

Stereotypes and Manipulation in the Scientific and Medial Narrations About Poland's Electoral Space

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Abstract

Much attention on voting behaviour is paid of not only scholars but also the media so these considerations inevitably grow shallower and subordinated to ideologisation and tabloidisation. The referred to analyses are therefore based not so on sound knowledge but rather on superficial associations and stereotypes, if not ignorance. Several types of the ailments would be discussed, viz. (1) overestimating of the results of opinion polls, (2) manipulation of the media, (3) the trivialisation of reasons for casting invalid votes and voting abstention, (4) the arrogant political interpretations of the electoral results, (5) incompetent prattling about the electorate flow and (6) a superficial interpretation of the role of the old political divisions in shaping the electoral space. The empirical analysis for Poland indicated that the nineteenth-century political divisions account for as little as 4% of the voting behaviour. This result contrast much to the general belief in the structural role of these divisions. The belief, widely published in the media, is based on purely cartographic rather than statistical analyses. The cartographic analyses are misleading because: (1) they show areas with a relative rather than absolute dominance of political phenomena, usually the support for a party; (2) they show a general trend rather than any clear-cut gradients or boundaries. The interpretation of cartographic analyses is therefore mainly intuitive and based on associations rather than facts. The spatial variation of voting behaviour is, however, quantifiable, so it can be calculated rather than interpreted in purely graphic categories. The perception of social and political phenomena in society is shaped by media coverage. Manipulation and indoctrination in the media is a part of a more extensive phenomenon of public ignorance.

Keywords: Electoral space, stereotype, manipulation, trivialisation, public ignorance, Poland

Introduction

In the context of the analysis of electoral space, three categories are worth to distinguish, i.e. (1) political behaviour, (2) electoral behaviour and (3) voting behaviour. The first ones are human reactions to stimuli coming from political phenomena and processes (Zieliński 1999). The second ones are more or less expressive reactions to political stimuli resulting from elections as an institution (Kavetsky 2010); they include voting, making decisions and the engagement in elections (Wróbel 2000). The third ones include participation, the manifestation of preferences and obstruction by casting invalid votes (Kavetsky 2010).

Considerations of electoral and voting behaviour are noteworthy not only of professional analysts, but also of the media. As a result, these considerations inevitably grow shallower and subordinated to ideologisation and tabloidisation. These are therefore based not so on sound knowledge but rather on superficial associations and stereotypes, if not ignorance. A question, however, arises whether or not medial information and texts identified as scientific can be analysed as a common source of knowledge about the electoral space. Within the positivist and, especially, neopositivist paradigms the answer is negative because medial information is treated as discourses not subjected to verification-falsification – in contrast to ‘serious’ empirical social sciences. Within the humanistic paradigm, however, the boundary between scientific and journalist texts is fuzzy because science is a source of both knowledge and ideology. Valuable formally journalistic texts extend therefore the knowledge of the social world no less than formally scientific texts. As a source of popular knowledge about the social world, journalistic publications serve not only as an intermediary between scientific knowledge and non-professional audience, but they often replace the former. The analysis of medial information and language is thus an important sociological issue. In the present article, manipulation applies basically to medial information while stereotypes refer to the scientific narration about electoral space.

In this article, six pointed to main ailments are discussed, viz. (1) the overestimation of the results of opinion polls, (2) medial manipulations, (3) trivialisation of reasons for casting invalid votes and absenteeism, (4) arrogant political interpretations of the electoral results, (5) incompetent prattling about the flow of the electorate, and (6) superficial interpretations of the role of the old political divisions in the formation of Poland’s electoral space.

Opinion polls vs voting results

A significant part of the analyses of the electoral results in Poland applied to the parliamentary and presidential level, while analyses of

regional and local elections were much less interesting for scholars and, especially, the media (Rykiel 2011). Greater interest, especially of the media, only aroused the results of the regional and local governments' elections of November 2014. Four main causes of this fact can be identified, i.e. (1) overwhelmingly numerous invalid votes, (2) an extremely large – in relation to past experience – divergence between forecasts and results, (3) the indicated extraordinary inefficiency of the State Electoral Commission, and (4) extensive and sensational comments from the media and opposition politicians.

