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***Young Poles' Perceptions of Jews,
Using as an Example, Young Częstochowa High School Graduates***

Forward

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, Jews comprised a very important and significant minority in Poland¹. Today, they are almost absent. For hundreds of years, Jews and Poles lived side by side. Over this time of living side by side as neighbours, both peoples had many opportunities to get to know and understand each other - however not fully or completely. There were many factors which affected the shaping of their mutual opinions of each other, among them Jews being in a continuing cultural ghetto and some circles of the Polish community staying within "their own" parish circles. This process became more expressive following Poland's loss of statehood and with the social transformations taking place in the 19th century triggered by industrialisation and the change from a feudal economy to a new form of "capitalist" one. The market and market competition became an area for conflicts as well as, at times, an enforced need for cooperation between traders and craftsmen from the Polish and Jewish communities. Both individual and, often, the generalised collective experience of Poles regarding Jews, and of Jews regarding Poles, was shaped by a centuries-long build-up of mutual mistrust and grudges, all contributing to stereotyping.

¹The first census from 1921 showed 2,831,168 Jews living in Poland, representing 10.5% of the total population. The 1931 census, conducted for the first time, throughout the whole country, showed 3,113,933 Jews living in Poland being 9.8% of the total population (Mały Rocznik Statystyczny, 1938). It is worth stressing that, in the inter-War period, the natural growth of the Jewish population diminished. 76.4% of them lived in the cities. Barely 4% of Polish Żydów supported themselves through agriculture, the majority of them from the Eastern Kresy. A few of them owned land estates. Around 33% of Jews were traders, the majority in retail and house-to-house selling. A few were wholesalers. About 33% of Jews were craftsmen. Jews comprised 55% of Poland's tailors, 45% of Poland's shoemakers and 51% of those involved in food trades. Jews most often worked in small craft and production businesses. Almost half of them worked independently, not employing others. A relatively large number were professionals. At the beginning of 1939, following negotiations with the Germans, agreed to take in Polish Jews who had been deported from the Third Reich.

In 1939, 3.5 million Jews lived in Poland, 10% of the total population, with 380,000 living in Warsaw. Jews comprised 31% of Warsaw's inhabitants, 32% of Łódź's and 43 Białystok's. In small towns (*shtetls*), Jews often comprised more than 50% of the residents. At that time, it was the largest centre of Jewry in Europe and only second to the USA in the world in size. After New York, Warsaw was the largest Jewish city in the World. The wealth of Polish Jews was estimated at 10 billion złoty, comprising 52% of businesses, 42% of craftsmen, and contributing 28% overall to the total Polish state budget. 33.5% of doctors and 53% of lawyers were Jewish. Of Poland's 103 theatres, 15 were Jewish. Jews published 160 newspapers and magazines, with a daily output of 790,000 copies. (Source: J.Tomaszewski, *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce w latach 1918-1939*, Warszawa 1985, pp.96-120.)

In the public sphere of today's Poland, Jews as a minority in principle do not exist², despite their existence on the collective imagination of Poles. Stigmatisation is noticeable not only in personal disputes or verbal squabbles, but also noticeable during stormy political campaigns. It functions as a specific type of tautology (the Jew as an enemy, but also the enemy as a Jew) which can appear when the situation presents itself as being receptive. From the other side, amongst many Jews there was a stereotype, formed over centuries, that "Poles sucked antisemitism from their mother's milk". That anti-Polish stereotype has withstood despite the proven positive attitudes of Poles in times that were the most difficult for the Jewish people – that of providing shelter, long ago, on Polish land during times when pogroms were rampant in Western Europe and during the Inquisition. The Hebrew word *Polin*, denoting the name of Poland, was read as "rest here" in an age of persecution, where Jews could cultivate their customs and develop their own culture. In the 19th century, following pogroms in Russia and in the Ukraine, they also found refuge and peace on Polish land. In the 20th century, it was Germans, not Poles, who imposed the monstrosities of the Holocaust upon Jews. Of the *Righteous Amongst the Nations of the World*, the majority are Poles³. The hostility towards Jews is a

²http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/fulltext_search_PLK_HTML.htm

http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/fulltext_search_PLK_HTML.htm /stan na 12.09.12/ ; In the national census of population and inhabitants taken in 2002, there were 1,055 (0.003%) people with Polish citizenship who declared themselves to be Jewish; only 37 people stated that their language in the home was Yiddish, of them 17 were Polish citizens and 20 were non-Polish, 225 stated that their language in the home was Hebrew, of them 131 stated they were Polish citizens, and 94 non-Polish.

http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_13882_PLK_HTML.htm Belonging to a national-ethnic group.

– the results of the 2011 census, GŁÓWNY URZĄD STATYSTYCZNY, of the Department of Demographic and Market Research *From a press conference held on 29/01/2013, 8,000 people declared a Jewish national/ethnic identity, of whom around 5,000 linked their Jewishness with their Polishness, as written in material provided by the Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego For the first time in the history of Polish census taking, in the 2011 census, Poles were permitted to indicate their national/ethnic identity. A flexible for of question regarding nationality/ethnicity, enabling one to declare belonging to one or two ethnic categories by replying to a question by making a choice from an extensive list of ethnicities, or by easily declaring their nationality/ethnicity in a free-form text format, resulted on many (over 200) diverse types of identification. It was not only a declaration of belonging to a national or ethnic group, but also to an ethno-regional, regional and even local grouping.*

³http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/languages/polish/righteous/about_program.asp;

<http://www.sprawiedliwi.org/>;

http://www.zyciezazycie.pl/porta/zyz/270/1903/Polscy_Sprawiedliwi_wsrod_Narodow_Swiata_odznaczeni_przez_Yad_Vashem.html; <http://www.ksiega-sprawiedliwych.pl/ksiega.htm>

In 1953, the Yad Vashem Institute of Holocaust Martyrdom and Heroism was established in Jerusalem which, ten years later created the *Righteous Among the Nations* medal. It is awarded to non-Jews who, during World War II, saved Jews from the Holocaust, without any expectation of money and understanding that, in doing so, their lives and the lives of their families came under real threat. Only in Poland (from 15th October 1941) did it mean the death penalty. Around 2,500 rescuers perished. The medal and certificate has been presented to 23'788 people from 45 countries (as at 01/01/2011). The largest group – 6,350 people – are Polish. Thanks to them, at least 30,000 Jews were saved. From research and from direct testimonies of those rescued, in order to help someone survive, there needed to be several or even a dozen people involved in the rescue.

Unfortunately, not all have been recognised.

In 2004, the Yad Vashem Institute published the two-volume *Encyclopaedia of the Righteous Amongst the Nations. Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust. Poland*, which presents profiles of all Poles honoured with the title to date.

phenomenon which, unfortunately, appeared and is still found in different countries. Yet in some circles of the Jewish community, Poland is still seen as an antisemitic country. Poles, in the main, are indignant of such perceptions. Is this right?

Research Assumptions

Within the context of contemporary social phenomena associated with globalisation and cross-cultural dialogue, a huge interest in Jewish culture is noticeable, on the one hand, through inter-ethnic contacts between young people. Whereas, on the other hand, there are signs of xenophobia, intolerance and also antisemitism present at football stadiums, manifesting in the damaging of Jewish cemeteries as well as “ordinary” anti-Jewish slogans on walls. It appears, therefore, essential to examine the attitudes towards Jews of the generation which is just now growing up.

This paper attempts to define the image of the Jew in the eyes of young Częstochowa high school graduates (2012/2013 school year). The 2012/2013 generation of young secondary school graduates interested the author for a few reasons. Firstly and obviously, this group is the youngest group of adult Poles which in the coming years will shape the face of our country. Secondly, to the best of the author’s knowledge, over the course of their studies in junior and secondary high school, almost half of these young people participated in classes, conducted at their school, devoted to minorities. The participation of these young people in events and classes associated with these issues was repeated, on average, twice. Taking into account all types of classes or events, these young people, over their last five or six years of education, took part in several types of activities. The author recognised that the effectiveness of these activities would be an interesting subject for evaluation.

The author also recognised that the 2012/2013 high school year could be representative of a few generations of high school graduates – those who matriculated a few years previous to them, as well as those who will matriculate a few years following them.

The place where the research was undertaken, namely Częstochowa, was not chosen by chance. This special city of Poland is the country’s spiritual capital. It grew and exists in the shadow of Jasna Góra which houses, in a monastery of the Paulist fathers, the greatest icon of the Polish nation - the Częstochowa Black Madonna - the symbol of Polish Catholicism. At the same time, it is the site of an active Jewish community – not just a local Jewish community (who number just a handful), but an active *World Society of Częstochowa Jews and Their Descendants*, as well as a group of researchers and communal activists (Poles), for whom the Jewish issue, particularly that linked with Częstochowa, is particularly important. The results of these activities have been, among others things, reunions of Częstochowa Jews, cultural exchanges, special educational activities, special academics conferences devoted to the Częstochowa Jewish community and the publication of books relating to this topic.

Stereotypes, National Stereotypes, National Identity

The question of how you perceive a Jew is, in principle, an issue of stereotypes, national stereotypes. Etymologically, the word "stereotype" originates from the Greek words *stereos*, meaning set, hard, massive and *typos* meaning a reflection, imprint. The notion of a stereotype was used, in the 18th century, by the French printer P.F. Didot to describe fixed dies - for repetitive printing of the same text (instead of individual fonts). Within printing, this notion functioned even in the naming of print works.⁴ The shortest use of the term "stereotype" indicates "... a brief, simplified and colourful image evaluation of a group of people (e.g. ethnic, professional, racial, social class), which is present within the consciousness of members of other groups."⁵ The expression "simplified" does not, however, have to mean that the stereotype always has a negative connotation. In fact, stereotypes can praise someone, be simply idolatrous, as well as being hurtful.

