

# The Role of Social Media in Creating Intercultural Dialogue and Overcoming Prejudice – a Comparative Analysis of Pilot Survey Results

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**Abstract:** Multiculturalism, as a political and social phenomenon, is more and more often perceived as a challenge in the realm of studying communication processes. New media make it possible to communicate and build relations in the global dimension with a simultaneous impact on the development of horizontal communication, creating groups and communities and active support for different forms of social participation. In this context a pilot study concerning the role of new media in overcoming schemata and prejudice of students in two different cities with different levels of multiculturalism in the local community was carried out.

**Keywords:** multiculturalism, social media, stereotypes, prejudice, hate speech, cultural differences, intercultural communication, comparative research

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of intercultural communication, problems connected with diversity and prejudice resulting from contacts between people of different nationality, ethnicity or religion is an important problem of multicultural Europe to which attention is drawn in various contexts. The Council of Europe, noticing the problem of prejudice having different sources, started a social campaign "No Hate Speech Movement"<sup>1</sup> in 2013, aimed mainly at eliminating hate speech on the Internet. Countries that are members of the European Union with its freedom of movement and residence, have different histories and experiences connected with multiculturalism. Among EU member states there are still countries whose societies are ethnically homogenous and where multiculturalism is a new challenge. As Zygmunt Bauman puts it "*With the tested ways of acting being no longer available, we seem to be left without a good strategy to handle newcomers.*" (Bauman 2006: 131) At the same time Charles Tilly

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1 Campaign website: <http://nohate.ext.coe.int/The-Campaign> [accessed 24.06.2014.]

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emphasises that one of the challenges of the contemporary world is preventing preservation of categorical inequalities that concern systemic differences in the access to benefits due to e.g. different nationality, race, ethnic origin or religion. (Tilly 2008: 138)

Multiculturalism is also starting to be perceived on more levels. From the traditional systemic understanding of multiculturalism as a structure created by people of different nationalities, cultures, ethnicity and religion that inhabit a given territory to perceiving family as a new scope of research in this respect. In families there are no borders of homogeneity of nationalities, cultures or religions of partners. According to Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, in Germany about twenty per cent of relationships are between partners of different nationality, ethnicity, religion or skin colour (in Berlin it is currently even over 20 per cent of relationships) (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2013). Often people with a different ethnic or cultural identity live in another country, which is not the country of origin of either of the partners. This sets another area for analyses of multiculturalism. At the same time, as Ulrich Beck already noted, multiculturalism is also space for identification of new risks, sources of conflicts and looking for ways to tackle them. Risks resulting from the present can also be an element integrating people, regardless of their nationality or shared values. (Beck 2002) The risk society is being redefined in the face of constant individualisation, which means that only the individual becomes the subject of rights and obligations. This means that *"individuals alone must to a greater extent notice, interpret and manage possibilities, threats and ambiguities in their lives that they formerly used to cope with in their families, local communities and by relating to a social class or group."* (Beck, Giddens & Lash 2009: 20) An individual is thus becoming more and more dependent on controlling their own possibilities, including the risky ones.

Social media plays a very important role in creating new forms of multicultural relations. In a globalised world they enable people to start relations with others in many different ways. Olga Guedes Bailey, Bart Cammaerts and Nico Carpentier define social media as alternative media that concentrate on the concept of media serving the community – as such they are part of the civil society. In the context of understanding the community, not only in its spatial aspect but also in the cultural one – alternative media serve building a community of meanings, interpenetrations and images. As they claim: *"A community is actively built by its members who in the act of its creation gain their own identity."* (Bailey, Cammaerts & Carpentier 2008: 12) Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim notice the phenomenon of using the Internet to connect people from different countries and cultures thus influencing the creation of multicultural relationships. These relationships thus also come into existence as a result of taking conscious actions – looking for partners representing a different national identity and cultural values. The problem of such relations is a challenge for societies that for many years have been regarded as multicultural. According to Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande, discarding the either/or logic to the benefit of building integration by cosmopolitisation is a project that may change the outlook of European countries on changing reality. (Beck & Grande 2009: 25) However, statements of politicians that determine people's opinions about multiculturalism become symptomatic – like the famous words of German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, about the failure of "multikulti" policy, or the words of the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, about changing the policy towards immigrants and restricting access to privileges connected with residing in the United Kingdom. To some extent, such declarations by politicians in countries where multiculturalism has been a fact for many years questions the pluralist model of state policy, regulating relations between different groups, each retaining their own identity.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> More about the theoretical model of multiculturalism can be found at P. Boski, *Cultural frames for social behaviour [Kulturowe ramy zachowań społecznych]*. (2009: 529)

The aim of the following study is to analyze the results of a comparative pilot survey concerning students' attitudes towards people coming from different countries and ethnic groups. The study was carried out in two cities of different countries, each on a different level of multiculturalism - Berlin (in Germany) and Krakow (in Poland). Research was conducted at two Universities: Protestant University of Applied Sciences in Berlin and Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University. The research location was selected because Berlin is currently a multicultural city where many nationalities, ethnic and cultural groups coexist.<sup>3</sup> There are almost half a million people from about one hundred and ninety countries in Berlin. The dominating minorities include people from Turkey, the former Soviet Union, the former Yugoslavia and Poland. For many years, German social policy has been actively supporting social integration. On the other hand, Krakow has a long history of being a multicultural community. Before World War II., almost thirty per cent of the population were people of Jewish origin. Currently Krakow is becoming more and more multicultural, mainly due to investments that draw new citizens from abroad as well as students, mainly from Ukraine. Consequently, it can be concluded that Berlin and Krakow represent a different level of saturation of the local society with multiculturalism and thus, also a different level of potential stereotypes and prejudice present in both cities nowadays, without referring to historical aspects of multiculturalism.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of the pilot research was to answer the following questions:

1. Do students notice multiculturalism of the environment they function in and if so, how do they perceive it?
2. What are the sources of their knowledge about multiculturalism and what/who shapes their attitudes?
3. Do they use social media in communication processes in the area of multiculturalism and do they treat these media as a source of education?
4. Do students feel threatened by living in a multicultural world? if so, what are the sources of their anxiety?

The survey was carried out in May and June 2014 in Berlin and Krakow on a group of two hundred randomly selected students, one hundred in each university<sup>4</sup>. Students who took part in the survey in Berlin came mainly from Germany. Besides German nationality a few people declared other nationality, sometimes mixed: Austrian, Italian, Turkish, Japanese, Spanish, English, Australian. The age of students who participated in the survey was between 19 and 53, averaging 28 years. In Krakow, the respondents also included a group of students from Ukraine who study in the Krakow University and reside in Poland. Students who took part in the survey in Krakow can be divided into two groups - over a half are Polish and just over twenty per cent are Ukrainians who study with them. One person declared to be of Slovak nationality. Fourteen people did not declare any nationality. The age of students who participated in the survey in Krakow was between 17 and 49 years of age, and was 22 on average. Research was carried out with a quantitative assessment of survey data gathered through thirty-four, mainly closed-ended questions. The content of the questionnaires used in

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/migration/index.pl.html> [accessed 24.06.2014.]

<sup>4</sup> In order to make the analysis easier, in the following part of the article names of cities are used instead of the names of universities when presenting research results.

the survey was the same, but questionnaires used in the Berlin survey were translated into German. The study encompassed students of different years of study, in Berlin studying "social work", in Krakow: "journalism and social communication" and "management".<sup>5</sup>

### 3. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

Students in Berlin and students in Krakow received 200 questionnaires in total. Each university received one hundred questionnaires –the former returned all of them while the latter returned only ninety eight. In some questionnaires students did not answered all the questions, so, in the presentation of research results the total numbers do not always correspond to the number of all questionnaires.

The following tables and graphs present answers of students in separate thematic blocks of the survey. The first group of the presented results concerns the attitude of students in both cities toward people coming from other nationalities and ethnic groups.

**Table 1.** Contacts of students with representatives of other nationalities/ethnic groups

<b>Do you study with people coming from other nationalities / ethnic groups? If so, what are these?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>I do not pay attention to it</b>
<b>Berlin</b>	<b>81</b> (Japan, Ghana, Italy, Poland, United Kingdom, Turkey, Russia, Germany ( <i>for students of other nationalities</i> ), France, Mexico, Czech Republic, Cameroon, Kazakhstan, Lebanon), Africans were also mentioned	<b>0</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Krakow</b>	<b>92</b> (Ukraine, Poland ( <i>for students of other nationalities</i> ), Turkey, Russia, Slovakia, the USA)	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

Source: Author

According to the above declarations of students, people studying at Krakow University more often report studying together with students from other countries. Students in Krakow also pay more attention to those people. The survey also revealed differences in the origin of students who study in both universities – education in Berlin offers students more diverse contacts.

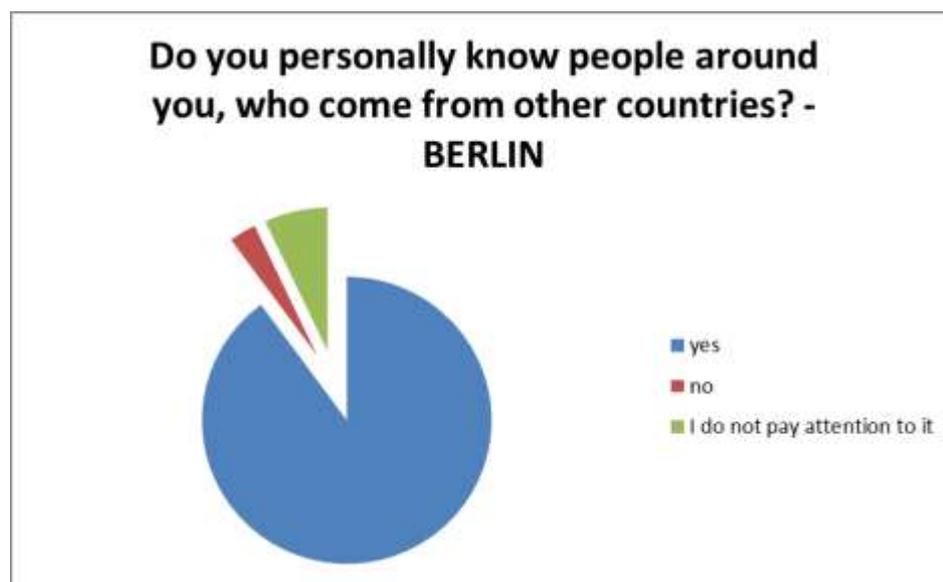
<sup>5</sup> In Poland education in the field of "social work" takes place as a major within different types of studies and it is not a separate field of study as in Germany.

