Cuius regio?
Ideological and Territorial Cohesion of Silesia

eds Lucyna Harc, Przemysław Wiszewski, Rościsław Żerelik

vol. 5

Permanent Change.
The New Region(s) of Silesia (1945-2015)

Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, Grzegorz Strauchold, Przemysław Wiszewski

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Table of Contents

Przemysław Wiszewski
A time of transformation. New Silesia under construction (1945-2015)..... 9

Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel
Administrative changes..... 19

Grzegorz Strauchold
Economy 47

Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel
Rural society after 1945..... 59

Grzegorz Strauchold
Urban communities..... 77

Grzegorz Strauchold
Ethnic issues 89

Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel
Cultural and regional identity in Silesia after 1945 (selected issues)..... 151

Przemysław Wiszewski
New Silesia or new post-Silesian regions?..... 169

Przemysław Wiszewski
A Prothean region. The changing shape of Silesia (12th-21st centuries)..... 175

Bibliography 209

Index 241

Polish-German-Czech concordance of topographic names 245

The Authors 249

Przemysław Wiszewski

A time of transformation. New Silesia under construction (1945-2015)

Abstract

The submitted book contains a collection of articles on issues related to the formation of Silesia as a region after the end of World War II until the present times. The exchange of population that took place in the years 1945-1947, i.e. expulsion of German inhabitants of Silesia and their replacement with Polish migrants from Borderlands and central Poland, was the end of a continuous transfer of regional tradition that dated back to the 12th century. The formation of new regional structures was conditioned by pressure applied by the central government to connect Silesia as a cultural space with Poland, but also with the existence of new administrative divisions. The administrative divisions quite often underwent drastic changes. Settling in the River Oder basin, in a foreign cultural and civil environment with people from both the Polish lands and also the Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Romania and - over time from Belgium, France and Greece, created a community that initially was deeply divided. Did they manage to overcome these divisions and create a new Silesian regional community?

Keywords

regiogenesis, tradition, regional history, Silesia, communist regime

This book contains a collection of articles on issues related to the functioning of Silesia as a region from the end of War World II to the present day. The studies presented here have been prepared as a summary of the final stages of research carried out by the Polish *Cuius regio* programme team. *The analysis of cohesive and disruptive forces determining the attachment and commitment of (groups of) persons to and the cohesion within regions* executed as part of the work carried out by the European Science Foundation[1]. The research concerning Silesia was financed by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education[2]. Previous volumes were devoted to the history of societal consistency in the Oder River Basin – in the area referred to as the Silesian historical region, which took place from the Middle Ages

[1] For more on the project, see www.cuius-regio.eu and Lucyna Harc, Przemysław Wiszewski, Rościsław Żerelik, *Czyj to region, czyli słów kilka o pewnym projekcie badawczym*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 67 (2012), no. 4, p. 3-5.

[2] *Cuius Regio. The analysis of cohesive and disruptive forces determining the attachment and commitment of (groups of) persons to and the cohesion within regions,* decision of the Minister of Science and Higher Education no. 832/N-ESF-CORECODE/2010/0.

to 1945[3]. The abridged and modified versions of most of the articles presented in these volumes were published in Polish in a journal entitled 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka'[4].

In the recent volume researchers from Wrocław's scholarly community, Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel and Grzegorz Strauchold, have tried to analyse the function of five basic factors that helped determine the region's coherency after 1945. According to overall project's assumptions, these were: 1) changes in the administrative framework of the functioning of Silesian communities (J. Nowosielska-Sobel); 2) the elements of the economy that strengthened or weakened the region's coherency (G. Strauchold); 3) the way in which the division of the community that inhabited Silesia into a rural and an urban population functioned, two groups with different social statuses, goals and cultural backgrounds (G. Strauchold – city, J. Nowosielska-Sobiel – village); 4) thorough transformations of the ethnic structure of the Oder River Basin which took place after 1945 and significantly contributed to the people's sense of affiliation to the regional community (Grzegorz Strauchold); 5) the complex issue of cultural identity or – the cultural identity of the inhabitants of the region and particular local communities (J. Nowosielska-Sobel). This consistent reasoning concerning a specific period in the history of Silesia is complemented by an attempt to recognise all the changes in our area of interest which took place between the mid-12th and early 21st century. They show the flexible, relative nature of how a regional community functioned in the European political and cultural space by using Silesia as an example (Przemysław Wiszewski).

Outline of the history of Silesia between 1945-2015

Although, compared to the previous periods concerning the history of the region, this one is the shortest, it is also full of events that thoroughly reshaped the

[3] See *The Long Formation of the Region (c. 1000-1526),* ed. Przemysław Wiszewski, Wrocław 2013 (=Cuius Regio? Ideological and Territorial Cohesion of Silesia (c.1000-2000), eds Lucyna Harc, Przemysław Wiszewski, Rościsław Żerelik, vol. 1); *The Strenghtening of the Silesian Regionalism (1526-1740),* eds Lucyna Harc, Gabriela Wąs, Wrocław 2014 (=Cuius Regio? Ideological and Territorial Cohesion of Silesia (c.1000-2000), eds Lucyna Harc, Przemysław Wiszewski, Rościsław Żerelik, vol. 2); *Region Divided: Times of Nation-States (1918-1945),* eds Marek Czapliński, Przemysław Wiszewski, Wrocław 2014 (=Cuius regio? Ideological and Territorial Cohesion of the historical region of Silesia (c.1000-2000), eds Lucyna Harc, Przemysław Wiszewski, Rościsław Żerelik, vol. 4); volume devoted to the 19th c. edited by Lucyna Harc and Teresa Kulak, is currently in print. Works are available under the Open Access policy in printed (with preference for libraries) and digital form on the project website (www.cuiusregio.uni.wroc.pl) and Digital Library of University of Wrocław, collection of the Faculty of Historical and Pedagogical Sciences.

[4] See 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 67 (2012), no. 4; 68 (2013), no. 2; 68 (2013), no. 4; 69 (2014), no. 3; 70 (2015), no. 3.

regional community. First of all, it was a period when determined transformations changed the regional community to an unprecedented extent. It was the time of the downfall of this community and the attempt to reconstruct it in a completely new or even different tradition under the auspices of the state authorities, and the rise of new or even innovative forms of regional community that were different from what had been expected. Though earlier regional and local traditions significantly modified the impact of political factors, in the 20th century and in the early 21st century, problems concerning the management of great social groups – nations – and the way of solving them, commonly called politics, determined the shape of Silesia.

For Silesia, the end of World War II meant that territories were divided up and then occupied by Allied troops – the Red Army and the Polish Army – and some areas that remained under the German administration. The latter were situated on the southern and south-western parts of the Oder River Basin. When the fighting ended, and the Reich capitulated, the Soviet troops came in, whose officers then took control of the local administration. The difference in the preceding situation of the inhabitants from both parts of the region – occupied by Soviet and Polish Armies and under German Army administration – faded away quickly. When refugees came back to their homesteads, most villages had been left empty, but cities were very often occupied by soldiers, as well as former forced workers and incoming settlers from Poland. The new Polish inhabitants were not numerous in spite of the emergence of a Polish administration in spring 1945.

In March 1945, the Polish Temporary Government divided the then occupied Silesia into two administrative districts – Lower Silesia and Opole Silesia. The Polish administration in these districts was to be managed by government representatives. In the same month, the Silesian lands which had belonged to Poland before the war (so-called Silesian voivodeship) and the pre-war German part of Upper Silesia were incorporated into Opole Silesia district, thus creating the Silesian-Dąbrowa voivodeship. The previous government representative was appointed as the voivode. In the case of Lower Silesia, fighting that lasted until May 1945 prolonged the formation of a regular administrative unit of the voivodeship. Finally, in May 1946, the boundaries of two voivodeships – Wrocław and Silesia were established. The boundary between them would correspond to the former border between the Wrocław and Opole districts. The Wrocław voivodeship included a part of Lower Lusatia (with towns of Lubań, Zgorzelec, Żary). At that time, there was a conflict between Poland and Czechoslovakia concerning lands near the Olza River and the Kłodzko Valley, the intensity of which varied, but nevertheless remained. The actual risk of armed conflict between Czechoslovakia and Poland was remedied due

to Stalin's intervention in June 1945. Nevertheless, the dispute lasted and though the agreement which guaranteed special rights for minorities within both countries was formally concluded in March 1947, but the official agreement on the borders between both countries in Silesia was signed no sooner than in 1958.

The creation of the administrative framework was accompanied by an increase in Silesia's population. The official announcement of peace conditions of the Potsdam Conference and the establishment of the border on the rivers of Oder River and Nysa Łużycka accelerated the settlement process. It is necessary to remember that the influx of settlers did not balance out the demographic losses of the region. Not all the Germans who had evacuated in the final stage of the war wanted or were able to return to their homelands. Nevertheless, it was still a densely populated area with huge economic potential. The Silesian economy was greatly weakened by planned robberies and requisitions carried out by the Red Army. The removal of equipment from factories and community establishments throughout 1945 resulted in the fact that the new Polish authorities managed the buildings without most of their valuable machines, semi-finished products, or raw materials. In spite of the above, the potential of the region was slowly reconstructed with the aid of the local German population. Particular care was taken to preserve the level of coal extraction, which involved investing substantial resources in restoring mining production capacity in Upper Silesia and in the Wałbrzych and Nowa Ruda regions.

As a result of the three allied superpowers' decisions concerning the establishment and subsequent adoption of new borders for Central Europe, Silesia began to receive Poles resettled from pre-war Polish territories which had been recently incorporated into the USSR. By the end of 1945, Silesia had received more than 300,000 displaced people from the former eastern parts of Poland. But more numerous group included newcomers from the poorer regions of central Poland who came to Silesia in a piecemeal fashion. In addition, the remaining Polish Jews whose number amounted to approximately 100,000 at mid-1946, were resettled in Lower Silesia. Later on, most of them decided to leave Poland, especially after the State of Israel was founded. The region was also settled by Polish emigrants from Yugoslavia and Romania (in total more than ten thousand), but also from France and Belgium (mainly mining families, in the thousands). The ethnic diversity of the region increased through the resettlement of inhabitants from south-eastern parts of Poland, mainly to Lower Silesia. They were relocated under repression related to an insurgency against Polish authorities – the so-called operation 'Wisła' – in 1947. During that time approximately 20,000 Ukrainians, Lemkos and Boykos were resettled in Lower Silesia. The last wave of migrants with a distinct ethnic identity arrived in the Silesian

territory between 1948-1950. At that time, political refugees from Greece, members or sympathisers of the communist guerrillas, were sent here. Approximately 6,000 Greeks and Macedonians were resettled in the territory of Silesia.

Newcomers were provided with appropriate housing by settling in the homesteads of the previous inhabitants. The latter were not asked for their permission, their belongings were treated as state property confiscated from enemies during the war. It did not mean an organized relocation of German citizens. Silesia, which was deserted after the war, still had sufficient space for both the new and old inhabitants. Old Silesians hoped to preserve the regional community in spite of the radically changing political situation. However, the living conditions of Germans which had dramatically deteriorated, inspired many people to apply to leave their former homeland. Specialists who were necessary to maintain production in plants that were still active or the basic infrastructure in cities would not be granted such permission by the authorities. All the others – although not a large number – were provided with the opportunity to go to Germany. At the same time, as early as 1945, attempts were made to relocate Germans from the border areas. The campaign, which was carried out by the Polish Army without a prior agreement with the Red Army, ended in a fiasco. The Soviet commanders needed the German population to ensure continuous food deliveries and a functioning infrastructure. However, as early as in August 1945, the victorious superpowers determined a need to relocate the Germans from Polish territories and provided the conditions to oversee and carry out this plan. The resettlement of approximately 1,600,000 Germans to Germany was carried out between November 1945 and the end of 1947. Finally, in December 1948, two Silesian voivodeships were inhabited by over 3,100,000 people, with only 58,000 referred to as people of German origin.

At the time, the propaganda of the Polish authorities stressed the opportunities for regional community development only within the new Polish state while exposing the Polish roots of the region along with its wealth and the progress of its reconstruction. It was not mentioned that Silesia sustained a second wave of pillaging of cultural goods, machines, and all kinds of valuable materials after first being robbed by the Red Army. This time, however, state officials cooperated with private entrepreneurs – Poles from southern and central voivodeships who travelled to Silesia for loot, namely to grab property that had been left by the Germans. Only the advanced decapitalization of the region and the strengthening of state structures in 1946 resulted in the authorities' taking preventive measures against such actions. However, earlier Polish officials decided to move valuable elements of the Silesian cultural tradition and civilization to Warsaw and other 'old-Polish' cities and towns.

In this case, the lands incorporated into the Polish state were treated as the enemy territory, one whose property could be used for compensation for losses inflicted on Poles by the Nazi Reich.

With regard to cultural goods, this process took a long time. In the case of economic equipment, it was slowed down relatively quickly. The new inhabitants of Silesia needed efficient infrastructure and work. The authorities understood that the restoration of the voivodeship's economic potential would be more beneficial than robbery, especially if Silesia, Western Pomerania and Prussia were supposed to be the showcase of the Poland's 'Recovered Territories'. However, it did not protect Silesia against further pillaging of property on the part of the central government. The most infamous example was the mass removal of building materials acquired from demolished houses in Wrocław and larger Silesian cities. They were subsequently used to reconstruct Warsaw, just as streetcars from Wrocław were used to launch the public transportation system in the capital. Simultaneously with the intensification of the Stalinist regime in Poland (1949-1956), the local economic landscape's profound conversion took place due to the stimulation based on ideological lines. Private ownership in agriculture and the efficiency of small, local factories were weakened, and craft and private trade were destroyed, while the development of a few large industrial investments and the mining industry was supported.

The incorporation of Silesia into Poland resulted in their administrative Polonisation. This not only meant an influx of settlers and the relocation of Germans, but also geographical names'– and to a smaller extent - administrative structures' changes. By 1948, the lands near the Oder River had become a proper part of the new Polish state with all consequences of that. Political changes were similar across Poland. The results of the referendum of 1946 as it became known, when the population was supposed to give affirmative answers to the questions asked by the authorities, were forged by the communists from the Polish Workers' Party (PPR) to the same extent as in other regions in the country. Similarly, the 1947 parliamentary elections were preceded by the repression of the agrarian party (Polish People's Party – PSL) supporters and an overly independent Polish Socialist Party (PPS) activists.

In 1948, the final stabilization of state structures in Silesia strengthened the division of the historical region into two parts: Upper Silesia and Lower Silesia. It was also reflected by different social and cultural structures. Upper Silesia and a part of Opole Silesia were inhabited by a large group of native inhabitants including mining specialists of German origin. Lower Silesia was definitely dominated by migrants. Native Silesians were not very numerous, and they were not able to pass

on the local cultural traditions to newcomers. The latter had to struggle with the differences between their new place of living and the former homelands: eastern and central territories of Poland. This applied both to spatial divisions in cities and villages, types of residential buildings and infrastructure, and the specific nature of economic life related to the urbanisation of the province that was more advanced than in other parts of the country.

In this socially destabilised situation, the major problem was the introduction of the new, Polish administration of the Catholic Church. The inclusion of the entirety of Silesia into the jurisdiction of the Polish Church piqued both the German Episcopate (which included Adolf Bertram who was Archbishop of Wrocław) and the Polish authorities. Eventually, it ended in success. In August 1945, Cardinal August Hlond, the Primate of Poland, appointed special apostolic administrators for the 'Recovered Territories' with the rights of residential bishops by prior approval of the Pope. They and the ordinary clergy maintained a good relationship with the local state administration. This made it possible to accustom the Polish newcomers from the East to their new life. What was important for them was a well-known, constant point of reference – a Polish priest who often accompanied migrants from their home towns and villages. Sometimes some church furnishings (holy images), which made the new place more familiar, were brought to the west from their original location.

After 1948, the stabilization of the social and political situation was accompanied by changes to the state administrative structure, which included Silesia. In 1950, the two previous provinces – the Wrocław and Silesian voivodeships – were divided into three main units: the Wrocław, Opole and Katowice voivodeships. At the same time, the northern part of Silesia was included in the Zielona Góra voivodeship, along with southern portions of Greater Poland. This territorial division lasted until the great administrative reform of 1975. Then – apart from the enlargement of the Opole and Katowice voivodeships at the expense of the neighbouring units, the Wrocław voivodeship was divided into four entities with capitals in Legnica, Wałbrzych, Jelenia Góra, and Wrocław. The last administrative division reform took place in 1999. Despite a debate on the establishment of larger administrative units, the concept of three provinces – Wrocław, Opole and Katowice voivodeships, was reinstated. Only in the case of the last one, may we refer to a significant territorial increase compared to its situation before 1975.

Administrative reforms reflect the general history of Silesia over this period of time. The period of collapse (1949-1956) was followed by a gradual reconstruction of industry and infrastructure. The part that developed particularly dynamically

was the Katowice voivodeship, which resulted from investments in the mining industry complex. Especially in the period between 1970-1980, when Edward Gierek was the first secretary of the communist party (PZPR) and the leader of the country. The son of Polish emigrants in France, he returned to Poland after World War II and closely affiliated himself with the mining traditions of Upper Silesia. Thanks to him and his decisions concerning industrial investments, it was possible to observe economic growth in Upper Silesia. The situation of Lower Silesia was worse, but we should note the development of a copper mining industry in Głogów and Lubin and the brown coal mining of the Bogatynia area. The political and economic decisions taken at that time strengthened the division in Silesia, which Poles began to identify exclusively with Upper Silesia and its hard coal mines, and other historical parts of the region which were not very often associated with Silesia as a single regional community. The key element for the functioning of the region was the administrative reform that took place a decade after the fall of communism. The local voivodeship government established in 1999 was provided with a wide range of prerogatives and funds which became the basis for the establishment of regional bonds among different local communities within voivodeships. The most symbolic campaign to strengthen ties was the funding of a historical monograph of Lower and Upper Silesia, Wrocław, Opole and Katowice by the local selfgovernment[5]. At the same time, the fact that Zaolzie remained a part of the Czechoslovakian state and later the Czech Republic, led to the dissociation of this territory from Silesia in the Poles' consciousness. On the other hand, the explicit activity of the Czech state concerning the construction of bonds between this region and the Czech Republic – also in a symbolic context – emphasises its distinctness from other Silesian territories[6]. Silesia seems to have entered the 21st century as a region – is it still one region? – split by political decisions and socio-economic processes. And yet, did the bonds of tradition and the cultural heritage of the whole region prove to be stronger than political pursuits to construct separate administrative units? Let us investigate!