W. Lippmann entered this notion into the social sciences, explaining it as "pictures in our heads made by man himself or given to him". By that, he did not mean photographic images (in the literal sense), but images in our minds being the effects of ideas. According to him, stereotypes are formations of consciousness which permit a person set in order reality prior to appropriate experience (*we are told about the world before we see it*).⁶

Stereotypes, particularly national stereotypes, are often strongly rooted in peoples' consciousness, rooted sufficiently enough so that people often do not realise that opinions stated by them are typical of stereotyped, racist, as well as antisemitic thinking. The earliest and probably the best written work on antisemites is by H.Graetz⁷: "Another virulent enemy of the Jews emerged over the past decades not under the sign of the cross, but in the name of excessive racial pride. Certain phraseology cast a firebrand proposition that the alleged descendants of Shem - Jews, Arabs and other nations related to them, linguistically nations called 'Semites' - in terms of intellectual power, creative imagination and the fruits of their activity, were below Aryans, the Indo-European nations. Admittedly, Semites, or more specifically the children of Israel, gave God to the civilized world, a higher level of morality and a constant reawakening to the Bible. But the ringleaders of this racial discord value these at a much lower level than the achievements of Aryans.

⁴ For example "Sterotyp" Print Works in Warsaw

⁵Source: *Nowa encyklopedia powszechna PWN*, tom 6, Warszawa 1997, s. 47. An overview of the definition of the notion of stereotype - see. J. Błuszkowski, *Stereotypy narodowe w świadomości Polaków: Studium socjologiczno-politologiczne*, Warsaw 2003, pp. 19-54.

⁶See. W.Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, New York 1922

⁷Heinrich Graetz (1817-1891), a Jew, a German history professor, among other things one of the first authors of the history of the Jews from biblical to contemporary times (11 volumes): *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*, translated into many European languages. An abridged version has appeared in Poland.

The enemies of the Jews absorbed this fallacy – appointing themselves as antisemites – the motive for kicking Jews around and of tolerating them only as guests in a minor role, because the earth and her riches belong rightfully to the Aryans. This artificially fuelled antisemitic racial hatred which was born in France, bred in Germany and implanted everywhere, triggered the medieval accusation that Jews murdered Christians and brought about many sad events.”⁸

The term “stereotype” today has an interdisciplinary circulation. Stereotypes are the subject of research in psychology, history, linguistics, as well as, in political science.

From the moment Lippmann’s book *Public Opinion* was published, namely from 1922, in which he used the term “stereotype” (but did not provide a complete, explicit definition of this notion), many definitions and interpretations of the term “stereotype” arose. In relation to that, as the aim of this paper is not to develop discussion on the subject of the definition of “stereotype”, epitomizing the history of defining the stereotype or descriptions introducing them, the author has accepted the following conclusions:

1. The notion of stereotype, in a classification sense, is ambiguous.
2. Stereotypes constitute specific and difficult to define or research forms of consciousness, combining into a whole, a perceptual cognitive and psychological structure, combining within themselves, simultaneously, descriptive and evaluative contents.⁹
3. Stereotypes are not notions but are more or less a general reflection of social phenomena. Those reflections are always evaluative. Stereotypes do not arise from the direct experience of individuals, but from tradition, by transmission or through an intermediary.

Therefore, the stereotype is a form of consciousness: a) entirely or partly at variance with facts, b) the expression of contents coming from sources, totally or to some extent, independent of experience, c) containing evaluations of an emotional and judgemental nature, d) are connected with words which impulsively change adopted beliefs, e) have a character of permanence¹⁰.

We should bear in mind that the stereotype is a result of a thought process which is superficial, hasty and based, as a rule, on an incorrect generalisation. Stereotypes have, above all, an evaluative character, evoking strong emotions (positive or negative) in a very narrow cognitive sense. The basis for the notion is its definition. The stereotype is strengthened or instilled without a definition replacing evaluation. A “stereotype” is dogmatic, prone to judgement without an apparent basis, a type of populist thought, often the result of so-called *wishful thinking*, is inelastic and immune to change¹¹. Scotsmen are skinflints, Arabs are dirty and Englishmen are phlegmatic - such generalised mental shortcuts facilitate the evaluation of others. We do not have to check it or verify it. We do not know why we accept it, except for the fact that it somehow makes our day-to-day functioning easier, not to mention our perception of the world – especially about one which we do not know or about

⁸ H.Graetz, *Historia Żydów*, (przekł. ST Szenhak) “Judaica” Publishing House, Warsaw 1929,t, VII, p.694

⁹ J.Błuszkowski, *Stereotypy w świadomości Polaków, studium socjologiczno-politologiczne (Stereotypes in the Consciousness of Poles – a Socio-Political Study)*, Warsaw 2003, p.20

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 49

¹¹ See A.Schaff, *Stereotypy a działania ludzkie (Stereotypes and Human Activity)*, Warsaw 1981.

which we know little. "The driving force behind the coming into existence and functioning of stereotypes is [...] necessary economics of effort and perceived effects resulting from a person's reduced cognitive possibilities. There exists [...] a second reason for the creation and use of stereotypes. Its source is a cognitive overloading causing a need to reduce the excess of information regarding the surrounding world, especially its complexities and volatility".¹² We acquire stereotypes through the process of the socialisation. They are passed on by society during childhood through, above all, family and by the surrounding environment. We are socialised by school, by friends, our work environment, the media etc. Stereotypes are an important integrating element of society. They are particular types of judgments - negative or positive, based on non-verified beliefs. For the individual, they are passed on as an expression of public opinion regardless of that individual's personal experience.

Stereotypes allow individuals to identify themselves with a set of shared values, as well as perceiving oneself as being different from those others who have been excluded from his/her own community. So they constitute an important element of integration into society. A stereotyped perception of reality, irrespective of to what degree it is accepted by the community and strengthened linguistically, is a subjective image. Knowledge of the realistic (objective) world is "filtered" through social consciousness, transformed into acceptability by a given society, into a system of norms and values. Together with needs, they generate determined attitudes, behaviours and actions. Due to that, stereotypes contribute to a stabilisation of the image of the world, as well as to the programming of a set of behaviours of an individual within a social group. In the period of globalisation and the computer society, cross-cultural dialogue has greater possibilities of developing - at least technologically.

So why have new barriers come into existence? On the one hand, in the Third Republic of Poland, we can see a huge interest in Jewish culture and an unparalleled growth, within contemporary Polish history, of young people actively pursuing international contacts. On the other hand, however, we see signs of xenophobia and intolerance. Signs of antisemitism are visible at football stadiums, are manifested in damaging Jewish cemeteries or through "simple" anti-Jewish graffiti on walls. The question of how a Jew is perceived is, in principle, a question of stereotype, national stereotype.

Stereotypes, particularly national stereotypes, are often very strongly rooted in people's consciousness, so much so that people using them do not realise that the opinions which they express are typical expressions of stereotypical, antisemitic, as well as racist thought.

¹² J. Błuszkowski, *Przemiany stereotypów narodowych w procesie transformacji systemowej w Polsce* (*Transformations of National Stereotypes in the Process of a Systemic Transformation in Poland*), [in] *Studia politologiczne, Społeczne uwarunkowania procesu transformacji systemowej w Polsce* (*Political Science Studies, Social Conditioning of the Systemic Transformation Process in Poland*), Warsaw 2007, vol.11 p.94

It is commonly accepted that stereotypes are an important inter-group mechanism of communication. One can see it particularly in the example of national stereotypes in the shaping of international political relationships.¹³

The national stereotype is a special stereotype. One could say that a special national compass operates in our heads which facilitates our movement in the world, our attitudes to national groups and to ourselves. The manner in which members of various ethnic groups are perceived is connected with history, a perception of one's own group (auto-stereotype) and with actual relations and conflicts amongst these groups. However it is also determined through an overall cultural "us and them" opposition.

Socio-biology stresses the *primaeval*, biological basis for ethnic bonds and for the defence of a national, collective identity. It manifests itself in the identification of individuals with their own group and with a feeling the separateness and distance from groups of others. In national societies, separateness has a form of historical complexity, of ethnic-cultural properties, which set a symbolic border between ourselves and others. Distinguishing ourselves from others, through a form of auto-stereotypes and hetero-stereotypes of other nationalities, performs an instrumental function in the realisation of national aspirations and interests.¹⁴

Since the aspirations, interests and aims of one national community often stand in conflict with the aspirations, interests and aims of some other national community, it often leads to conflict between these communities. Of course, at this point, it is necessary to be aware that, in the perception of the national-nationalist arena, not all nations are equally important. Certainly with regard to important nations, for instance where they are neighbouring, there is direct rivalry.

According to the theory of actual group conflict, national stereotypes are instruments of rivalries between nations in their desire to achieve goods. They can also come into existence through cultural and religious differences. A cause for conflict could also be a feeling of injustice experienced by one nation, which can give birth to a prejudice and hostility towards the other.¹⁵

Conflicts encourage the coming into existence of stereotypes. Most often, although not exclusively, they are negative stereotypes (sometimes the stereotypes can be positive), and using them can prolong conflicts. All stereotypes have both an emotional and judgmental nature of oneself and of others. In the case of the auto-stereotype, the nature is usually positive, extolling one's own community. In the case of the hetero-stereotype, the evaluation of strangers is negative.