**Table 2.** Relations of students with representatives of other nationalities/ethnic groups

Are there people of other nationalities or ethnic groups in the group of students you have closer relations with (e.g. you meet outside of the university)? If so, which ones?	Yes	No	I do not pay attention to it
<b>Berlin</b>	<b>52</b> (Romania, Bosnia, United Kingdom, Poland, Australia, Turkey, Russia, Italy, France, Lebanon, China, Cameroon, Holland, Georgia, Kurdistan, Ecuador, Puerto Rico,) Asians, Africans, Buddhists and Muslims were also mentioned	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Krakow</b>	<b>40</b> (Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Belarus, Czech Republic, Ireland)	<b>53</b>	<b>3</b>

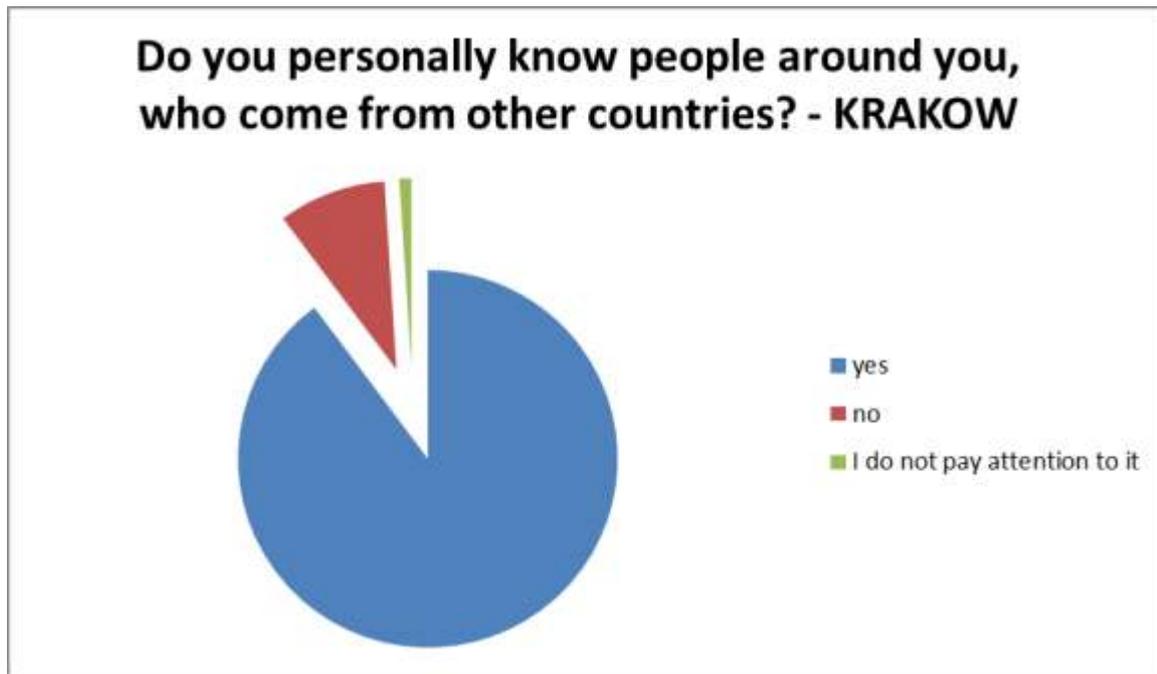
Source: Author

According to data from survey questionnaires presented above, students in Berlin are more open to building and keeping relations with students from other countries and ethnic groups than the ones who study in Poland. Similarly, as in the case of the previous table, students in Berlin also less often say that they pay attention to students from other nationalities and ethnic groups around them, what may prove that functioning in a multicultural environment makes these relations so common that some students do not pay attention to the country of origin of their fellow students.

**Chart 1a.** The level of acquaintance with people of other nationalities and ethnic groups - students from Berlin

Source: Author

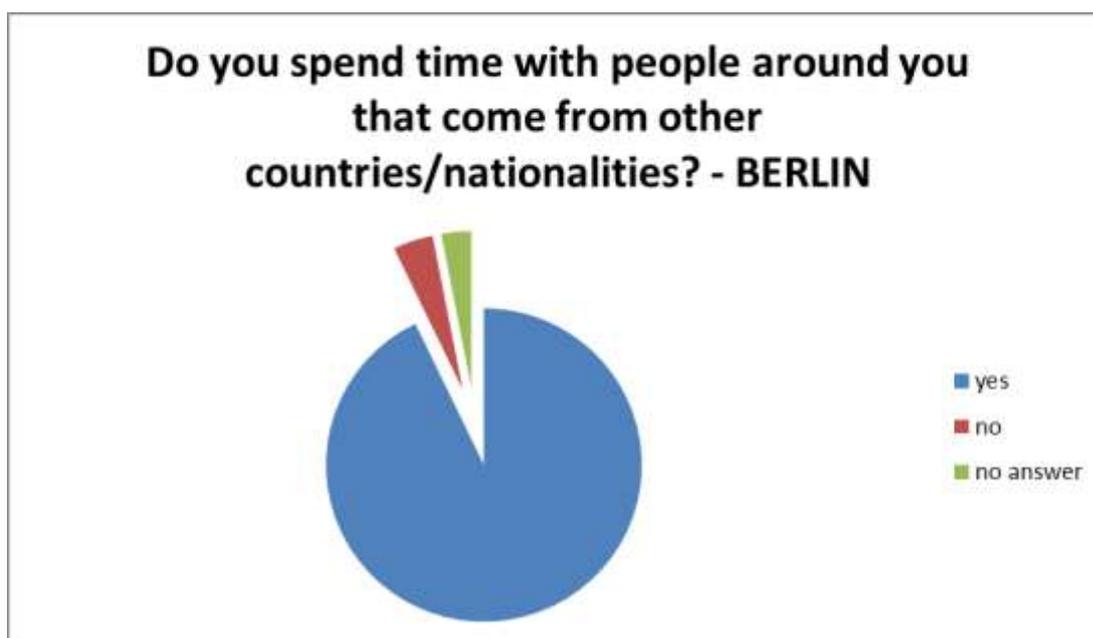
**Chart 1b.** The level of acquaintance with people of other nationalities and ethnic groups - students from Krakow



Source: Author

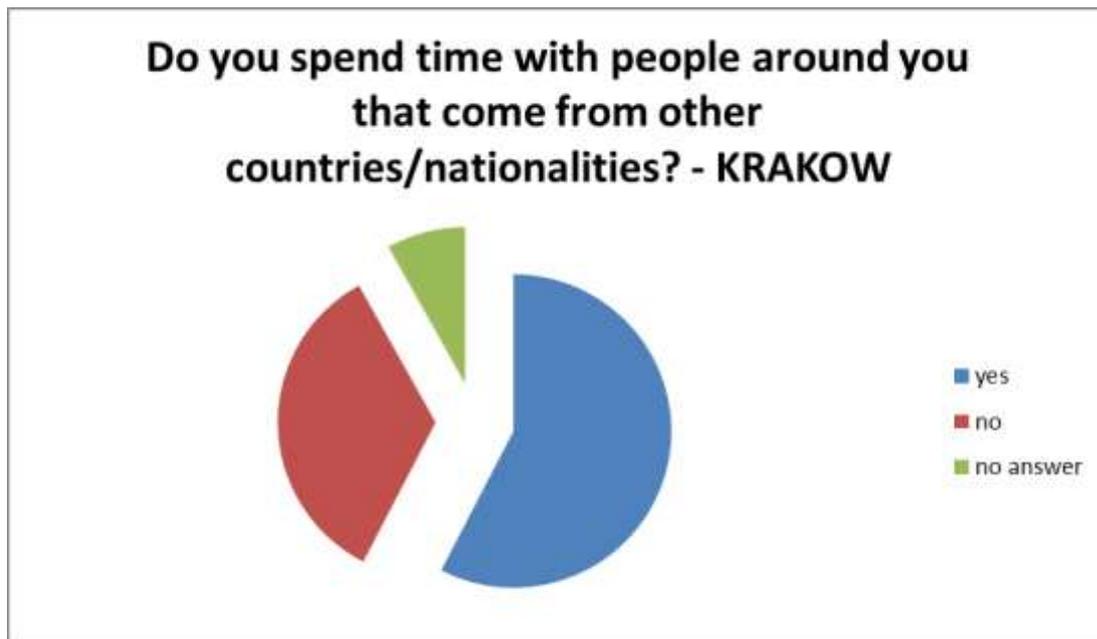
The two above charts also confirm that the students' level of acquaintance with people from other countries and nationalities around them is different in each city, not only at the universities. Students in Krakow declare a lower level of acquaintance with people of other nationalities than their peers from, Berlin but they also more often pay attention to the origins of people around them.

**Chart 2a.** Spending time with people from other countries/nationalities – Berlin



Source: Author

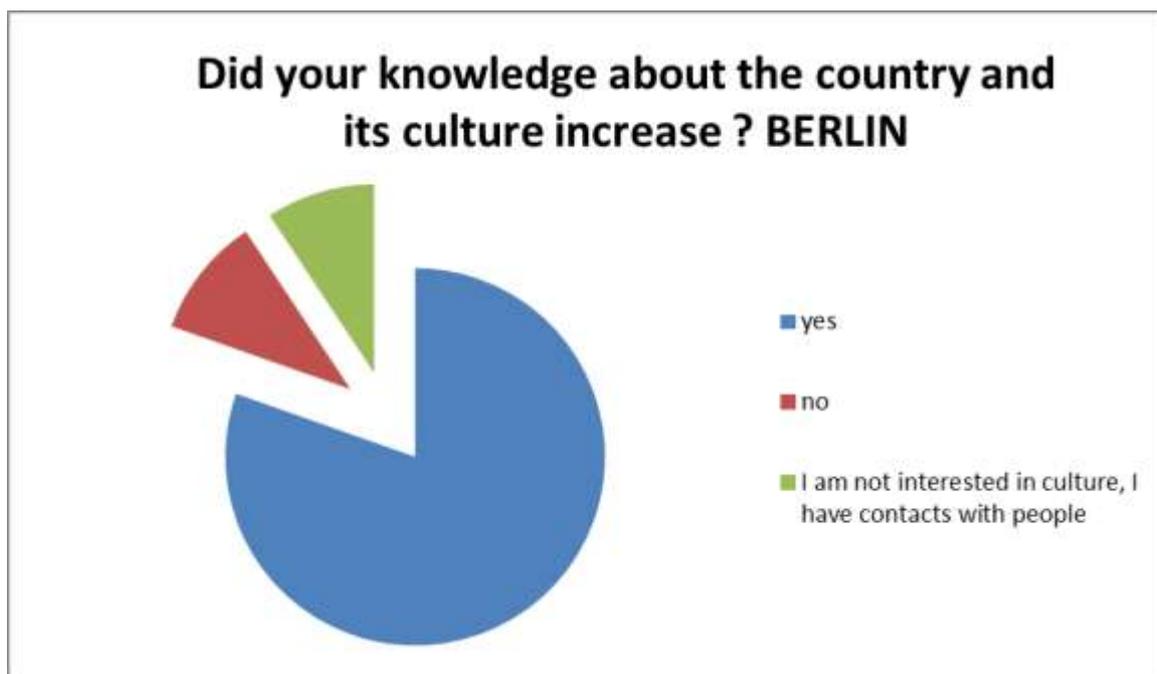
**Chart 2b.** Spending time with people from other countries/nationalities – Krakow



