to life; they like to have fun, like to party; messy, amusing; and the English are a very jolly, amusing, and romantic nation. All things considered, these are characteristics our respondents liked, valued, and appreciated in interpersonal relations.

In third order among the positives (6%) were assessments of the British work ethic and the type of worker he or she is. According to the respondents who commented on this aspect, traits include: punctual; busy; orderly; persistent; hardworking; conscientious; dependable; decent; meticulous; professional; pedantic; well-organized; know what they want; arduousness; precise; and unhurried. The category in fourth order (and, at 3%, half as great as the preceding one) entails those characteristics linked to a "decisiveness" in British nature. Here we find: resolute; principled; easily making a decision; feisty; bold; honorable; a rather serious approach to life; and straightforward. These quite highly respected characteristics are inscribed in the Polish image of the English as people who are calm, collected, and gentlemanly.

Additionally, mentioned among the positive were adjectives that might not appear in interpersonal interactions, but which are, nonetheless, held dear in Polish culture. In this case, too, it was 3% that described a positive attitude towards one's home country. Britons were linked to the following: patriots; attached to their own country and tradition; love of the nation and culture; tradition is very important to them; attached to their history; particular about their history; and capable of living in accordance with tradition. Thus, the participants in our study expressed their admiration for social qualities cherished and highly esteemed in the Polish cultural model with its accentuation of the national.

Appraised positively, too, were intellectual qualities perceived among the English (3%). Items listed here were: intelligent; modern; educated; clever; commonsensical; rational; interesting people; reflective; wise; subtle, thoughtful; some are very talented; and they have an exuberant imagination. One of the most frequently indicated positive traits (2% of those mentioned) is also a tolerance of or openness towards difference. Descriptors in this classification included: respect the dissimilarities of other people; open; tolerant of other nations; openness towards other races; not meddlesome; open to foreigners; understanding; liberal; open to other nations, sexual orientations or religions; and that the English have a broad worldview. It should be added that some of the traits were indirectly associated with work and budget. Noted by 2% were: thrifty; resourceful; quick to act; proactive; pragmatic; frugal; bustling people; well-organized; and energetic.

Polish opinions about the external looks and appearance of the English are not univocal and only 1% spoke of the British as nice-looking. Affirmative aesthetic evaluations were expressed in the words: handsome; elegant; tidy; and clean. Closing out the positives, it is

worth noting that only a few responses spoke of Britons as familial or caring about their family and home. Perhaps the low number of this kind of perception could be explained by the strong norm of familial solidarity and responsibility still-binding in Polish society.

Neutral Traits

Amidst the descriptions of the imagined Briton there are some characterizations which cannot be distinctly classified in either the positive or negative category of assessment— these we labelled neutral. Such elements appear as an effect of the respondent's own observation while others are transmitted as part of the traditional stereotype of Englishness (as discussed earlier with regards to the 2001a CBOS study).

Nearly every seventh of the responses analyzed (13%) discloses traits which are, to a great extent, part and parcel of the usual, formulaic image of the English in Polish society. Expressions taken into account in this grouping refer most often to the political system (monarchy), a penchant for tradition (tea, driving on the left side) and certain features of temperament (phlegmatic). Falling under this category were: English rules; country with a queen, with traditions; phlegmatic; having time for everything; islanders; the world speaks and communicates in their language; worldly; they have their empire and so are very proud of it; queen-loving; dignified; conservatives; drink tea; have a unique sense of humor; they pride themselves on the queen, living through her events such as the last wedding; proud of the monarchy and queen; royal roots; conservatism; they love their country and queen; drive on the left side; differ in language; gentlemanly; old-fashioned; five o'clock; eloquent; distinguished; following etiquette; closely bonded with their political system (monarchy); atheists, though in general everyone's Protestant; have good manners; love football; athletes; born football fans; a nation of fans; and football lovers. Further classified as a neutral aspect were responses about the individualism of the Briton (2%): individualists; eccentrics; free; liberal; love eccentricity; have an eccentric sense of humor; cherish their privacy; odd; unique sense of humor; and fascinating.