Formally, the function of electoral polls is to anticipate the results of elections. The accuracy of electoral forecasts is therefore a measure of the reliability and methodological correctness of individual opinion poll agencies. The actual results of elections are therefore the basis from which the deviations of the surveyed results are examined. At the November of 2011 local and regional elections, a reversal of this rule happened. An unreliable survey of an agency was taken as a departure point, the deviation from which was interpreted by the media and opposition politicians in terms of the inconsistency of the calculation of votes or even electoral frauds. The medial manipulation was a context of this sensation.

For the 'non-professionalised sociologists', electoral polls appeared more reliable than the results of the election. It is worth to remind here that the election results show what *all* voters *opted* for on the ballot papers and the percentage apply to valid votes. The polls show, on the contrary, what *some* voters *say* they opted for and the percentage apply to all respondents. Polls indicate therefore 0% of invalid votes or few if some respondents admit they had threw blank card to the ballot box. Interestingly, this simple fact was too difficult to understand by some politicians, especially the opposition.

Medial manipulations and sensationalism

In the discussed here context, medial manipulations include two main themes, i.e. (1) biased selections of participants in medial indoctrination or quarrels, referred to misleadingly as debates, and (2) the trivialisation of information about the results of local and regional elections. The latter theme is discussed herein. The trivialisation applies to the reduction of the information about the outcome of the elections to one of their levels, i.e. the regional assemblies. It is because this spatial scale allows to easily compare the political results of the elections. In this way, the results of the local elections are ignored in such comparisons, i.e. those of the (1) communal councils, (2) mayors, (3) county councils and (4) Warsaw's city districts.

The importance of elections in different spatial scales is, however, different for voters, and this is represented by the knowledge of the

respective candidates' names. In 2010, 61% of voters knew names of the candidates for mayors, 28% to the communal councils, 18% to the county councils and only 7% to the regional assemblies (Zbieranek, n.d.). This suggests that the knowledge of the candidates represents a distance decay function between the seat of the elected body and the voters' place of residence. The Warsaw's city districts seem one exception from this pattern because the districts are perceived as poorly acquainted and arbitrarily delimited bureaucratic units (Rykiel 2016).

During the local and regional elections, the media are merely excited by the results of the elections to the regional assemblies and mayors of cities while voters outside large cities are mainly interested in the election of their communal and, less often, county councils whereas those of the regional assemblies are much less interesting (Gendźwił 2015), the number of invalid votes on individual spatial levels being a good illustration of this rule. This may result from the fact that local voters do not identify themselves with the current voivodships that politicians had allocated to in 1999 without asking the concerned people about their opinion and even openly ignoring the opinion in cases. In this context, the concept of the sociological vacuum between the kinship bonds and the national sentiments (Nowak 1979) seems still valid in Poland. In the analysed context, the vacuum is manifested in the alienation of a considerable part of voters with the higher levels of local and, especially, regional governments (Gendźwił 2015).

Individual voting strategies for individual bodies can be observed. This results from the distance decay function but also from the degree of the partisanship vs personalisation of the candidates, attributed to the individual levels of elections. It can be hypothesised (Rykiel 2016) that (1) a concrete candidate is voted for to the communal council, (2) and the mayor of a small town, (3) a concrete candidate including his/her party affiliation for a mayor of a large city, (4) a local committee to the Warsaw's district council, (5) a local or supra-local committee, possibly including its party affiliation, to the county council, (6) a nationwide, usually party, committee to the regional assembly.

In media coverage, this complex pattern of electoral and voting behaviour is being reduced to voting to regional assemblies. Moreover, the quasi-entertainment television post-election programmes, preferring speed of disinformation at the expense of information reliability, presented a quarter-to-quarter change in Poland's map with voivodships highlighted in uniform colours of the party, which – according to the media – won the election to individual regional assemblies. This had little substantive significance in the proportional electoral system in Poland at the national and regional levels, in which no single party till 2015 won a mandate to govern individually.

The presented results were in fact merely ones to the regional assemblies, i.e. a slight part of local and regional elections, moreover the one that was the least interesting for the electorate although the most interesting for the media because, however, of the ease of the presentation rather than the substantial significance. From this information a main media coverage was made, which indicated that the electoral, if not political, space of Poland is divided between the winning and the losing parties. With the presentation of the colour maps, no complete results were waiting for but sensational message was broadcasted of who the winner in the given moment was (Noch 2014). After the votes were counted, it turned out who the real winner *de facto* was. Most importantly, however, in no single moment the presented map was one of the results of the local election (Kłosowski 2014).