Source: Author

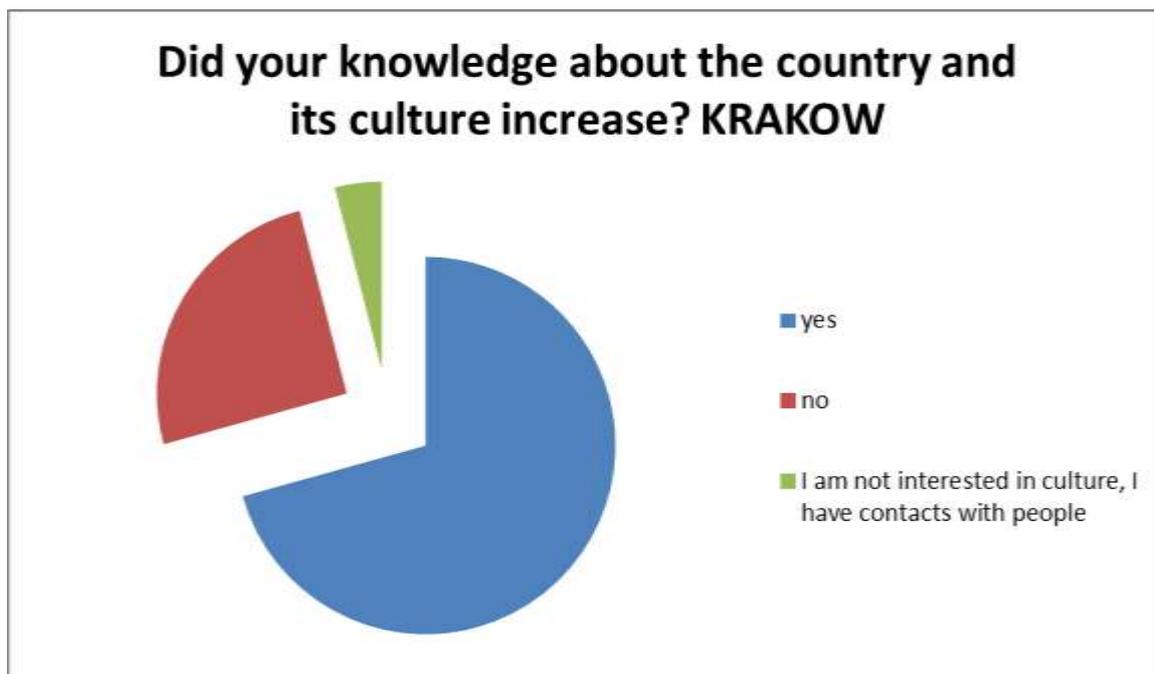
Chart 2b demonstrates an even more marked discrepancy between answers given by students in Krakow. When asked about spending free time with people of other nationality or country, it is more common for them to report that they have no relations with such people, while students in Berlin report that spending time together with people from other countries/nationalities is common.

**Chart 3a.** Relationship between keeping relations with people of other nationality/ethnicity and the increase of one's knowledge about their country and its culture - Berlin



Source: Author

**Chart 3b.** Relationship between keeping relations with people of other nationality/ethnicity and the increase of one's knowledge about their country and its culture – Krakow

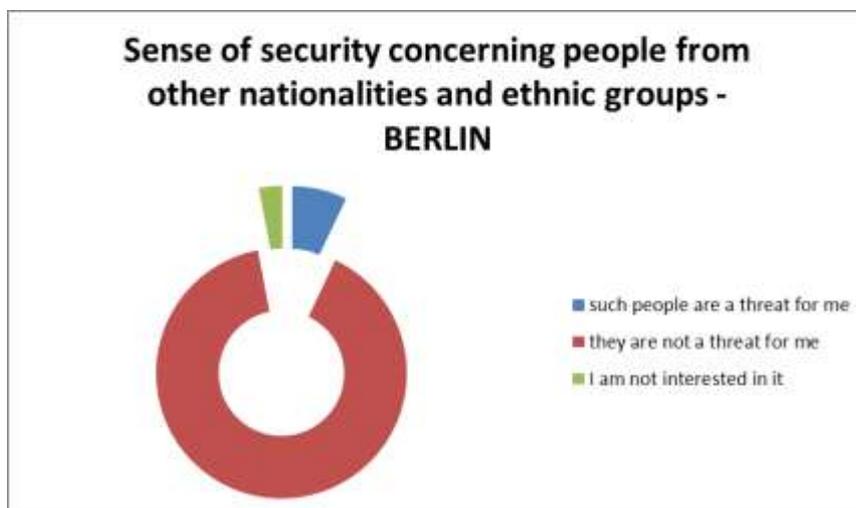


Source: Author

The two charts above show to what extent, according to students' declarations, keeping relations or spending time with people of other nationality or ethnicity influences the level of knowledge about the culture of a given country, region or ethnic group. Students in both cities declare that their knowledge about culture has increased but this chart presents a higher level of individualisation of relations of students from Berlin with people coming from other cultures, because these students more often reported that they were interested in contacts with people.

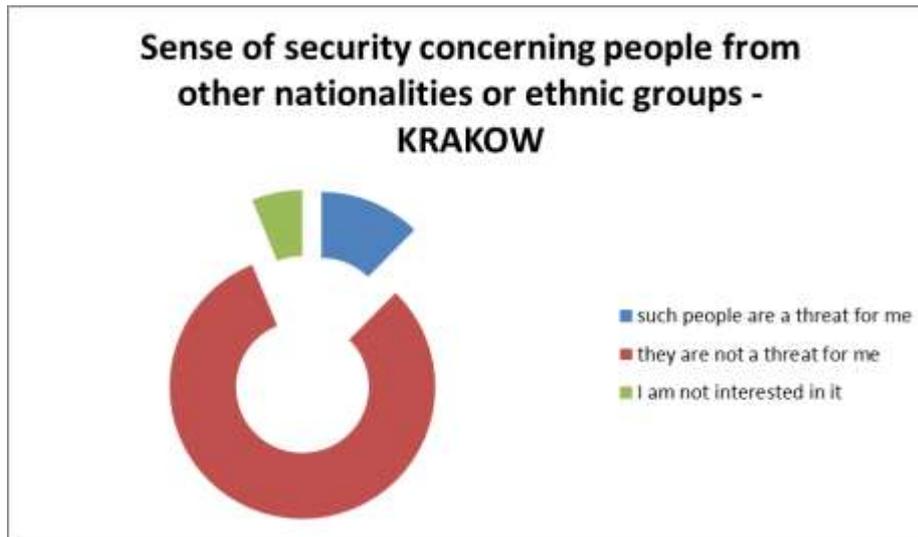
Another portion of the survey results presents answers concerning students' attitudes towards sense of security and sources of fear.

**Chart 4a.** The level of students' sense of security – Berlin



Source: Author

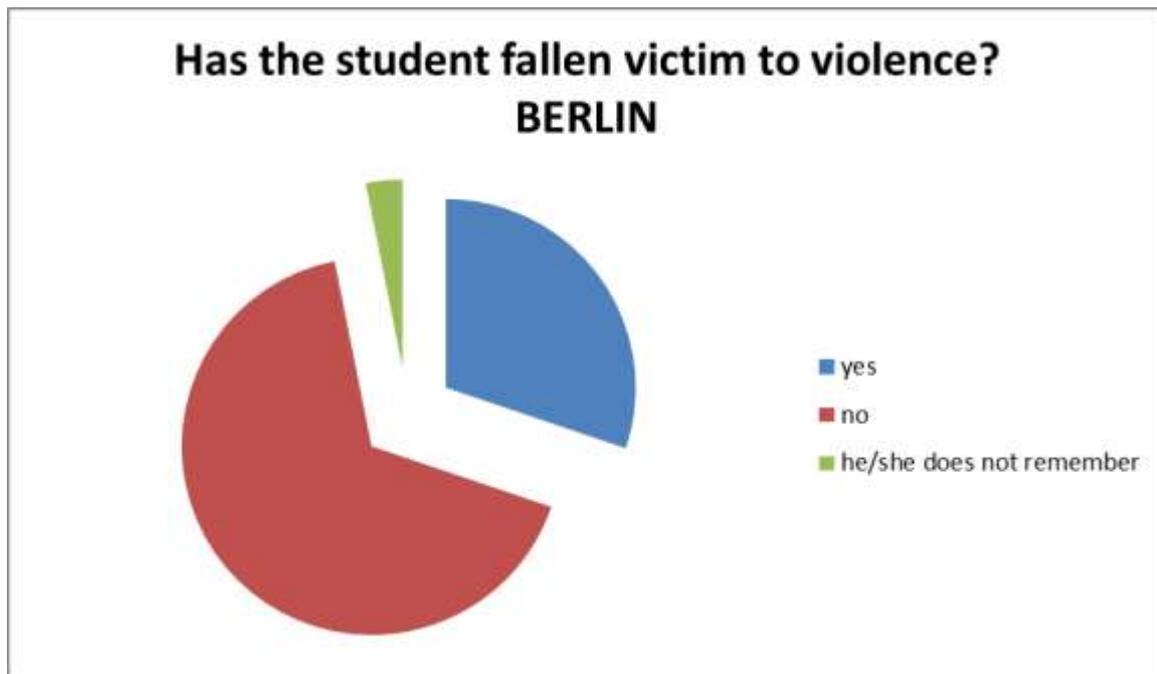
**Chart 4b.** The level of students' sense of security – Krakow



