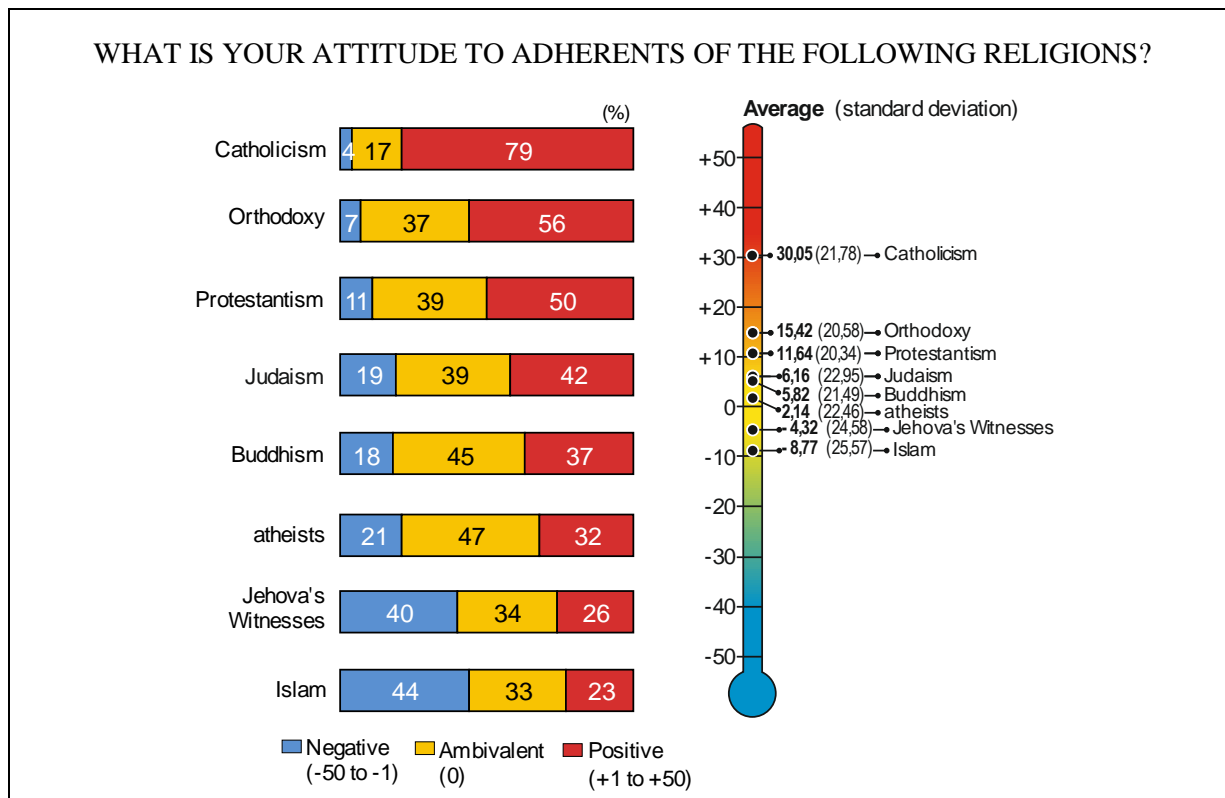


ATTITUDE TO ISLAM AND MUSLIMS

The image of Muslims in Poland is largely based on information drawn from the mass media. It is not significantly shaped by personal contact with adherents of this religion, as the scale of such contacts is very small. Only one-eighth of adults (12%) personally know a Muslim.

Respondents were asked to describe their attitude to people of different faiths and to non-believers on a scale metaphorically called a 'thermometer', which took the values from “-50” to “+50” degrees. Among different religions, the feelings towards Muslims are coldest. Over two-fifths of Poles (44%) express cold attitude, while only a quarter (23%) have warm feelings for them. A third of Poles (33%) are indifferent. The overall temperature is sub-zero. Negative feelings prevail also in case of Jehova's Witnesses.

Negative feelings towards Islam may be related to potential associations with violence or terrorism. The attitude to Jehova's Witnesses may be a consequence of their style of converting, which is sometimes perceived as intrusive. The reception of different religions is largely determined by the degree of cultural proximity and the number of its adherents. Thus, the best attitude is recorded towards Catholics, followed by other Christians, i.e. Protestants and the Orthodox, for whom the feelings are not so warm. Positive attitude prevails also in relation to religious Jews, Buddhists and atheists, who are usually perceived ambivalently.