Some 3% of the respondents spoke regarding the personal prosperity of the British and indirectly the level of national prosperity: wealthy; colonial landlords; affluent; well-groomed; have a good job; travelling all over the world; comfortable; demanding; enjoying prosperity; living well; colonizers profiting from the lands they settled; financially independent; extravagant; high-life; money-loving; want to live in splendor; and living on credit. Deserving of special attention are responses which portray the English in comparison to the Poles (4%) and which stem from direct contact, pointing out both similarities and differences. Regarding the former, descriptions include: just like us; so similar to us; rather normal; just like us, but simply a different country in which life is easier; just like us, except that they live better; ordinary and don't differ from us in any way; just like us except fatter, they don't eat well, and constantly have bad weather; have a lot in common with us; similar to us; similar to Poles; close to us; normal, just like Poles; normal like us; kindred spirits; similar culture because the younger people don't differ at all from us; and the English are similar to the Poles in nature. Regarding the latter, Britons are: rather more polite than us Poles; don't have a tendency to complain; calmer than we are; and a bit too morally and politically correct. Additionally, the English were described

as Europeans and, as such, close to the Polish: Europeans; politically correct; and like the majority of Europeans. A trace percentage (1%, 9 responses) indicated that the British can vary: sometimes they're like this, sometimes different.

Negative Traits

Negative elements in the image of the English were relatively numerous albeit fewer than the positive: 36% of all responses collected. There were a few key themes here: a sense of superiority (9%); lazy (9%); cold (9%); bad (4%); drunk (2%); hotheaded and argumentative (2%); and ugly (1%). These descriptors refer both to individual or group behavior and to specific character traits. In the image found in Polish society today (as already illustrated comparatively), the work ethic of this ethnicity is assessed with great variation. Nevertheless, emerging more strongly is a negative image (9% versus 8% positive); every ninth response was clearly and candidly about the laziness of the English.

Among our cohort of respondents, Britons were seen as: slow; generally lazy; deadbeats counting on others to do work for them; laying claims; not very thorough; working reluctantly; unwilling to work; lethargic; careless; sluggish; not eager to work; and living off welfare. Used are a few synonyms for laziness known in the Polish language: deadbeats, sloths, lazybones, etc. A certain portion of the traits assigned to the British are of a highly negative nature, some even morally condemning (4%): evil; badly behaved youth; badly brought up; unfriendly; belligerent; rude; egoists; dishonest; cunning; sly; greedy; brazen; selfish; aggressive; unfair; taking advantage of others; calculating; a boorish nation; vulgar; prejudiced; feigning sincerity; and can't stand them.

A somewhat high degree of the descriptions (9%) points to negatives implying the English are unpleasant in interpersonal contact. Traits of temperament encompassed: cold; caustic; indifferent; do not show emotions; distant; closed; introverted; secretive; self-controlled; taciturn; unsociable; stiff in contacts; stiff and impossible to live with; cool show of affection; distanced from the world; restrained; frigid; not very friendly; distrustful; not very hospitable; generally distant in friendships; artificial; false; unavailable; quite restrained; withdrawn; bitter; dull; without a sense of humor; with not much of a sense of humor; smiling little; sad; surly; gloomy; pessimistic; intrusive; and dull.

Likewise, 9% spoke of an unpleasant and deprecated "English sense of superiority." This unfavorably read characteristic also pertains to interpersonal interactions, specifically to signs of self-exaltation: arrogant; conceited and full of himself; self-righteous; enjoying self-exaltation; self-absorbed; doesn't take others into account; carrying head high; the most important person in the world; haughty; proud; think they are the most important; see themselves as better than others; wise guys; pride themselves on their country; pompous; bigheaded; inflated ego; conceited; bloated; nonchalant; megalomaniacs; have high self-esteem; have aristocratic behavior; cocksure; look down on others; convinced of their superiority; egocentric; see themselves as lords of the world; self-absorbed; unfounded pride; so self-righteous; very proud of their situation in the world; smart alecks; and a nation that enriched itself through colonization and now thinks that it rules the world.

Still other negative character traits and behaviors were found among the English in 2% of the responses: hot-tempered; disruptive; noisy; start fights; madness; promiscuity;

troublemakers; debauchers; rabble-rousers; uncultured; hooligans; loud; and lacking a bit of culture. We situated still another category of unfavorable characteristics here. About 2% of the responses were related to alcohol: drunks; drink too much alcohol; like to drink; beer drinkers; drunkenness; and alcoholics. A smaller group of respondents (1%) underscored disadvantageous aesthetics associated with Britons: unsightly; a bit slapdash; they're islanders, so not good-looking; dowdy women; obese; an obese nation; physically unattractive; sloppy; don't pay attention to aesthetics; dirty; and stuff themselves.