Source: Author

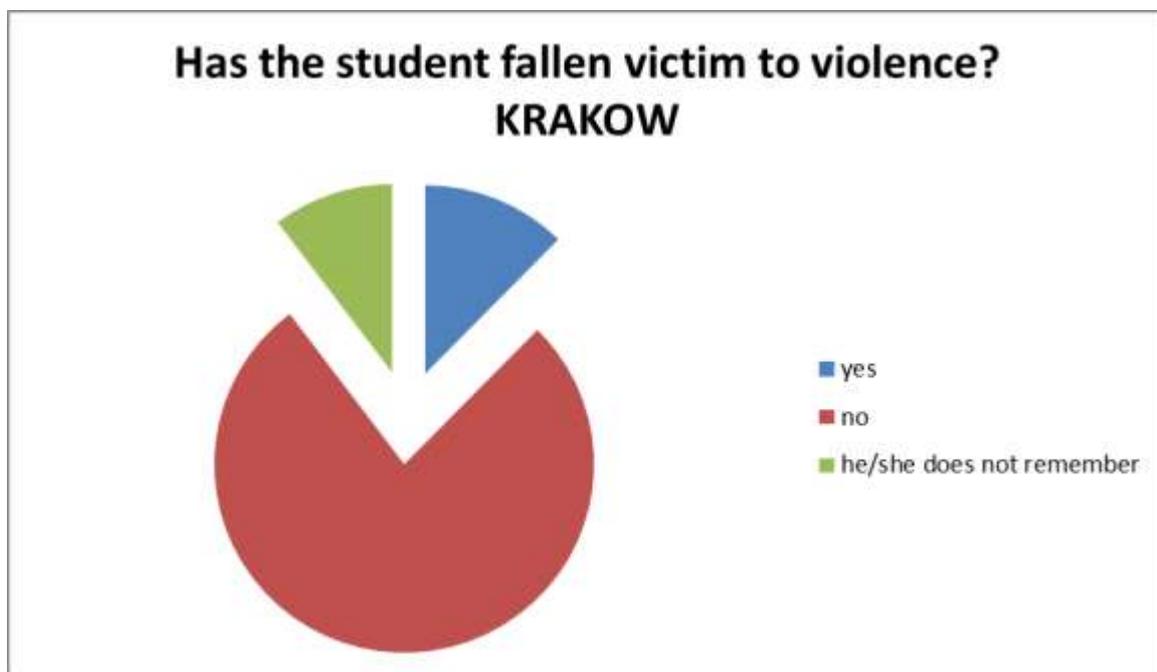
The above charts shows that students in both Berlin and Krakow basically do not treat people from other nationalities or ethnic groups as a threat source, but students from Krakow are more anxious. On the other hand, students in Berlin reported more often being not interested in this issue, what may mean that they see some threats but the source of those threats are not associated with nationality or ethnicity. Also, potential sources of their feeling of being threatened seem to be interesting. Students from Berlin report that the reason for that is the fact that another religion (that will become dominant) impose a certain model of living on them and that people coming from other countries/cultures with a different system of values will decide about their life in the future. According to students from Berlin, the inflow of new workers who might take over their jobs is not perceived as a threat. Students from Krakow share the fears of their peers from Berlin, pointing to the same sources of anxiety but they also emphasise the feeling of being threatened concerning the possibility of a worker from another country taking over their jobs.

**Chart 5a.** Nationality-motivated and ethnically-motivated violence - Berlin



Source: Author

**Chart 5b.** Nationality-motivated and ethnically-motivated violence - Krakow



Source: Author

The two graphs presented above show that students studying in Berlin were more often victims of violence motivated by their nationality, skin colour, religion or views than students in Krakow. These data are particularly interesting in juxtaposition with previous charts concerning the sense of security of students in each city. Students in Krakow declare more

fears connected with the sense of security, although, at the same time they less often fall victim to violence connected with nationality, skin colour, practiced religion or declared views.

Answers about the character of violence the students have fallen victim to, included mostly public comments and insults, exclusion from the group a student had participated in, and beating in the case of people from Berlin. Students reported quite rarely about hate speech towards them on the Internet. On the other hand, students in Krakow answered that it was aggression and hate speech on the Internet that were the basic source of violence against them, a few people also said that violence against them consisted in public insults and negative comments about them.

Juxtaposing details of people who declared that violence was used against them due to their nationality, skin colour and practiced religion, in the case of students from Berlin these were Germans (aged 20 to 49, mostly young people aged 22-25), also an Austrian man, people of Spanish, English, Japanese and Turkish origin (one answer).

On the other hand, among students in Krakow, the victims of violence were Poles (aged 22 to 40) and Ukrainians (aged 19 to 22).

**Chart 6a.** Violence motivated by nationality/ethnicity around students - Berlin



Source: Author

**Chart 6b.** Violence motivated by nationality/ethnicity around students - Krakow



Source: Author

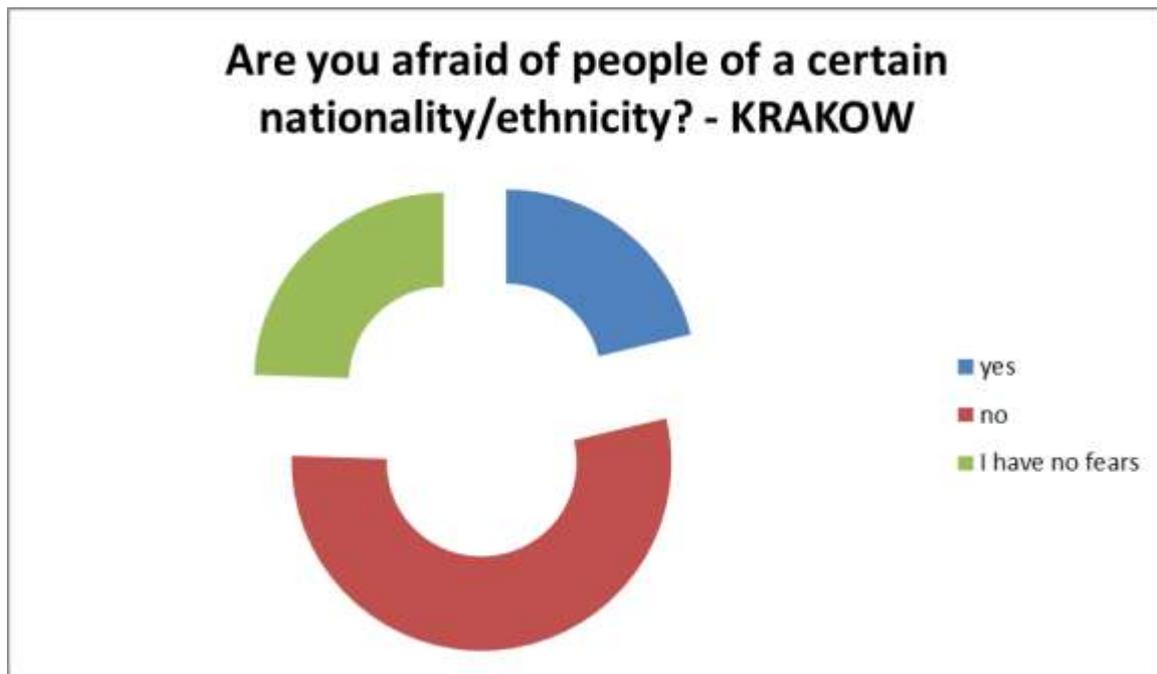
Just as in the case of previous charts, there is a marked difference in the experience in the environment of students from Berlin and Krakow as well. As students from Berlin declared, violence motivated by nationality, skin colour, religion or presented views happened around them more often than in the case of declarations of students from Krakow.

**Chart 7a.** Fears of students connected with people of certain nationalities/ethnic groups – Berlin



Source: Author

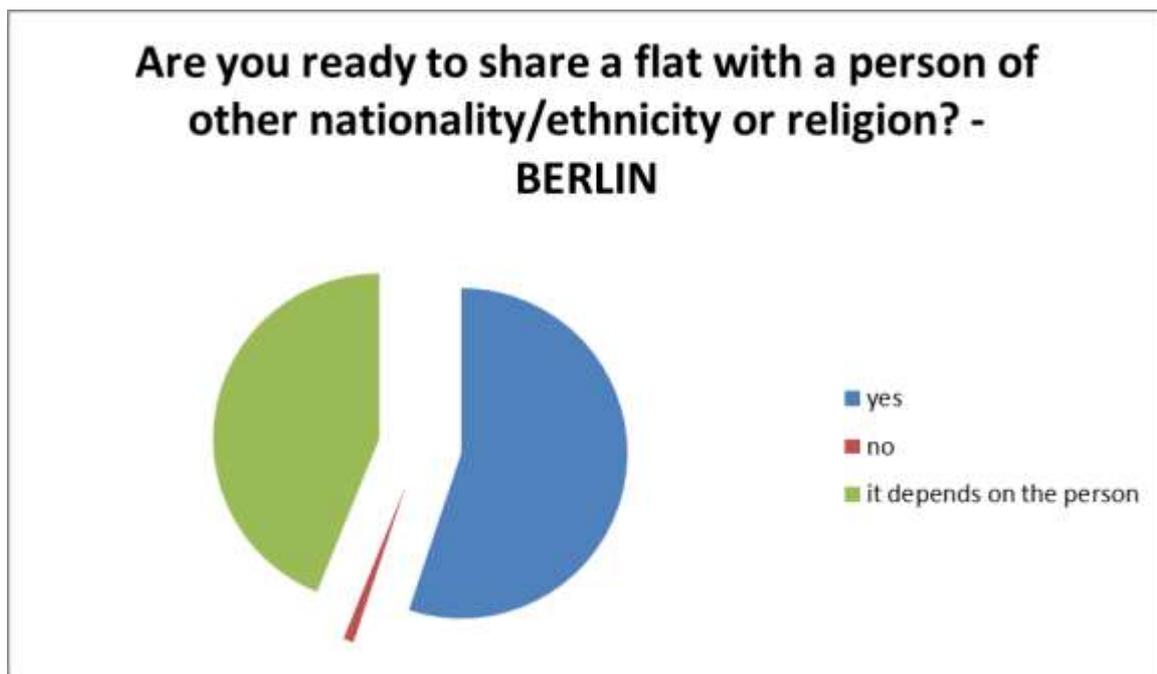
**Chart 7b.** Fears of students connected with people of certain nationalities/ethnic groups - Krakow