[5] See Cezary Buśko, Mateusz Goliński, Michał Kaczmarek, Leszek Ziątkowski, Teresa Kulak, Włodzimierz Suleja, *Historia Wrocławia*, volumes 1-3, Wrocław 2001-2002; Marek Czapliński, Elżbieta Kaszuba, Gabriela Wąs, Rościsław Żerelik, *Historia Śląska*, ed. Marek Czapliński, Wrocław 2002; *Dolny Śląsk. Monografia historyczna,* ed. Wojciech Wrzesiński, Wrocław 2006; *Historia Górnego Śląska. Polityka, gospodarka i kultura europejskiego regionu*, eds Joachim Bahlcke, Dan Gawrecki, Ryszard Kaczmarek, Gliwice 2011; *Opole. Dzieje i tradycja,* eds Bernard Linek, Krzysztof Tarka, Urszula Zajączkowska, Opole 2011; *Katowice. Środowisko, dzieje, kultura, język i społeczeństwo,* eds Antoni Barciak, Ewa Chojecka, Sylwester Fertacz, Katowice 2012, volumes 1-2.

[6] In 2014, a monograph prepared by Czech historians was published. It was supposed to show the place of Silesia – as a whole – in the Czech Republic, until the final acquisition of the major part of the historical region by Prussia, *Slezsko v dějinách českého státu*, vol. 1 (*Od pravěku do 1490*), vol. 2 (*1490-1763*), ed. Zdeněk Jirásek, Praha 2012.

Map 1. Silesia after the II World War (1945) (Dariusz Przybytek)

Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel

Administrative changes

Abstract

The issue of the administration and selected institutions in Silesia in the context of analysing the strengthening and weakening forces within the region, determining the affiliation of people (social groups), and the social unity as a historical phenomenon after World War II, is among the most crucial of issues. The war resulted in territorial changes in Silesia and in its demographic transformations. The new geopolitical system has contributed to the total destruction of the community that used to call itself Silesians until 1945. Partial population exchange implying the clear cultural transformations in the region, and the actions of the state authorities, revealed, for instance, in the administrative reforms, heading for decades towards the elimination of the historical borders, has helped in forming a new identity quality in the region, with a clear indication towards Upper Silesia, Opole Silesia and Lower Silesia.

Keywords

borders, administration, region, Lower Silesia, Upper Silesia, Opole Silesia, Lubusz Land, voivodeship, territorial self-government, Catholic Church, national minorities, Recovered Territories

The end of World War II meant for Central and Eastern Europe, and especially for Poland, a deep geopolitical transformation. The multiple consequences of these changes were felt the most in Silesia, causing a radical political and local transformation. The increasingly strong actual authority of the communists established under the patronage of the Soviet Union and the Red Army in Polish territories in theory supported the post-war Polish borders in the west along the Oder - Nysa Łużycka River line. The shape of the future southern and western borders of Poland, including the status of Silesia, was problematic due to international conflicts, particularly the dispute over the affiliation of Zaolzie, and the Czechoslovak claims on the lands of Racibórz, Głubczyce, Kłodzko and Żytawa, which were finally resolved by a border agreement in 1958. Agreements concluded between the contemporary powers led by the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain, were also of great importance. At the Yalta conference in February 1945, it was enigmatically declared that the territory of Poland should be significantly increased in the north and in the west, postponing the solution of the issue to a future peace conference. Polish communists, as part of the Provisional Government, acting in strict agreement with Moscow, didn't wait for the final international decision concerning

the eastern German lands, and instead implemented a *fait accompli* policy on the aforementioned lands, including Silesia[1].

There was, however, a clear distinction between Upper Silesia and Lower Silesia in these activities. The former was treated as valuable land full of natural resources with a very well-developed industrial infrastructure. The fact that these lands were inhabited by Silesians, regarded as 'regained' Poles, was also of tremendous propaganda importance. The aforementioned return of Upper Silesia to the Homeland lasted virtually until 1947, namely until the consolidation of the communist political power in Poland, and served as one of the main rallying points for creating the foundations of post-war Polish Statehood.

This was quite different in the case of Lower Silesia. These lands were in German hands until practically the spring of 1945. When they were captured by the Soviet Army, a great question was just how far the reach of the Polish administration was supposed to extend. Not without difficulties, but with great consistency and some exceptions, Lower Silesia was already controlled by Poles by the summer of 1945. Decisions undertaken by the Big Three in July 1945 in Potsdam confirmed the situation as it stood again, enigmatically indicating the areas discussed here to continue 'under the administration of the Polish state'. Although the decisions of the Big Three, and the *fait accompli* policy being implemented by the Polish administration in 1945 created a temporary border-territorial situation, rather than the foundations for stabilization, yet the aim to incorporate these lands into the new Polish state was expressly indicated. Potsdam's decision to expel the German population was of tremendous importance in creating the grounds for the stability of the changes thus initiated. As Grzegorz Strauchold notes, 'The Polish authorities had an empty and vast land at their disposal to be filled with a Polish population, at least until the end of 1946. […] Those coming from different places would create here – as fast as possible – a new and fully-integrated Polish community. Integrated – as officially, though secretly-assumed – under the watchful <care> of the state. Within the Polish United Workers' Party [PZPR], it was clear that the demographic situation emerging in Lower Silesia provided the opportunity to create a society made

[1] Elżbieta Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 r.*, [in:] M. Czapliński, E. Kaszuba, G. Wąs, R. Żerelik, *op. cit.*, p. 426-428; Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, *Lata 1945-1948. Dolny Śląsk u progu nowej epoki*, [in:] *Dolny Śląsk. Monografia historyczna*, p. 627-628; Grzegorz Strauchold, *Autochtoni polscy, niemieccy, czy… Od nacjonalizmu do komunizmu (1945-1949)*, Toruń 2001, p. 22; idem, *Myśl zachodnia i jej realizacja w Polsce Ludowej w latach 1945-1957*, Toruń 2003, p. 79-81; idem, *Dolny Śląsk – 'odzyskana perła'*, [in:] *Trudne dziedzictwo. Tradycje dawnych i obecnych mieszkańców Dolnego Śląsk*, ed Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, Wrocław 2006, p. 13-15; Adam Dziurok, Bernard Linek, *W Polsce Ludowej (1945-1989)*, [in:] *Historia Górnego Śląska*, p. 267-271; Krzysztof Nowak, *Śląsk czechosłowacki po 1945 roku*, [in:] *Historia Górnego Śląska*, p. 287-288.

up first of small pieces, but later united in the form expected by the political and ideological administration of the State. A policy such as this and its pursuits were implemented in the areas of Lower Silesia at least until the end of 1970. At the same time, Lower Silesia was a theoretical guarantee of the great, actual enrichment of the Polish state in its new shape. Apart from quite good soils and its pre-existing advanced agriculture, some great industrial installations were located here […]'[2].

The year 1945 is when nearly the whole of historical Silesia returned to the Polish state[3]. However, its historical and administrative limits were not the same. These are mainly a part of Upper Lusatia (Zgorzelec, Lubań, Żary) incorporated in the west and the counties of Będzin and Zawiercie in the east that were a part of the Kielce voivodeship beforehand. At the same time, the Zielona Góra county was incorporated into the Poznań voivodeship, just as parts of the Świebodzin and Krosno counties were. The Zaolzie part of the former principalities of Cieszyn, Opava and Krnov was left beyond Silesia administered by the Polish authorities[4].

The first administrative division that introduced a certain amount of stabilization went into effect on 29 May 1946. It resulted in establishing the Wrocław voivodeship that covered within its range the pre-war counties of the Lower Silesia province, excluding the indisputably Silesian county of Zielona Góra, the Lusatian counties of Hoyerswerda and Rothenburg incorporated into the Soviet occupation zone, and the Żary county for the benefit of the Poznan voivodeship. The Zgorzelec county changed its shape, its loss of areas lying on the other bank of the Nysa Łużycka River was compensated with a part of the Saxon county of Zittau, bearing the now-popular name of 'Turoszowski bag'[5]. During the next administrative reform, which came into effect by virtue of a regulation of 6 July 1950, which established the Zielona Góra voivodeship, the counties of Głogów, Kożuchów, Szprotawa, Żagań, and

[2] G. Strauchold, *Autochtoni polscy*, p. 14-15.

[3] About territorial divisions in Silesia after 1945: Kazimierz Orzechowski, *Śląsk w przeszłości i jego terytorialne podziały*, [in:] Kazimierz Orzechowski, Dariusz Przybytek, Marian Ptak, *Dolny Śląsk. Podziały terytorialne od X do XX wieku*, Wrocław 2008, p. 93-97; Marian Ptak, *Ewolucja struktury terytorilano-administracyjnej Dolnego Śląska i województwa dolnośląskiego*, [in:] K. Orzechowski, D. Przybytek, M. Ptak, *op. cit.*, p. 110-112; E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 438-440, 524-525, 547; Tomasz Kruszewski, *Zmiany podziału terytorialnego na Ślasku w XIX i XX wieku*, 'Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis', No 2144, Prawo CCLXIV, 1999, p. 184-194; Teresa Bogacz, *Historyczne podziały Dolnego Śląska*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 6 (1999), p. 14-15.

[4] T. Kruszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 184; E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 440.

[5] The name came from the Turoszów settlement, now part of the town of Bogatynia, the most important industrial centre of the locality. Here was administrative centre of large open-cast, coal mines, which are still important elements of Lower Silesian economy.

Wschowa, all of which belonged to the Silesian administration between 1938 and 1945, were all excluded from the Wrocław voivodeship[6].

At this point, it is also worth mentioning the fate of the Hoyerswerda and Rothenburg counties and the western part of Zgorzelec county that belonged to Silesia until 1945. In 1949 they became a part of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). In the middle of the 1990s, a referendum was conducted in these areas concerning their incorporation into Brandenburg or Saxony. It resulted in the aforementioned territories becoming a part of the latter territories[7].

The Polish Council of Ministers' regulation of 1946 established the Silesian voivodeship (also known as Silesian-Dąbrowian one), for which the starting point was initially the province of Upper Silesia within the boundaries set as of 1944. As a result of various corrections, two great administrative units were finally formed, and the border between them, running through the western ends of the Kluczbork, Opole, Niemodlin, Gródek and Nysa counties, basically overlapped the former border of the Opole and Wrocław regencies. After several administrative-territorial corrections (e.g., transferring into the Kielce and Cracow voivodeships parts of counties that had been incorporated into the Upper Silesian province during the war by the German invaders) in 1950 the Opole voivodeship was created, including, most of all, the counties of the former Opole regency (according to its previous shape of 1940). The aforementioned changes occurred, as a matter of fact, mainly at the expense of the Silesian voivodeship, although this reform also resulted in the eastern historical counties of Brzesko and Namysłów being cut out of the Wrocław voivodeship[8].

These and subsequent transformations (e.g., the enlargement in the 1950s of the Silesian voivodeship at the expense of the Kielce voivodeship) resulted in Silesia – or rather *Silesian* voivodeships – administratively covering areas down to the Liswarta River, which practically meant the end of the divisions between Silesia and Lesser Poland region that had been formed in the 18th and 19th century[9].

The changes described here were supplemented by the Act of 1950, on Local Bodies of the Uniform State Authorities, under which voivodeships' offices, county offices, municipal and communal councils were replaced by so-called 'national

[6] T. Kruszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 184; Joanna Szczepankiewicz-Battek, *Łużyce – przestrzeń dysocjacji kultur narodowych i religijnych*, Słupsk 2005, p. 36-59.

[7] T. Kruszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

[8] *Ibidem*, p. 186-188; K. Orzechowski, *op. cit.*, p. 94-95; Ryszard Kaczmarek, *Ludzie – stosunki demograficzne, struktura społeczna, podziały wyznaniowe, etniczne i narodowościowe*, [in:] *Historia Górnego Śląska*, p. 41.

[9] K. Orzechowski, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

councils' having administrative authorities, whose members were officially elected by citizens[10].

Another deep change in the administrative divisions of historical Silesia was brought about by the reform implemented pursuant to the Act of 28 May 1975 on the Two-Stage Administrative Division of the Country, and to the changing of the Act on National Councils. As a result of these counties were dissolved across the country and Silesia was divided into a number of new voivodeships: Bielsk, Katowice, Opole, Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica, Jelenia Góra and Zielona Góra. At the same time, territorial corrections were made as a result of which the Bielsk and Zielona Góra voivodeships essentially reached beyond the borders of historical region Silesia, and territories of some of the previously-Silesian counties entered the structures of historically non-Silesian lands. The whole county of Górów was incorporated into the Leszno voivodeship. As Tomasz Kruszewski notes, the 'decisions of 1975 that liquidated the counties interrupted the historical developmental continuity of the territorial structure in Silesia'[11]. According to Teresa Bogacz, the reform contributed to creating a hostile climate where it became easier to trigger ambivalent feelings and antagonisms between different political groups and social circles[12].

The next serious territorial transformation of Silesia only occurred after 1989. The systemic transformations in Poland of the 1990s resulted in the undertaking of a state decentralization program, which in consequence meant restoring the counties. Under the Act of 24 July 1998 in the Introduction of a Basic Three-Level Territorial Division of the Country (into voivodeships, counties, and communes) as of 1 January 1999, sixteen large voivodeships have been established. In the area of Silesia, the Dolnośląskie voivodeship (with its governmental seat in Wrocław), Lubuskie (with its governmental seat in Zielona Góra), Silesian (with its governmental seat in Katowice), and Opole (with its governmental seat in Opole) were created. As a result of the corrections, bigger or smaller changes occurred within the boundaries of the counties as compared to the situation up until 1975. A positive conceptual result of the reform was, as noticed by Kazimierz Orzechowski, 'an atmosphere suitable for […] the historical name of Śląsk' to appear more broadly in official nomenclature[13].

Considering the matter of the administration authority and institutionalization in Silesia as it pertains to the analysis of both strengthening and weakening forces

[10] E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 503.
[11] T. Kruszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 190.
[12] T. Bogacz, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
[13] K. Orzechowski, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

within the region that determine the affiliation of people (social groups), and social unity as a historical phenomenon after World War II, the reform of 1998/99 reflects the issues addressed in the article very well. The aforementioned nationwide administrative changes, including Silesia as well, were accompanied by extensive political and social discussion at the parliamentary level through different public media, and accompanied by petitions, demonstrations as well as cultural and integration activities. The principal axis of the dispute in this reform was the concept of dividing the country into twelve large regions, according to which Silesia was to be divided into two voivodeships: the Lower Silesian and Silesian (or Upper Silesian). This approach eliminated smaller areas such as the Opole voivodeship. The aforementioned vision met with the strong objection of the people of Opole who fought for many months and in various ways in 1998 for their voivodeship. In January of this year, the Citizen Committee for the Defence of the Opole Region was established and collected more than 250,000 signatures against the liquidation of the voivodeship (within only the first month of operations, as much as approximately 50,000 votes of objection were collected). Soon, another initiative to create an active Autonomous Defence of the Opole Voivodeship was taken. Actions that were taken to maintain the previous status involved local government members, politicians, the Opole University community, clergy, entrepreneurs and businessmen, artists, and most of all, a large part of the society. Within the extensive range of actions organized bottom-up to retain the voivodeship, the Opole region's communes hosted cultural and entertainment events under the name of 'Śląskie Biesiady'. In March, two protest demonstrations were organized in the region consisting of several thousand people each. In May, nearly 5,000 people gathered in the Opole amphitheatre to protest against the liquidation of the voivodeship. About 2,000 inhabitants of the Opole Region protested in Warsaw. The A4 highway in Walidrogi was also blocked, and there was a great, colourful 'Chain of Hope' (June 1998), running along route E 40, i.e., from the border with the Wrocław voivodeship to the border with the Katowice voivodeship, involving thousands of local people. The campaign, fought in various political, social, economic and cultural areas, resulted in leaving the small Opole voivodeship on the administrative map of Poland. In the Opole region, this campaign was considered to be in defence of the region's identity. What's interesting is that during the few months of intensive work and campaigning for the administrative unity of the Opole region, the atmosphere was marked by a huge and deep sense of integration, one which lasted in subsequent years and is reflected by the 'Brońmy Swego Opolskiego' (Defend Our Opole Locality!) monument, unveiled solemnly on 6 August 2000 in Opole. It symbolizes

the unification of all the inhabitants of the Opole region in fighting for the voivodeship: on a table formed in the shape of the Opole voivodeship, next to a cannon in the shape of the Piast Tower, there is a saluting Polish soldier, so-called Uhlan that refers back to the period of the Silesian uprisings. The battle for the Opole voivodeship, fought across many fields and involving thousands of people, fully unveiled the huge social potential of the Opole region. Actions undertaken during those few months, except for the administrative path (which, in turn, was above all in the hands of the local administration members, politicians, deputies and senators), revealed strong community bonds in the Opole region. These allowed various associations to form in a very short time to coordinate protests or lobby campaigns whose purpose was not only to provide a clear protest voice against the ideas of the central authorities, but also to develop a strong integration impulse in the region. The aforementioned forces that bond the local community, whose cultural roots reach deep into the Opole soil, was also confirmed by the extent of the bottom-up initiatives undertaken, and their high effect on almost all social groups[14].