Warmth and Competence: Content Analysis of the Imagined English

At this point we return to our earlier deliberations upon the conceptualization of image content and key dimensions along which one group is described by another. The first axis is associated with auspicious, warm intentions perceived in intergroup relations; the second is associated with perceived talents, skills, and competences. Both of these dimensions are measured on a scale from the positive to the negative, and the combinations yield four types. High evaluations on both axes characterize more positive stereotypes; low evaluations on both axes characterize more negative stereotypes. The findings of the analyses we conducted on our 2018 dataset of responses are illustrated in Table 3. Excluded from the table are the neutral traits (24% altogether) which neither describe warmth nor competence in the described the English.

Table 3

Traits of the imagined English according to warmth and competence (positive and negative)

	Warmth		**Competences**	
	Positive	**Negative**	**Positive**	**Negative**
1.	Positive traits in interpersonal contacts	Coolness in interpersonal contacts	Hardworking	Lazy
2.	Well-balanced	Sense of superiority over others	Positive attitude towards one's country and tradition	Drunks
3.	Cheerful	Bad traits	Wealthy	Negative aesthetic appraisal
4.	Positive character traits	Negative behavioral traits	Positive intellectual traits	Negative intellectual traits
5.	Tolerant		Individualism	
6.			Positive traits linked to finances	
7.			Positive aesthetic appraisal	
8.			Familial	
Total	35%	24%	20%	12%

Source: original analysis.

Predominant in the image of the English are precisely statements describing their warmth and good intentions with respect to others. These comprised 59% of all the

responses gathered, and, among these, dominating was the positive (35%) versus the negative (24%). With respect to skills, knowledge, and competencies perceived as held by this ethnicity, these comprise 32% of the total, including 20% positive versus 12% negative. Therefore, similar to findings of other research studies, our survey also led to an observation that unequivocally positive or negative perception is rare. Significantly more frequent are images of an ambivalent nature in which one dimension is assessed higher while the other is assessed lower.

As we have already noted, an important aspect in the concept of the SCM is an attempt to shed light on the mechanisms by which stereotypes arise when based upon concrete intergroup relations. Hence, we can now ask how the relationship between the Poles and the Britons looks when viewed through the prism of our research. If we take into consideration the warm intentions axis, then (in the mind's eye of the Poles) we can say that a moderate rivalry between the two ethnicities comes to the fore; next taking into consideration the talents and competences axis, a similar, moderately positive image manifests itself. This is therefore neither an envious, nor a paternalistic image. Yet it is clearly not a relationship based on admiration, hence one could call this a "respectful rivalry" image. The image is not a univocal one: it represents the English in categories that are positive, negative as well as neutral. Found within descriptions of the Other (the British) are also comparative descriptions of one's own group (the Poles). Thus, Polish society's image of the English is variegated, living, and rich in reflection; it arises out of various life experiences as well as a broad spectrum of resources for knowledge and thinking.

Sociodemographic Differences in the Ethnic Image of the English

The contact hypothesis frequently accompanies discussions about stereotypes, contact, and mutual relations between ethnic (and other) groups. In the case of the British, however, it does not hold true in Poland. Poles who had general experience with living abroad for economic reasons did not differ significantly in their opinions of the Britons; those opinions were neither better nor worse than in the general population. That part of the contact hypothesis which proposes that personal contact with representatives of a given nationality (or ethnicity, race, etc.) will lead to descriptions in positive categories was not borne out by the statistical evidence. The image drawn by those respondents who had declared a stay abroad for employment purposes (naturally imposing contact with foreigners) did not differ from that drawn by those who had never worked abroad. Another weak spot in this sociological hypothesis are answers to the question as to whether a respondent personally knew a foreigner (regardless of where this contact was made): again, no statistical relationship could be established between traits assigned to the English and personal relationships with foreigners. People who declared such a relationship actually tended to attribute more negative and neutral characteristics to the Briton; concurrently, both those with and without firsthand relations attributed positive characteristics with equal frequency.