This journalists' 'impatience', as it was euphemistically called (Lepczyński 2014) or, rather, their thoughtlessness, was cynically used by politicians. On this basis, the main opposition party considered the results of the election as 'untrue, unreliable, if not defrauded' (Kaczyński o wyborach, n.d.). The basis of such a conviction was repeatedly expressed, disturbing opposition, although curious, statement of incompatibility of the election results with the earlier polls. This conviction was not weakened after the complete results of the election to the regional assemblies had been published, indicating that the results did not differ significantly from the ones of the exit poll (Noch 2014). Sensational medial information was also aroused much excitement about the increase in electoral support for the Peasant Party (PSL) in the port city of Gdynia in relation to the previous election, even though the actual data showed that the information was 'absolute nonsense' (Noch 2014), resulted from an accidental comment on the Facebook, if not a typos, mindlessly or tendentially picked up by the right-wing media (Kozak 2014).

The trivialisation of the causes of absenteeism and the casting of invalid votes

Electoral turnout is a measure of the political activity of citizens and exposing their attitudes towards the composition of elected bodies. The opposite of turnout is not only election absenteeism, but also obstruction (Rykiel 2016), which involves the casting of invalid votes. The latter has three aspects. Firstly, technical mistakes during the voting procedure can be identified that can be interpreted in terms of random error. Secondly, a misunderstanding of the technique of voting can be identified, which includes three main reasons, i.e. (1) the social or political impairment of voters, causing their inability to understand voting techniques (McAllister, Makai, 1993; Knack, Kropf, 2003); (2) the carelessness of the body governing of the

election, which does not take into account the impairment in the design of the ballot papers; (3) a conscious manipulation of this body. Thirdly, conscious casting of invalid votes can be identified, which can be interpreted as a symptom of obstruction (Rykiel 2015) or, at least, a lack of interest in elections to a specific body. The cause of such behaviour may be the aware contestation of the electoral law or the party system (Kavetsky 2010) rather than the political system. Those casting invalid votes can therefore be considered as members of two informal parties: the Party of the Irrational and the Contest Party. The former usually mark the name of more than one candidate on the paper during the ballot, while the latter used to cast a blank ballot paper. The latter voters are twice as many in the case of elections to regional assemblies than to county councils (Zbieranek, n.d.), which confirms the aforementioned distance decay function between the voter's residence and the seat of the elected body.

The significance of the distance decay function is also confirmed by the total percentage of invalid votes in the elections of individual bodies between 2002 and 2010 (Table 1), however up to the regional level, while the distance decay function is not revealed in the national and European elections (Table 1). This rule can be interpreted in terms of the sociological vacuum by Stefan Nowak (1979) that extends between the local and national communities.

Table 1. Percentage of invalid votes in the elections of individual bodies, 2001-2010

Body	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009	2010	average
Mayor (1st round)		2,23				1,91			1,66	1,93
Mayor (2 nd round)		1,12				1,26			1,08	1,15
Communal council		4,18				3,77			3,66	3,87
County council		8,59				8,30			8,18	8,36
Regional assembly		14,43				12,70			12,06	13,06
Sejm	3,99				3,60		2,04			3,21
Senate	3,54				3,48		1,73			2,92
European Parliament				2,67				1,77		2,22
President (1st round)					0,66				0,70	1,22
President (2nd round)					1,01				1,16	1,09
EU accession referendum			0,72							0,72

Source: own compilation and calculation based on Zbieranek (n.d.)

In this context, electoral absenteeism can be considered as a symptom of voter turnout (negative frequency). The political results of elections differ therefore from the legal results. The latter, officially published, are referred to the number of validly casted votes while the political results should be

referred to the number of the eligible voters (Kavetsky 2010; Rykiel 2016). Taking into account the turnout in subsequent parliamentary elections in the post-transitional quarter of a century, it should be stated that the largest political party in Poland is the informal Non-Voters' Party. All proportions regarded, it also applies to the local and regional election of 2014, in which the Contest Party and the the Party of the Irrational took fifth place.