The circumstances of the administrative reform implemented in Silesia at the end of the 1990s also revealed another phenomenon, alongside the case of the Opole voivodeship, which was noticed by Tomasz Kruszewski. Referring critically to certain administrative-territorial solutions of the mentioned reform in Silesia (e.g., concerning the name of the 'Lubuskie', or 'Silesian' voivodeship), he wrote: 'These strange ideas concerning the voivodeships of the Recovered Territories […] arise from the fact that Poles themselves – seemingly – do not know what to refer to, i.e. whether a voivodeship refers to a Prussian regency, or to a province. We don't have these territorial structure levels; instead of two Prussian levels, there is [in Poland] only one. Under these circumstances, sometimes we create large voivodeships, like Prussian provinces, and sometimes small ones, like Prussian regencies. The survival of the voivodeships of Zielona Góra and Opole proves the great devastating effect, caused in 1950, on the mentality of the local communities who, with great effort, were defending completely unnecessary borders and unnecessary voivodeships (other than their own). These borders of 1998 mean that Silesia is once again torn apart as it was under its Versailles borders from 1919 to 1922'[15]. This very critical and polemical opinion indicates the importance of the administrative-territorial transformations in the process of creating regional and social identities in Silesia. The transformations, burdened heavily with history and

[14] *Jak uratowano województwo opolskie [1998]*, [in:] http://nowahistoriaopolszczyzny.pl [last access 08.07.2014].

[15] T. Kruszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

geopolitics, affect the issues of identity and social unity, both in terms of strengthening and weakening forces.

Analysing the problem above, the following issues should be pointed out. At the end of World War II, Silesia was taken out of a certain geopolitical system, and was now subject to natural adjustments, whereas it had previously been stable for decades in its fundamental structure. While it was natural for Upper Silesia to return after the dark times of occupation back to the Polish Statehood, the process faced by the Lower Silesian region was far more complicated. For the German community, the second half of the 1940s meant the end of any political, historical, economic, or cultural connection with Silesia, along with the fact of its expulsion. First, the relevant system of deep deficits and dispersion in the area of occupation zones, and then of two new German states, meant the complete and irreversible destruction of this community's previous unity. It only survived practically at the level of its spiritual relationship with Silesia, treated in terms of Heimat, a homeland whose memory was cultivated first in the privacy of the home, and then within numerous organizations and political and cultural associations, book and album publications, periodicals, and at events of various kinds.

When discussing this issue, it is worth briefly mentioning the issue of Lusatia in the Polish and German awareness of the Polish-German borderland in the context of the consequences of the administrative-territorial changes. Practically, until the first half of 1970 in south-west and western Lower Silesia, the notion of Lusatiahood functioned marginally as an element of identity[16]. Since 1975 when Krzysztof R. Mazurski introduced the term East Lusatia as a Lusatian area within the postwar Polish borders, i.e. between the Nysa Łużycka River in the west and the Kwisa River in the east, it has appeared more often in papers of archaeologists, ethnographers, historians and art historians. Politicians, local administration members, and journalists have also made use of the term and it has seeped into the consciousness of society which is proven by how often it is used in the names of restaurants, and hotels[17]. The phenomenon indicated here has developed not without problems, as noticed by Krzysztof R. Mazurski: 'The social engineering campaign, understandable from […] the political point of view [in the period before 1989 - JNS] of the Polish authorities – uncertainty about the western border, a new Polish community transferred from the eastern (and other) native lands and cut off from the traditions of their own regions – was trying not only to promote the notion of <returning

[16] Krzysztof R. Mazurski, *Łużyce Wschodnie jako region turystyczny*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 13 (2008), p. 67-69.

[17] G. Pisarski, *op. cit.*, p. 77-78.

to old Piast=Polish> lands, but also to create a bond with the new lands. Hence, an attempt was made to convince the people of the Lower Silesian (later Wrocław) voivodeship that they all live in Lower Silesia, even if these are the Lusatia or Kłodzko territories, they are all Lower Silesians'[18]. As Grzegorz Pisarski notes when observing the development of the phenomenon after 2000, 'Having however no intention to differentiate in this respect, the whole area [Lower Silesia and East Lusatia – JNS] is inhabited – historically – by an immigrant element, yet the awareness of Lusatiahood goes hand in hand with raising the Lower Silesian identity'[19]. The main problem was, however, the fact that the eastern part of Lower and Upper Lusatia through the border of the Oder and the Nysa Łużycka was cut off in almost 20% of the areas where the Upper and Lower Lusatian population was still living, shaping the cultural identity of the region for decades. A natural process, to some extent, triggered a regional curiosity in the new inhabitants of the aforementioned lands, which could not be fully replaced by official government propaganda. The interest in their own town and the resulting search for knowledge about the region has revealed in a conflict between the theses being propagated and the specific cultural character of the Lusatian land, which, for instance, in its traditionally built architecture, demonstrates its exceptionality in comparison to the Lower Silesian land[20]. Together with the aforementioned process taking place on the Polish side, a belief is being established in eastern Saxony that 'Lower Silesia starts between the Budziszyn and Nysa Łużycka, which is justified by the historical creation of the Prussian administration, called <Lower Silesian Upper Lusatia (Niederschlesische Oberlausitz)>, while between the Kwisa and Nysa Łużycka, a new identity is being created <Polish Upper Lusatia>'[21].

For the new inhabitants of Lower Silesia, the second half of the 1940s was the beginning of a difficult, and in many cases complicated, process of merging with the Silesian land. Burdened by a painful war experience both in the context of the relations between the victims and the German invaders, and removed from their small homelands, e.g., on the Polish Eastern Borderlands (*Kresy*), and with their own rich cultural heritage, they were settled on a land that they had no historical ties with (as opposed to the Upper Silesian identification). This was a region that was culturally-foreign to them; most of them knew nothing about it and, it is very important to note, it was a part of the state that symbolized their long and

[18] K.R. Mazurski, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
[19] G. Pisarski, *op. sit.*, p. 78.
[20] K.R. Mazurski, *op. cit.*, p. 69-77; J. Szczepankiewicz- Battek, *op. cit.*, p. 269-282.
[21] K.R. Mazurski, *op. cit.*, p. 79; Bernd Schöne, *Śląska tożsamość w Saksonii*, [in:] *Śląsk, Schlesien, Slezsko. Przenikanie kultur*, ed. Zygmunt Kłodnicki, Wrocław 2000, p. 134-137.

severe occupation. The Lower Silesian community that was formed in such a complicated manner was a rather passive element of the administrative transformations of the reforms in 1946 and 1950, rather than a participant. It is because to a great extent they served the top-down actions of the government aimed at issuing administrative orders and integrating the region with the rest of the country. A consequence of these reforms was also the controlled integration of the Lower Silesian community with the land on which they now had to live and function, imposed upon them by the central authorities through its administrative division and naming process. In such a designated framework, the concerned community also had to start a unification process.

At this point it should also be stated that taking Silesia out of the familiar, long-lasting geopolitical system was a fact that both strengthened and weakened the community of the region after 1945. With regard to the first issue, the destabilization of the region by its partition between several countries should be noted. This divided the local community, and in many cases literally broke the bonds with it. The new community (see Lower Silesia) had general problems with identification with the physical aspects of the place as well as with mental adaptation to it in the initial period. While German inhabitants would identify themselves as Silesians, members of the new Polish community would not demonstrate such an identity for years[22]. The identification was also hindered, and in many cases prevented, by insufficient knowledge about the region, which in consequence limited many individuals in their Lower Silesian awareness to the areas of Wrocław, Legnica, the Sudetes mountains and its foreland, while totally excluding the region of Zielona Góra. This problem was deepened by the reform of 1950, when all the official names of the provinces were named after the towns that made up their capitals, thereby rejecting the historical nomenclature of the administrative districts.

However, on the other hand, taking Silesia out of the prior geopolitical system served to integrate the local community. Certainly it is visible, above all, in Upper Silesia, which is not burdened anymore, as it used to be for decades, especially during the interwar period, with the stigma of a place of encounter and competition between the Slavic and Germanic elements. At that time this struggle built up and shaped a deep and permanent national antagonism, and a clear determination to affiliate with a specified ethnic and cultural group. On the other hand, in the case of Lower Silesia, the phenomenon of building a new Polish society arose; the new 'Lower Silesians' integrated with the rest of the country, but also attempted to shape the cultural landscape of the region.

[22] See chapter by Grzegorz Strauchold, *Ethnic issues*, in this book.

The factor discussed here was also significant in how Silesia was perceived from the outside, which was not without an effect on the integration and disintegration processes within the communities living in the Silesian territory. In the interwar period, the identification of the whole of Silesia with Upper Silesia was formed among Poles, becoming a synonym for it. The consequences of this way of thinking can be seen perfectly in the naming process of the voivodeships that were established in 1946, when the Wrocław voivodeship and the Silesian voivodeship were separated. These kinds of actions did not help in shaping the identification of the new society in Lower Silesia with the whole of Silesia in a historical context, and in its internal integration around the notion of Silesianity as a distinguishing element of the region seen from the outside. Until 1945, there was practically no distinction between Upper and Lower Silesians in German public nomenclature, since it was common to call the members of the community of all the administrative parts of the region by the term 'Silesian'. On the other hand, after World War II, a kind of 'naming void' appeared. As noticed by Grzegorz Pisarski, in the case of the Polish settlers populated former eastern borderland of the German state, 'the terms used were <the population of the western and northern lands>, or <of the Recovered Territories>. The fact of one's residing in Lower Silesia would not be associated *de facto* with residing in Silesia, since the latter name was clearly associated with a small fragment of the middle part of Upper Silesia, and in fact with the area of Katowice'[23].

The reform of 1975 was of similar importance in the context of the forces that strengthened and weakened the Silesian community. As Marian Ptak notes, 'particularly at the level of voivodeships it eliminated, to a large extent, the old and recent historical borders of Polish territories, including Silesia. The pursuit to remove the historical borders was also expressed in consequent naming that was derived from the name of the administrative centre, and not from the historical region's name'[24]. These kinds of actions had broad results; one example is the Wrocław voivodeship, for which the aforementioned reform meant another reduction in its area, and for Wrocław itself, an obvious administrative degradation, which could

[23] Grzegorz Pisarski, *Łużyce a tożsamość Dolnoślązaków*, [in:] *Dolnoślązacy? Kształtowanie tożsamości mieszkańców Dolnego Śląska po II wojnie światowej*, eds Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, Grzegorz Strauchold, Wrocław 2007, p. 73-76; Roman Baron, Andrzej Michalczyk, Michał J. Witkowski, *Kim jest Górnoślązak?*, [in:] *Historia Górnego Śląska*, p. 467-473; Hermann Stehr, *Ślązak*, [in:] *Śląsk. Rzeczywistości wyobrażone*, ed. Wojciech Kunicki, Poznań 2009, p. 279-286; Stefan Bednarek, *Jedność Śląska – z perspektywy dolnośląskiej*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 3 (1996), p. 260-165.

[24] M. Ptak, *Ewolucja*, p. 111-112.

not remain without a (negative, of course) impact on the processes of integration and of building the identity of the local communities[25].

Another consequence of the reform, which deepened the processes of distinguishing the identity of the new Upper and Lower Silesian communities, was the implementation of a solution that was supposed for the voivodeships of crucial importance to the country's economy. It was the creation of 'macroregions' as they became known, that consisted of several voivodeships. In the case of Silesia, only one, southern macro-region was established, which included the voivodeships of Katowice, Opole, Bielsko-Biała and Częstochowa[26]. Lower Silesia was void of this type of voivodeships' conglomerate.

The administrative reform of 1975, as proven by the example of Jelenia Góra, did not foster regional integration either[27]. At the turn of the 1960s and 70s, there was a great discussion there and in its vicinity on defining the local character of the Jelenia Góra region. It resulted in a number of press articles representing various views on the subject. These polemics should undoubtedly be considered important in the identity-shaping process of the Jelenia Góra region's community. The analysis of many press articles, and of the occasional publications, indicates not only the intention, but also the belief that it is necessary to create the term 'Jelenia Góra region', which is supposed to answer to a social demand[28]. The roots of the mentioned polemics date back to the second half of the 1940s, when, mostly thanks to the Lower Silesian branch of the Polish Writers' Union, an idea emerged to create 'a new type of Sudety Pole'. In 1947, during the First Convention of the Polish Sudety Region's Writers in Jelenia Góra, a declaration was issued concerning the 'cultural integration' of the population and about cooperating 'in shaping a uniform type of Pole that fits the nature and the needs of the Sudety Region'. The program, formulated this way, proved the conviction of the existing autonomy and particular nature of the Jelenia Góra region, on which it is possible and even necessary to build the idea of its local character, and in turn, its social identity. This thought was, however, in conflict with the intentions of the state authorities that aimed at the many-sided integration of these lands with the rest of the state which, in turn, was a precondition for creating a uniform Polish nation[29].

[25] S. Bednarek, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
[26] E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 525.
[27] Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, *<Czy istnieje Polak sudecki?>. Z problemów kształtowania się tożsamości zbiorowej ludności Dolnego Śląska na przykładzie Ziemi Jeleniogórskiej w latach 60. XX w.*, [in:] *Dolnoślązacy?*, p. 41-43; S. Bednarek, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
[28] J. Nowosielska-Sobel, *<Czy istnieje Polak sudecki?>*, p. 41-43.
[29] *Ibidem*, p. 27-29.

This way of thinking was revived again in 1958 on the wave of the *October thaw* (1956), when the *Jelenia Góra Theses* were announced – recorded statements of locals from the region – which, as noticed by Ivo Łaborewicz, 'have become the official development program for this part of Silesia for several successive years […] They consisted one of the most significant integration activity elements within the population that settled in Lower Silesia after World War II. On their basis, several institutions and organizations have been founded, which in many cases are still operating, or have significantly affected the region's cultural life for a number of years [among others, the creation of the <Nowiny Jeleniogórskie> magazine, and the Jelenia Góra Land Enthusiasts Association – JNS]'[30]. As noticed in the monograph of Jelenia Góra, the Theses are the 'effect of local patriotism and sympathy for the city and the region'[31].

This sense of a distinct Jelenia Góra region, its original geographic-economic features, and its great human potential, formed over the years (both from bottom-up organizations, and by social personalities, cultural life, local press media, as well as by certain representatives of local government) was given a powerful impulse by establishing the Jelenia Góra voivodeship in 1975[32]. This fact confirmed the local community's belief that it does have distinctive features when compared to Silesia. On the other hand, it gave them an additional institutional tool. Both for the authorities of Jelenia Góra and for many people in the region's community, the establishment of their province was a promotion and a factor that directly increased (e.g., by means of potentially easier access to funds) the pace of life and infrastructural transformations[33].

The issue of the administrative changes in Silesia as a factor that strengthened or weakened the social structure in a historical context must be undeniably associated with the analysis of the role of various institutions in the processes and phenomena being discussed. It should be borne in mind that as an 'institution' we understood both a specific, administrative office, a representative of the authorities, and an individual acting not only within regulations, but also undertaking her/his own initiatives, thus promoting oneself as the leader of specific changes or processes.

[30] Ivo Łaborewicz, *Integracja ludności Kotliny Jeleniogórskiej na przykładzie działalności Towarzystwa Klubów Robotniczych i Chłopskich*, [in:] *Dolnoślązacy?*, p. 45.
[31] *Jelenia Góra. Zarys rozwoju miasta*, ed. Zbigniew Kwaśny, Wrocław 1989, p. 269.
[32] I. Łaborewicz, *Integracja ludności*, p. 46.
[33] Marian Iwanek, *Rozwój społeczno-gospodarczy i kulturalny Jeleniej Góry w 35-leciu PRL*, 'Rocznik Jeleniogórski', 18 (1980), p. 7-8.

The first administrative teams for Silesia were made up of people from Lublin and Cracow for Opole Silesia, and from Kielce and Cracow for Lower Silesia. Temporary civil authority on behalf of the Provisional Government was entrusted to the district representatives of the Government. In the case of Opole Silesia, this was General Aleksander Zawadzki from Dąbrowa Górnicza (who was serving, at the same time, as the first Silesian-Dąbrowian governor), and Stanisław Piaskowski in Lower Silesia. These teams had the duty of establishing the foundations of the Polish administration (often under very difficult conditions, as mostly in the case of Lower Silesia, see e.g., problems with the Soviet war *kommandaturas*), launching transportation services, and securing industrial and municipal facilities, and cultural goods[34]. In this sense, these offices constituted an important and natural factor of bonding the region's community under these conditions.

In the case of the Opole Region and Lower Silesia, the issue can be also discussed in terms of the operation of populating the aforementioned lands connected with removing the German population[35]. The main condition for the success of the Polish authorities' plan of integrating the Silesian land with the rest of the country was their fast Polonisation scheme, which was to take the form of settling Poles and of removing everything German, together with the previous inhabitants[36]. Simultaneously, a propaganda campaign was conducted about the 'ancient Polish-hood' of the lands being populated. The migration and colonization program implemented by the State Repatriation Office (PUR) was far from the assumed orderly, planned, coordinated operation. Many settlers perceived PUR very negatively as an institution that represented the state government in the field, for the prevailing chaos, and

[34] E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 438-439; Sebastian Ligarski, *Stanisław Piaskowski – pierwszy wojewoda dolnośląski*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 11 (2005), p. 141-146.