Nonetheless, a statistically meaningful correlation was found between another variable and the appearance of positives or negatives in the description of the English: analysis established such a link with respondent gender. Upon recoding the positive, neutral, and negative

traits of the British according to the gender of the respondent, a highly significant correspondence was found with the positive or the highly negative, morally contemptuous. For instance, women expressed extremely negative opinions more rarely than men; men were more likely to notice negatives overall. Correspondingly, females more frequently assigned positive character traits to the Briton such as hardworking, even-tempered, and calm.

Respondent age does not expressly influence the image of the English more positively or negatively, although the youngest did tend to assess the British more positively than those in the older age categories [Pearson Chi-Square Test Value = 6.286; df = 1; significance = 0.05]. A social variable that evidently led to different appraisals was respondent education, although this pertained only to the positive descriptions. Individuals with a secondary and tertiary education varied from those who only completed elementary school: the higher the education level, the more positive characteristics are perceived in the English. More precisely, the percentages of positive descriptors, according to the three levels of education (elementary, secondary, tertiary), were 32%, 41%, and 45% respectively [Pearson Chi-Square Test Value = 7.180; df = 1; significance = 0.05].

Similarly, respondent religious beliefs yielded variations in views of English characteristics. Interestingly, the direction this took defies popular ideas about the effects of intense religious engagement. Among the nonbelievers, over half (58%) described the English in mostly negative shades in comparison with various kinds of believers (i.e., non-practicing, irregularly or regularly practicing) [Pearson Chi-Square Test Value = 10.589; df = 2; significance = 0.01. Still, regarding positive and neutral characteristics of the imagined English, religious belief or lack thereof did not generate a statistical correlation. With respect to those traits identified as neutral, we can conclude that these are more universal descriptors permanently and stably inscribed in the Polish social imagination.

Respondent political affiliations are of little significance in obtaining a variegated, richer image of the Briton. One exception is that persons identifying with a politically conservative, but economically more libertarian movement—*Kukiz'15*—assigned more negative traits to the English with more frequency than advocates of other political parties [Pearson Chi-Square Test Value = 5.672; df = 1; significance = 0.05]. Noteworthy is the absence of a connection between positive, neutral or negative British character traits and the socioeconomic status of the respondents. All in all—and despite the distinctions just documented—the image of the English in Polish eyes appears to be socially constant.

Worth adding here is that our respondents felt that Britons have a fairly positive attitude towards Poles. One half (an even 50%) expressed such an outlook, over a third (35%) was of the opinion that the English attitude is more neutral, while every seventh (15%) respondent spoke of a negative attitude towards the Poles. Overall, however, answers to this question remain weakly differentiated in Polish society—only a work experience abroad yielded a statistically valid correlation. In general, those respondents with at least an episodic job experience abroad more rarely felt that the British have a negative attitude towards Poles than respondents without such experience (respectively 10% to 17%) [Pearson Chi-Square Test Value = 7.033; df = 1; significance = 0.01].

Answers to other items on our questionnaire suggest that the British belong to the circle of nations which Poles perceive as closer in social distance. This narrow gap of social distance which Poles perceive with reference to the English—supported by the 2001

research study (CBOS 2001a: 14) as well as our earlier editions of *Poles and Others* from 1988 (Nowicka 1990) and 1998 (Nowicka, Łodziński 2001)—is yet another fixed feature in this Polish interethnic image. This was already evident in the high position the British occupied in surveys done in the 1970s and 1980s about Polish attitudes towards other nations (Jasińska-Kania 1989: 152–153). Frequent underlining of similarities between groups is (in psychological studies) seen as a sign of a smaller social distance vis-à-vis an Other (Baran, Boski 2016). According to this understanding, the more a group is seen as similar to ours, the smaller the social and psychological distance.

Summarizing, the ethnic image of the English arising out of the responses gained through our 2018 survey is one no longer completely anchored in some historically inscribed, unempirical depiction of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom. The imagining of the Poles is now more rooted in information drawn from various resources—including the highly diverse experiences of personal, social contact. These contacts are face-to-face on the territory of the United Kingdom; they are associated with employment, university studies, family visits, and (albeit less often) deeper contact with travelers from the British Isles to Poland. Those Britons in Poland are not only members of now-infamous weekend stag parties, but are also people who live and work in Poland for longer periods (e.g., English language instructors, employees of international corporations, etc.).