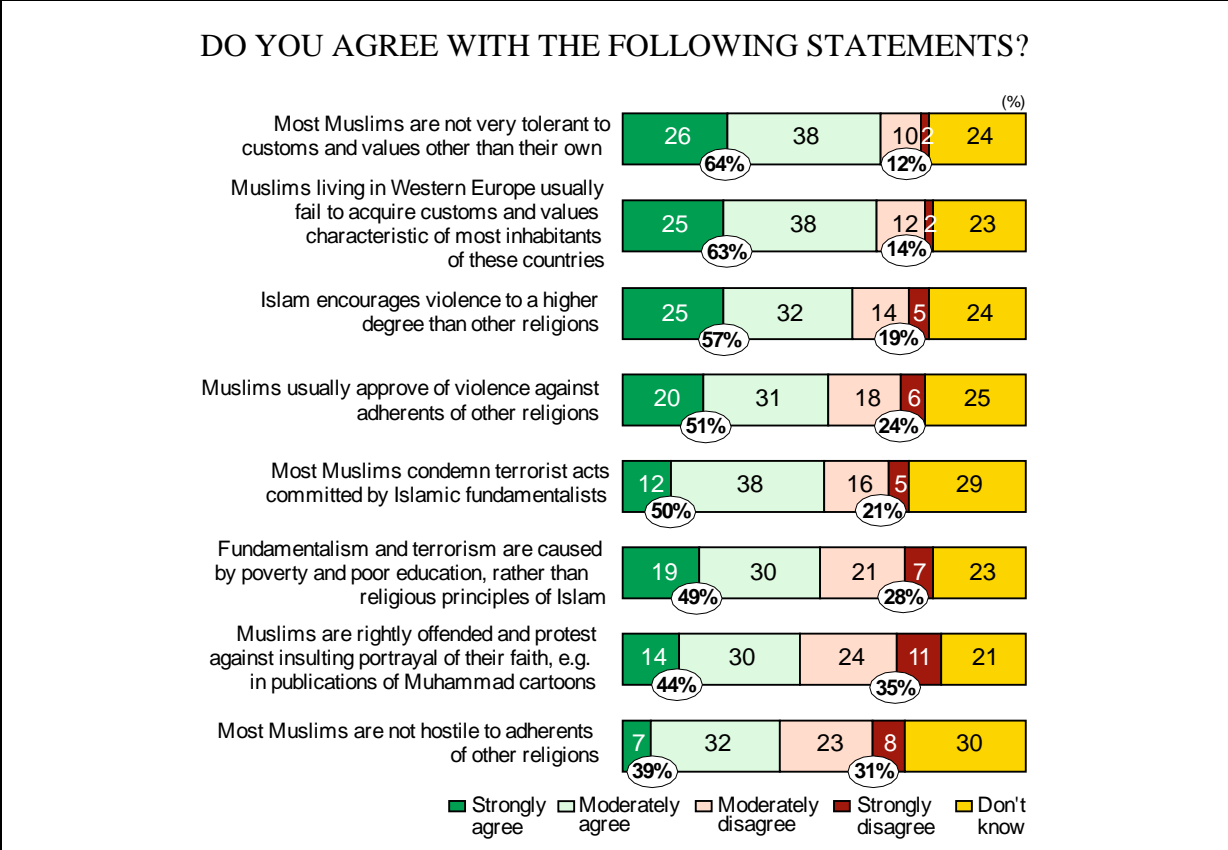
The perception of different religious groups is correlated. Positive feelings to members of one religion tend to coexist with warm feelings for others, and negative attitudes are also related.

Islamic fundamentalism caused a lot of negative associations, such as intolerance, violence, war and, first of all, terrorism. This mental association was magnified and reinforced in the consciousness of western societies after the attack on World Trade Center on 11th September 2001.

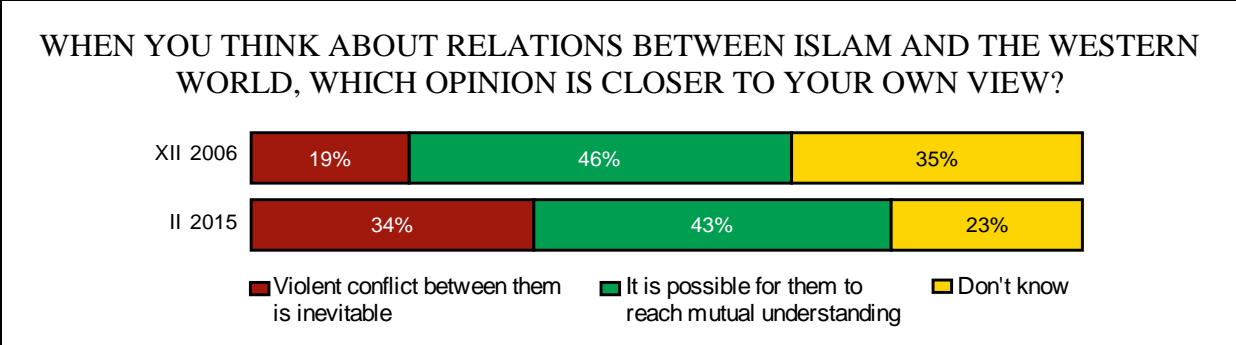
Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) share the opinion that most Muslims are intolerant to customs and values other than their own. A similar proportion (63%) mention problems with assimilation, claiming that Muslim minorities living in Western Europe do not acquire customs and values characteristic of the majority of residents of these countries. The majority of respondents associate Islam with violence: 57% think that this religion encourages violent actions, and 51% believe that Muslims usually approve of violence against adherents of other religions. However, in the view of half of Poles (50%), the majority of Muslims condemn terrorist attacks committed by Islamic fundamentalists.

Many people attribute terrorism to non-religious reasons and show some understanding for the feeling of injustice suffered by Muslims when their religious feelings are violated. Almost half (49%) agree that poverty and poor education, rather than religious principles of Islam, are the main factors contributing to terrorism or, more broadly,

extremism. Over two-fifths (44%) agree that Muslims are rightly offended when their faith is shown in insulting way, for instance by the publications of Muhammad cartoons. The opinions about the attitude of Muslims to adherents of other religions are strongly differentiated. Almost two-fifths of respondents (39%) share the opinion that most Muslims are not hostile to people of different religion, while a third (31%) disagree.



In recent years, the conviction has strengthened that conflict between Islam and the western world is inevitable. Nevertheless, the plurality of respondents (43%) still believe that understanding is possible.



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Attitude to Islam and Muslims", March 2015. Fieldwork for national sample: February 2015, N=1003. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.