[35] E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 444-462.; Adam Baniecki, *Ludność niemiecka w powiecie i mieście Bolesławiec w latach 1945-1949*, [in:] *Trudne dziedzictwo*, p. 40-59; Grzegorz Hryciuk, Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, Bożena Szaynok, Andrzej Żbikowski, *Wysiedlenia, wypędzenia i ucieczki 1939-1959. Atlas ziem Polski*, Warszawa 2008, p. 82-103, 169, 182-203.

[36] Grzegorz Hryciuk, *Przesiedlenia Polaków z Kresów Wschodnich II RP*, [in:] G. Hryciuk, M. Ruchniewicz, B. Szaynok, A. Żbikowski, *Wysiedlenia, wypędzenia i ucieczki*, p. 103-125; Elżbieta Kościk, *Zasiedlanie wsi w południowych powiatach Dolnego Śląska w latach 1945-1949*, [in:] *Demografia i społeczeństwo Ziem Zachodnich i Północnych1945-1995. Próba bilansu*, eds Ewa Frątczak, Zbigniew Strzelecki, Warszawa 1996, p. 89-91; eadem, *Osadnictwo polskie na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945-1948*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 11 (2005), p. 23-32; eadem, *Przemiany demograficzne na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945-1950*, [in:] *Ziemie Zachodnie – historia i perspektywy*, eds Wojciech Kucharski, Grzegorz Strauchold, Wrocław 2011, p. 93-102; Franciszek Kusiak, *Osadnictwo polskie na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945-1950*, 'Zbliżenia Interkulturowe – Polska. Niemcy. Europa / Interkulturelle Annäherungen – Polen. Deutschland. Europa', 1 (2006), no. 2, p. 85-101; idem, *Przyczyny i efekty migracji na Dolny Śląsk w latach 1945-1950*, [in:] *Migracje: dzieje, typologia, definicje*, eds Antoni Furdala, Włodzimierz Wysoczański, Wrocław 2006, p. 172-183; Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, *Ewakuacja, ucieczka i wysiedlenia ludności niemieckiej z ziem na wschód od Odry i Nysy Łużyckiej w latach 1944-1947*, [in:] *Ziemie Zachodnie*, p. 127-144.

for insufficient knowledge on the specific nature of particular groups of Polish people being settled in Silesia (e.g., people who had previously lived in cities and had now been sent to villages) The sense of harm accompanying those that were resettled only served to additionally fuel this situation. As Elżbieta Kaszuba notes, 'Initially, in this still new community, the local identities prevailed over ethnic or national unity. The specific character of particular migrant categories determined their varied prospects with regard to their adaptation tendencies in their place of new settlement, their preferred world view systems, political choices, attitudes and behaviours in the sphere of public life. Official characteristics provided generalized, stereotypical portraits of each group, with a specified level of political correctness in relation to the government'[37].

The Polish administration's inability to execute the settlement plans had serious consequences for the formation of a new society. One negative example is the Jelenia Góra Valley region, not destroyed by the war, and theoretically able to offer perfect living conditions (an intact residential base; good road and railway infrastructure). In spite of this, some settlers considered their stay in the Karkonosze (Giant) Mountains as a transitional situation. Many decided to abandon their assigned farms, and some of the settlements located in the mountains were left unoccupied[38].

Such difficult situations often disclosed the potential of individuals aware of their role, who served offices representing the government in the region, but also played a significant role in co-creating and bonding the local communities. One person worth mentioning is undoubtedly the governor of the Jelenia Góra county, Wojciech Tabaka, who in the second half of the 1940s, according to Grzegorz Strauchold, 'Dealing with the diverse and unstable collection of people settling here, or <just> visiting, […], looked for ways to permanently root them to his area. Intending to create a uniform, stabilized local community, he provided, among his methods, the settlers with appropriate cultural incentives'[39]. To a great extent, it is due to his actions, since he supported not only various art activities, but also assisted people of culture in settling in the county by assigning them a flat, that Karkonosze became a place of residence and creative work for a large group of writers who have participated in accordance with his idea in shaping the cultural landscape of the local

[37] E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 448.

[38] Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, *Region karkonoski po II wojnie światowej*, [in:] *Wspaniały krajobraz. Artyści i kolonie artystyczne w Karkonoszach w XX wieku. Die imposante Landschaft: Künstler und Künstlerkolonien im Riesengebirge im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Klaus Bździach, Berlin-Jelenia Góra 1999, p. 30.

[39] Grzegorz Strauchold, *Polskie środowisko literackie w rejonie Karkonoszy w pierwszych latach powojennych*, [in:] *Wspaniały krajobraz*, p. 291.

community. As Jacek Kolbuszewski said, people such as Alina and Czesław Centkiewicz, Jan Izydor Sztaudynger, and Aleksander Baumgardten 'left the stigma of familiarity on the moral landscape structure', by implementing, together with county governor Tabaka, a program of actual repolonisation, one of whose most important elements was the development of a cultural and spiritual life[40].

Just how big the role of a specific individual holder of an office is in creating a sense of social unity in the face of a serious problem threatening a given society was fully disclosed by the situation caused by the great flood that hit Silesia, including Wrocław, in July 1997. Sociologists examining the aforementioned events use the term 'marvel' in their assessment, since it was at that time that a spontaneous community order emerged, replacing institutional values and standards in a time of crisis[41]. As noted by Katarzyna Kajdanek, 'In the face of high water, the city authorities lost their ability to manage the situation and information about the situation. For several days, the situation was handled by the community, and information by the local media (mainly radio). On the other hand, the authorities stopped formally managing the community and became part of it. This means that particular individuals facing a great threat redefined the way in which they performed their roles, and thereby became closer to the regular inhabitants of the city'[42]. One unique symbol of this change was the, at that time current, president of Wrocław, Bogdan Zdrojewski, who served in his role as the city authority but also accompanied Wrocławians on the embankments defending the city.

The local government played an important role in creating the forces that affected the shape and identity of the Silesian community after 1989. As noted by Jan Waszkiewicz, the aforementioned phenomenon is particularly, but not uniquely, noticeable in Lower Silesia[43]. The local governments are responsible for organizing community life in the areas of administration, land management, economic development and in strategic thought about long-term development. For years, there has been a discussion on these issues in order to evaluate how the idea of self-governance works in Poland, and how its particular representatives are functioning in this

[40] Jacek Kolbuszewski, *Karkonosze w poezji polskiej lat 1945-1955*, 'Rocznik Jeleniogórski', 19 (1981), p. 187; Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, *<Na barkach nieśli krajobraz> – z problemów oswajania zastanej przez osadników przestrzeni na przykładzie powiatu jeleniogórskiego drugiej połowy lat 40*, [in:] *Trudne dziedzictwo*, p. 122-126.

[41] Katarzyna Kajdanek, *Znaczenie powodzi 1997 r. w procesie wrastania mieszkańców Wrocławi*a, [in:] *Ziemie Zachodnie*, p. 389-398.

[42] *Ibidem*, p. 391.

[43] Jan Waszkiewicz, *Samorząd terytorialny na Dolnym Śląsku – siedemnaście lat doświadczeń*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 12 (2007), p. 7.

area, which to a large extent is determined by the individual in charge, who shapes and implements local policy.

Analysing the problem in a more general way, the role of the local government in building a civic society should certainly be highlighted[44]. In this context, Jan Waszkiewicz points out the following problem: '[…] The pursuit of a manifestation of civic attitudes was a primary and much more fundamental process as compared to the introduction of the local governments. The rise of <Solidarity> between 1980-1981 was a great awakening of the civil society, and also at that time, the drive to build a Republic of Local Governments was clearly manifested. The turn of 1988-1990 also triggered many civil initiatives, and the introduction of the local and communal governments resulted from the manifested dynamics of civil society. […] It is beyond doubt that political games on local and regional levels […] reinforce social self-organization, and it can be proven by the number and variety of electoral committees that are non-partisan in nature, based on various civil organizations and movements. They introduce their representatives to local governments (which reinforces their position and increases their stability). […] Also, local governments have learned to value social organizations as partners in implementing projects important for a particular community, and transfer some of their duties and tasks to them'[45]. This belief is supported by social organizations functioning in the region, independent from the authorities, that have been able to create various initiatives that demonstrate regional identity, e.g., in economics. This includes the Lower Silesian Economic Certificate, the Economic Forum organization in Kudowa, and finally euro-regions being established in Silesia, e.g., the Polish-Czech Euro-region of Glacensis in the Valley of Kłodzko, and the Polish-German Euro-region of Nysa[46]. A problem of the latter initiatives remains the clear division between activity in an international frontier partnership of local governments, and their knowledge of local communities. However, as has been noted by those researching the subject, more and more is being done to reduce the gap between knowledge and understanding, e.g., in culture. Krzysztof R. Mazurski concludes: 'participation in this type of trans-border cooperation brings specific, measurable

[44] *Ibidem*, p. 16; Jan Waszkiewicz, *Województwo dolnośląskie w 2005 r.*, [in:] *Dolny Śląsk 1945 - Dolny Śląsk 2005*, ed. Bogdan Cybulski, Wrocław 2006, p. 161-176.

[45] J. Waszkiewicz, *Samorząd*, p. 16-17; Władysław Suleja, *<Solidarność> (nie tylko) dolnośląska. Refleksje po 25 latach*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 11 (2005), p. 9-22; E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 530-532; Łukasz Kamiński, Jakub Tyszkiewicz, *Lata 1956-2005*, [in:] *Dolny Śląsk. Monografia historyczna*, p. 744-759; Łukasz Kamiński, *Opozycja i opór społeczny na Dolnym Śląsku 1945-1989*, [in:] *Ziemie Zachodnie*, p. 273-281.

[46] J. Waszkiewicz, *Samorząd*, p. 17; Krzysztof R. Mazurski, *Euroregiony Polski południowo--zachodniej*, [in:] 'Dolny Śląsk', 6 (1999), p. 136-146.

economic results and considerable improvement, aiming at actual integration between neighbours. The essence of this is determined to a large extent by the bottom-up, spontaneous character of the partnership, proving the self-awareness and actual self-governance of the frontier inhabitants'[47].

Jan Waszkiewicz indicates the importance of local governments as a factor affecting the common building and growth of social capital in both a commune and a sub-region, or a region, namely the 'unified functioning dimension of a given community, that is all the bond, values, behaviour models etc. based on mutual trust, solidarity, loyalty (and skills) in cooperation for the common good'[48]. Social capital is of considerable importance for social unity, which may be reflected in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship, being translated into the economic development of the region and the wealth of its inhabitants[49].

In Lower Silesia, one more feature has also been unveiled, determining local governmental works, and the result of the particular post-war historical character of the region. It is first of all the fact that local authorities of various levels had to take on the role of supplementing the Lower Silesian identity and, on the other hand, of its creator[50]. This includes 'dealing with the past' and 'designing the past'[51]. The local authorities have become creators that reconcile the cultural burden of subsequent generations of Poles with the cultural landscape and heritage of the Lower Silesian land. In particular, Wrocław has provided many initiatives in this field, starting by initiating research works on the city's past, than issuing publications popularizing the knowledge that was obtained this way, organizing a number of cultural events, and also taking care of the preservation and restoration of the city's material culture goods. Referring to the role of the local governments in 'designing the past', and to influencing through this element the unity of the region's society, many initiatives have also been undertaken in this area, led by the acquisition of funds for building and modernizing the infrastructure, and for implementing specific projects in that area. These kinds of activities certainly promote growth in the number of community contacts, because, as noticed by Jan Waszkiewicz, although it is 'a very mundane dimension of building the local, and particularly regional, identity', it remains very important. The possibility of efficient and direct contacts between the members of the local society in all matters, from politics to economics or culture, affects the level of its unity. For this reason, any initiatives

[47] K.R. Mazurski, *Euroregiony*, p. 146.
[48] J. Waszkiewicz, *Samorząd*, p. 17.
[49] *Ibidem*, p. 18.
[50] *Ibidem*.
[51] *Ibidem*.

to make people familiar with the region and its capital city are very important. However, there is still a lot to do in this field, not only with regard to building the road infrastructure, but also with regard to available European funds, and to a situation of localities situated far from the centre of the region.

Institutions which, in a very clear manner, affected the shape of the society living in the Silesian land in the post-war decades, were Churches of different denominations, led by the Catholic Church, which in the second half of the 1940s actively participated in the integration of the region with the Polish state, often undertook challenges that exceeded their pastoral services[52]. Although in the period mentioned above it was operating under extremely difficult conditions, seriously complicated by the fact that the uniform Polish Church organization throughout Silesia was not possible to be organized (for political reasons, and because of the international arrangements and provisions of the Holy See), the Catholic Church managed to be a stabilizing factor, in terms of supporting the adaptation and integration processes of the new local Polish community in the making. As Elżbieta Kaszuba notes, 'During that time, the Polish Catholic Church was actually the only institution, apart from the schools, that was able to close the gap between various regional groups and the native population and immigrants on the lands left by the Germans. For the settlers, it was a glimpse of their abandoned homeland. The Zabużanie [settlers from the Eastern Borderlands – JNS] often came with their own priests, taking their parish unity with them to the new place, thereby moderating their sense of alienation. Thus the Church contributed to stabilizing the colonization and to creating new social bonds, and the Polish Church administration could additionally bond the post-war territorial acquisitions with the rest of the country. These factors, being part of the Polish national and state interest, formed the short-term and limited unity of objectives of the secular and clerical authorities in Poland'[53].

[52] E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 440-444; Józef Pater, *Archidiecezja wrocławska po zakończeniu II wojny światowej*, [in:] *Ziemie Zachodnie*, p. 173-187; Kp. Bp Adam Dyczkowski, *Rola Kościoła w integracji Ziem Zachodnich i Północnych po II wojnie światowej*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 4 (1997), p. 5-9; Kp. Józef Pater, *Polska administracja*, p. 10-24; *Ludzie wrocławskiego Kościoła po II wojnie światowej w 30-lecie śmierci Kardynała Bolesława Kominka*, eds Ignacy Dec, Krystyn Matwijowski, Józef Pater, Wrocław 2005; *Droga do stabilizacji polskiej administracji kościelnej na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych po II wojnie światowej. W 40. rocznicę wydania konstytucji apostolskiej Pawła VI Episcoporum Poloniae coitus*, ed. Wojciech Kucharski, Wrocław 2013.; K. Kościelny, *W trosce o zachowanie tożsamości religijnej i narodowej Polaków mieszkających na Dolnym Śląsku po II wojnie światowej – Ksiądz Jan Winiarski i jego działalność w świetle aparatu bezpieczeństwa*, [in:] *Dolnoślązacy?*, p. 101-113; Edyta Kołtan, *Kościół jako czynnik integracyjny ludności Dolnego Śląska widziany przez pryzmat działalności Zgromadzenia Sióstr Maryi Neipokalanej (1945-1963)*, [in:] *Dolnoślązacy?*, p. 131-139.

[53] E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 441.

The activity of the Catholic Church, even later, was among the most important factors that fostered the integration of the Silesian community. The actions of such outstanding personalities such as Archbishop Bolesław Kominek, or Archbishop Henryk Gulbinowicz, and many distinguished people of the Church, helped to create living parish communities, a catholic press, and church institutions (e.g., of a scientific-educational nature), but also to protect the local cultural heritage and not only to preserve the Christian values among Church members in the face of communist indoctrination, but also to create the exceptional nature of the Silesian community[54].

The millennial celebrations of the Baptism of Poland in the 1960s also had a great integrating power on Polish Society, such as the preparations for the event, referred to as the 'Big Novena', an important element of which was the circulation of a copy of the Heavenly Mother of Częstochowa icon travelling between Silesian dioceses to every church and parish. The integration power of the Church, as a community, revealed itself both during the preparations of the faithful to visit the icon, but also during all the preparatory work to host the icon properly. In 1963, in the Wrocław diocese, the image visited more than 600 parishes, independent vicariates and pastoral centres, integrating thousands in common prayer and work. In October 1964, the icon was transferred to the Opole diocese, where it gathered legions of church members during religious celebrations. The case was similar to the national millennial celebrations of the Baptism of Poland in Piekary. The 'detention' of the Heavenly Mother of Częstochowa icon in 1966 during its transportation to Katowice and journey to Jasna Góra grabbed attention in Silesia. Following this incident, only the frame of the icon made the journey, filled with flowers, which was welcomed with equal respect in some parishes[55].

The pilgrimages of the Polish pope John Paul II were of tremendous importance in terms of social integration. This refers to both the first papal visit in June 1983, during which he visited Katowice, Góra św. Anny and Wrocław. Its meaning is mostly in that it again revived faith in the sense of fighting for freedom under the flag of 'Solidarity'[56]. The pope visited the capital city of Lower Silesia again in June 1997, when the Eucharistic Congress took place in the city.

[54] Kp. Józef Pater, *Polska administracja Kościoła rzymskokatolickiego na Dolnym Śląsku po II wojnie światowej*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 4 (1997), p. 17-23.

[55] A. Czarnasiak, *Obchody tysiąclecia państwa polskiego i mileniu chrztu Polski na Dolnym Śląsku – starcie Kościoła katolickiego z władzami komunistycznymi w walce o <rząd dusz>*, [in:] *Piastowsko-komunistyczna satysfakcja? Obchody rocznic historycznych i świąt państwowych na Śląsku po II wojnie światowej*, eds Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, Grzegorz Strauchold, Wrocław 2008, p. 196-198.

[56] E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 533; Ł. Kamiński, J. Tyszkiewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 755.