In an appropriate environment (the elements of time and space play a decisive role here, changing the setting), it is sufficient to call someone a Jew, an Armenian, a Greek, a Turk or a Pole, in order to, as empirical research shows, trigger the relevant phobias or, in certain circumstances, positive emotions,

¹³ J. Błuszkowski, *Przemiany stereotypów narodowych w procesie transformacji systemowej w Polsce (Transformations of National Stereotypes in the Process of a Systemic Transformation in Poland)*, [in:] *Studia politologiczne, Społeczne uwarunkowania procesu transformacji systemowej w Polsce (Political Science Studies, Social Conditioning of the Systemic Transformation Process in Poland)*, Warsaw 2007, vol.11 p.95

¹⁴ J. Błuszkowski, *Przemiany stereotypów narodowych w procesie transformacji systemowej w Polsce*, [w:] *Studia politologiczne, Społeczne uwarunkowania procesu transformacji systemowej w Polsce*, Warsaw 2007, vol.11 p.95

¹⁵ J. Błuszkowski, *Przemiany stereotypów narodowych w procesie transformacji systemowej w Polsce*, [w:] *Studia politologiczne, Społeczne uwarunkowania procesu transformacji systemowej w Polsce*, Warsaw 2007, vol.11 s.95

even if the person making the judgement has never encountered a member of the group which he/she is judging.¹⁶

These emotions can be either positive or negative which, it seems, are reflections of certain aspirations and actions of the entire national/nationalist community. It is precisely a specificity of national stereotypes. That specificity is a deciding factor as to whether they are political stereotypes. Referring to Schaff, Błuszkowski aptly notices that their political character results from the fact that "[...] it relates to national communities having their own interests and global political-state organizations. From this, titles also perform significant political functions, universally appearing in the language of politics, as well as constituting an essential instrument within political debate."¹⁷ It is worth remembering that A.Schaff recommended to all those who are politically active, and especially to those who speak publicly and wish to gain popularity, that they study stereotypes and learn how to use them.

It appears that, regarding national stereotypes, with particular reference to auto-stereotypes, we are left with the notion of national identity, namely with a set of national characteristics thanks to which they differ one from another and, in their own beliefs, distinguish themselves from others. In the formation of that identity, stereotypes are simply an indispensable element. One could say, straight out, that the auto-stereotype is the essence of national identity.

National Identities are social constructs which permeate the life of a nation. Therefore, they depend on national stereotypes referring to their own nation as well as to other nations, and especially to their neighbours. From this point of view, (...) national stereotypes have a functional character, helping to express and to determine the basic characteristics of a nation which, as products of the life of that society, are not able to be verified by facts. (...) for if the character of national identities is different, such as a blend of diverse, basic ingredients, the stereotypes of others, especially, will be different. They can therefore assume various forms, from harmless to very unpleasant or dangerous (e.g. racist-nationalist stereotypes)¹⁸

and/or antisemitic. The aim of sociological and politological research of national stereotypes is to answer the question of how nations perceive and judge each other.

Stereotypes come into existence uncontrollably and have a long-lasting character. They constitute a rigid form of social consciousness. For these reasons, changes in stereotypes happen slowly. How slowly? Will two generations be enough to change the stereotype of Jews in Poland? Has an actual lack of real Jews in Poland's public arena changed Poles' attitudes towards them? Along with Jews' disappearance from Poland, did antisemitism also disappear? Did the economic-political changes which occurred in Poland and in central Europe after 1989 change our attitudes to other nations, among them the Jews? Despite their scant presence on Polish soil and not being representative of Poland's neighbours, Jews still belong to a group of people known and important to Poland and to

¹⁶ A.Schaff, *Stereotypy a działanie ludzkie (Stereotypes and Human Activity)*, Warsaw 1981, pp.38-39

¹⁷ Refer J .Błuszkowski, *Przemiany stereotypów narodowych w procesie transformacji systemowej w Polsce*, [w:] *Studia politologiczne, Społeczne uwarunkowania procesu transformacji systemowej w Polsce*, Warsaw 2007, vol.11 p.96, A.Schaff, *Stereotypy a działanie ludzkie*, Warsaw 1981, pp.132-141

¹⁸ Citation: J. Berting, C. Villain-Gandossi, *Rola i znaczenie stereotypów narodowych w stosunkach międzynarodowych: podejście interdyscyplinarne* [in]: T. Walas (red.), *Narody i stereotypy*, Kraków 1995, p.19.

Poles.¹⁹ Are they also important to the youngest generation of adult Poles? What stereotype of the Jew exists within this group of society? Is it positive or negative and maybe even neutral? "Modernity," as Z. Bauman notices, "has already inherited a notion of the Jew which is detached from Jewish men and women inhabiting cities and villages."²⁰ Is this the case with the youngest adult Poles connected to Częstochowa? This paper answers to these questions in order to actually explore the issues associated with the stereotype of the Jew in the consciousness of the young people of contemporary Częstochowa and to actually answer questions which appear essential to making a few remarks of a general nature in order to evaluate the examined phenomenon in an appropriate context.

Stereotyping Poles and Jews

In the history of every nation, understanding the concept of "other" occupies an important place, in terms of the enemy, the opponent or the "misfit". In Poland, "other" was most often seen as a German being the enemy, or the Jew. The Germans were Poland's neighbours. They spoke an incomprehensible language and constantly invaded Polish soil. From the beginnings of a functioning Polish state, Poles have had to defend themselves against pressure from the Germans. A mutual military-political dislike and rivalry has lasted for hundreds of years. So, an attitude to the Germans as the enemy is, at least in one way, historically justified.

Likewise, Jews and Poles lived side-by-side for hundreds of years. The first mention of Jews in Poland dates back a thousand years. However, from the 13th century, it was not the presence of individual Jews that was the natural reality in Poland, it was the presence of an entire Jewish community. These communities did not wage wars against each other. On the contrary, their coexistence was to their mutual benefit. For example, in 16th century Poland, nothing of importance could happen without the Jews²¹. Jews, having good conditions for the development of their community on Polish soil, were certainly strangers, linguistically, religiously and culturally. They differed in external appearance and lifestyle. At the same time, it was a hermetically sealed community, demonstrating little willingness to assimilate. It is little wonder that, amongst the Polish population, unchecked pieces of information and superficial evaluations circulated. All this was excellent fuel for a stereotype to be established. Along with the economic and political situation of the country, the stereotype of the "Jew" changed in the same manner as did other stereotypes operating within Poland. Traditionally, however, the Jew was seen as anti-Catholic and, therefore, anti-Polish. Even though the almost direct functioning of the Polish and Jewish communities should, it would seem, have engendered mutual recognition and respect, the view by Poles of Jews and by Jews of Poles, over many centuries, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries, was built on mutual mistrust, grudges and, of course, on stereotypes.

In more contemporary times, this mutual perception especially influenced the first half of the 20th century. During this period, Poland regained its independence and every "alien" could present a

¹⁹J. Błuszkowski, *Stereotypy narodowe w świadomości Polaków. Studium socjologiczno-politologiczne*, Warsaw 2003 ,pp.103-107

²⁰ Z.Bauman, *Nowoczesność i Zagłada (Modernity and the Holocaust)*, przeł.F.Jeszuński, Warsaw 1992, p.111

²¹P.Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, London 1987, pub. Pol., Kraków 2000, pp. 252-253

threat to this independence. The country had only just organised its statehood, had fought a war over its borders, while simultaneously being economically underdeveloped and with immense financial problems. This situation provoked a search for simple explanations for failure, a search for those who were guilty for creating problems in the everyday lives of citizens as well as for the problems associated with the reconstruction of Polish statehood. Within the consciousness of society, it was the “others” who were guilty. There was a certain respect for ethnic minorities who had their own state. But the Jews had been deprived of any form of their own statehood.

According to the census, the Jewish community comprised around 10% of the Polish Second Republic’s population. With respect to the rest of the population, they differed in appearance, customs, religion and language.²² The Jewish community was very active economically. Successes in business evoked jealousy, particularly from those who were having a hard time or who were not successful in a competitive marketplace, e.g with Jewish craftsmen, tradesmen or industrialists. Anti-Jewish attitudes were born against a background of economic difficulties, of disappointed aspirations and the difficult reality of a reborn Poland. Supported and whipped up by some Polish political groupings, they became articulated through different manifestations of antisemitism. The antisemitism of the 1930’s not only touched Jewish communities living in big cities and small towns, it was, in a way, sanctioned by the authorities through, for instance, the co-called *bench ghetto*.²³ Jews, with the general participation of a part of the Catholic clergy, also became the brunt of aggressive propaganda from a nationalist right wing which was growing in strength.²⁴ According to

²²Officially, Poland was a country which guaranteed Jews, by law, equality with regard to freedom of religion, education and the development of Jewish culture and local government. Jews benefited from these laws. For example, in 1924, young Jews comprised 26% of all students and 23% of all high school students in Poland. In 1930, Rabbi Meir Shapiro opened the famous Talmud school *Yesziwę Mędrców Lublina (Jeshivat Chachmei - Hakhmei)* in Lublin. This seven-storey building contained 120 classrooms. Its library held 40,000 books. Jews established their own political parties and labour unions. They were members of the Sejm and the Senate. However, at the same time, they were exposed to various kinds of aggressive acts.

²³ It was a form of discrimination against ethnic minority students consisting of separate seating, apart from other students, in lecture halls of universities. It was ordered by the university authorities, who also introduced the *numerus clausus* principle (a limitation on the number of university students for purely political or practical reasons, implemented in the inter-War period and following World War II. It was implemented in Poland, Russia, the United States Germany, Hungary and Rumania.) or the *numerus nullus* (literally, a *zero number* – a ban on any Jews students introduced at certain Polish universities and in several other central European countries in the 1930’s. The *numerus nullus* was a broader form of the *numerus clausus* practice.). It was driven through the Sejm by groups of Polish nationalists. The first bench ghetto was introduced in 1935 at the Lwów Polytechnic. By 1937, the majority of tertiary education institutions had introduced it with the agreement of the Ministry of Religion and Public Education. They began denoting indices of Jewish students. Protesting against the practice, Jewish students, supported by a few Poles, refused to sit on these benches but, instead, stood during lectures. They were supported by a few professors, among them being the philosopher, T. Kotarbiński (1886–1981).