*Source: Author*

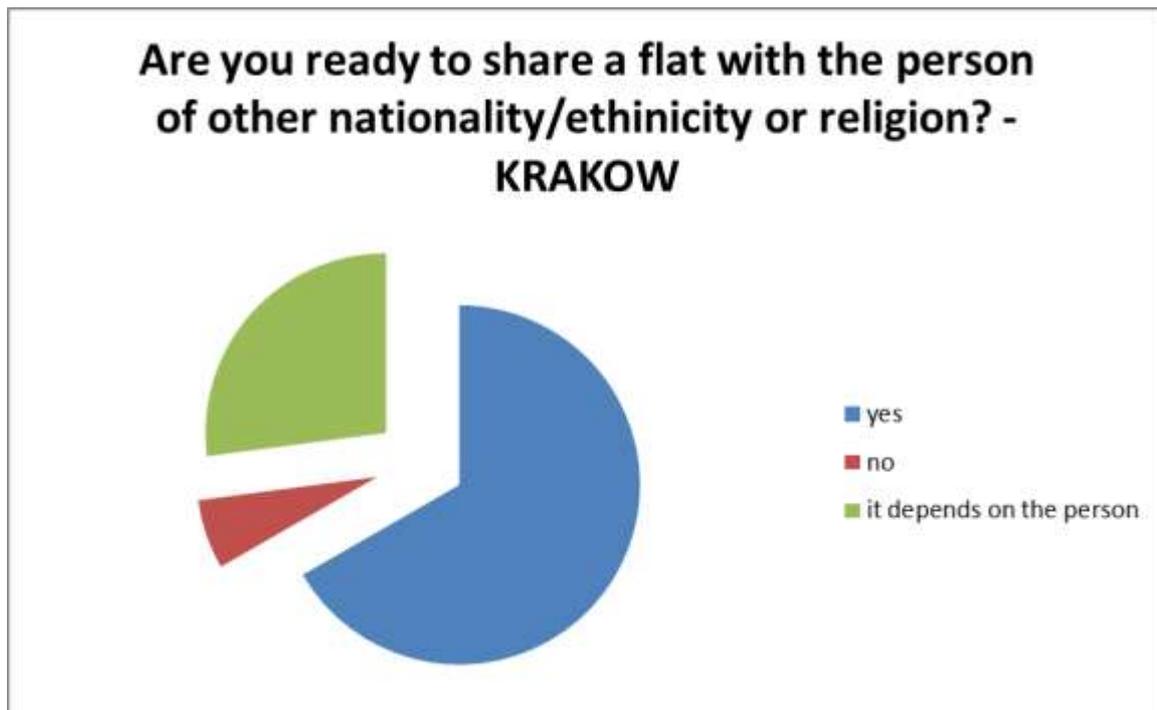
The surveyed students from both cities had a similar level of fear of people of a certain ethnic group or nationality. Both in the case of students from Berlin and Krakow, the most feared group are people from Muslim countries, although students in Krakow also mentioned people from the Far East, from Central and Eastern Europe and the inhabitants of Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Chart 8a.** Declarations concerning sharing the same space – students in Berlin



*Source: Author*

**Chart 8b.** Declarations concerning sharing the same space – students in Krakow



Source: Author

The above data, just like the ones presented before, show different attitudes of students from Berlin and Krakow. A vast majority of students is ready to share a flat with a person of another nationality and ethnicity, whereas students from Krakow gave more negative answers and also less often said that their decision depends on a given person, i.e. on individualised choice. This may prove that the level of prejudice and using stereotypes significantly influences attitudes of students from Krakow.

**Chart 9a.** Declarations excluding sharing the same space – students in Berlin



Source: Author

**Chart 9b.** Declarations excluding sharing the same space – students in Krakow



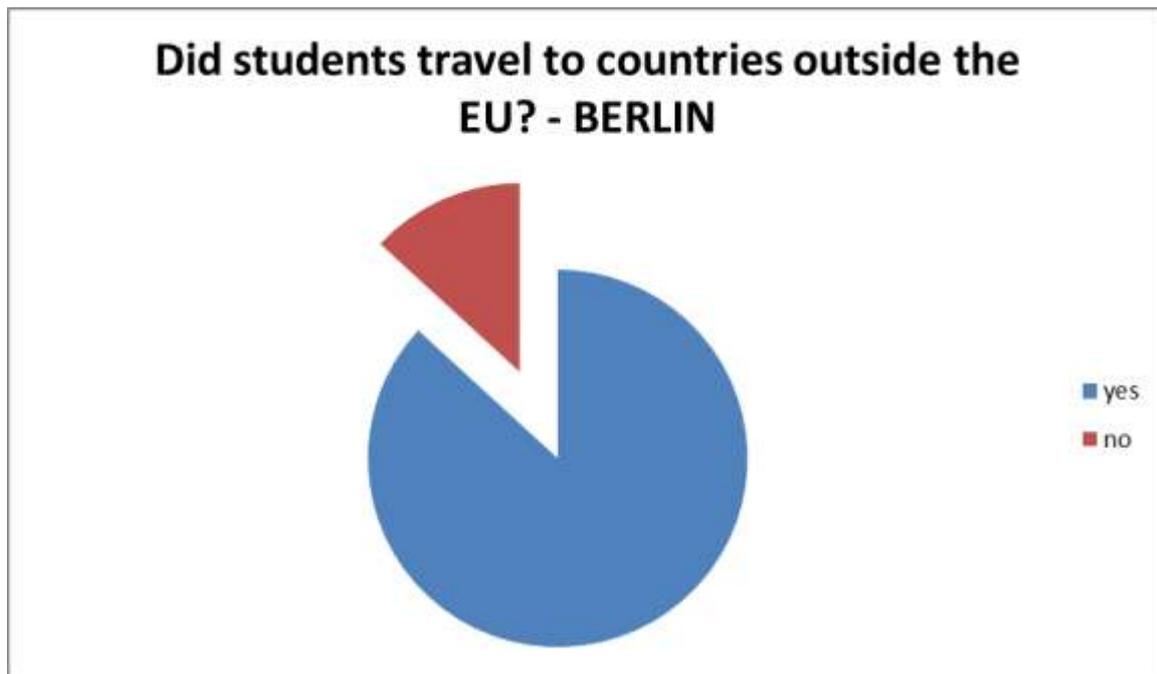
*Source: Author*

In the survey, students' answers were verified by putting in questions sounding differently but concerning the same topic in different places of the questionnaire in order to confirm answers given by students. Verification confirmed attitudes of students from Berlin but verified attitudes of students from Krakow, pointing to a higher level of prejudice towards living together with people belonging to other nationalities, ethnic or religious groups.

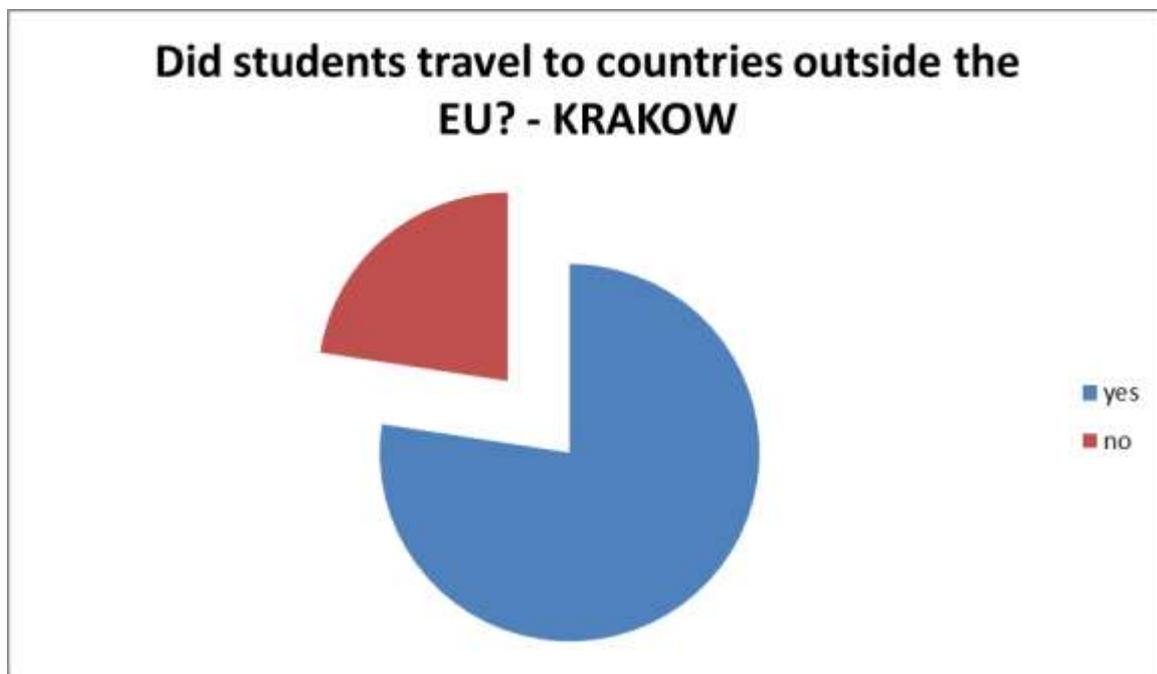
Among people the students from Berlin exclude sharing a flat with were religious extremists and Islam believers. There were more groups of people students from Krakow exclude living with: Islam believers, Gypsies, Jews, Germans, Ukrainians, Africans. Interestingly, in the case of the group of students from Krakow, the analysis was also done by extracting answers obtained from students (Poles and Ukrainians). In the first group there were: Gypsies, Muslims, Jews, Germans, Ukrainians and Africans. In the other: Muslims, Catholics, Russians and Poles.

According to the above results, the main source of prejudice are mainly religious differences, both in the case of students from Berlin and Krakow. Among Poles, research also revealed individual anti-Semitic attitudes (people who said that they rule out living with a person of Jewish nationality were aged between 35 and 45).

Another group of the presented research results concern experiences of students from travelling and staying in countries outside the European Union.

**Chart 10a.** Mobility of students – Berlin

Source: Author

**Chart 10b.** Mobility of students – Krakow

Source: Author

The two above charts present students' own experiences of travelling to other countries outside the European Union. It follows from them that students from Berlin have much more experience connected with travelling outside the EU than students from Krakow.

Answers concerning the longest period of stay abroad in the case of students from Berlin include a period of up to two weeks, however, there are also answers pointing up to a period between one and three months. The most common reasons for travelling were holidays, then education or vocational apprenticeship, visiting friends or family and finally; working abroad. On the other hand, among students from Krakow, the period of stay is not longer than two weeks, less often up to a month and the reasons of the stay are most often holidays or visiting family or friends.

Juxtaposing answers to questions about travelling abroad with fears of students of people of other nationalities or ethnic groups we obtain the result that going on holidays does not help in overcoming prejudice and fear. Among students who expressed fear and prejudice against others were mostly these who declared trips (usually two-week ones) on holidays. They fear mostly Muslims (the largest number of answers), individual answers concerned the residents of Africa – Northern and Sub-Saharan.

This area was not studied, however, it is worth mentioning as an area for a possible continuation of this research - to what extent tourism, including mass tourism, influences the creation or reinforcement of prejudice and fears against people of other nationality, ethnicity or culture.

The last portion of the presented survey results concerns the influence of traditional media, including statements of politicians in the media, on shaping students' attitudes in each city. Answers concerning activity of students in social media were selected from the analysis, as they are a separate type of mass medium that may be a place for self-education of students.