The integration role of the Catholic Church also revealed its importance in the field of culture. Particular decisions of the Church authorities contributed to turning Wrocław into a centre of independent culture in the 1980s. This refers above all to the founding of Pastoral Care for Creative Communities in 1983 that not only integrated local independent artists, but also gave them a chance to exhibit in the 'Na Ostrowie' Art Gallery, located in the church of St. Marcin[57].

In the limited framework of this article, it is impossible to list all the elements and types of forces that build local identity, whose source was the Polish Catholic Church for dozens of years after the war. However, it is worth mentioning a study by Łukasz Kamiński devoted to the opposition and social resistance in Lower Silesia between 1945 and 1989, which points out that the region referred to above, in particular, due to insufficient community integration in the first post-war years, was not fostering spontaneous resistance against communism. The breakthrough came no sooner than in 1956 when Lower Silesia became the arena of protests, rallies and demonstrations, and new organizational structures, led in Wrocław by one of the first Catholic Intelligentsia Clubs in the country. The full role of Lower Silesia as a centre of active opposition was revealed in the 1980s along with the birth of 'Solidarity'. In this context, Łukasz Kamiński writes: 'It is beyond a doubt that participation in the opposition and social resistance was one of the most important factors (next to, among others, the activity of the Church) fostering the formation and integration of the new community of Lower Silesia'[58].

A source of the forces strengthening the Silesian communities are also Churches of other denominations. This refers to both the Evangelical Churches and the Orthodox Church[59]. Thanks to Protestant clerics, after the war it was possible to organize Evangelical parishes in Lower Silesia, which formed the basis for Polish communities that clustered Evangelicals arriving to these lands from all over Poland. Practically, until the beginning of the 1980s Evangelicals that had been organized this way were living next to but separated from Catholic communities. The issue, determined mainly by political factors, as well as by war experiences, hindered the formation of grounds for mutual understanding within a single Lower Silesian community. Positive changes in the spirit of ecumenism, as well as deep

[57] Ł. Kamiński, *op. cit.*, p. 279.
[58] *Ibidem*, p. 281.
[59] Kp. Bp. Ryszard Bogusz, *Kościół ewangelicki na Dolnym Śląsku po II wojnie światowej*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 4 (1997), p. 25-34; Jan Witt, *Kościoły ewangelickie na Dolnym Śląsku*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 14 (2009), p. 27-29; Rościsław Żerelik, *Prawosławie na Dolnym Śląsku (na tle prawosławia powszechnego)*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 14 (2009), p. 30-39; Stefan Dudra, *Kościół prawosławny na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych Polski po II wojnie światowej*, [in:] *Ziemie Zachodnie*, p. 235-247.

political and economic crises in the country as a whole in the early 1980s and the clear support on the part of many Evangelicals for the 'Solidarity' movement, started bringing Christians of various denominations closer to each other. The charity activities of Evangelical parishes with wide international contacts, have supported hospitals, orphanages, and individuals throughout Lower Silesia, regardless of their denomination. Based on this foundation, as early as in the 1990s, a number of activities were undertaken, initiated by both Catholic and Evangelical hierarchs and Church members[60]. As early as in 1989, the foundations 'Krzyżowa dla Porozumienia Europejskiego' (Krzyżowa for European Understanding) and 'Fundacja św. Jadwigi Dortmund-Wrocław' (Foundation of St. Hedwig Dortmund-Wrocław) were laid. In 1996, a project named the 'Mutual Respect District' was implemented in Wrocław, which focused not only on the works of Catholics and Evangelicals, but also on those of the Orthodox faith and Jews. As noted by Janusz Witt, 'this marvel does not exist anywhere else in Poland'[61]. The District's initiative also provided the impulse to organize common events and celebrations, meetings and readings within the Week of Prayers for the Unity of Christians. The Evangelical Church participated in the establishment of a Christian primary school. These kinds of activities, apart from the works for the internal bonding of Evangelical communities (cherishing religious-sacristan life, creating choirs and youth groups, issuing bulletins), are also included in creating the identity of Lower Silesia under a sign of openness and ecumenism.

A similar integration factor in Lower Silesia was the Orthodox Church. This was particularly apparent at the time of compulsory resettlement in the aforementioned lands of the Ukrainian population within framework of the 'Wisła' operation. Those resettled from Lemkivshchina, lands of Rzeszów, Przemyśl and Lublin, for faster assimilation were settled in small groups among the Polish community. With time, apart from the Ukrainians, for different political and economic reasons, Orthodox Greeks and Macedonians, Russians and Belarussians have appeared[62]. As noted by Rościsław Żerelik, 'the Orthodox church in Lower Silesia is an ethnic conglomerate', which, aside from the mentioned groups, also includes Poles, Bulgarians, and Romanians[63]. The Orthodox Church at the level of faith and liturgy tries to unite the Church community, permitting them however to keep their ethnic identity. At the same time, just as in the case of Protestant Churches, the Orthodox

[60] Kp. Bp. R. Bogusz, *op. cit.*, p. 33-34.
[61] J. Witt, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
[62] See the chapter *Ethnical issues* by Grzegorz Strauchold in this book.
[63] R. Żerelik, *Prawosławie*, p. 38.

people actively participate in the social and cultural field in forming the community of Lower Silesia inhabitants[64].

Besides these institutions, many other organizational formations serve as sources of the forces that strengthen or weaken the unity of the Silesian communities, which due to their diversity, number, and importance cannot be thoroughly discussed in the limited scope of this article. Certainly this role was also served by schools, both as institutions serving their educational role, and as institutions attempting to create specific attitudes determined by the particular political character of the given time. In small towns or, above all, villages, schools often served the role of cultural institutions and real instigators of life in the region[65]. They were places where the numerous cultural traditions brought to Silesia by the settlers in the first years after the war clashed. Thus, the aforementioned institutions were platforms where individuals and groups, often distrustful towards one another, were learning about themselves, based on common national and universal values, and trying to create a society. As noted by Stanisław Gawlik, schools did a lot to create a climate stimulating better understanding[66]. Unfortunately, this area was also affected by politics, which meant that under the socialist system integration was concentrated above all around political ideology. However, after 1989, a school has participated more actively in exploring and popularizing the regional past, connecting the young generation with their 'small homeland'. These institutions were co-organizers of regional conferences, publications, or contests concerned with different aspects of the past and the contemporary life of the region. Schools throughout Silesia were often the first to implement the initial program to determine the regional tradition in the field of folk customs by organizing, e.g., children folk music groups, Christmas pantomimes, etc. School anniversaries gathering numerous graduates, often dispersed around the world, are not only an opportunity for sentimental meetings, but also a certain manifestation of affiliation – if not in physical, then in spiritual terms – of the feeling of affiliation to a social group, constituting a living element of cultural identity of the region.

In spite of the fact that schools, as an institution in the field of building the local identity in Silesia, for years have undertaken many initiatives and programs, as was demonstrated by the survey studies of Stanisław Gawlik from 2005 in the Lower Silesian, Opolskie and Silesian voivodeships regarding the role of education

[64] *Ibidem*, p. 39.

[65] Rościsław Żerelik, *Integracyjna rola szkoły na Dolnym Śląsku na przykładzie Szkoły Podstawowej w Szczepanowie*, [in:] *Dolnoślązacy?*, p. 151-161.

[66] Sławomir Gawlik, *Wychowanie w kulcie śląskich wartości kulturalnych*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 16 (2011), p. 62.

in promoting Silesian cultural values among the youth, there is still a lot to do in this area[67]. The studies have also disclosed the role of families and local governments in creating regional identity. When it comes to schools, only 38% of the educational institutions refer to the rich cultural values of the Silesian land in education. This situation affects the direct live contacts of students with the cultural creations of the region, which results in the fact that the majority of the young generation is unable to define or indicate the cultural heritage values of their local homeland[68]. The issue is deepened by deficits observed in family homes in the fields of knowledge, as well as in cultivating the region's identity, and of the actions of different bodies within the local governments: 'The common tendency of financial saving results in the fact that the schools lack funds for more comprehensive organizational-pedagogical efforts to enable a practical presentation in their curriculum of cultural values of their nearest environment'[69].

When discussing the role of various institutions affecting the level of unity in the Silesian community, various socio-cultural regional associations must be mentioned. All organizational entities of this kind operating in the Silesian land cannot be, of course, listed. When making certain generalizations, it should be stated without exaggeration, however, that from the point of view of regular inhabitants of this land, they serve as an important binder keeping different local communities together, which ultimately affects the image of the whole community with a clear differentiation between Lower and Upper Silesia. The first organizations and associations of this kind after World War II began to appear numerously from 1956, when the political thaw created conditions for those people who wanted to self-organize and act for the benefit of their local environments. The next phase in the development of these types of organizations came about after 1989. Many associations and societies have initiated efforts in exploring the history of the Silesian land to popularize it in the form of publications, exhibitions, or through establishing regional museums as places to promote the traditions of a given region. The result of those campaigns was, and still is, the establishment of folk groups, organizing special days for regions or towns, and many other initiatives. All activities of this kind contribute to forming the region's unity. By serving the roles of a leader and instigator of cultural and social activities, the aforementioned organizations are a true force that activates a given community to integrate more strongly with its region, and thereby form a permanent allegiance with it, and to take responsibility

[67] *Ibidem*, p. 64-65.
[68] *Ibidem*, p. 64.
[69] *Ibidem*, p. 64-65.

for the cultural heritage that determines its special nature[70]. According to Marek Ordyłowski, sport and its organizational forms played a serious integration role in Lower Silesia, and not just directly after the war[71]. A serious integration role, but within national minorities, both internally and in terms of entering into the community of a region, was served by socio-cultural associations[72].

To sum up the discussion on the administration issues, and on selected situations in Silesia in the context of analysing the strengthening and weakening forces within a region after World War II, it should be stated that the subject is crucial. As noted by Gerard Kosmala: 'The borders of historical regions may be kept by the appropriate administrative policy of the State; the way the borders of administrative units are set and their suitable naming influence the regional awareness of inhabitants: it may maintain and strengthen the historical regions, or blur old regions and build a new awareness and identity'[73]. The importance of the problem is also highlighted by cultural expert Stefan Bednarek, who wrote: '[…] The regional bond, built upon the unity in the area, community-social relationships and unified tradition and culture, is determined not only – or perhaps not mainly – by historical or ideological-propaganda arguments, wishful thinking or the will of the most influential opinion-forming environments. The decisive factor here is the collective identity, the common feeling of the regional identity, and the delicate fabric of local relations, reflected in human attitudes, views, and feelings. Although the regional identity has its deep historical roots, it is the present that confirms and sustains it'[74].

The relation highlighted here has been fully-revealed in Silesia. The main consequences of World War II include the change in the state boundaries. They affected Silesia in a special way, which entered into the new geopolitical system that also

[70] Józef Rydzyk, *Edukacja regionalna w działalności Towarzystwa Miłośników Sycowa*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 14 (2009), p. 178-182; Adam Kocjan, *Rola muzeum sycowskiego w edukacji regionalnej*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 14 (2009), p. 183-189; Tomasz Jaworski, *Współczesna <Łużyckość> Polaków na wschód od Nysy Łużyckiej*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 13 (2008), p. 86-95; Aleksander Kowalski, *Stowarzyszenie na Rzecz Rozwoju Doliny Baryczy*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 16 (2011), p. 154-156; Anatol Jan Omelaniuk, *Regionalny ruch społeczno-kulturalny na Dolnym Śląsku po II wojnie światowej*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 15 (2010), p. 170-178; Antoni Bok, Dariusz Andrzej Czapa, *65 lat Towarzystwa Ziemi Głogowskiej*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 15 (2010), p. 179-186; Stanisław Kotełko, *50 lat Towarzystwa Regionalnego Ziemi Świdnickiej*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 15 (2010), p. 187-188; Zbigniew Lubicz-Miszewski, *50 lat Towarzystwa Miłośników Ziemi Trzebnickiej*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 15 (2010), p. 189-202; Anatol Jan Omelaniuk, *O miejsce towarzystw regionalnych w <małej ojczyźnie> i w regionie*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 15 (2010), p. 203-208.

[71] Marek Ordyłowski, *Sport jako czynnik integracyjny ludności Dolnego Śląska po II wojnie światowej*, [in:] *Dolnoślązacy?,* p. 163-173.

[72] Katarzyna Ćwikła, *Niemieckie Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne we Wrocławiu*, [in:] *Śląsk w czasie i przestrzeni*, eds Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, Grzegorz Strauchold, Wrocław 2009, p. 275-285.

[73] Gerard Kosmala, *Śląsk*, p. 107; S. Bednarek, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

[74] S. Bednarek, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

caused deep ethnic and demographic changes by the partial replacement of the population, which, in turn, influenced the beginning of social and cultural transformations that are changing the face of the region. The administrative reforms whose effects covered Silesia revealed the existing strengthening and weakening forces within the local community. On the other hand, however, they constituted the impulse for their formation. Social reactions to the administrative transformations of Silesia, and to their consequences, as well as operations of various institutions after World War II, have fully revealed the existence of at least three Silesian cultural regions, and of a clear identity division into Upper, Opole and Lower Silesia, which was reflected, for instance, by the clear limitation of the term 'Silesian' to the first of these regions. At this point, the issue of forming important notions to define Upper-and Lower Silesianhood should be noted. In the light of the prevalent opinion in Poland (important - beyond Upper Silesia itself), the Silesian=Upper Silesian identity has its own clear definition in a geographic, political, social and cultural context. Roman Baron, Andrzej Michalczyk and Michał J. Witkowski question the above view in the text *Kim jest Górnoślązak?*, indicated the complexity of the issue, complicated by complex national relations, and the instrumentation of the Upper-Silesianhood by propaganda and politics after World War II too: 'This complexity persists - despite the fact that this area has been a part of a single state for more than fifty years. [It is] also a reaction to regional, ethnic, and national differences, suppressed for decades in PRL'[75].

Simultaneously, there is an ongoing formation process of the term 'Lower Silesian', not only as an inhabitant of this part of Silesia, but also as an identity element in a broad cultural-sociological perspective. The relevance of this issue is highlighted by the results of the report published in 2011 of a study conducted by the Centre of Social Monitoring and Civic Culture at the Lower Silesian Government[76]. One of the areas subject to the study was the issue of the importance of ties with the area of residence of the Lower Silesian community and its impact on building local identity. The answers of the respondents to the questions asked show, first of all, high importance of the relation between administrative changes that concern the region and building a social identity there. Secondly, in the case of Lower Silesia, changes of administrative divisions act more as a factor that is disrupting than supporting the social unity creation process. The authors of the report clearly stated that defining the physical area of the region is a serious problem for the inhabitants

[75] R. Baron, A. Michalczyk, M. J. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 473.

[76] *Tożsamość mieszkańców Dolnego Śląska. Raport z badań, projekt realizowany przez Centrum Monitoringu Społecznego i Kultury Obywatelskiej*, Wrocław grudzień 2011 www.cmsiko.pl/resources/files/raporty/tozsamosc.pdf [last access 03.05.2015].

of Lower Silesia[77]. They added the following comment to their conclusion: 'It is partially a result of the complicated history of these lands, first of all of its post-war history, and subsequent local administration reforms. The changes in the province borders certainly didn't help to create a special bond connecting the inhabitants with their area', which seems to be confirmed by the respondents' answers[78]. They were unable to indicate any specific area at all, or they identified it with the present-day Lower Silesia voivodeship. References to the historical borders of the region were rare. There were references to landscape, climatic, or land form issues[79]. Additionally, the problem was complicated as a result of the administrative reform of 1999. As it is noted by the authors of the report, 'This division raised a lot of controversies among the respondents, who emphasize the common history and features of those areas, and dilemmas the inhabitants faced in the period when the reform was prepared and the fate of these areas was determined. The new administrative division in some cases caused complications in the life of individuals, associated for example with commuting to school or work. It can be observed especially in the case of inhabitants of small towns located on the borders of the Lower Silesian voivodeship'[80]. Thus, the report disclosed a clear tendency in the social attitude in Lower Silesia. In the bond arrangement: Poland – the ideological homeland, the birthplace or specified area of residence, located on the Lower Silesian map, the so-called 'little homeland', and finally Lower Silesia as a region, the latter indicator serves the least important role, which does not mean that the local community does not identify with it. A consequence of identity deficit caused by a missing definition of the region and its borders that would be clear for an average Lower Silesia inhabitant can be clearly seen here[81].

Simultaneously with the aforementioned phenomenon of a certain polarity of Silesia, there is an identity-naming problem in relation to the southern counties of the Lubuskie voivodeship, which are, after all, at the same time the northern lands of the historical Lower Silesia. The administrative reform of 1998/1999 provided a strong impulse to start a discussion on defining the term 'Lubusz Region' and its substantiation with regard to the whole voivodeship. The issue of the name 'Lubusz Silesia' as a sub-region being part of the Lubusz voivodeship, raised by historian Andrzej Toczewski, the then-director of the Lubusz Land Museum, has become the basis for a deep, wide and very emotional discussion not only on onomastic

[77] *Ibidem*, p. 28.
[78] *Ibidem*.
[79] *Ibidem*, p. 28-29.
[80] *Ibidem*, p. 29.
[81] *Ibidem*, p. 34.

matters, but, first of all, on identity issues shaped not only by historical, ideological-propaganda, political, administrative, or even economic arguments, but by common social-regional sense[82], Observation of the discussion on the aforementioned problem that is periodically revived within the Lubusz voivodeship even today, involving politicians, local administration members, scientists, social life personalities, businessmen, and local journalists, allows us to conclude that the politics of administrative divisions of Silesia implemented for decades in the case of this region has become a clear foundation to create a new identity that has resulted practically in a departure from thinking in categories of Silesianhood towards defining, forming and creating a new Lubusz identity. The mentioned option is based, on one hand, on the observed trends represented, among others, (but not only) by the young generation that calls itself Lubuszanie, and on the other hand, on the belief that it is necessary to create a Lubusz identity that will become the basis for creating a common history and strong and permanent regional relations between Zielona Góra and Gorzów Wielkopolski, which in turn will contribute to the economic and social development of the region[83].