²⁴ In May 1934, as the result of a crisis in the *National Democrat* camp, the *Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny (ONR)* political organisation was established. Its program took under consideration to mood of young people, utilised public demagoguery and radical phraseology. It advocated class solidarity, antisemitism, the nationalising of foreign and Jewish capital, as well as essential public utilities, along the lines of a fascist model of private property. The *ONR* was popular mainly amongst a section of young students and amongst the petit bourgeois. Among other things, it organised economic boycotts of Jews and assaults of Jewish workplaces. Due to its radical activities, it was dissolved by the authorities in July 1934, but continued to be active illegally. When Józef Piłsudski died in 1935, the *Sanacja* was forced to come to an understanding with the *National Democrats* and with other extreme right wing parties. Many of them were extremely anti-Jewish. An antisemitic ideology was the common factor to this political agreement. The National Democrats ever faster untwisted the spiral of anti-Jewish feelings which found their expression in economic boycotts. The Roman Catholic Church in Poland

the ideology of this nationalist right-wing grouping, Jews constituted a mortal threat to the Catholic nation, to its political, cultural and economic interests. Jews were presented as agents of Bolshevism and Freemasonry. This revived propaganda, supported by some circles of the Roman Catholic Church, strengthened the negative stereotype of the Jew, the bad economic situation, the dislike for "others" and supported the antisemitic mood of Polish society, whereas, on the other side, amongst Jews, the image of the Polish antisemite became widespread.

The experience of the Holocaust had little influence on changing those mutual stereotypes. Admittedly, Poles demonstrated heroism in exposing their own lives in saving the lives of Jews, but there was no lack of those who, for money, managed to condemn entire Jewish families to certain death by denouncing them during the Nazi occupation of Poland. After the War, it was equally easy to arouse antisemitic moods amongst the Polish population as it was prior to the War. Even though the number of Jews had drastically diminished, their mutual prejudice was revived with renewed strength. It engendered pogroms.²⁵ Using the antisemitic mood for political purposes, it ended up in the unprecedented forcing of Jews to leave Poland.

Against this background of events throughout Poland, what were Polish-Jewish and Jewish-Polish relations like in Częstochowa, the spiritual capital city of Poland? A Jewish community council in Częstochowa was mentioned as far back as the 18th century. It was actually from that time that Częstochowa, a small town at the foot of Jasna Góra, began to become a centre of commerce. From far and near, more and more Jewish families flowed in. This community began to organise itself.²⁶ In the 19th century, when the development of Częstochowa gained an additional dynamism thanks to, among other reasons, the construction of the Warsaw-Vienna railway, the city's Jewish community was ready for new challenges. Częstochowa became an excellent place to do business, trade, and manufacturing, with the city providing better prospects to raise one's standard of living. Jews, living in Częstochowa, were able to use this opportunity (as did a section of the Poles who, during this period, arrived on a large scale in the city from nearby overpopulated and poor towns). Częstochowa Jews, or the Jewish community in Częstochowa, was not a community which lived on the margin of the overall social life of the city. They actively joined into the processes of developing and modernising the city. They made a meaningful contribution to the process of building the city, participating in all aspects of economic, cultural, as well as, political life.

The development of industry, construction, trade and even the development of a religious industry, associated with the Jasna Góra, occurred with the full participation of Częstochowa Jews. An ever more affluent Jewish community organised itself better and better. There were funds for a Jewish cemetery, a synagogue, Jewish schools and a *mikvah*.²⁷ So the development of Częstochowa

actively supported the antisemitic politics of the National Democrats. In 1936, Prime Minister Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski (1885-1962) declared an "economic war" in Poland against the Jews. In 1937, by order of Marshall Edward Rydz-Śmigły (1886-1941), the *Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego (OZN, United Nationalist Camp)* was established. The organisation, which propagated the concept of the Polish people focussing around the army and Marshall Rydz-Śmigły, was accused of having fascist and antisemitic tendencies. Among the signs that this was the case were, among other things, that Jews could not become members of the organisation and the call for a boycott of doing business with Jews.

²⁵P.Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, pol.wyd. Kraków 2000, p.509 the author claims, during the seven months following the end of the War, 350 antisemitic motivated murders took place in Poland. He quotes Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, 816 nn

²⁶See.Z. Jakubowski, *Częstochowscy Żydzi*, [w:] *Z dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie*, red.Z.Jakubowski, pp.11-32

²⁷ Ibidem

generated a development of the Jewish community, and vice versa. The development of the Jewish community generated a development of the city. It was thanks to the Jewish Inhabitants of Częstochowa that workplaces and factories were established. Jews creating Częstochowa industry provided employment not just for Jewish workers. Thanks to Jewish initiative and Jewish money, the city's first theatre was established. It was not just for a Jewish audience, it was a municipal theatre. Using Jewish money, a Jewish hospital was also built in Zawodzie. By virtue of its foundation and its funding, it was Jewish. However, in its charter, it was clearly stated that the hospital should have an openly accessible Catholic chapel. It was a municipal Jewish hospital.²⁸ It operated more as a municipal hospital than as a Jewish one – the same manner in which it functions to this day.

So Częstochowa was a quite specific city in terms of the co-existence of these two communities, in which relations between Częstochowa Jews and Częstochowa Christians were arranged for the benefit of the city and of both communities. Both communities participated in patriotic celebrations. They became an occasion for cooperation. This was the case celebrating the anniversary of the Kosciuszko Insurrection, the passing of the Constitution of the 3rd of May, as well as the return to Poland of the body of Henryk Sienkiewicz. When it came to so-called national matters such as anniversaries, the celebration of national holidays, elections, etc., no problems existed between Jews and Christians in their organisation. Of course, there were party political differences. There were mutual attacks, not to say quarrels and shouting matches or offensive articles in the press. There was hatred towards Jews and most probably hatred towards Poles. However, it all fitted into a certain framework of a widely understood "proper" co-existence. For the good of Częstochowa, as for the good of both communities, it was well-understood at the time. They cooperated in industry, in education, in a medical association and in the city council. It even reached such a situation that, on the City Council, a coalition was formed between a Jewish party and the National Democratic Party. "It is undoubtedly worth noting that it is a fact that, in Częstochowa from the 17th century, there were no large-scale cases of culture shock or cultural collisions between the Jewish and Polish communities. The city also saw no group conflicts between these communities."²⁹ A disgraceful exception to this was a bloody massacre in 1919 committed by members of Haller's army in which seven Jews were murdered and many were beaten and crippled.³⁰

Approximately five thousand Jews survived the War in Częstochowa. They were not all originally from Częstochowa. Many of them from other places had ended up in the ghetto here. Despite having not the worst memories of pre-War times and the fact that the Jewish community in Częstochowa was well organised after the War³¹, the majority of Częstochowa Jews left the city in the 1940's. A disdain for Jews by the Poles and the Kielce pogrom evoked fear. Even the intervention of the Bishop of Częstochowa, Teodor Kubina³², thanks probably to whom antisemitic riots were prevented in Częstochowa, still did not instil any optimism. Jews left Poland and Częstochowa. By 1956, barely four hundred Jews still lived in Częstochowa. However those who remained again tried to organise

²⁸ ibidem

²⁹ J.Sztumski, *Kulturotwórcza rola społeczności żydowskiej w Częstochowie (T Częstochowa Jews Role in Culture Creation)*, [in:] *Z dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie (From the History of Częstochowa Jews)*, editor.Z.Jakubowski, p.68

³⁰ K.Gebert, *The Two Lines*, [in:] *The Jews of Czestochowa Coexistence-Holocaust-Memory*, editor.J.Mizgalski, Czestochowa 2005, p.31

³¹ J.Mizgalski, *The Jews of Czestochowa*, [w:] *The Jews of Czestochowa Coexistence-Holocaust-Memory*, editor.J.Mizgalski, Czestochowa 2005, pp.23-24

³² ibidem

themselves. In order to preserve their traditions, culture and the memory of those who did not manage to survive the Holocaust, they formed the Częstochowa branch of the Jewish Social and Cultural Association in Poland (TSKŻ). As part of its activities, the Association ran a club for youth to which adults also came. The club was active right up until the anti-Jewish events of March 1968. As a result of those events, the majority of those Jews still remaining in Częstochowa Jews dispersed around the world.³³ They did not understand why they were rejected by a country which they did not reject. The only thing that came into their minds was Polish antisemitism.

Contemporary Antisemitism

Within academia, there is still no consensus as to whether Poles are still antisemitic or not.