**Chart 11a.** Traditional media as a source of information for students – Berlin



Source: Author

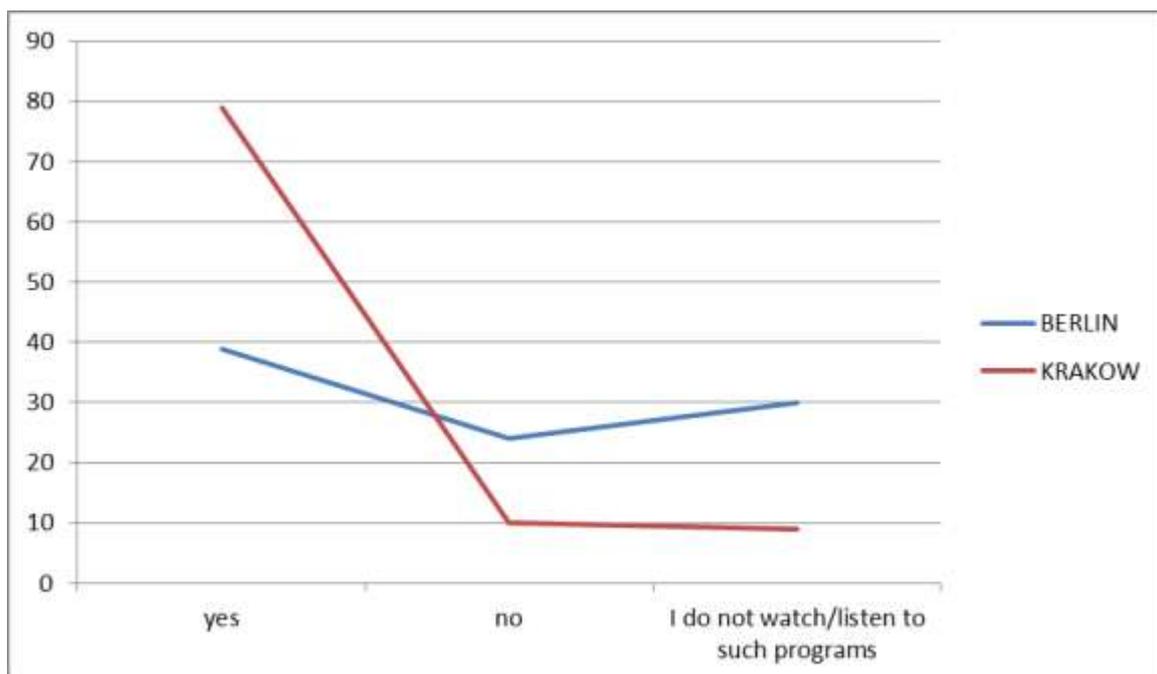
**Chart 11b.** Traditional media as a source of information for students – Krakow



Source: Author

According to the above charts students in Krakow and in Berlin have similar attitudes towards messages concerning multicultural Europe presented in traditional media. Both students in Berlin and in Krakow answer that they rather do not watch/listen or do not remember programmes that would tackle the issue of a multicultural Europe.

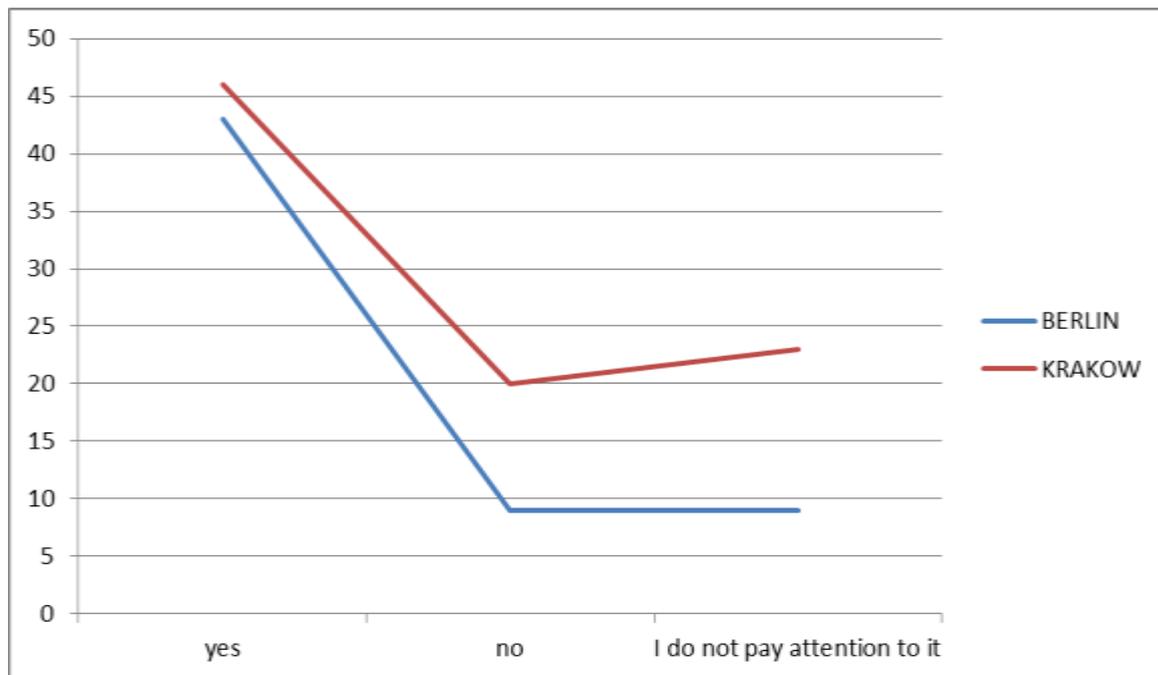
**Chart 12.** Statements of politicians on the radio and on television – students' opinions



Source: Author

The above chart presents differences in students' opinions about statements of politicians in traditional media (radio, television). Students in Krakow stated that programs they watch are highly political, contrary to the students from Berlin.

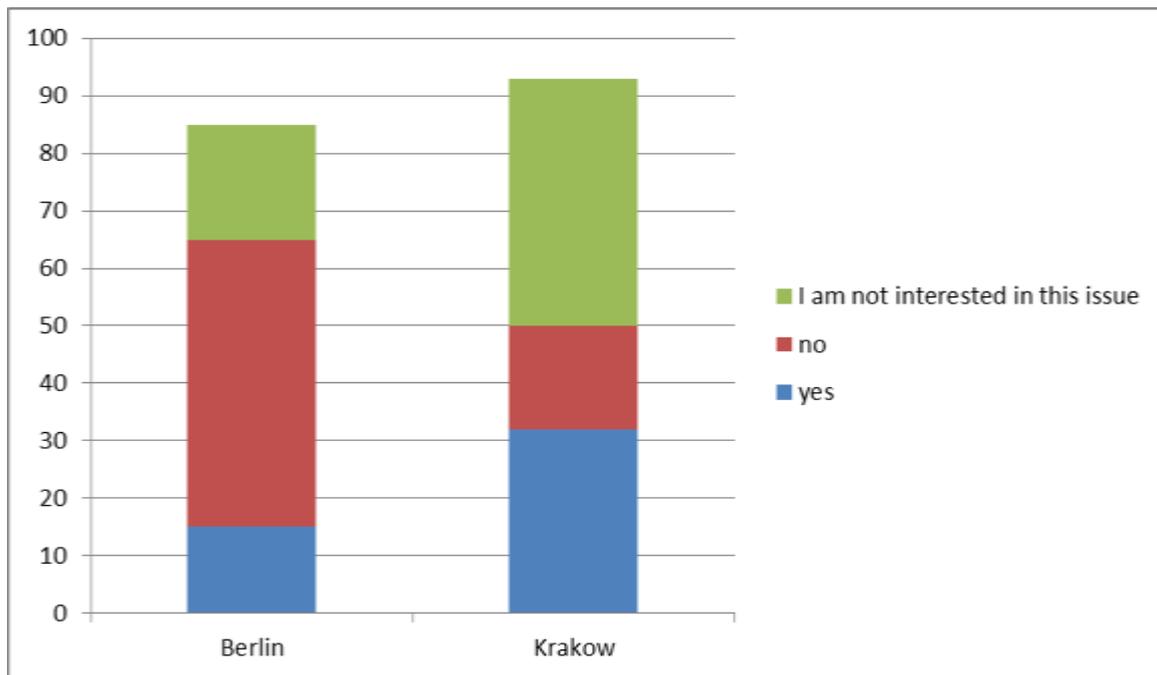
**Chart 13.** Statements of politicians on the radio and on television about multicultural Europe – students' opinions



Source: Author

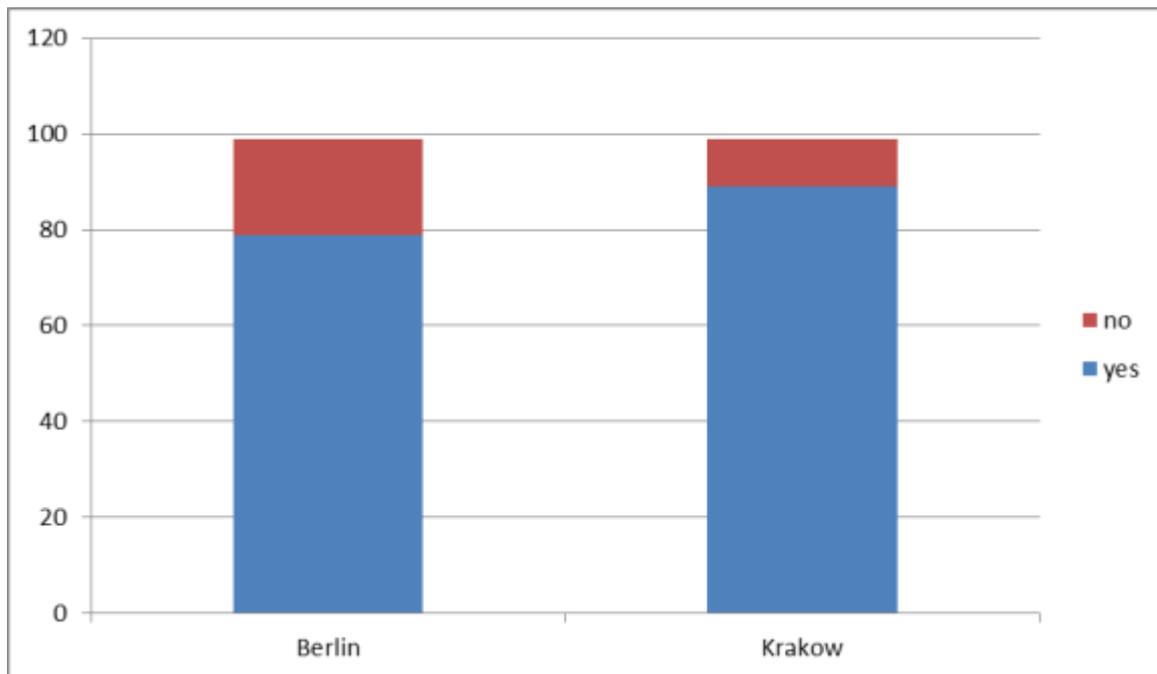
Making data from the previous two charts more precise, where students' observations concerning participation of politicians in radio or TV programs are presented, they were asked in the survey about the participation of politicians in discussions about multicultural Europe. Students from Krakow declared a similar number of statements of politicians like students from Berlin but at the same time they less often pay attention to such statements.