To sum up, it should be stated, referring to the thesis of Stefan Bednarek, that Silesia, as the name of a district, is functioning to a smaller or larger extent in colloquial language, and 'though its designation still seems to be quite expressive, it appears that to a large extent it is an abstract designation that includes historical territories that have been beyond the Polish state since the times of Kazimierz Wielki. When we want to indicate specific places in that area, we almost always refer to a closer term: Trzebnica lies in Lower Silesia, Niemodlin in Opole Silesia, and Mikołów in Upper Silesia, and the inhabitants of these cities are defined as the Lower Silesians, or Upper Silesians, rather than Silesians in general'[84].

[82] *Dyskusja wokół pojęcia <Śląsk Lubuski>*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 12 (2007), p. 122-143.

[83] Piotr Maksymczak, *Lubuska Racja Stanu (debata 28.04.2005)*, [in:] *Lubuskie Trójmiasto. Portal obywatelski*, www.lubuskietrojmiasto.pl [last access 16.08.2014]; Stanisław Kowalski, My, *Śląsk Lubuski*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 12 (2007), p. 131-132.

[84] S. Bednarek, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

Grzegorz Strauchold

Economy

Abstract

Economy was among the factors that affected the condition of the population of Silesia. From the beginning of the Polish statehood in Silesia in 1945 non-agricultural sectors of the economy in the area were owned by the state. This was also the case in the part of Silesia, which before World War II was in Poland. In the countryside - throughout Silesia - the role of small, private farms was important. At the same time in these areas large acreages of land were in the hands of the state. Almost all state farms experienced shortages, and instead of profits they were driven by losses. After the fall of communism in Poland, from 1989, in Silesia also, a process began of introducing larger scale agricultural units to the private rural economy, which is still incomplete. However, the group of independent, large farms is still relatively small. The Silesian countryside contains more small estates, and villages remain fragmented. Moreover, in some areas - in poor mountainous areas (e.g. in the Kłodzko Valley), there has been a phenomenon of economic regression and depopulation of rural areas.

In non-agricultural areas of economic life, the state ownership (often hidden under the façade of a cooperative ownership) favoured by the communist authorities quickly achieved a definite advantage after the fall of 'real socialism'.

Keywords

economy, state-ownership, looting, economy re-building, mining, state farms, industrial investments

The economy was undoubtedly one of the key factors that affected the condition of Silesian society[1]. This issue continually came up in my and the co-author's discussions in nearly each article in this book. I do not need to remind readers in this chapter of the issues related to shaping – or weakening – the social bonds in rural areas and in cities. I also do not intend to focus in detail on the ethnic issues that were so important, mainly in Upper Silesia. For this reason, I will not repeat my discussion from the chapter on the conflicts between the local population and the immigrants over the agricultural farms that were tearing apart the rural areas in Upper Silesia. I will also not dwell on the desperate struggle of the so-called natives over

[1] See: Janusz Kaliński, *Gospodarka w PRL*, Warszawa 2012; Adam Makowski, *Ziemie Zachodnie i Północne w polityce gospodarczej Polski w latach 1945-1960*, [in:] *Ziemie Odzyskane 1945-2005. 60 lat w granicach państwa polskiego*, ed. Andrzej Sakson, Poznań 2006, p. 59-78; Jerzy Kociszewski, *Proces integracji gospodarczej ziem zachodnich i północnych z Polską*, Wrocław 1999.

the preservation of their property that was lost to the benefit of the immigrant Polish officials and settlers.

The purpose of my discussion will be to analyse – across a period of as many as seven decades – the impact of strictly economic factors on the issue of the stability or instability of social bonds in Silesia.

The Polish people who first came to this land tried, first of all, to stabilize their economic situation at least to a small extent and to ensure occupations for themselves that would allow them to acquire articles and services for their daily needs: lodgings, heating, clothes, and food. After the tragic war years, these basic needs were the only material needs the settlers had, along with the need to ensure their safety, which, while non-material, was no less important.

People settling in rural areas needed land, farm buildings and tools to cultivate the land[2]. Their expectations did not include any form of joint land usage nor did it include sharing its yield; the peasants saw themselves as potentially private owners. The communist authorities in the first years after the war even avoided allusions indicating any intention of the collectivisation or nationalisation of rural farms. Thus, they did not erect any barriers in relation to taking over the small German farms that had been left behind and were now taken over by Polish private owners. However, I would like to stress in advance that the issue of enfranchisement in rural areas was not definitely fixed. Nonetheless, Silesian areas, in particular areas where there were no fierce or bloody conflicts over land between the local population of settlers[3], saw the gradual establishment of a group of Polish peasants introducing their yield into the economy in the first years after the end of World War II. They did not create a homogeneous social group but, simply by their existence, could be classified as a specific social group in Silesia. Closer relationships between independent peasants could, of course, exist only within local communities, due to the fact that cooperation was not based on political parties. The most popular party among peasants, in opposition to the communist party, the Polish People's Party (PSL) was incapacitated in 1946 by police and administrative repressions and was completely marginalized after the 1947 elections to the Polish Sejm, which were rigged. At the end of the 1940s PSL ceased to exist. The second peasant party, so called People's Party (SL), which was an ally of the communists in the Polish

[2] In relation to the topic, see from older but still valuable literature: Patrycy Dziurzyński, *Osadnictwo rolne na Ziemiach Odzyskanych*, Warszawa 1983; Władysław Misiuna, *Rolnictwo na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych*, Poznań 1965.

[3] See: Grzegorz Strauchold, *Spór o gospodarstwa rolne pomiędzy tzw. autochtonami polskimi a osadnikami polskimi na ziemiach północnych i zachodnich w latach 40. XX w.*, [in:] *Gospodarka i społeczeństwo w czasach PRL-u (1944-1989)*, eds Elżbieta Kościk, Tomasz Głowiński, Wrocław 2007, p. 60-69.

Workers' Party (PPR), did not enjoy popularity in rural areas. In 1949, in the process of depriving Polish society of its individuality, SL was transformed into the United People's Party (ZSL). Until the end of the period known as 'real socialism' in Poland, ZSL was an ally of, and almost completely obedient to the communists, and transmitted their actions from the state's political centre to the very *bottom*, i.e. to rural communities.

The German population's escape, relocation and the fact that they were stripped of their right to possess property, also in Silesia, meant that many large rural properties had to be abandoned by their former owners. A feature hindering the settlement of individual peasants on this land was the existence of a single farm layout for each of these large properties: the owner's and his family's house as well as the farm buildings located in its vicinity. Even when a division of fields into smaller units for each peasant family was possible, a lack of an appropriate infrastructure (separate family houses and connected with them outbuildings) prevented it. In this situation, state authorities initiated the so-called cooperative-allotment settlements on incorporated land, also in Silesia. The peasants who were settled there – as it was said – were meant, only initially and for practical purposes, to administer the land together. In the future, this land was to be divided into smaller, individual lots. This never happened, and after the communists initiated the collectivisation of agriculture in Poland at the end of the 1940s, peasants who had participated in this form of administration automatically became state employees in State Agricultural Farms (PGR). A community of agricultural workers therefore appeared who were completely dependent on their state employers. These people were very often dissatisfied with their fate; PGRs, with very few exceptions, were a highly ineffective form of administration in rural areas. They also duplicated pathologies that had existed throughout the post-war decades in sectors of the economy administered by the state such as bad management, ignoring duties, and also, often alcoholism. This form of property, *administered* by hired state workers, not acting *on their own*, survived until the end of the Polish People's Republic (PRL) in 1989. In the next few decades the post-PGR communities became a synonym of the failure to adapt to the conditions of the market economy as well as structural poverty and helplessness in the face of life that was passed down from generation to generation.

The Silesian community of independent peasants underwent a difficult test when the communists initiated a campaign aimed at collectivising rural areas at the end of the 1940s. It consisted in encouraging peasants, also by applying severe pressure, to administer jointly – cooperatively – by merging farms which had

been previously individually owned. Apart from the Catholic Church, this type of policy was a blow to the last social group that was independent from the political establishment. This resulted in a wounded feeling that bred dissatisfaction and resentment. This, was in fact, a compulsory form of administration and was ineffective just as it had been in the State Agricultural Farms, and led to a systematic decrease in the role of agriculture as a significant sector of the economy. The result of the transformation in 1956 (de-Stalinisation) and the return to power of Władysław Gomułka (the leader of the communist Polish United Worker's Party [PZPR]) in autumn of that year, was the spontaneous elimination – also by Silesian peasants – of agricultural cooperatives and the restoration of the significance of a group of small, independent private owners[4] in the following decades, the condition of this social group was affected by the chronic underinvestment in rural areas from the state sector that made decisions concerning internal policies. The authorities were not aiming to eliminate private farms any more but they did not distribute the necessary quantities of technical means, fertilizers etc. for the farmers' needs, instead these were given to the permanently ineffective state agricultural economy. As a result, peasants' properties in Silesia – as in other regions of Poland, remained disintegrated and economically ineffective. Private farms in rural areas began to be transformed into Western-type farms after the fall of communism in Poland in 1989, in Silesia as well, although this process is still not complete. Nonetheless, the number of independent, large agricultural farms is still relatively few with small properties still prevailing in Silesian rural areas, and the countryside remains fragmented. What is more, some areas – poor submontane spaces (e.g. in the Kłodzko Valley), experienced economic decline after 1989 and the rural areas were depopulated.

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State ownership (often hidden under the facade of the cooperative property preferred by the communist authorities), quickly rose to prominence in non-agricultural areas of economic life. As a matter of fact, small private initiatives did their best to reconstruct and launch workshops, smaller factories, wholesale and retail stores also in Silesia in the first years after the end of World War II[5]. Initially, they enjoyed the support of authorities dominated by the communists – for tactical reasons. However, the original community of Silesian small entrepreneurs was effectively split

[4] Bogdan Cimała, *Przyczyny rozpadu Rolniczych Spółdzielni Produkcyjnych na Śląsku Opolskim w 1956 r.*, [in:] *Październik 1956 na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych*, ed. Wojciech Wrzesiński, Wrocław 1997, p. 127-137.

[5] The general *condition* of land incorporated in 1945, including Silesia, is shown in the publication of the Main Office for Spatial Planning and Statistics, see: *Atlas Ziem Odzyskanych*, ed. Józef Zaremba, Warszawa 1947.

starting with the so-called battle for trade, initiated by the communists in 1947. This resulted in a sudden ideological turn in Poland. Having effectively rigged the elections to the Polish Sejm and having destroyed legal opposition in 1947, the communist Polish Workers' Party (PPR) abandoned the strategy of tolerating private property in the economy. In subsequent years, the formation of an independent group of medium and small private owners in non-agricultural sectors in Silesia was prevented.

As a result of the political turn in 1956, the policy towards small private property was largely, temporarily, liberalised. Until the end of the Polish People's Republic (in 1989) a group of private, small manufacturers and entrepreneurs functioned in the economy – including Silesia. It was prevented from playing a significant role in the economic life, however, and their products often filled the gap in supply for people and even for state companies. Silesian private entrepreneurs were concentrated in trade organizations and the Democratic Party (SD) was considered their political representation. It was an ally of the communist Polish United Worker's Party (PZPR) (established in 1948 after PPR merged with the allied Polish Socialist Party [PPS]). The situation of this Silesian community (also on a national scale) changed radically from the end of 1988 when – still under the rule of the communists – a liberal economic system was initiated in Poland. The private sector of the economy had dominated the Silesian (and Polish) economy for over a quarter of a century. However – and this will be referred to at the end of the chapter – the so-called companies, fully owned by the State Treasury, were actually state forms of administration that still have a strong position in Silesia today.

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Since the beginning of the Polish state presence in Silesia in 1945, State ownership has dominated in non-agricultural sectors of the economy. State-controlled property was predominant also in the part of Silesia that, before World War II, was part of Poland, through the expropriation of large properties in the industry as well as through anti-German legislation and the nationalization act from 1946. It was decisive because all previous German properties were expropriated and became Polish state property by accepting the relevant legal acts.

Polish settlers coming to the municipal areas of Silesia first looked for employment possibilities in state-owned companies. In Upper Silesia they were employed in those companies along with local Silesian people. This, in the first years after the war, led to frictions and mutual misunderstanding. In Lower Silesia – apart from the coal basin of Wałbrzych and Nowa Ruda - German employees were no longer encountered until the end of the 1950s. German professionals were employed

in large cities – most of all in Wrocław. However, they were almost all relocated to within the new boundaries of Germany until the end of the 1940s.

The state, as well as the local governments in Silesia dominated by its policy, organised the foundations for the new, Polish social life. State initiatives in industrial areas of Upper Silesia, generally undamaged to a great extent during World War II, were focused on setting up companies and incorporating them as quickly as possible into the Polish economy. Employing large numbers of Polish settlers in the Upper Silesian industry led to the formation – apart from the already existing, although decimated, local resident Silesian community – of a new, Silesian, social group consisting of hired employees (in state positions)[6]. Similar groups (communities) were born in Lower Silesia. There – apart from the exceptions indicated above – the newly formed communities of hired state employees were generally created within homogenous national groups but consisted of different Polish regional groups.

The state-dominated economy – until the democratic transformations were initiated in 1989 - was the factor that integrated local communities. Initially, the main occupation for many settlers was clearing rubble and general cleanup jobs organized by the state and local governments. These were necessary in numerous destroyed areas, and particularly in destroyed cities and industrial centres, to make them suitable places to live and work. Apart from the struggle for food, heat and lodgings – which were sometimes dramatic and desperate – collective campaigns created the foundations for the formation of uniform municipal communities[7]. However, state-owned companies were a powerful factor that formed the new society from the very beginning and made up the core of economic life in Silesia[8]. The fact that employees often lived on the same housing estates, and shared employment, created the first bonds of groups from various Polish regions. At the same time, the company management conducted ideological campaigns, aimed at the workers' approval of the socialist system. This indoctrination was strictly related to social activities in the factories, including recreational activities. Organising meetings, picnics, community campaigns, during which workers cleaned up the city free-of-charge on their afternoons off, also served to integrated people. Social activities covered arranging trips, cheap holidays for the employees' families, but also trips (often free-of-charge) to sanatoriums for health reasons. The collections of family photographs from the post-war decades are full of moments when

[6] E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 438-474.
[7] See: Marek Ordyłowski, *Życie codzienne we Wrocławiu 1945-1948*, Wrocław 1991.
[8] Relevant the topic, e.g. for economic issues in Lower Silesia, see: Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, *Lata 1945-1948*, p. 625-674.

not only employees were introduced to one another but also the members of their families. In my opinion, it is impossible to treat the industrial management campaigns referred to above (and the economy, in general) just as an example of cynical campaigns to integrate and indoctrinate people in communist ideology. As in every totalitarian system, social-integrating activities were much more extensive (when compared with the previous possibilities life had to offer) and brought – particularly in a poor country destroyed by the war – a significant relaxation of the hardships of everyday life. We also cannot ignore the fact that ideological officers genuinely cared for the improvement of the people's living conditions.

The indoctrination of the working masses from the end of the 1940s also took the form of mass demonstrations and marches (that were theoretically voluntary) on Labour Day, which was celebrated on May 1. Open-air dancing festivals with meals were organized for the locals in the afternoon. These forms of entertainment were popular in the initial post-war decades which were materially and culturally poor.

The indoctrination in companies also had its dark side. Production in factories from the end of the 1940s until the middle of the 1950s was watched especially closely by communist political police officers. They tracked down actual and implied 'saboteurs' and 'enemies of the people', some of whom disappeared forever, many of them for several years. The press, which was completely controlled by the communists, stigmatised (by using personal information) people deemed harmful to the process of building socialism[9]. These relationships created – especially in large factories of strategic importance for the national economy (not only weapons factories) – an atmosphere of distrust and intimidation. These factors did not foster the formation of solid interpersonal bonds. Neither did the insistently promoted movement of the labour leaders as they were known, namely male and female employees who significantly exceeded their production plans. Because production limits were almost automatically increased when the labour leaders broke records, workers treated labour leaders at best with reluctance, and at worst with hostility. The leading figures of these initiatives in Upper Silesia were the miner Wincenty Pstrowski and the Bugdoł brothers.

After this particular period of terror, until the middle of the 1950s but also until the end of *real socialism*, communists controlled the ideological situation

[9] This practice affected a member of my family. The rest of his family did not know what had happened to him for several years. The press in Wrocław called him – using his last name - a 'pest' etc. Fortunately, he survived.

in the industry[10]. The secret police acted in a more sophisticated manner and were almost invisible. On the other hand, each national company had 'Basic Party Cells', which were openly visible. These were the smallest cells of the ruling communist Polish United Worker's Party (PZPR). The affiliation of employees to PZPR varied in particular periods. This party undoubtedly attracted a certain part of workers – for ideological, pragmatic or opportunistic reasons. It served as the instigator of social environments that accepted the basic tenets of communism. However, it is difficult to judge whether the communists ever won the hearts of the economy's employees. The official statistics are very misleading, while the periodical protests of employees – including Silesia, were genuine.