In the local and regional election of 2014, a considerably higher than before percentage of invalid votes (Gendźwił 2015) to regional assemblies can be noticed, and this seem to confirm the weakest regional consciousness in relation to the extent of other level of territorial consciousness. According to the 2006 and 2010 data, in the elections of the regional assemblies over 70% of the invalid votes was represented by empty ballot papers (Kłosowski 2014), i.e. indicating a lack of interest in the body or contesting it. In 2014, the number of invalid votes in the local and, especially, regional election exceeded 18% (Gendźwił 2015), and this raised far-reaching concern of the largest opposition party with the possibility of electoral fraud, although it should have rather aroused the anxiety of all the parties represented on the political scene due to such a large representation of the Contest Party.

The arrogance of the interpretation of the political results of elections

The choice made by voters is purely formal, if not ritual, its meaning should not be therefore overestimated (Zybertowicz 2002), especially as far as the distribution of seats in representative bodies is concerned. In fact, decisive for the collective decision who will rule is the electoral system rather than the preferences of voters (Rykiel 2004). Little information about the preferences of majority and minority can thus be obtained from ballot papers and polling ballots. One can only conclude, which party or candidate for the elected position the majority and minority considered as lesser evil (Harrop, Miller, 1987). The results of elections can therefore only give a general insight into the voters' preferences. This information is, however, arrogantly interpreted by politicians, and sometimes even by political scientists, which leads to misunderstandings, occasionally painful not only for politicians but also for voters.

Four examples of such arrogance can be provided in the Polish context (cf. Rykiel 2016). Firstly, the results of the 4th June of 1989 contract election can be referred to, which was interpreted as a general rejection of communism. The voters have, however, always a chance to answer only the question they are asked. In the election in question, voters were not asked whether they were for or against

communism, but whether or not they wished to have the Senate and 35% of seats in the Sejm occupied by the opposition, under the constitutionally guaranteed leading role of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR).

Secondly, the results of the first free general election of 1991 can be referred to. Due to the unformed political scene and a lack of election threshold, the Sejm was politically fragmented. The third most popular party in terms of the election results got only 9% of validly casted votes, i.e. the support of less than 5% of eligible voters. Having, however, got 11% of the seats and joining the government coalition, the party imposed with enormous arrogance restrictive acts in symbolic and moral matters, referring to its alleged representation of 'the Catholic majority'.

Thirdly, the results of the 1993 general election can be referred to, in which the left-wing parties – both post-communist and post-Solidarity – won. This fact was interpreted as a deep attachment of voters to the leftist values (Rykiel 2004), even though the fatigue and even embarrassment of voters with the rule of the right-wing parties seems a sufficient basis for the interpretation of the election results.

Fourthly, the arrogant behaviour of the winning party after the general election of 2015 can be referred to. Having obtained the support of 18% of eligible voters but 40% of seats in the Sejm, this party, having no constitutional majority but referring to the undefined 'sovereign's will', began its rule with violent and manifested breaking not only the parliamentary customs and habits but also the constitution.

6. The alleged flow of the electorate

A permanent element of the post-election quasi-entertainment television programmes is the presentation of the alleged flow of the electorate in relation to the previous election. This flow is assessed on the basis of exit polls by asking selected respondents who they voted for in the previous election. The subject of the investigation is therefore the output rather than input population. Such investigations ignore therefore the most numerous on the Polish political scene the Non-Voters' Party of the previous period, even though some of its members could vote in the present election. Investigations of the flow of the electorate based on exit polls is therefore methodologically invalid.

Electoral preferences are based on general views on public affairs, they are not therefore formed by incidental circumstances. Even in periods of violent systemic changes, certain stability of political preferences persists. Contrary to medial information, the flow of electorate between parties is

sporadic. All parties lose some of their original supporters, usually, however, by demobilisation rather than transferring sympathy to other parties. New supporters are gaining from among those of uncategorised preferences (Duda 1997).

The role of the old political divisions in shaping Poland's electoral space

The influence of the historical past, including the old spatial-political divisions, on spatial variation of voting behaviour in Poland was repeatedly noticed and often analysed. In the analyses, attention was paid to the historical and cultural foundations of the spatial variation of political activity and electoral preferences (Raciborski 1997; Zarycki 1997, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2007a, 2007b; Bartkowski 2003; Kowalski 2003, 2004; Skwierzyński 2008), and even to the civilisation differentiation of these foundations. In these analyses, a general category of 'space' was used, while narrower categories of electoral, and at least social, space was implied.