**Chart 14.** Students' opinions concerning the statement of German Chancellor Angela Merkel about the failure of the so-called "multikulti" policy



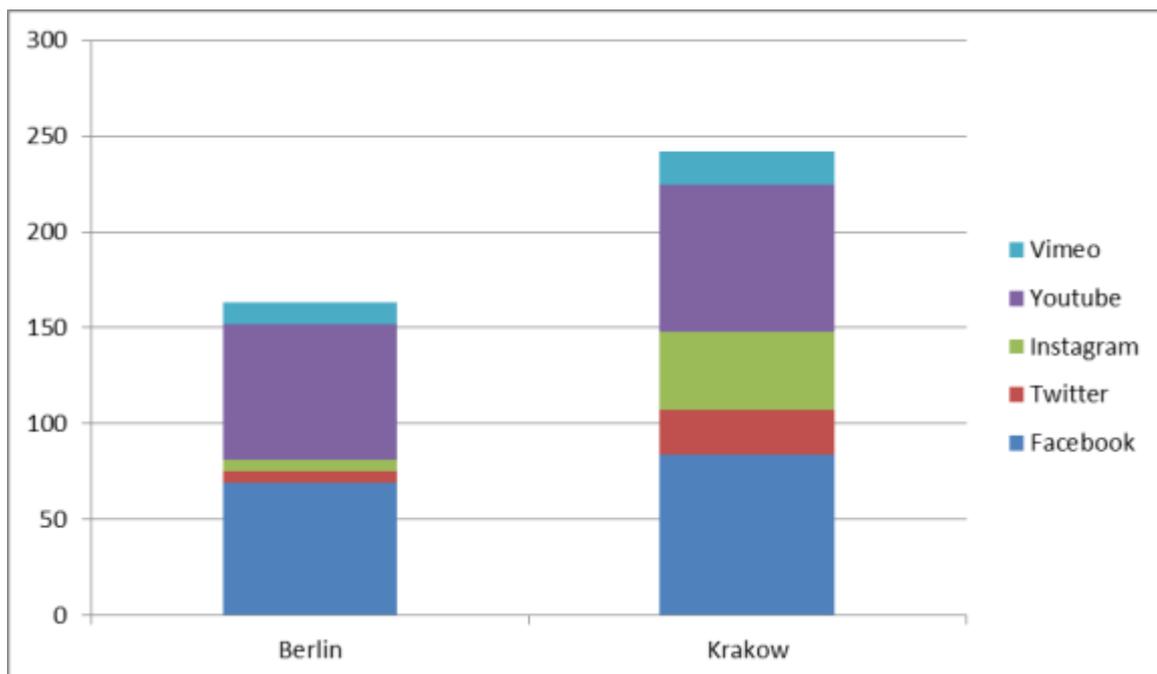
Source: Author

Students from Berlin and Krakow shows different attitudes in relating to the words of German Chancellor, Angela Merkel about the failure of the "multikulti" policy. The majority of students from Berlin declared that they do not agree with Merkel's statement, but students from Krakow said that they are not interested in this issue or they agree with the statement. Discrepancy of students' attitudes in each city is rather the result of students' own experience and their social competence shaped in certain social conditions – students from Berlin live their lives in a multicultural environment; something they can experience every day. We also can not underestimate the phenomenon of political correctness that –to some extent– might have influenced the answers of students from Berlin.

**Chart 15.** Students' activity in communication through social media

Source: Author

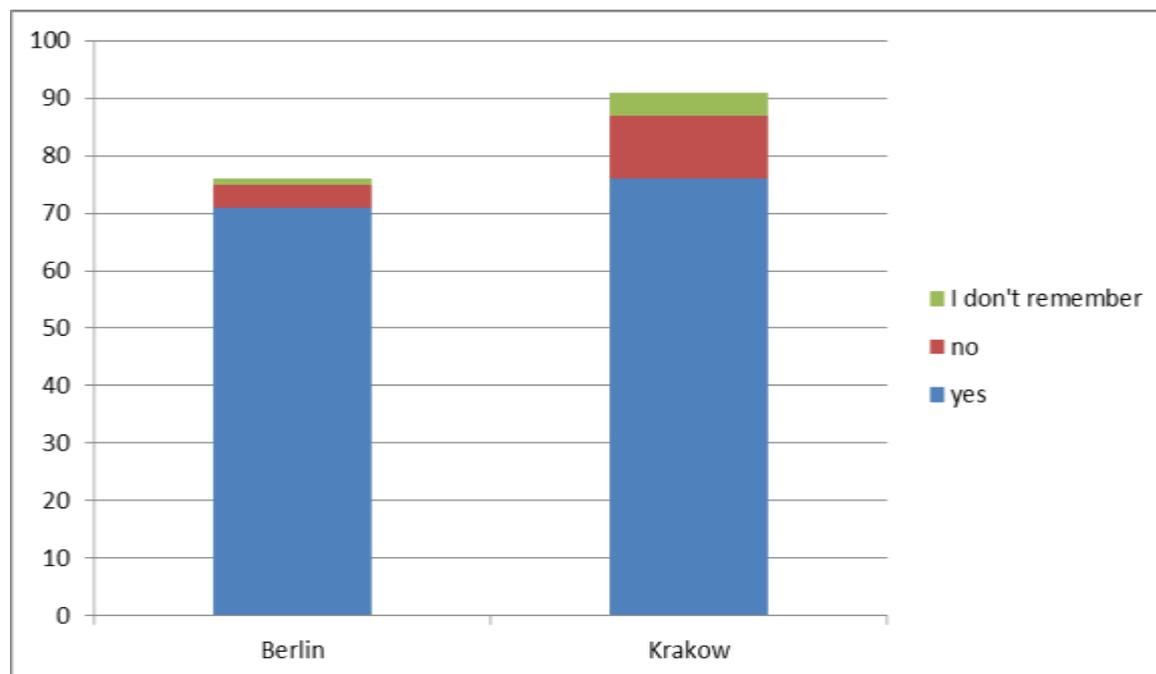
The survey revealed slight differences in using social media by students from Berlin and Krakow. Students from Berlin use social media less actively than their peers from Krakow. This may be the result of different ages of students – average age of students from Berlin who participated in the study was 28 years of age and average age of students from Krakow was 22 years.

**Chart 16.** Social media used by students

Source: Author

The above chart shows students' preferences regarding social media that they use. The most popular ones, both among students from Berlin and Krakow are the social website Facebook and the content website Youtube. Students from Krakow also pointed to Instagram and Twitter, as social media they use.<sup>6</sup>

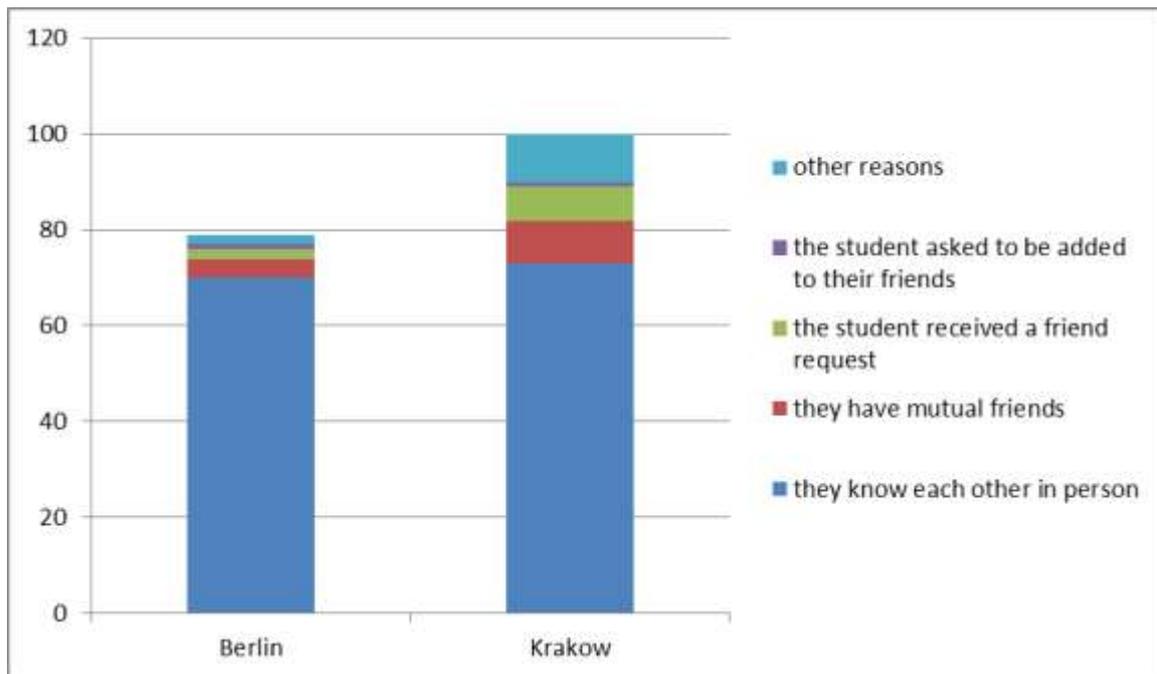
**Chart 17.** Students' declarations about having friends of other nationality/ethnicity on social media