The Institute of Jewish Affairs in London lists, as signs of antisemitism, among others, the presence of the antisemitism in mainstream political life, the existence of political parties with elements of antisemitism in their policies, the appearance of publications with antisemitic contents, acts of aggression towards Jews or their institutions, a lack of combating the phenomenon of antisemitism through the law, an increase in antisemitic attitudes as determined through public opinion polls.³⁴ From observing everyday social life, it is known that antisemitism can also manifest itself in literature or more widely in art, in loutish behaviours (e.g. antisemitic taunting in football stadiums), or in the desecration of Jewish cemeteries, as well as through offensive graffiti or anti-Jewish pictures on walls

Academic literature distinguishes between different types of antisemitism. However, no matter how we approach the issue, the source is still the stereotype. It is the result of the centuries-old history of Polish-Jewish relationships and the mutual influence these nations had on one another. Conflicts of different kinds, which arose during that time between the Polish and Jewish peoples, affected the development of prejudice and stereotypes – mainly negative stereotypes. In the Polish public arena of today, does a stereotype of Jews still remain? And if so, does this stereotype of the Jew in Poland have a character of antisemitic prejudice? Even though there are not many Jews in Poland, this nation is certainly nonetheless important to Poles. Thanks to research conducted in 1999 by Warsaw University's Institute of Political Science, a structure was constructed to determine the perception by Poles of their surrounding nations. As a result of this research, a list of twenty one nations, whom Poles recognised and considered important, was compiled. Within this list were the Jews.³⁵ As a result of that same research, being based on the classic research of D.Katz and K.Braly³⁶, as well as utilising the fruits of Polish and western academic research, a list of seventy eight features was formulated which was used to describe, by respondents, individual nations from the earlier created list.³⁷ Thanks to this research, it was possible to construct a list of descriptive stereotypes of twenty

³³ Ibidem, p.24

³⁴ *Antisemitism. World Report*. Institute of Jewish Affairs, London 1992; H. Datner-Śpiewak, *Struktura i wyznaczniki postaw antysemickich, w: Czy Polacy są antysemitami?*, ed.: I. Krzemiński, Warszawa 1996, p. 25.

³⁵ J. Błuszkowski, *Stereotypy narodowe w świadomości Polaków. Studium socjologiczno-politologiczne*, Warsaw 2003, p. 107

³⁶ D.Katz and K.Braly researched ethnic stereotypes with the help of a list of 84 descriptive adjectives. Their research was conducted in 1932 amongst students at Princeton University. It was later repeated several times in the 1950's, 1960's and 1980's. It turned out that, over that period of years, the set of basic features assigned to individual ethnic groups had undergone only slight changes. This attested to the relative permanence of stereotypes.

³⁷ J. Błuszkowski, *Stereotypy narodowe w świadomości Polaków. Studium socjologiczno-politologiczne*, Warsaw 2003, pp. 108-117

nations. The Public Opinion Research Centre in Warsaw has, for years, been researching the attitude of Poles to Jews.³⁸ The results of this research show that, over the years from 1993, a dislike of Jews has decreased, while empathy for them has grown. In 1993, 15% declared empathy for the Jews. This figure grew to over 20% and even to 31% in 2010 and 2011. The following table has been drawn up on the basis of research conducted by CBOS:

Year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2001	2002
%	15	17	25	26	28	19	19	19	23
Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2010	2011	
%	21	18	20	20	23	34	31	31	

Table 1. Changes in empathy of Poles for Jews over the years 1993-2012.³⁹

Research Concept

Utilising these achievements and experiences, the author of this paper asked himself the question of how do young people in Częstochowa perceive Jews. Are the young people of Częstochowa more or less prone than others to surrender themselves to the stereotyping of Jews? The author has attempted to define the image of the Jew in the consciousness of students attending Częstochowa secondary schools. In reconstructing the image of the Jew, a list of features has been used which was put together by J. Błuszkowski.⁴⁰

The author was interested in not only constructing an image of the Jew in the consciousness Częstochowa school students, but also in the attitude towards Jews of the young people of Częstochowa. To this end, an attempt was made to measure social distance using the Bogardus scale. It was the basis for the creation of the stereotype of the Jew in the eyes of senior high school students and third grade secondary technical school students in Częstochowa. Supplementary to this was a question on the sources utilised by these young people for their knowledge about Jews. The research was conducted in May 2012 amongst second year students at Częstochowa comprehensive senior high schools and third year students at Częstochowa secondary technical schools.

Overall, 2,646⁴¹ questionnaires were completed by Częstochowa students who were just below the age of maturity and who, in May 2013, were to sit for their matriculation examination.

³⁸ Zob. Komunikaty CBOS, [http://badanie.cbos.pl/results.asp?srchtype=subject&subject=Świat -- Stosunek Polaków do innych państw i narodów&q=a1&pgsz=10&pgno=1](http://badanie.cbos.pl/results.asp?srchtype=subject&subject=Świat--StosunekPolakówdoinnychpaństwinarodów&q=a1&pgsz=10&pgno=1)

³⁹ On the basis of a CBOS report. See. Komunikaty CBOS, [http://badanie.cbos.pl/results.asp?srchtype=subject&subject=Świat -- Stosunek Polaków do innych państw i narodów&q=a1&pgsz=10&pgno=1](http://badanie.cbos.pl/results.asp?srchtype=subject&subject=Świat--StosunekPolakówdoinnychpaństwinarodów&q=a1&pgsz=10&pgno=1)

⁴⁰ The list of features was not set up alphabetically as with Błuszkowski, but was compiled randomly; two vacant options were added. The author considered that selection of such an option would indicate a total lack of interest by the respondent and would make the completion of the questionnaire more reliable.

⁴¹ In the 2012-13 school year, there were 1,026 third year technical school students, 2,146 second year senior high school students ; information provided by the City Council at the request of the author.

Seventy eight possible descriptions of Jews were presented (as well as the two vacant possibilities). They were:

1. intelligent	41. honest
2. educated	42. frugal
3. reckless	43. devious
4. not fun-loving	44. lazy
5. prudent	45. sincere
6. playful	46. diligent
7. vindictive	47. without honour
8. abusive of alcohol	48. not enterprising
9. understanding	49. honourable
10. tea-total	50. enterprising
11. sad	51. traditionalist
12. uncivil	52. uneconomical
13. cheerful	53. innovative
14. cultured	54. thrifty
15. passive	55. conservative
16. dirty	56. self-contained
17. active	57. progressive
18. clean	58. open
19. undisciplined	59. fanatical
20. cosmopolitan	60. unfriendly
21. self-disciplined	61. tolerant
22. patriotic	62. kind
23. disorganized	63. superstitious
24. nationalistic	64. egotistical
25. liking order	65. rational
26. internationalist	66. accommodating
27. stupid	67. backward
28. militarist	68. conceited
29. clever	69. modern
30. pacifist	70. modest
31. cowardly	71. atheistic
32. anarchistic	72. not valuing family life
33. brave	73. a believer
34. a loyal citizen	74. valuing family life
35. immoral	75. unsociable
36. poor	76. BLANK
37. moral	77. friendly
38. rich	78. unintelligent
39. dishonest	79. uneducated
40. high-spending	80. BLANK

The three most often selected options were a believer, frugal and rich. More often than not, the Jew was perceived as intelligent, enterprising and a traditionalist.

Detailed results of the choices made can be seen on the following table:

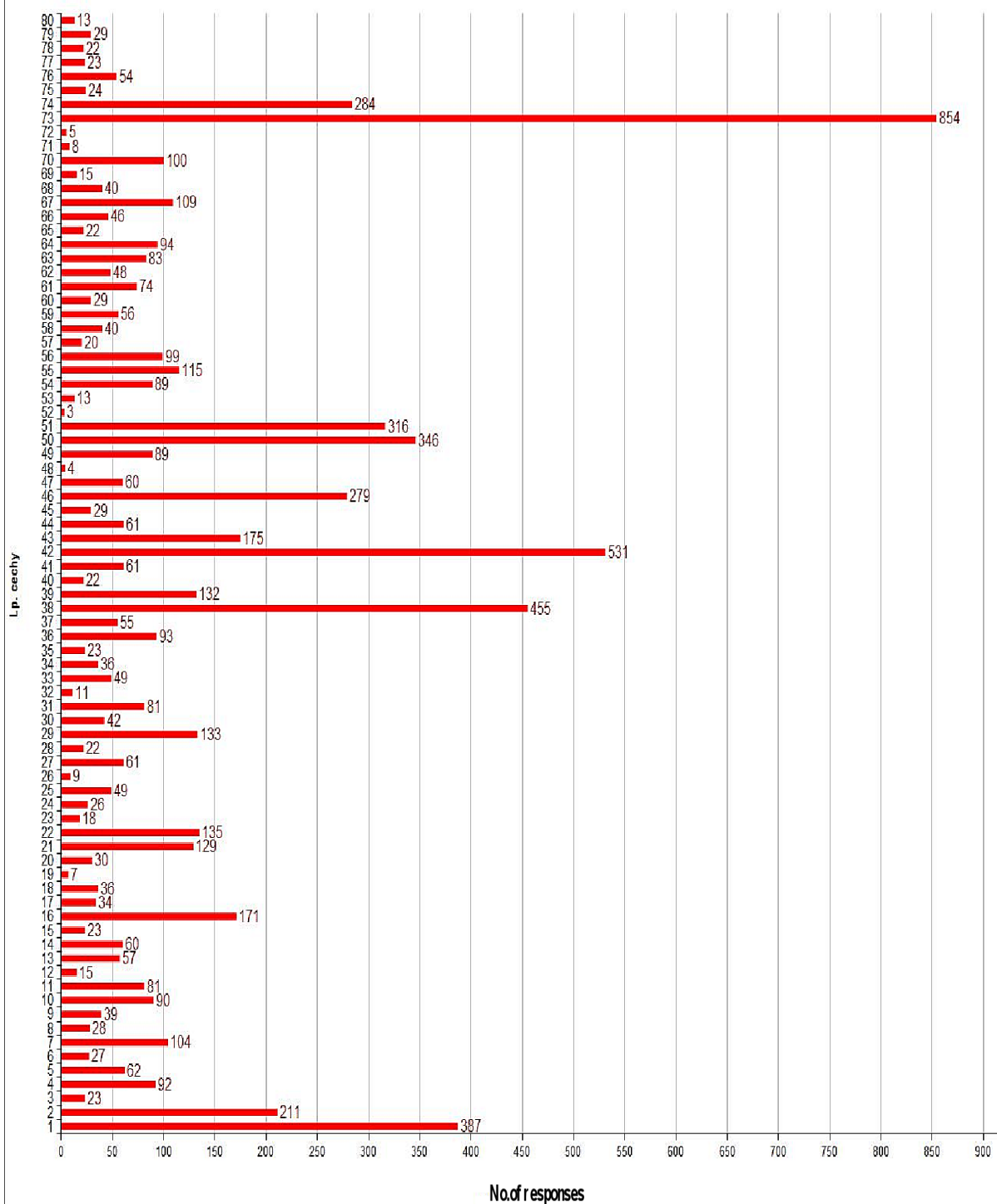


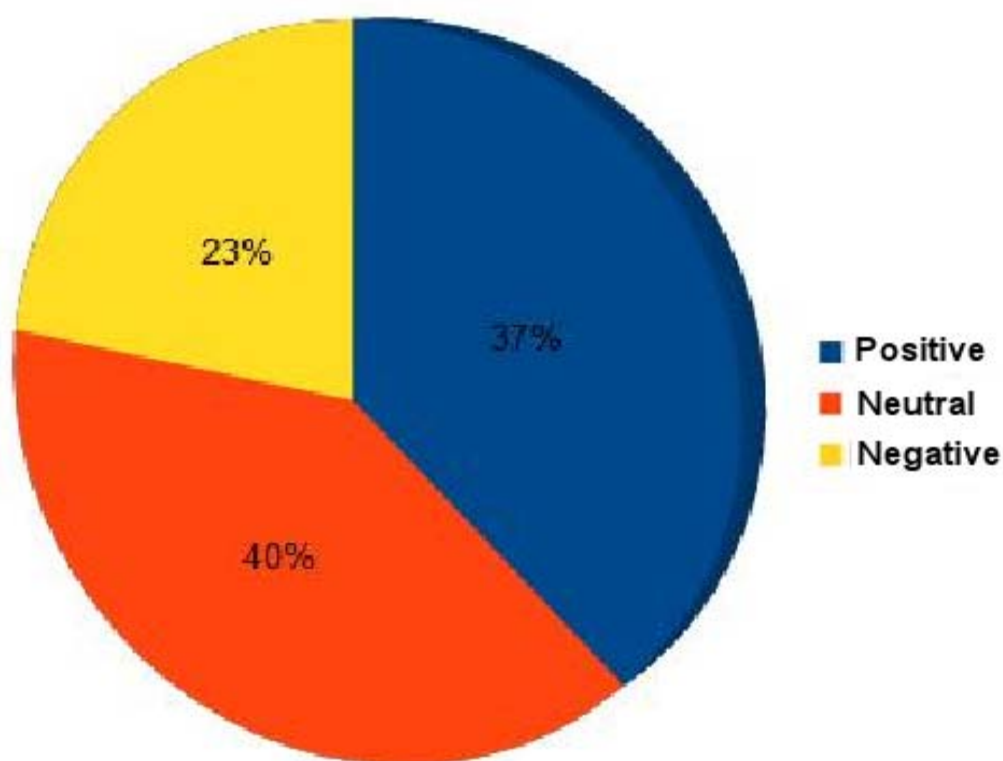
Table 2: Compilation of the results of the popularity of features being characteristic of persons of Jewish nationality according to the respondents

Complementing these results are choices made by respondents to another question in which participants were presented with opposing features and were asked to mark the level of that characteristic which they thought were appropriate to Jews.

1	intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	unintelligent
2	prudent	1	2	3	4	5	reckless
3	understanding	1	2	3	4	5	vindictive
4	cheerful	1	2	3	4	5	sad
5	active	1	2	3	4	5	passive
6	self-disciplined	1	2	3	4	5	disciplined
7	organised	1	2	3	4	5	disorganised
8	clever	1	2	3	4	5	stupid
9	brave	1	2	3	4	5	cowardly
10	moral	1	2	3	4	5	immoral
11	honest	1	2	3	4	5	dishonest
12	sincere	1	2	3	4	5	devious
13	honourable	1	2	3	4	5	dishonourable
14	innovative	1	2	3	4	5	traditionalist
15	progressive	1	2	3	4	5	conservative
16	tolerant	1	2	3	4	5	fanatical
17	rational	1	2	3	4	5	superstitious
18	modern	1	2	3	4	5	backward
19	a believer	1	2	3	4	5	an atheist
20	sociable	1	2	3	4	5	unsociable
21	educated	1	2	3	4	5	uneducated
22	playful	1	2	3	4	5	not playful
23	tea-total	1	2	3	4	5	abuser of alcohol
24	cultured	1	2	3	4	5	uncultured
25	clean	1	2	3	4	5	dirty
26	patriotic	1	2	3	4	5	cosmopolitan
27	internationalist	1	2	3	4	5	nationalist
28	pacifist	1	2	3	4	5	militarist
29	loyal citizen	1	2	3	4	5	anarchist
30	rich	1	2	3	4	5	poor
31	diligent	1	2	3	4	5	lazy
32	economical	1	2	3	4	5	high-spending
33	enterprising	1	2	3	4	5	non-enterprising
34	thrifty	1	2	3	4	5	uneconomical
35	open	1	2	3	4	5	self-contained
36	kind	1	2	3	4	5	unfriendly
37	accommodating	1	2	3	4	5	egotistical
38	modest	1	2	3	4	5	conceited
39	valuing family	1	2	3	4	5	Not valuing family life

Table 3: Questionnaire

In summarising the responses of the attitudes of young people, it can be stated that the predominant attitude to Jews is a neutral one, with a distinctly positive orientation.



Graph 1: Percentages of positive, neutral and negative replies by participants to the first question of the questionnaire form

Neutral evaluations were 40%, positive 37% and those which could be recognised as negative 23%.

We can regard these evaluations as an indicator of Częstochowa school students' attitudes towards Jews. Comparing them with national data, it is worth noting that the percentage of evaluations which we can consider as positive and which can be read as sympathetic, is quite considerable.

The author will not analyse here the average assessment of Jews for each pair of opposing evaluation features, as this is not the main topic of this paper. Those who are interested in this are referred to Table 4 below which depicts the accurate responses by participants and they are free to draw their own conclusions.

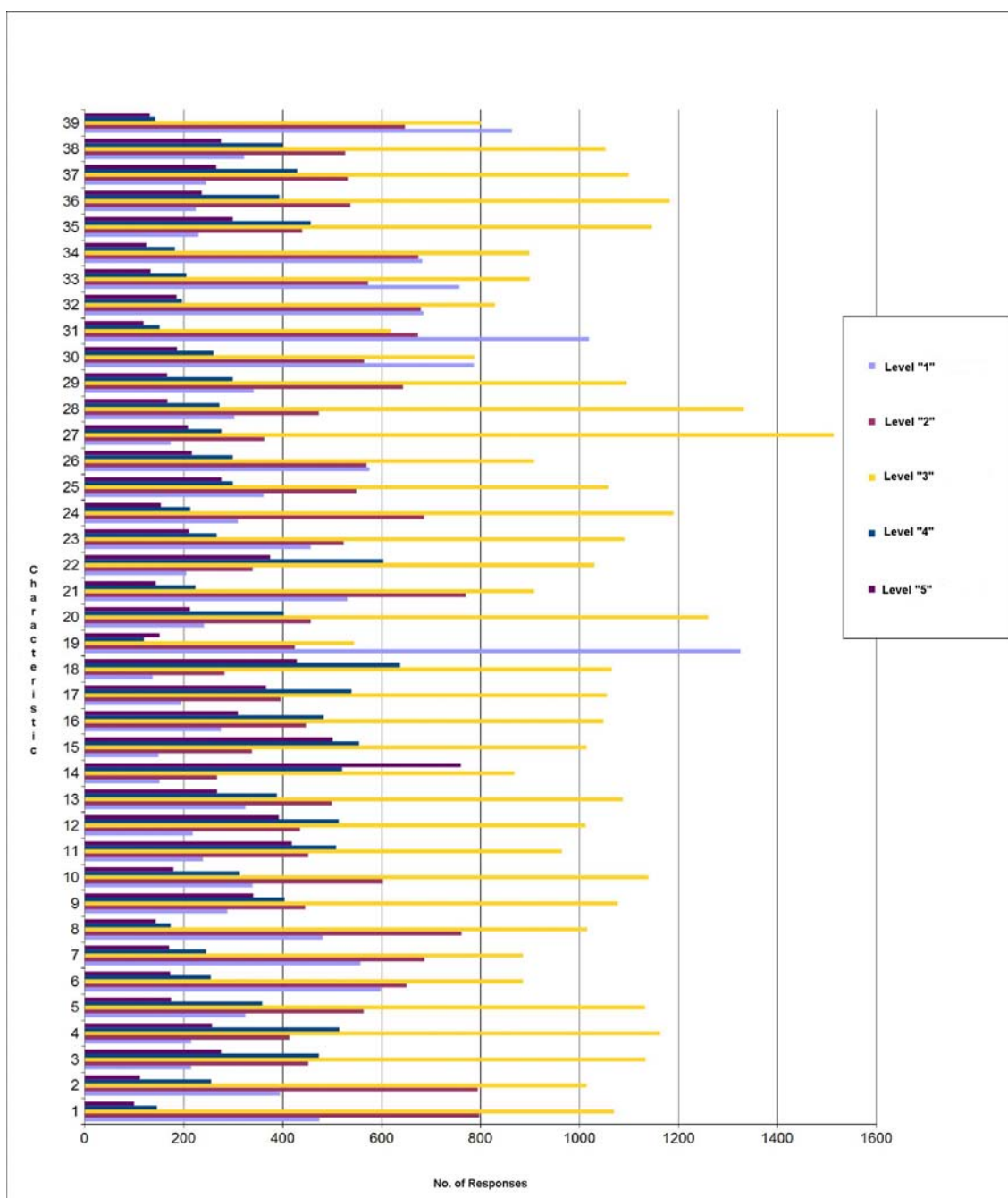
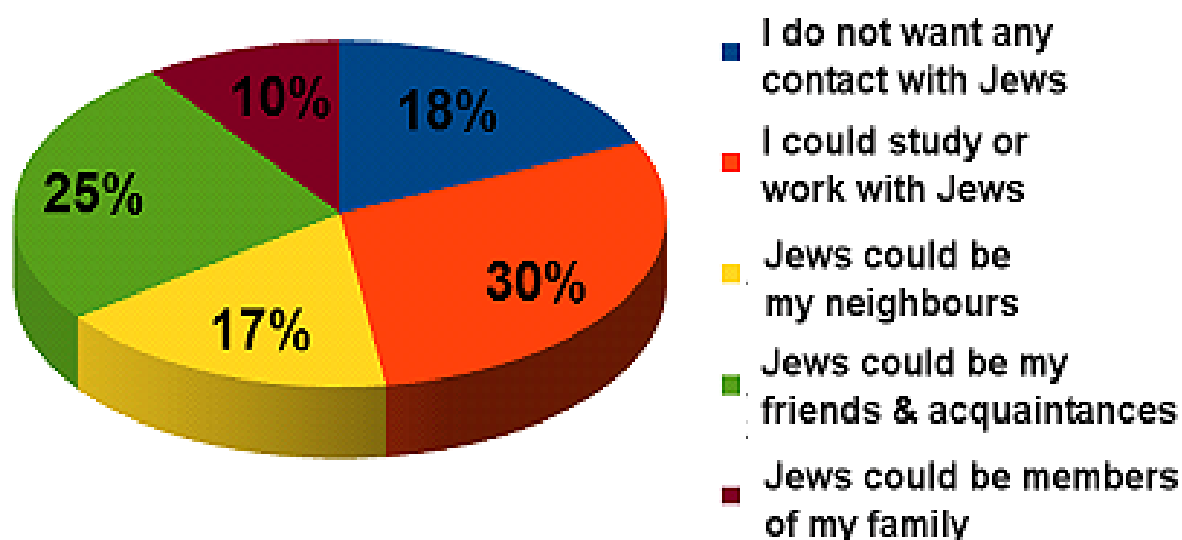