The area where the formation of communities in Upper Silesia was the result of economic factors in the first post-war decade was the Upper Silesia Industrial Region. Heavy industry in Lower Silesia was concentrated around Wałbrzych and Nowa Ruda. Also the old copper region existed near Bolesławiec[11]. Of course, larger cities situated outside these regions were significant to the economy. These included Wrocław, Opole, Legnica, Świdnica, Jelenia Góra. In the eyes of political and economic policy-makers, the merger of nearly all Silesia within the boundaries of Poland was undoubtedly the acquisition of 'a land of milk and honey'. Of course, it was, at that time, heavily destroyed by the war and devastated and dismantled by the Soviet, but also the official Polish government. Therefore, the economy – as I have already mentioned earlier – became a powerful element for the creation of consistent, municipal communities immediately after the end of the war.

The first half of the 1950s was the period when the 6-year economic plan was being implemented in Poland. It was implemented during a period of strong tensions between the despotic East and the democratic West and it led to increased industrialization and the expansion of workers' crews in numbers, including Silesia. These movements resulted in a growth in weapons production, then an increase in people moving in from the rural areas, and jobs for everyone who was looking for one. At the same time – according to the Marxist-Leninist ideology – factory workers growing in numbers were to become 'branches of the working class'. It was assumed they would be unshakable support for the communist authorities this assumption never fully came to fruition. Anxiety in the industry and the visibly accumulated dissatisfaction of workers and their families – for social,

[10] Maciej Tymiński, *PZPR i przedsiębiorstwo. Nadzór partyjny nad zakładami przemysłowymi 1956-1970*, Warszawa 2001.

[11] Jan Paździora, *Polska miedź 1945-2010 (synteza działalności)*, Żary 2011.

but also for political reasons – was present in Silesia as early as in the 1940s and – especially in Wrocław in 1956[12].

After the political crisis in 1956 and the pacification of anti-communist social feelings in Poland, Władysław Gomułka, the new communist leader, adopted a policy of more intense industrialisation. This policy even overtook the achievements of the 6-year plan with its intensity. It resulted in the creation of the Legnica-Głogów Copper Region in Lower Silesia. Small towns, such as Polkowice and Lubin, suddenly grew into cities full of young men, from small provincial towns, looking for jobs in copper mines[13]. In addition the Rybnik Coal Region was being developed in Upper Silesia. After the next breakthrough – at the end of 1970 – Edward Gierek, the new leader of the communist party and of the Polish state, adopted a policy of accelerated economic growth aimed at raising the standard of living to a significant degree. The leading Silesian project at that time was the production, under license, of the Fiat 126 P car model in Tychy and the 'Katowice' ironworks. It was a large investment providing employment for several thousand people[14].

Paradoxically, the creation of large communities that were employed in the industry – also with the intention of effectively preventing unemployment – proved fatal for Polish communism. The growing economic crisis of the 1970s resulted in an increase in social dissatisfaction. The progressively higher prices and increasing product shortages in retail stores did not prevent workers from protesting even in Upper Silesia. This region was subject to a selective policy of privileged supplies for the employees of local mines. The strike campaign, which began in July 1980 in the east of Poland, exploded on the Polish coast in August while Wrocław *stopped* as early as in August. The Upper Silesian industry was brought to a halt soon after that. Three central government agreements with the striking workers were concluded at that time. Apart from Szczecin and Gdańsk, they included an agreement with Jastrzębie Zdrój in Upper Silesia[15]. Communities that had been formed as a result of the communist policy of intensive industrialisation showed their strength and steadfastness and forced the communists to make certain democratic concessions. The avalanche of protests could not even be stopped by the martial law that was introduced in December 1981. Its author, another leader of PZPR, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, became one of the leaders of the movement for national conciliation and

[12] See: Stanisław Ciesielski, *Wrocław 1956*, Wrocław 1999 (='Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis', Historia CXXXVIII).

[13] See: Jakub Tyszkiewicz, Jan Walczak, Małgorzata Balicka, *Polkowice – historia współczesna (1945-2010)*, Polkowice 2012.

[14] Piotr Greiner, *Historia gospodarcza Górnego Śląska (XVI-XX wiek)*, [in:] *Historia Górnego Śląska*, p. 336-338.

[15] A. Dziurok, B. Linek, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

the actual and sustainable democratisation of the Polish state by the end of the decade. It was possible – which should not be forgotten, as a result of the general breakdown of communism in Europe and the weakening power of Soviet Russia.

The introduction of free-market principles in Poland in 1989 became – paradoxically – a great tragedy for factory workers. Many companies in Silesia (and all over Poland) went bankrupt, their workers lost their places of employment. The branches of the industry that survived – like black coal mining – are facing huge problems even today. This results in the periodic, desperate protests of Upper Silesia workers afraid of unemployment. The mining industry, in the hands of the democratic state, (hiding its ownership status behind the facade of so-called companies that are in fact fully owned by the State Treasury) is becoming less and less significant in the economy. This situation has led to a high level of social disintegration. Democratisation and the free market in Lower Silesia have led to a liquidation of the coal mines and the downfall of the Wałbrzych-Nowa Ruda coal region. This region was affected by mass unemployment the effects of which have not been dealt with even today. This region's community, once employed by large industry, has ceased to exist. Many people have chosen to emigrate for economic reasons. The *bootleg mining shafts* – which had not been seen in Poland since before the war – began to appear[16]. Such strikingly visible reasons disrupting the local communities have not been dealt with even today[17].

The free-market capitalist economy, based on an economic calculation, has been appropriating an increasing number of areas of the economy for more than a quarter of the century since the political transformation. As a matter of principle, it did not foster consistency and preferred individualism. The latter was very visible and the economic policy in Silesia (but also in the entire state) was aimed at deindustrialization (following a long-time but already outdated model of the European Union's). Instead of heavy manufacturing, vehicle assembly plants appeared, e.g. 'Fiat' in Tychy. A large share of foreign capital in the Silesian economy gave rise to the continuous danger of its sudden withdrawal. This was another unhelpful factor not in the favour of local communities.

The Lower Silesian 'Mining and Metallurgical Copper Conglomerate' (KGHM), located in the former Legnica-Głogów copper region, is a very positive

[16] The notion *bootleg mining shaft* means the extraction of coal from shallow deposits by individuals digging holes in the ground. This is not only illegal but also very dangerous. The fact that coal is mined in this way proves the miners' desperation.

[17] See: Ryszard Bełdzikowski, *Zarys życia politycznego i transformacji gospodarczej w województwie wałbrzyskim w latach 1989-1998*, 'Nowa Kronika Wałbrzyska', 2 (2014), p. 13-31; Beata Detyna, *Bezrobocie w Wałbrzychu i powiecie wałbrzyskim – skala problemu*, 'Nowa Kronika Wałbrzyska', 2 (2014), p. 73-90.

example of the duration of communities animated by economic policy. This is a very resilient community, well-off, ready to actively protest in large numbers to defend their profits and privileges. However, it has also become anxious in recent years because of the state's excessive fiscalism that has placed part of the Conglomerate on the brink of bankruptcy.

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The impact of economic factors on Silesian societies after 1945 was inspiring for more than four decades. The communists' policy in this area resulted in the formation of powerful communities that significantly contributed to the democratisation of the state – probably in a manner that they did not expect. However, the freedom that was naturally associated with capitalism led to a serious erosion of social consistency after 1989. Currently, it is difficult to perceive of it in the form it took more than a quarter of a century ago. The old cohesive factors have ceased to exist. The destructive factors shook up the Silesian communities with great force and civil society, still experiencing the dramatic effects of the political transformation, is only being formed.

Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel

Rural society after 1945

Abstract

The issues of forces that unite and destroy identity and created a sense of social community in the countryside after 1945 in the whole of Silesia within the present Lower Silesian, Opole and Silesian regions is a very wide and complex notion. The process of building social community in the region is determined by many factors, starting from one's own awareness and the society members' emphasis on selected aspects of knowledge and their emotional character. Certainly, a clear specific nature of different phenomena that comprise the problem discussed here can be indicated with regard to the Lower Silesian, Opole or Upper Silesian countryside. It is generated by historic, political, economic, social and cultural experience. In the case of Lower Silesia, as noticed by ethnologists, cultural science experts and historians, despite deep changes taking place that are particularly clear after 1989, the problem of cultural identity of the contemporary inhabitants of Lower Silesia is still valid. Upper Silesia is characterised by multiculturalism but is also a place where people strongly identify with their local communities and with their own sub-regional cultures, that manifests itself in both tangible and intangible elements of heritage. The popularisation of modern information bearers or a clear cultural approximation of the countryside to urban centres has the effect of deepening the process of cultural unification process in Upper Silesia. We can, however, speak about a clear regional identity by distinguishing between ethnographic sub-regions which display some characteristic features. The phenomenon points to a deep, authentic, decades-long, establishment of the population in the region.

Keywords

village, contryside, folklore, cultural heritage, identity, tradition

The change in the geopolitical situation in Silesia after World War II determined, as in all areas of life of the region, the perception of the countryside. The migration movements that had started in 1945 led to serious changes in the cultural and social landscape of rural areas. These transformations were particularly visible in Lower Silesia where one could notice, on the one hand, almost a complete turnover of the population, and, on the other, fluctuating demographic changes in the proportions between the rural population and the urban population over the years. In the initial period of the Polish settlement operation, Polish people chose the countryside more willingly (most of all because of the better chances of obtaining supplies than in the cities). This choice was undoubtedly affected by the character of the first settlers who often belonged to a group of small-scale peasants functioning on the margins of the pre-war Polish countryside and could finally

become holders of their land. It is estimated that in September 1945 Poles made up approximately 10% of the Lower Silesian countryside[1]. In subsequent months, along with the migration of more Polish settlers, the aforementioned trend underwent certain modification in favour of cities. However, the data of November 1947, indicates the attractiveness of the rural areas as a place to settle. Over this period, of the 1,767 million people inhabiting the districts of Lower Silesia as many as 930,000 were living in the countryside, and 835,000 were living in cities[2]. With regard to the agricultural areas of Lower Silesia the years 1945-1948 are acknowledged as not only a time of settlement, but also as the period of the post-war economy's reconstruction and the creation of a new type of agrarian structure for the region[3].

As for the subject matter raised in the article concerning forces that unite and destroy social cohesion as a historical phenomenon, the issues concerning the widely understood settlement of the second half of the 1940s should be considered of key importance. On the one hand, the Germans were almost completely removed from the rural landscape of Lower Silesia, and in many cases the same happened also to the indigenous Polish population, who either were not positively verified by the Polish authorities, or else decided to leave Silesia of their own will. As a result of the displacement of the German population from Lower Silesia, the agrarian socio-cultural structure that had functioned until 1945 and had helped to determine a particular perception of the rural areas of the region, was completely destroyed. Some crafts or services vanished along with it and, above all, the spiritual culture, including folklore in a broad meaning ceased to exist. Hundreds of years of the Germans' presence in the region was reduced to: the rural infrastructure in the form of homesteads often with intact equipment and utilities such as electricity; objects with sentimental value which had not been taken for various reasons by the resettlers or, finally, valuable and tangible culture objects[4].

For Polish settlers arriving from different places, the above-mentioned cultural heritage rooted in a natural landscape was unusual, because it had nothing in common with their *little homelands* that they had wanted to or been forced to leave. This presented a real challenge or in some cases a deep problem and difficulty in building a new community. Settlers from central Poland and resettlers from the territories lost by Poland to the Soviet Union could be encountered

[1] M. Ruchniewicz, *Lata 1945-1948*, p. 641-642.
[2] *Ibidem*, p. 651.
[3] *Ibidem*, p. 671-672.
[4] *Ibidem*, p. 643-646; E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 454-457; M. Ruchniewicz, *Ewakuacja, ucieczka i wysiedlenia*, p. 127-135; Arno Herzig, Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, *Dzieje ziemi kłodzkiej*, Hamburg-Wrocław 2008, p. 398-401; K. Ruchniewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

in the Lower Silesian countryside. The third group were Poles from Yugoslavia, mostly from the areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The fourth group were Ukrainians and Lemkos. This ethnic and regional mosaic was complemented by Poles from the Romanian part of Bucovina[5]. A particular group of settlers with whom, first of all, the western districts of the region (Lwówek, Lubań, Zgorzelec, Żary) were populated were the military who, after demobilization, were to form a certain element in the frontier areas[6].

All the aforementioned groups that came to the Lower Silesian countryside brought with them the baggage of their life experience, in particular their experience of the war and time suffered under German occupation or physical labour in Siberia or in Kazakhstan. Resettlers from the former eastern territories of Poland, who had been brutally torn from their family's land and by force settled in Lower Silesia carried with them the life experience of functioning under the Soviet communist regime. The members of aforementioned group were characterized by a high-level of distrust towards communist authority. The latter wanted to reduce settlers' memory of their lost family lands. But they still had a sense of temporality of their presence on 'Retrieved Territories' and connected with the latter awaiting of political change. The settlers from the former eastern territories of Poland manifested a determined pursuit of life in their own community, often in the form of a dense settlement in a given place (involving even the transfer of entire villages to new settlement points) and emphasising their identity marked, among other things, by deep religiosity. On the other hand, Poles from central Poland were coming to Lower Silesia for economic reasons first and foremost, and

[5] See the chapter *Ethnic issues* by Grzegorz Strauchld in this book.

[6] Adam Baniecki, *Osadnictwo rolnicze w powiecie bolesławieckim w latach 1945-1950*, [in:] *Śląsk w czasie i przestrzeni*, p. 150-155; Elżbieta Kościk, *Przemiany demograficzne*, p. 95-96; Grzegorz Hryciuk, *Przesiedlenia Polaków z Kresów Wschodnich II RP 1944-1946*, [in:] *Ziemie Zachodnie*, p. 103-125; Jarosław Syrnyk, *Ukraińcy na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych Polski po II wojnie światowej*, [in:] *Ziemie Zachodnie*, p. 145-156; Rościsław Żerelik, *Z Beskidu Niskiego na Dolny Śląsk. Uwagi o kształtowaniu się tożsamości Łemków*, [in:] *Trudne dziedzictwo*, p. 75-86; Aleksander Srebrakowski, *Wilnianie na Dolnym Śląsku po II wojnie światowej (komunikat)*, [in:] *Trudne dziedzictwo*, p. 87-93; Elżbieta Berendt, *Powojenny kształt dolnośląskiej tradycji ludowej*, [in:] *Śląsk, Schlesien, Slezsko*, p. 141-156; Marek Ordyłowski, *Wieś dolnośląska w latach 1945-1956. Władza a społeczeństwo*, Wrocław 1999; Alfred Nasz, *Przemiany kulturowo-społeczne we wsi dolnośląskiej po drugiej wojnie światowej*, 'Wieś dolnośląska. Prace i Materiały etnograficzne', 20 (1970), p. 9-17; Elżbieta Kościk, *Osadnictwo wiejskie w południowych powiatach dolnego Śląska w latach 1945-1949*, Wrocław 1982; eadem, *Zasiedlanie wsi w południowych powiatach Dolnego Śląska w latach 1945-1949*, [in:] *Demografia i społeczeństwo Ziem Zachodnich i Północnych 1945-1995. Próba bilansu*, eds Ewa Frątczak, Zbigniew Strzelecki, Warszawa 1996, p. 89-91; Franciszek Kusiak, *Osadnictwo wiejskie w środkowych i północnych powiatach Dolnego Śląska w latach 1945-1949*, Wrocław 1982; idem, *Osadnictwo polskie na ziemi trzebnickiej w latach 1945-1950*, 'Brzask', 1998, no. 5-6, p. 30-51; idem, *Osadnictwo polskie na Dolnym Śląsku*, p. 85-101; J. Szczepankiewicz-Battek, *op. cit.*, p. 273-275.

to make a better future for themselves. For small-scale or even landless countryside inhabitants before World War II, often from the overcrowded or poor regions of Kielce, Rzeszów or Cracow, settlement in Lower Silesia meant a serious economic leap forward. Settlers from this group were not aiming (with some exceptions) to live in communities consisted of people from their old homeland. They also gladly help with building the local administration[7]. On the other hand, Poles from Yugoslavia exhibited other features, they had a mostly poor educational level and connections with the Yugoslavian communist movement. As Adam Baniecki notices: 'This communist-partisan ethos was attributable to the whole group. The slogans of system transitions were more appealing to them than to other groups. They had been faced with extermination from part of the Serbs or Croats before leaving. They were also tempted by the vision of a new Poland and the new territories that were awaiting them'[8]. The settlers from Yugoslavia were trying to stick together and to live in large groups[9]. The situation of Ukrainians and Lemkos who settled in the countryside was very complicated because their settlement was clearly repressive. They found themselves in Lower Silesia as a result of military pacification and displacement operation called 'Wisła'. The first transportation of the aforementioned people arrived in 1947. Ukrainian and Lemko settlers were literally dispersed in districts of the northern and central part of the region. Often they underwent secondary resettlements within Lower Silesia. Ukrainians and Lemkos were under constant surveillance and the control of the authorities and security services. Those that settled here were also treated with distrust by the Poles as a result of the difficult Polish-Ukrainian relations and tragic events e.g. in Volhynia (Wołyń)[10]. A particular group were Poles from Romania. When compared to other settlers, they were distinguished by their deep poverty, a particular dialect, and a deep attachment to wearing traditional costumes every day (this group continued this custom longer than other communities). Owing to their relatively low number, they stuck together, creating a compact and closed community. Other Lower Silesian settlers looked at them with disdain and distrust and treated them unkindly[11].