Intriguingly enough, among the responses on the subject of the inhabitants of Great Britain, no references are made of physical distinctions (such as race) in British society. As mentioned earlier herein, we see this as evidence of a popular reading of the descriptor "the English" to represent a white, autochthonous inhabitant of the British Isles. Across all three editions of our research, we have had more respondents who have never been in the UK, and only a very small minority that has worked in and returned from the UK. In our 2018 research sample, just under a fifth of those participating in our survey (19.9%) declared having worked abroad. Our findings therefore show little social distance, but no corroboration of the contact hypothesis: direct contact did not manifestly and positively influence the elements composing the ethnic image of the English envisioned by Poles.

Conclusions

If we are to presume that "stereotypes—like other cultural patterns—are accepted in the process of socialization" (Bokszański 2001: 21), then, indubitably, this imagined Englishness cannot be simply dubbed a stereotype. As a result of the June 2018 edition of our longitudinal study, *Poles and Others—30 years on*, we see a portrait that is rich in content, varied in shape, and illustrative of widespread experiences as well as knowledge derived from contact with the English. That contact is sometimes direct and takes place in the UK; sometimes it is contact intermediated by mass or social media transmissions.

In all certainty, only direct and intensely personal contact can change attitudes towards another group. Nevertheless, this type of contact does not predetermine the direction that change will take—it will only enrich and concretize the image. The contact hypothesis assertion that any and all contacts decrease distance is not wholly accurate. In the case of Poland, this was already evident in the findings of previous studies by other scholars

(Grzymała-Moszczyńska, Nowicka 1998; Gawlewicz 2016). Contact in and of itself is insufficient: contact must be characterized, on the one hand, by a level of longevity, and, on the other hand, must include a certain element of emotionality.

Just as simply consorting with a diverse society does not translate into changed perceptions of others by immigrants so, too, potential shifts in attitudes towards diversity itself can lead in various directions. For example, pupils in an ethnically mixed school in Poland—when compared to pupils in similar, but homogenous schools—did demonstrate palpably more varied and more often negative attitudes towards their ethnically different classmates (Grzymała-Moszczyńska, Nowicka 1998). Likewise, as the case at hand indicates, one cannot assume that close, even long-term contact will influence the shaping of opinions and influence them positively. Neither can one assume that contact will result in a specific shift on either or both of the warmth and competence axes. Our analyses of the variations in the social image painted by Poles does, however, point to one essential factor: a "cognitive readiness." A reflexivity combined with knowledge resources, broader horizons, and an interest in the wider world are crucial—and these are characteristics built, above all, by education.

The empirical material collected suggests that, on the one hand, evaluation of the perceived behavior of Britons stems from diverse forms of contact and knowledge obtained from various sources. On the other hand, that evaluation also stems from the axiological formation of Polish society with an accent on its core values: attitudes connected with work (industriousness), one's own country (patriotism), and the stance taken towards the Other (amiability). These are core components of the Polish value system which, in turn, comprises the keystone in description and assessment of other ethnic and national groups. Hence the Briton is seen in both positive and negative categories.

The ethnic image of the English which arises from the research done in Polish society can be described as depicting a "rivalry between partners." That imagery indicates that key shifts have occurred in how Poles think of themselves and the position of their country in Europe and the wider world. This is no longer a simple, binary perception of the world in categories of a refined, well-developed, and wealthier West (of which Great Britain was an example) versus an unrefined, undeveloped, and poor post-socialist East (of which Poland was an example). Presently, the composition of the portrait of the English extends beyond that historically rooted framework. Significant is that the Brexit process has basically contributed nothing to the way Poles see Britons (Jancewicz, Kloc-Nowak, Pszczółkowska 2020; Trąbka, Pustulka 2020). Overall, it is rather the result of the direct experiences of Polish immigrants in the UK, but—as the findings of our inquiry substantiate—it is also the effect of broader changes in the consciousness of Polish society and how it sees itself and others. All in all, this is connected with the rising status of Poland—a state which broke away from political and economic dependency to build the firm foundations for an open society with a strong market (see Gawlewicz 2020: 528).

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