Table 4: Quantitative summation of participants' responses to the characteristics of Jews, on a scale of 1 to 5.

For the purposes of this paper, we should only note that the young people of Częstochowa schools perceive Jews as a religious people, placing great significance on tradition and on family life.

In examining stereotypes, the emotional component is singled out. Social distance between nations is a synthetic expression of the emotional component. In measuring the social distance of, for example, one nationality to another, the so-called Bogardus Scale is the universally accepted scale of measurement.⁴²

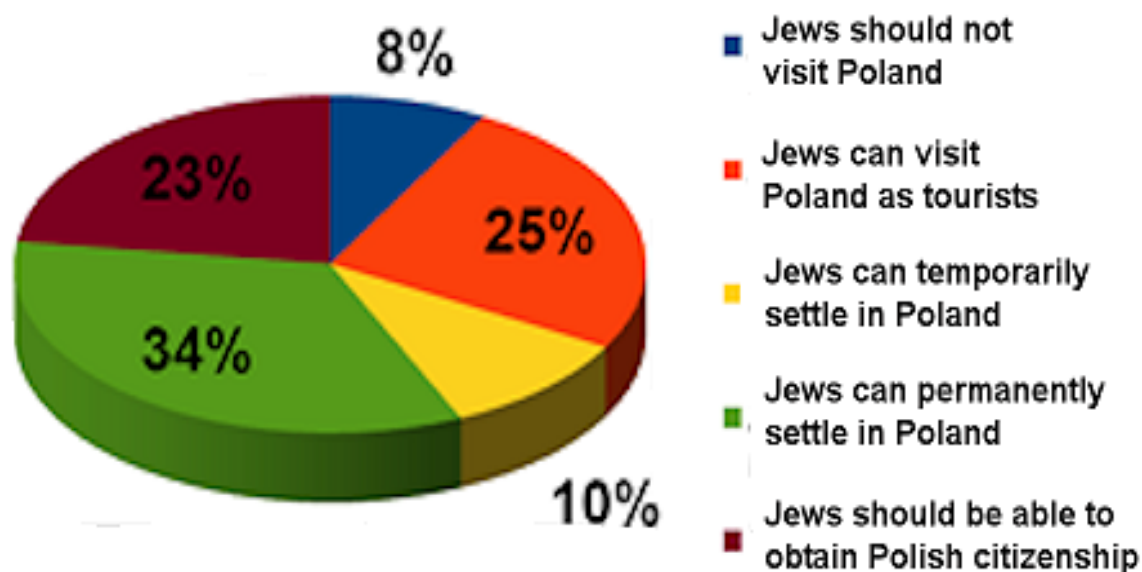
Micro-social and macro-social measurements were both taken into account within the survey of Częstochowa students' social distance from Jews. The micro-social dimension encompasses the extent of an individual's readiness to establish communal bonds within a narrow circle. This range of circles includes workers' groups, local-neighbourhood ties, friendships and family links. Each consecutive degree increases the level of intimacy and closeness. It should be instantly noted that as many as 18 % of respondents ruled out any contact with Jews (the author recognises that such a level - a rejection of intimacy – has been verified by research). This would mean that this number of respondents displays a xenophobic and probably antisemitic attitude. However the 55% of respondents answering positively to the question of whether Jews could be their friends and acquaintances, as well as could become members of their family, demonstrated an open attitude, as demonstrated by Graph2.



Graph 2: Percentage breakdown of questionnaire responses with respect to the possible nature of contact with Jewish people

The macro-social dimension relates to wider social circles. In researching the respondents, apart from the possibility of forbidding Jews to visit Poland, four types of contacts with Jewish people were proposed to respondents: visiting Poland as tourists, temporarily settling in Poland, obtaining Polish citizenship and settling permanently in Poland. As can be seen from Graph 3, 8% of respondents stated that Jews should not visit Poland. 10% of respondents stated that Jews should be able to receive Polish citizenship.

⁴² The Bogardus Scale of social distance is a technique of measurement determining people's willingness to participate in social contacts, either closer or more distant, with other categories of peoples. Research, with the help of this scale depends on the respondent stating which type of social contact he/she would have with representatives of determined nationalities.



Graph 3: Percentage breakdown of questionnaire responses with respect to the possibility of assimilating Poles and Jews within a common territory

Analysing these questions further, the author divided respondents according to gender (1,367 females and 1,279 males took part in the research). It resulted that, amongst those responding to the questionnaire, it was predominantly males who did not want any contact with Jews (73%) and also males (69%) who were most opposed to Jews visiting Poland.

It is interesting to observe that only 3% of respondents, who declared that their knowledge of Jews was drawn from their own personal experience, did not want more contact with Jews or did not want Jews to visit Poland. It is worth noting here that the questionnaire results indicated that only 20% of respondents drew their knowledge about Jews from their own experience. Close to half (48%) of the respondents drew it from the media (television, Internet). In increasing their knowledge about Jews, respondents had relied on literature (classical, historical), as well as talking with friends and family - 30% and 20% of respondents respectively.

Regarding this aspect of the questionnaire, respondents were free to choose more than just one response.

Perceptions of Jews by Częstochowa High School Matriculants - Compared with Polish Nationwide Research Results

Within the minds of the young people of Częstochowa, on the one hand, Jews are considered to be both intelligent and deliberate, yet also described as conservative and superstitious. Respondents stressed patriotism and loyalty, for the majority of whom had no connection with the militarism.

From research conducted by J. Błuszkowski, it is revealed that, in the opinion of Poles, Jews are characterised with outstanding talents which single them out favourably from other peoples. They also regard them as educated and clever, talented and creative people in many fields, making a meaningful contribution to culture and to international learning.⁴³ Similar attitudes to Jews can be concluded from the completed questionnaires in Częstochowa. However, J. Błuszkowski's research findings about the negative mentality of Jews are not confirmed by Częstochowa youth.⁴⁴ Częstochowa young people do not perceive them as people with any special tendency towards fatalism or fanaticism.

In researching the stereotype of the Jew within the scope of their perception and evaluation of them and of their economic culture, J. Błuszkowski established that Poles appreciated their frugality and diligence, that Jews, in the opinion of a considerable section of Poles, have a reputation of being good business owners, are ranked among the rich, the frugal and the enterprising. They are capable of looking after their own interests. They are diligent and thrifty. Alongside the positive, strong economic elements of the image of Jews within the consciousness of Poles, there are also negative ones. A. Cała claims that Poles also perceive them as dishonest and devious people, mean, greedy, sly and shrewd and prepared to gain at the expense of others.⁴⁵ These negative characteristics were not apparent, to any great extent, amongst the Częstochowa respondents. Częstochowa young people do not perceive Jews as devious people, without honour or immoral. Respondents are not free from the stereotype of perceiving the Jew as frugal and rich, but those perceptions are not accompanied by those negative aspects in the same decided manner as resulted from J. Błuszkowski's research.