The aforementioned spatial variation was almost exclusively related to the non-existent for almost a hundred years political division of Poland among the three empires and the related phantom borders (Jańczak 2015), or at least in four civilisation zones, i.e. the areas of the three former empires and the 'regained' territories granted to Poland in 1945 (Hryniewicz, Jałowiecki, 1997). The individual zones were then analysed in terms of regional political structures with their specific regional modes of production (Kavetsky 2010), and even as historical cultural regions (ibidem), even though they consisted of rather than formed individual regions (Rykiel 2000).

In this context, three main approaches were applied in the study of spatial variation of voting behaviour (Rykiel 2016). The first was limited to a general description of the degree of the development of civil society in individual civilisation zones (Kowalski 2000). In this interpretative framework, it was assumed that the political attitudes formed in the nineteenth century, i.e. during the industrial and national revolutions and the development of capitalism in Central Europe, are still valid because they to the greatest extent form the spatial differentiation of social capital (Zarycki 2015) and thus also civic activity in Poland (Hryniewicz, Jałowiecki, 1997).

In the second approach, it was assumed that voting behaviour is only explained by the current social and economic situation, statistical analyses are therefore sufficient to reveal the relationship between electoral support and socio-economic characteristics of areas (Parysek et al, 1991).

In the third approach, represented in journalism, associations and stereotypes were accepted as explanatory categories, and the general spatial trend of support for dominant political parties was interpreted as a sharp and

unequivocal divide of political space (Janicki, Władyka, 2005). In this approach, evident errors of the delimitation of civilisation zones occurred (cf. Rykiel 2012). This approach has a negligible explanatory value, but the severe power of the intellectual destruction of the unprepared media consumers.

The quantification of the influence of the old territorial divisions on voting behaviour remains an important research issue. The analysis on a national scale indicated that the division in the four civilisation zones explained only 11.46% of variation of the voting behaviour in the 1993 general election (Kabath 2002). More recent results are presented beneath.

The Kendall correlations between the support for the presidential candidates in 2015 and the four civilisation zones were presented elsewhere¹²⁰ (Rykiel 2016). The related determination coefficients are presented in Table 2. It is worth noting that the territorial affiliation to only one civilisation zone explained more than 20% and merely in the case of two main candidates. On average, the territorial affiliation to the four civilisation zones only in the case of the two main candidates explained more than 10% of the voting behaviour while for all candidates this territorial pattern explained only slightly more than 4% of the variance.

Table 2. Kendall correlation determination coefficients (%) of the affiliation to the four civilisation zones for the electoral support of the presidential candidates, 2015

Candidates	Post-Austrian	Post-Russian	Post-Prussian	Regained 1945	<i>Average</i>
Grzegorz Braun	2.92	0.58	0.96	2.06	<i>1.63</i>
Andrzej Duda	9.32	12.24	5.10	21.16	<i>11.95</i>
Adam Jarubas	1.96	16.99	1.32	7.03	<i>6.83</i>
Bronisław Komorowski	6.67	17.32	7.60	20.90	<i>13.12</i>
Janusz Korwin-Mikke	0.49	1.32	0.08	0.98	<i>0.72</i>
Marian Kowalski	0.01	4.43	1.05	2.19	<i>1.92</i>
Paweł Kukiz	1.35	1.44	0.01	4.98	<i>1.94</i>
Magdalena Ogórek	9.61	0.05	2.92	1.83	<i>3.60</i>
Janusz Palikot	6.50	0.08	0.03	5.11	<i>2.93</i>
Paweł Tanajno	1.02	0.00	0.67	0.04	<i>0.43</i>
Jacek Wilk	1.31	0.27	0.74	0.13	<i>0.61</i>
<i>Average</i>	<i>3.74</i>	<i>4.98</i>	<i>1.86</i>	<i>6.04</i>	4.15

Source: own calculations based on data by Elżbieta Kabath

These results demitologise therefore the role of the historical heritage in contemporary voting behaviour since it was indicated that only a small and decreasing over time part of voting behaviour can be explained by this legacy. The significance of the nineteenth-century territorial divisions should

¹²⁰ The calculations were made by dr Elżbieta Kabath, whom the present author thanks for sharing the results.

not be overestimated (Kabath 2000; Kabath, Rykiel, 2003). It is worth mentioning, however, that the role of the historical heritage in voting behaviour is, in essence, an analysis of the role of particular territorial divisions. The significance of the division into four civilisation zones can thus be contrasted with the significance of other territorial divisions (Rykiel 2016).