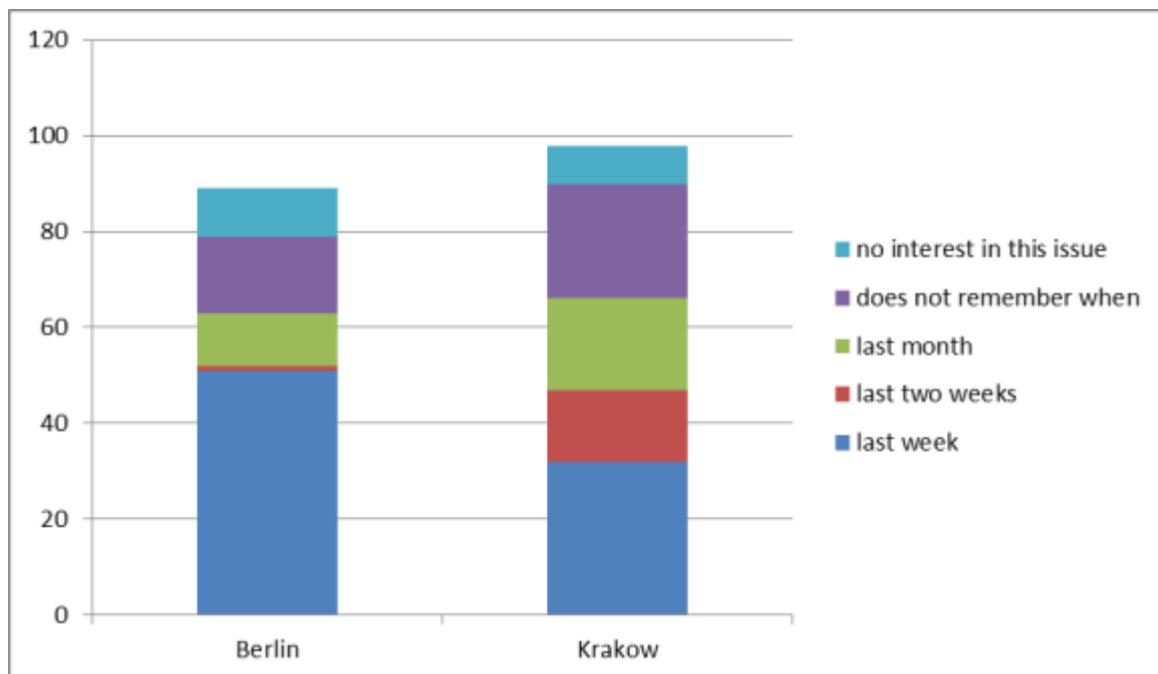
Source: Author

A vast majority of students declared that they have people of other nationalities or ethnic groups among Facebook friends. More students from Krakow said no. Reasons for starting relations on Facebook are presented in the below chart. Usually, friends on Facebook are people who know each other personally. In the case of students from Krakow there is more variety in reasons why students start relations with others.

<sup>6</sup> Answers about the popularity of Facebook and Youtube result from many previous surveys so in the questionnaire the analysis of students' activity on Facebook has been adopted.

**Chart 18.** Reasons for having friends of other nationality or ethnicity

Source: Author

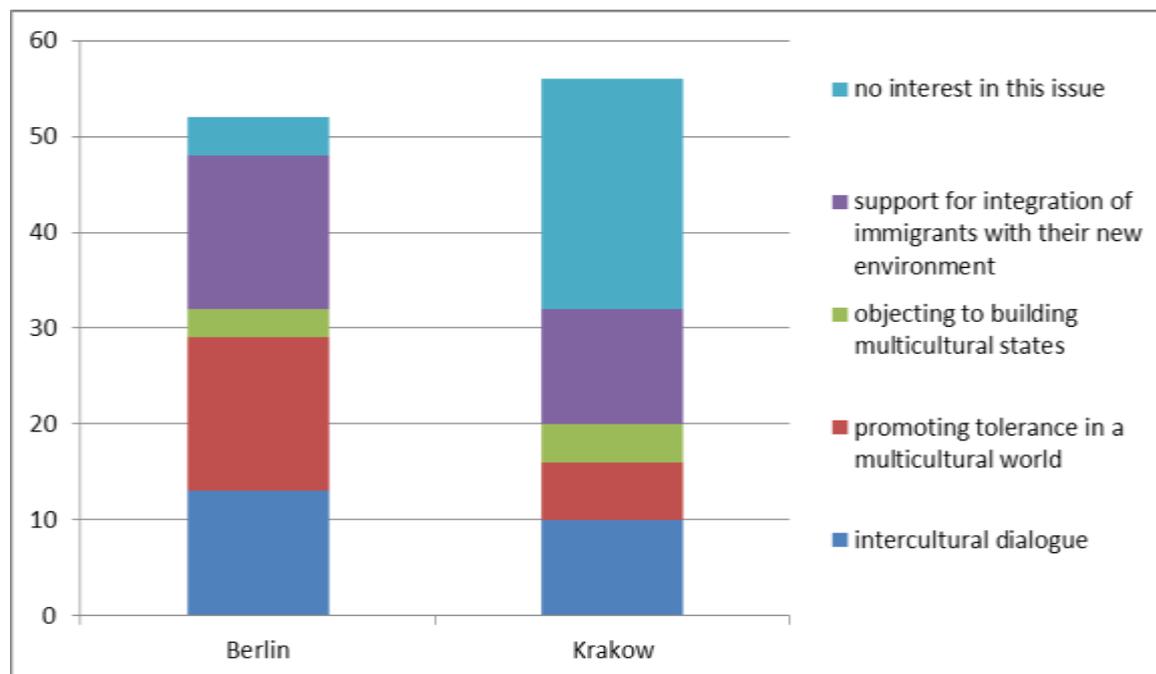
**Chart 19.** Activity of students in searching for and analysing information about multiculturalism

Source: Author

The analysis of activity on the Internet points to differences in the interest in the topic of multiculturalism of students from Berlin and Krakow. The former more often declare searching for and analysing information devoted to the issue of multiculturalism or people of other nationality or ethnicity on the Internet. Students from Krakow, as compared with their

peers from Berlin, more often point to the lack of interest in this topic. This conclusion results from the analysis of the number of people who do not remember when they searched for such information on the Internet, as well as open declarations of people about lack of interest in this issue.

**Chart 20.** Being a member of a group or community connected with the issue of multiculturalism on Facebook



Source: Author

The above table presents declarations about students' membership in groups and communities on Facebook. Students' attitudes expressed by belonging to them are different. Students from Berlin are more often members of groups and communities that are devoted to intercultural dialogue, promoting tolerance in a multicultural world and supporting integration of immigrants in a new environment. On the other hand, students from Krakow usually said that they were not interested in this issue. In addition, it is worth emphasising that both students from Berlin and from Krakow rarely declare negative attitudes towards the creation of multicultural states - the lowest index concerns declarations of membership in groups and communities that gather people around the idea of objection to building multicultural states.

## CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SURVEY AND PERSPECTIVES OF FURTHER RESEARCH

The carried out pilot survey revealed differences in attitudes of students from Berlin and Krakow. Students studying in Krakow pay more attention to multiculturalism of the environment they function in, what may prove that the change from a nationally homogenous to a more multicultural society draws their attention. On the other hand, students from Berlin treat multicultural environment they function in as natural - many respondents declare that they pay no attention to people of other nationalities and ethnic groups around them. Among

students in Berlin individualisation of relations is also more noticeable – they pay attention to people, not to their nationality or ethnicity.

Students from Krakow are also more prejudiced and have more fears than their peers from Berlin. Interestingly, negative experiences, like being the victim of violence motivated by nationality, ethnicity, skin colour, views or religion are to a greater extent shared by students in Berlin than in Krakow. At the same time, the former declare a much lower level of prejudice than the latter. This may provoke a conclusion that one's own experiences, even negative ones, do not lead to increased prejudice and fear, also due to individualisation of social relations.

Students in Krakow pointed to a high level of political content of messages in electronic media – on the radio and on TV. At the same time, in the case of both groups of students, it has not been established that politicians' statements influence different attitudes, they can, however have impact on preserving schemas and prejudice as well as reinforcing fears.

Also travelling and staying abroad does not influence overcoming prejudice and fears – these have more often been declared by students from Krakow, who at the same time declared travelling for a period not longer than a month on holiday.

In the case of both groups of students the source of prejudice are fears connected with religious differences and influence of another religion on everyday life. Students from Berlin and from Krakow said that their fears and prejudice are mainly against people of Muslim origin, practising Islam.

Students in Krakow more often communicate with the use of social media than students in Berlin. The latter at the same time declare that they more often use social media to search for information connected with multiculturalism, promoting tolerance and helping immigrants to assimilate with the society. At the same time both groups declared a rather low level of interest and activity in groups, whose aim is opposing to building multicultural societies, what may be treated as a positive effect. The analysis how students in both cities use social media has shown that they do not use them to start new relations but only move relations existing in real life to the Internet. We cannot therefore definitely say that students' activity in social media influences overcoming stereotypes and eliminating prejudice, although in the long run it may be important, particularly in the light of increasing educational mobility of students. By emphasising the importance of project identities<sup>7</sup>, Manuel Castells points out that their aim is changing cultural codes that create frameworks for communication in the network society. The result is changing the culture of virtual reality and supplementing it with alternative values. (2009: 385) It can thus be supposed that this mobility, international and intercultural contacts in the real world will in the future create new project identities. All the more so, as Jan van Dijk remarks: *"The Internet does not replace the existing ways of communication but supplements them. /.../ thanks to the support of the network and various weak bonds (coexisting with the traditional strong bonds) new communication groups and even new community types are created."* (Van Dijk 2010: 237)

The carried out survey at the same time found planes for continuing deepened analyses in order to further state the dependence between own experiences of an individual, the educational process and the impact of stereotypes on shaping attitudes in communication processes. These analyses are particularly important in determining differences between representatives of other multicultural communities, e.g. attitudes of young people in France, where also the level of saturation of the society with multiculturalism is significant and at the same time, unlike in Germany, integration of immigrants with the environment, through social activities, is not as effective as in Germany.

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<sup>7</sup> The importance of project identities as exemplification of political self-awareness and representation of different ideologies is also mentioned by Darin Barney in *The Network Society* (2008: 172)

The survey also made it possible to draw a conclusion that students from Berlin living in a multicultural environment are less prejudiced and less fearful of multiculturalism than students in Krakow (Poles and Ukrainians), for whom multiculturalism is still a social novelty. This proves that living in a multicultural environment, despite experiencing violence more often, helps individualisation of perception of people of other nationalities, ethnic or cultural groups, i.e. really eliminates stereotypes. Students from Krakow (Poles and Ukrainians) who have less contact with cultural variety (results presented in Table 1 proved it) usually follow stereotypes when defining their attitude towards the environment.<sup>8</sup> An interesting area for qualitative research that may be continuation of the carried out pilot study, is the observation of communication in social media in different groups and communities whose aim is to promote tolerance, equality, intercultural dialogue, and supporting immigrants in their assimilation with the environment. Such research would make it possible to show real differences in arguments used by young people in different countries, who are for or against the idea of building multicultural societies.

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<sup>8</sup> According to Walter G. Stephan and Cookie W. Stephan: "When a stereotype is activated it can trigger the mechanism of a self-fulfilling prophecy. This process consists of three stages. First, people are prone to look for such information that will confirm their expectations. Second, information confirming the stereotype draws attention better and is better coded, unless the evidence contrary to the expectations is strong and unambiguous. Even if the information undermining the stereotype is remembered, it will probably not be attributed to internal factors and, moreover, the person who does not fit the stereotype is often disliked. Third, expectations resulting from a stereotype influence human behaviour, increasing the possibility that a representative of a foreign group will react in a way confirming the expectations." (2003: 42).

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