A few other aspects come out of the first schedule when issues are considered connected with perceptions on the subject of the lifestyle and customs of Jews. Częstochowa youth consider Jews equally cheerful as sad, equally opened-minded as closed-minded, while admittedly not being very playful even though they drink alcohol, that they are kind and honourable.⁴⁶ The results of research conducted amongst Częstochowa youth do not entirely correspond with the research findings of J. Błuszkowski. They suggest that the perception of Jews by young Poles, by Częstochowa youth, is not identical with perceptions of a dozen or so years ago and that the changes which have taken place in these perceptions are indicators of change in the current stereotyped perception of the Jew. In Błuszkowski's analysis of the psycho-characteristic profile of Jews, we find expressions characterising their virtue, but also some that are markedly pejorative. "Poles consider that Jews are ambitious, active, prudent and disciplined. At the same time, they consider them closed, conceited, devious,

⁴³ A. Cała, *Autostereotyp i stereotypy narodowe*, w: *Czy Polacy są antysemitami? (Are Poles Antisemites)* Ed.: I. Krzemiński, Warsaw 1996, pp. 226–228

⁴⁴ See J. Błuszkowski, *Stereotypy w świadomości Polaków, studium socjologiczno-politologiczne*, Warszawa 2003.

⁴⁵ J. Błuszkowski, op. cit., pp. 160–162.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, pp. 301–303.

unfriendly, cowardly and vindictive people. The accumulation of the above negative characteristics can attest to a prejudice by Poles against Jews.”⁴⁷ Results of the poll conducted at Częstochowa schools do not lead to such a clear-cut conclusion. Relative to J. Błuszkowski’s results, one can talk about a reduction in prejudice against Jews⁴⁸, within which it is worth noting a mainly indifferent attitude. Only in some areas are assessments made in a decidedly positive manner. According to our respondents, they are economical, thrifty, prudent, diligent, patriotic and loyal citizens.

Discussion of Research Finding

If one was to ask the statistically average Pole whether he is an antisemite, an outright majority would reply in the negative. Two clearly noticeable tendencies can be drawn from Poland-wide research as well as from analysing the results of the questionnaire from Częstochowa: on the one hand, there is a reduction in declared antipathy towards Jews, while on the other hand, some stereotypical aspects continue to exist which can attest to antisemitism.

Certainly, Częstochowa youth are not free of stereotypes. 2,646 students from Częstochowa secondary schools took part in the questionnaire research. It was conducted in May 2012 amongst second year senior high school students and third year technical school students. The descriptive profiles of people, the configuration of characteristics, are arranged according to their response levels.

The three characteristics most frequently attributed to Jews by Częstochowa youth are “believers” (854) followed by “economical” (531) and, in the third place, “rich” (455). These were followed closely by the following characteristics: “enterprising” (346), “traditionalist” (316) and “valuing family life” (284), as well as “diligent” (279). This was complemented by the “intelligent” characteristic which was nominated 387 times. These choices lend credence to other indicators, to features, which are the opposites mentioned earlier. “Atheistic” and “not-valuing family life” received eight and five responses respectively out of, let us remind ourselves, almost two and a half thousand completed questionnaires. Similarly, when assessing the practical resourcefulness of Jews, “non-enterprising” was selected by four people and “uneconomical” by three. According to the average Pole, the average Jew is rich and frugal - this is also reflected in the questionnaire results. Only 22 people thought that the Jew is high-spending. The set of thirty nine antonyms proved useful in assessing how Częstochowa youth perceive Jews. A scale of 1 to 5 was used to determine, in the opinion of respondents, which features were more characteristic of Jewish people. A score of 1 and 2 indicated a positive side to the characteristic, a score of 3 was neutral, while scores of 4 and 5 gave the characteristic a markedly pejorative side.⁴⁹

Analysis of the results indicates that the young people most often circled point 3, indicating a neutral response in determining a given feature. This related to as many as 40% of all completed

⁴⁷ Ibidem, pp. 303-305

⁴⁸ J. Tazbir, *Przed kolejnym zakrętem*, [w:] *Polacy o sobie (Poles About Them, selves)*, Ed.: P. Kowalski, Łomża, 2005, pp. 11-12.

⁴⁹ Prof. dr hab. Jan Błuszkowski - Instytut Nauk Politycznych Wydziału Dziennikarstwa i Nauk Politycznych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.

questionnaire forms. 37% attributed positive features to Jewish people, while 23% negative. Looking at the extremes, 16% scored 1 on the scale, while 10% scored 5 which indicated decided negativity.

As far as a contemporary perception of Jews is concerned, the youth of Częstochowa tends towards being dichotomous. The majority of Częstochowa youth do not present as having antisemitic views. But, still, 18% would like no contact with Jews and 8% expressed an unwillingness for Jews to even visit Poland. In this instance, respondents in these groups were mainly male. Only one third were female. The remaining respondents had nothing against Jews as neighbours or to study or work alongside them. One quarter does not rule out friendship with Jews. In this instance, twice as many females responded this way as did males. 10% of respondents thought that Jews could become members of their family. A similar situation arises when we consider the analysis of the results to the fifth question, which asked whether Poles and Jews could live side-by-side. Barely 8% objected to any presence of Jews in Poland. In this instance, males demonstrated the more isolationist position. Amongst the 168 who responded this way, only 52 were female. But as many as 57 % respondents had nothing against Jews living permanently in Poland or even obtaining Polish citizenship. Here, women also demonstrated the more open attitude, although the disproportion was much smaller. 35% of respondents were neutral as regards to Jews temporarily staying in Poland and to Jews visiting Poland as tourists.

A separate issue was what sources young people used in obtaining information about Jewish people. What emerges from the research is that Częstochowa youth most often draw their knowledge about Jews from electronic media - almost half the respondents indicated television and the Internet (1,140 people). From the completed questionnaires, it appears that barely 427 people base this knowledge on their own experiences. As the author has already stressed, an interesting observation is that only 3% of those questioned, who declared that they draw their knowledge about Jews from their own experience, did not want contact with Jews nor did they not want Jews to visit Poland.

Attitudes of Poles towards Jews (and also towards other peoples), over time, are undergoing a paradigm shift – perceptions now differ from the manner in which Jewish people were perceived in the Middle Ages, differ from perceptions during the Second Polish Republic and differ following World War II and the *Shoah*. Certainly, the perception of Jews today is also undergoing certain changes and alterations. This is partially confirmed when analysing the responses of Częstochowa youth when compared with the Poland-wide research conducted by Professor J. Błuszkowski's team. The changes in stereotypes, however, are happening slowly due to the sources of the stereotypes of Jews being stuck within the centuries-old history of Polish-Jewish relations.

For centuries, Jews constituted a large-in-number ethnic group in Poland. Following the tragedy of the Holocaust, few remain today. However, some cultural perceptions still remain and have been retained by Poles towards Jews. Today when, in the Polish socio-political arena, there are in principle no Jews, we cannot speak about mutual relationships or perceptions or conflicts, but of images created in the more distant and near past. Antisemitic moods have revived amongst Poles which some researchers have called antisemitism without Jews⁵⁰ and without antisemites. From results

⁵⁰ A. Cała claims that antisemitism without antisemites is comprised of two elements. Firstly, antisemitism manifests itself upon social attitudes. Admittedly, research indicates that very few people in Poland declare antisemitic views. Similarly, there is very, so-called, popular little antisemitism which contains a Christian anti-Judaism component. However, A. Cała recognises, as an antisemite, a person who, while refraining from expressing any negative evaluations or prejudice, also simultaneously does not express anything affirmative

coming from research conducted by the Jewish Historical Institute, 57% of Poles questioned did not pick even one pro-Jewish response.⁵¹

Conclusion

Moulded during the course of a long history, patterns of perception of the Jewish people have persisted in the political culture of Poles, independently of the number of Jews now living in Poland. The process of transformation of attitudes and postures to other nations is undergoing a dynamic redefinition within contemporary reality. The pace of those transformations is being determined by:

- 1) an increase in tourism following the disintegration of the East-West divide in international relations;
- 2) revolutionary progress in information transmission technology and in the development of interpersonal communication systems;
- 3) a growth in interest in the standard of living, culture and contribution to worldwide achievements by other nations;
- 4) the creation of a global labour market and an increase in economic emigration;
- 5) an individual's own experience as a minority in another country in which that person has settled either temporarily or long-term;
- 6) seeking a place for one's own nation within the global village, and by
- 7) recognising, within ethnic and national conflicts, the sources of social unrest and threats to national and international safety.

In this context, it is possible to review the attitudes of Częstochowa youth which were articulated in the research findings. However, it is worth noting that, at least in part, the results indicate change. Amongst Częstochowa youth, it is not as difficult, as previous research has shown, for them to make positive statements about Jewish people, and that the set of stereotypic expressions characterising the Jew is also changing.

The fact is that stereotypes of Jews have a heterogeneous character. They contain intertwining positive, indifferent and negative elements. They often contain contradictory descriptions and evaluations but simultaneously, in spite of a dominant indifference to that nationality, the stereotype contains more and more positive elements.

The research, even though it included young people from an entire age grouping, was merely a survey. It was aimed at recording a state of perception (examining a very much superficial picture of the Jew amongst young people). A complete answer to the way Częstochowa youth regard Jews could be obtained by also researching their attitudes and perceptions towards other nations and

towards Jews. This statement is the most powerful argument justifying the proposition of antisemitism with out Semites. Secondly, signs of antisemitism are appearing in the sphere of public life. A. Cała mentions here antisemitic statements by politicians and evidenced within Polish political parties who propagate antisemitic views. A. Cała, *Autostereotyp i stereotypy narodowe*, w: *Czy Polacy są antysemitami?* Red.: I. Krzemiński, Warsaw 1996, pp. 226–228.

⁵¹ H. Datner-Śpiewak, *Struktura i wyznaczniki postaw antysemitycznych*, w: *Czy Polacy są antysemitami?*, Red.: I. Krzemiński, Warsaw 1996, p. 32. From results coming from research conducted by the Jewish Historical Institute, 57% of Poles questioned did not select even one pro-Jewish response.⁵¹

then carrying out an appropriate comparison. The author has, however, left this subject for a future task.