For comparison, an analysis of the role of physical-geographic divisions in explaining voting behaviour is presented beneath. The Kendall correlations between the support for the presidential candidates in 2015 and the three physical-geographic megaregions (Kondracki 2002) were analysed. The related determination coefficients were presented in Table 3. On average, this spatial pattern explained only for the two most serious candidates more than 4% of the variation in voting behaviour, while for all candidates this pattern explained slightly over 2% of the variance.

Table 3. Kendall correlation determination coefficients (%) of the affiliation to the three physical-geographic megaregions for the electoral support of the presidential candidates, 2015

Candidates	Extra-Alpine Central Europe	East European Lowland	Carpathian Region	<i>Average</i>
Grzegorz Braun	3.61	0.32	3.41	2.45
Andrzej Duda	7.24	0.00	10.55	5.93
Adam Jarubas	0.36	0.51	1.72	0.87
Bronisław Komorowski	5.37	0.00	7.89	4.42
Janusz Korwin-Mikke	1.16	0.47	0.52	0.72
Marian Kowalski	1.02	2.00	0.00	1.01
Paweł Kukiz	1.60	0.16	1.45	1.07
Magdalena Ogórek	5.90	0.09	10.21	5.40
Janusz Palikot	3.44	0.04	5.87	3.12
Paweł Tanajno	1.34	0.13	1.17	0.88
Jacek Wilk	1.44	0.12	1.31	0.96
<i>Average</i>	2.95	0.35	4.01	2.44

Source: own calculations based on data by Elżbieta Kabath

It can be, of course, argued that the explanation of the spatial pattern of voting behaviour on the basis of physical-geographic regionalisation is substantively meaningless, the fact that the physical-geographic megaregions explain only 2% of these behaviours is therefore intuitively correct. In this context, it must be noted that the division of Poland into four civilisation zones explains only twice better these behaviours, although this spatial pattern is commonly referred to as a significant pattern of the spatial variations in voting behaviour in Poland. It must therefore be stated that cartographic analyses of voting behaviour in Poland are misleading for two main reasons. First, they show areas of relative superiority of certain political

phenomena, usually support of the candidate or the electoral committee, rather than the unequivocal dominance of these phenomena. Secondly, cartographic analyses show general spatial trends rather than any distinct gradients ('boundaries'). Interpretations of cartographic analyses are therefore more intuitive and based on associations rather than facts. To complement such analyses with statistical analyses is therefore highly desirable. As it was indicated above, the spatial variation of voting behaviour is quantifiable, it can be therefore counted instead of interpreted in purely graphical terms.

The general spatial pattern of voting behaviour is the result of the unification of political life on the national scale, with regional differences in politics generally losing their significance. This also applies to the division in four civilisation zones. Although the former political boundaries are still visible, the foundations of their existence have disappeared and the role of the contextual factors of voting behaviour grows (Rykiel 2016).

Conclusion

Numerous empirical analyses indicated the polarisation of Poland's political space between the right-wing areas in the south-eastern half of the country and the left-wing areas in the north-western half. This stability of the political scene can be attributed to patterns and institutions of long duration (Zarycki, Nowak, 2000). In spatial terms, two complementary patterns can be identified: (1) the zonal pattern of heterogeneous territorial units referring to civilisation zones, and (2) the non-zonal pattern of isolated large cities and urban agglomerations. Electoral universalism, however regionally embedded (Kavetsky 2010), is characteristic of urbanised areas.

The perception of social and political phenomena in society is shaped by the medial coverage. Manipulation and indoctrination in the media is a part of a larger whole (Rykiel 2012), i.e. a society of ignorance (Rykiel 2015). The category of stupidity seems an important explanatory variable in this context. Nowadays stupidity is identified with mediocrity. As the latter, stupidity is hidden under the pretence of social equality, constituting therefore a major obstacle to the pursuit of wisdom (Gadacz 2014: 103). Due to its commonality, it is characteristic of most members of society a category capable of real influence. It can therefore easily become the basis of large-scale social and cultural degeneration. The universality of stupidity carriers makes them a mindless power (ibidem). This allows to understand the mechanism for nonsense dissemination in society (When 2004).

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