

## **Gratitude and ingratitude in Polish-American relations after 1918: ties, interests, hierarchies**

The aim of the project is to identify and analyze various forms and functions of gratitude and ingratitude expressed in Polish-American relations. By gratitude we mean a positive emotion that is a response to a good provided by one party to another which they were not in any way obligated to give. An expression of gratitude is a specific response to such goodness. Ingratitude, on the other hand, is the lack of proper appreciation of the good received. Expressions of gratitude are among the key elements in building interpersonal bonds, both at the individual level and between larger social organisms, institutions and countries. In international relations, expressing gratitude is never politically neutral, which is why gratitude has become an element of soft power and a diplomatic instrument serving specific political interests, using various means based on altruism or empathy.

In Polish-American relations, various forms of expression of gratitude have been constant over time, maintaining good emotions between the two states and their citizens, but also serving as tools of the political game. Americans, through their leaders, expressed gratitude for the participation of Tadeusz Kosciuszko and Casimir Pulaski in their War of Independence, for Poland's involvement in the fight against communism, its support for the US army in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and recently for Poland's provision of massive assistance to Ukraine. Poles, in turn, have expressed gratitude at various stages of their history and for various forms of American support: for the postulate of rebuilding the Polish state expressed by President Woodrow Wilson, for Herbert Hoover's humanitarian aid, for Haller's army in WWI and the post-WWII UNNRA parcels. Between 1945 and 1989 gratitude to America was a forbidden feeling, which not officially expressed but felt collectively. The gratitude of Poles for American support in the struggle for sovereignty was represented by Gary Cooper's face on Tomasz Sarnecki's famous poster. At almost every stage of Polish-American history there were also voices that could be interpreted by the other side of these relations as expressions of ingratitude, e.g. after 1989 the necessity of applying for American visa Poles often interpreted as ungratefulness of the US.

Despite the intensity and obvious presence of these phenomena, it has not to date aroused the interest of researchers dealing with Polish-American relations. In general, academic reflection on gratitude as an emotion played out politically is relatively weak even at the global scale, despite the fact that since the 1990s and the time of the so-called *emotional turn*, the analysis of the role of emotions in politics, including international politics, has intensified significantly. In view of the above, the research undertaken as part of this project will undoubtedly have a pioneering character. The analysis of expressions of gratitude will concern both the circumstances in which they were expressed, their forms, the cultural differences that shaped them and embedded them in specific political situations, and the actors involved and their intentions. An important element of the research will be to determine the function of specific actions that have met with gratitude, and in particular an attempt will be made to determine the role of gratitude in building the hierarchical system in Polish-American relations.

The research will be interdisciplinary. The analysis will use tools from two fields - the humanities and social sciences, and within them from several disciplines: cultural and religious studies, art studies, international relations, and social communication and media studies. Research objectives will be implemented on the basis of the literature on the subject and other sources and documents. The objectives of the project will be pursued on the basis of literature, diplomatic documents, speeches, media materials (press articles, audiovisual materials) other artifacts (diplomatic gifts, monuments) and exhibitions. There will also be interviews with diplomats and politicians, both Polish and American, about their experiences and thoughts on gratitude or its absence. In the analysis of the data collected qualitative methods will be used, e.g. discursive analysis.

The result of the project will be a comprehensive examination of the place, nature and function of gratitude expressed in Polish-American relations, which will allow us to look at these relations from a new perspective, revealing the forms through which gratitude is expressed, the circumstances and intentions behind them, and the dynamics of change in the nature and interpretation of expressions of gratitude over more than a century of interaction. In addition, the research will establish a theoretical and methodological subsoil for the analysis of expressions of gratitude among actors other than covered in this project.