Aside from the Ukrainians and Lemkos, the remaining populations living in the Lower Silesian countryside at the end of 1940s demonstrated national homogeneity. However, over this period of time the phenomenon of social cohesion

[7] M. Ruchniewicz, *Lata 1945-1948*, p. 649-651.
[8] A. Baniecki, *op. cit.*, p. 152-153.
[9] *Ibidem*, p. 153-154.
[10] J. Syrnyk, *Ukraińcy*, p. 145-156; R. Żerelik, *Z Beskidu*, p. 75-86; M. Ruchniewicz, *Lata 1945-1948*, p. 651.
[11] A. Nasz, *op. cit.*, p. 15-16; J. Szczepkowska-Battek, *op. cit.*, p. 273-275.

within the region cannot be indicated (perhaps beyond a short episode of the first post-war weeks which imposed an involuntary social solidarity generated by overcoming everyday problems). As is noted by Alfred Nasz, during this period of time in Lower Silesia, including the countryside, the population was clearly represented by 'different cultural content, views, and behavioural patterns, shaped by where they had come from. They often differed in terms of their physical attributes. Often it was only here that different regional groups began to learn about other groups: they became aware of their existence in the interwar period in Poland, where they were able to assess their various national achievements and levels of development in terms of both their differences and similarities, and the distinctness and/or sense of community according to their respective ethnic-cultural origin'[12].

The Lower Silesian countryside after World War II taken as a whole, along with the processes and phenomena taking place in it, is a typical example which proves the thesis that a group of people whom reside together as a community in a given area that is determined by both a natural and cultural landscape does not automatically make them a community[13]. What is interesting in that, the specific character of the countryside with its limited area and number of inhabitants would seemingly constitute an optimal space for the integration process. Why was it not the case in the post-war Lower Silesian countryside? The answer to this question is very complex. On the one hand, as Izolda Topp-Wójtowicz notes, '[…] a limited number of inhabitants and an easily defined space are favourable to the integration process. However, they do not automatically generate them'[14]. On the other hand, the fact that for many groups of settlers the countryside of Lower Silesia was, in their awareness, more a temporary place of residence than an establishment, this cannot be disregarded. The temporary character generated in this way must have resulted in people having *shallow roots* in their new homeland, or in many cases simply a lack of *roots* at all for many years. In the case of rural communities, this factor is of tremendous importance, because it is their distinguishing feature in comparison to the urban population, which is more mobile and prone to changing places of residence. A lack of roots meant that peasants lacked a sense of safety, which in turn was automatically unfavourable to the creation of fixed bonds both in terms of the place of residence and other social groups. The awareness of putting down roots is also an important element of the peasant mentality based on a 'mythical-

[12] A. Nasz, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

[13] Izolda Topp, *Swoi i obcy. Szkic do najnowszych dziejów kształtowania się tożsamości kulturowej na kłodzkiej wsi*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 1 (1995), p. 218; eadem, *Folklor dolnośląski – mit czy rzeczywistość?*, [in:] *Trudne dziedzictwo*, p. 150-161.

[14] I. Topp, *Swoi i obcy*, p. 218.

-religious order', which through the resettlement to the Lower Silesian land was seriously overturned, and perhaps even degraded to a certain degree[15].

In accordance with the assumptions of the Polish authorities, an important factor that could have affected the intensification and deepened the integration process of the society of Lower Silesia in the second half of the 1940s, was the process of the 'repolonisation' of the region[16]. According to this assumption, the myth of Polishness evoked in all areas, from political life to the economy and, most of all, culture, would contribute to the accelerated process of building a unified Lower Silesian society, and would eliminate the sense of temporality and ethnic, regional and cultural differences that were the heritage of pre-war Poland. Despite many efforts and mass campaigns carried out for years in all areas of social life, 'the myth of Polishness' did not work to the degree expected by the Polish authorities, in particular in the case of the countryside - it has been proven by cultural studies experts and ethnologists[17]. As Izolda Topp-Wójtowicz emphasises: 'the idea of a mono-ethnic state (which paradoxically gave rise both to a fear of German nationalism and systemic tendencies in post-war Poland) makes Polishness an element that integrates a community creating a nation. But for the Lower Silesian land, Polishness was related to own local ethnicity [of new Polish settlers – JNS]. It was a source of conflict in a place of co-existence'[18].

In the social relations of the Lower Silesian countryside regional differences were more strongly felt than any sense of national community for dozens of years. Certainly, both the authorities and some socio-cultural activists, or even scientists in the 1970s claimed a victory in the form of full integration, the result of which were actions supported by myths of Lower Silesian culture and folklore propagated by the mass media, where 'Lower Silesian' meant more than a geographical term and an 'unfilled place where everything fit'[19]. The illusion of a political myth of integration clashed in the Lower Silesian countryside with peasant mentality, which, through the centuries had been creating its own model of building a community based on the conceptual dichotomy of *familiar* vs. *strange*, where familiarity was defined as being based on the community of traditions and cultural codes

[15] I. Topp, *Folklor*, p. 156; Elżbieta Berendt, *Przeszłość <zadana> przyszłości. Dolnośląska tradycja ludowa* 'Dolny Śląsk', 9 (2001), p. 243.

[16] Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, *<Na barkach nieśli krajobraz> – z problemów oswajania zastanej przez osadników przestrzeni na przykładzie powiatu jeleniogórskiego drugiej połowy lat 40*, [in:] *Trudne*, p. 108-126; Marek Ordyłowski, *Tradycje dawnych i obecnych mieszkańców wsi dolnośląskiej*, [in:] *Trudne*, p. 146-147.

[17] I. Topp, *Swoi i obcy*, p. 216-218; E. Berendt, *Przeszłość*, p. 241-250.

[18] I. Topp, *Swoi i obcy*, p. 218.

[19] *Ibidem*, p. 215-216.

that determined functioning as a group[20]. Everybody who did not fit this convention was considered a stranger, characterized by different customs and folklore as presented in material and spiritual culture, and different value systems. Since the landscape of Lower Silesia featured too many determinants of *strangeness*, the rural community was closing up more and more around the family and the so-called locals/neighbours from the previous place of residence, even if the previous relationships had not been ideal. That was beautifully shown in the film directed by Sylwester Chęciński 'Sami swoi' [1967], where the antagonized peasants waging 'a holy war' about a field border in their eastern homeland and then settled down in Lower Silesia next to each other, assuming that 'a familiar enemy is better than an unfamiliar friend'[21]. When it comes to the peasant mentality and its importance to the processes of building a social community in the region, it should be mentioned that for many rural settlers who were *treated* by history to a journey in space, this journey was simultaneously a journey in time. Elżbieta Berendt mentions this: 'Their world that collapsed so suddenly, was often built on a peasant consciousness instilled in the 19th century, which was not open to both a rapid and civilised breakthrough, not ready for changes'[22]. This fact by no means fostered fertile grounds for community building in Lower Silesian villages. Stereotypes and antagonisms that accrued in the settlement period functioned in the social space of the Lower Silesian countryside for dozens of years. As is shown in research on the countryside, in the Valley of Kłodzko as late as in the 1980s, there were accidents of neighbours' frictions determined by affiliation to 'a strange' regional group[23]. Contemptuous and disparaging descriptions were used on a daily basis; they are not unfamiliar even today. We are referring to e.g. the following nicknames: 'ruskie' (Russians), 'zabugole' (people-from-behind-the-Bug-river) towards settlers from East, 'centralaki' (people-from-the-Centre), 'bose Antki' (barefoot Johnies), and 'złodzieje' (thieves) towards migrants from central Poland[24].

The aforementioned antagonisms also deepened the errors, negligence and chaos of the settlement policy in Lower Silesia, which in turn, often determined for a long time the relationships between regional groups and affected a deepening of the disintegration process of rural societies. The settlers from central Poland who arrived in large numbers in the first group of settlers occupied better farms, contrary

[20] *Ibidem*, p. 219.
[21] The movie *Sami swoi* directed by S. Chęciński; written by A. Mularczyk; produced by the movie company ZZRF ZF 'Iluzjon' (1967).
[22] E. Berendt, *Powojenny*, p. 148.
[23] I. Topp, *Swoi i obcy*, p. 219.
[24] E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 464.

e.g. to Lemkos or Ukrainians who were placed in the worst, often destroyed buildings[25].

Integration was also hindered by differences in the demographic structure of immigrants. The integration processes were easier in communities with a predominance of young people who were able faster acclimatise to the new, natural and cultural landscape of Lower Silesia as well as learn how to function in a deeply diverse social space[26].

Emphasis should also be placed on the phenomenon of a considerable settlement fluctuation observed in the second half of the 1940s, which, in turn, was the result of various factors, for instance in the case of Poles from central Poland it was disappointment with their social situation in Lower Silesia that made them decide to return to their original place of residence[27].

The phenomena described here was also influenced by the necessity for new settlers to confront with the local cultural landscape that it was marked everywhere with Germanness, with the landscape of Lower Silesia that, after all, they had never come upon before. The aforementioned confrontation generated frustration even when the land was left by its past inhabitants. However, what is interesting, as Izolda Topp notices: 'It seems a one-of-the-kind paradox that the clash with the diversity of local varieties of Polish folk culture became a greater threat for the self-definition of the settlers than their confrontation with German tradition. Whereas contact with the local culture fostered the preservation, and even helped in maintaining it; the former, brought identity, which was based on a clear separation between <familiar> and <strangers>. But multiculturalism in the administratively determined boundaries of the community, within one village and even one homestead was undermining the very principle of identification in the traditional model of folk culture'[28].

The people who persisted in the previously discussed stereotypes and antagonisms generating destructive phenomena that hindered the integration process and society building in the Lower Silesian countryside over many post-war years were, above all, the first and the second generations of settlers: 'Ethnicity shaped relations not always openly, but especially permanently. The division into the familiar and strangers shaped cultural identity […]. It was visible in the landscape, in the interiors of houses, in attitudes towards work'[29]. The process of an ageing countryside,

[25] A. Baniecki, *op. cit.*, p. 153; M. Ruchniewicz, *Lata 1945-1948*, p. 652.
[26] A. Nasz, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[27] *Ibidem*, p. 25.
[28] I. Topp, *Folklor*, p. 159.
[29] I. Topp, *Swoi i obcy*, p. 219.

denoting also the departure of the generation marked by a symptom of cultural clash, and the phenomenon of emigration of many representatives of the third generation to cities, which, in this way, 'exceeded ethnic conditions', weakened the previously discussed forces thereby destructively affecting the integration process[30]. As Izolda Topp notices, the aforementioned third post-war generation 'is disinherited of tradition and not integrated, but suspended between stereotypes of social ties and heroism of their own choices'[31]. However, it is already a generation that perhaps is unable to fully break with stereotypical thinking, because they learned it in their family homes, but clearly manifests setting roots in the widely understood 'Lower Silesian character', also by trying to define it equally with other members of rural communities[32].

The weakening of the negative phenomena discussed above generated by settlement problems was determined by industrial development, the impact of cities, urban culture and development and the growing impact of education. Interestingly, at the same time they were a source of forces that positively influenced the shaping of a new, rural social community in Lower Silesia[33]. In this case, however, a certain kind of paradox can be seen. Modernisation of both social and everyday life and economy - progressive industrialization, which had an influence also on raising agricultural production in the region (the modernization of farm machines, the use of artificial fertilizers and new crops); an increase in the income of rural families; the transformation of the socio-professional structure (the separation of the group of peasant-workers reconciling farming with work in industrial plants or people earning income only from off-agricultural activities); changes in everyday life through the use of modern household appliances; the shaping of some demographic processes affected destabilization (the phenomenon of young people escaping from the countryside to cities) – weakened and in many cases eliminated the traditional rural family model, which also constituted in a serious manner the rural community model. Villages were undergoing urbanization and some villages, as e.g. in the Lubin-Głogów-Legnica copper region were being absorbed by municipal agglomerations. The aforementioned phenomena directly affected ethnic and regional antagonisms, dominant for years, which, as a matter of fact, did not disappear but greatly lost importance. This process was deepened by the recovery of contacts between the countryside and the city. For the inhabitants of rural centres

[30] *Ibidem*.
[31] *Ibidem*.
[32] E. Berendt, *Przeszłość*, p. 247; Jakub Tyszkiewicz, *Odbudowa Dolnego Śląska i rozwój gospodarki*, [in:] *Dolny Śląsk*, p. 733-734.
[33] A. Nasz, *op. cit.*, p. 30-33; E. Berendt, *Powojenny*, p. 154-156.

the city was not only a place of handling official issues or trade, but also a place of additional work and education for the youngest generation. Great importance in this process can be attributed to the school, which, being a plane of encounter of many cultures, was a place that taught the basic principles of social coexistence and the elimination of antagonistic attitudes[34]. As Elżbieta Berendt notices, the boundaries of the countryside's insulation that were broken in this way could not be restored[35].

A serious force that united the social community of the Lower Silesian countryside after World War II was the Catholic Church. On the one hand, enjoying common authority, it could mitigate conflicts between settlers, on the other hand, however, within parishes, it created the perfect climate for the inhabitants of the countryside to get to know each other by participating in prayer services, religious ceremonies and collaboration in Church organizations[36]. Of course, even in that area regional differences were revealed, beginning with some forms of ceremonies and extending to everyday habits. However, within the area of religious life they could be effectively eliminated[37]. Rituals and different forms of religious life related to traditional Catholicism also allowed the settlers to familiarize themselves with the cultural space of Lower Silesia as well as to put down roots in its structure. The inhabitants of rural communities gladly gathered to pray around roadside crosses or shrines founded by the German inhabitants of the Lower Silesian land and with time they renovated them and recognized them as their own[38]. A similar thing also happened in the case of pilgrimage places[39]. An analogous integration role in the countryside, particularly in relation to Lemkos and Ukrainians, was played by the Orthodox Church[40].

The process of serious ethnic and demographic changes after World War II also affected the countryside of Upper Silesia and Opole[41]. First of all, the displacement of Germans from the region should be mentioned; it is estimated that altogether in the initial post-war years 350,000 German inhabitants were displaced, including most from the region of Opole[42]. The second half of the 1940s is also

[34] A. Nasz, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
[35] E. Berendt, *Powojenny*, p. 154; Henryka Wesołowska, *Tradycje regionalne w współczesnej kulturze ludowej Dolnego Śląska*, [in:] *Śląsk – etniczno-kulturowa wspólnota i różnorodność*, ed. Barbara Bazielich, Wrocław 1995, p. 159-160.
[36] M. Ordyłowski, *Tradycje*, p. 146; A. Nasz, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
[37] M. Ordyłowski, *Tradycje*, p. 146.
[38] E. Berendt, *Przeszłośc*, p. 248.
[39] E. Berendt, *Powojenny*, p. 144-145.
[40] R. Żerelik, Z *Beskidu*,, p. 85; E. Berendt, *Powojenny*, p. 154.
[41] A. Dziurok, B. Linek, *op. cit.*, p. 271-276.
[42] *Ibidem*, p. 272.

the time of settlement of the Poles from the former Eastern Borderlands. The inhabitants of the voivodeships of Kielce and Cracow also appeared in Silesia. Most resettlers from the Eastern Borderlands and from central Poland were settled in Opole Silesia. In the second half of the 1940s, approximately 350,000 new inhabitants arrived, including 190,000 of the first of the above groups, and approximately 150,000 of the second group[43]. New inhabitants were, first of all, sent to rural areas. This process covered to a far smaller extent the territory of the pre-war, Polish Silesian voivodeship. Here the settlement phenomenon was on a smaller scale and related mostly to municipal areas. Apart from approximately 40,000 Poles from central Poland, also re-emigrants were settling, these were Poles from Western Europe, mainly from French and Belgian mines[44].

This settlement diversity also affected the degree of integration of the new inhabitants from the abovementioned regions with their new land, to which they tied their fortunes, and with themselves. While the process of building rural communities in Upper Silesia was faster and did not involve many conflicts, in the case of Opole Silesia the situation was completely different[45]. The shortages and negligence of the settlement period were central to many situational conflicts (e.g. the commonness of the phenomena of disputable farms occupied by resettlers from the neighbouring provinces, most often better equipped) which hindered the process of building a rural community in the region in the following years[46]. Mutual animosities and antagonisms reinforced by the difficulties of the adaptation process to a new cultural landscape and everyday problems generated serious and permanent barriers between the former Eastern Borderlands' inhabitants and resettlers from central Poland. They were reinforced by mutual biases, stereotypes, and insulting labels (e.g. Poles from Cracow or Kielce were called 'thieves', people from the Polish former eastern territories were 'Ukrainians', Upper Silesian inhabitants were called 'Krauts'). Indigenous inhabitants effectively separated from new settlers – they were closing up on themselves, within their own groups taking care of traditions and, first of all, struggling with the anti-German policy of the communist authorities[47]. The problem was deepened also by a factor Piotr Madajczyk

[43] *Ibidem*, p. 275; Piotr Madajczyk, *<Obcość> jako wyznacznik powstawania i funkcjonowania granic etniczno-narodowych na Górnym Śląsku*, [in:] *Górny Śląsk wyobrażony: Wokół mitów, symboli i bohaterów symboli narodowych / Inagieniertes Oberschlesien: Mythen, Symbole und Helden in den nationalen Diskursen*, eds Juliane Haubold-Stolle, Bernard Linek, Opole-Marburg 2005, p. 109-122

[44] A. Dziurok, B. Linek, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

[45] *Ibidem*.

[46] *Ibidem*, p. 274-275.

[47] *Ibidem*, p. 275.

draws attention to: 'The separation was strengthened by both parties [in this case, the separation of new settlers and the indigenous population - JNS], though for different reasons: the population of Silesia perceived the newcomers as strangers in the Silesian regional community, while the Polish migrants perceived Silesians as strangers in the Polish national community. The negative attitude of the Polish immigrants had some objective basis, which was a form of defensive reaction by the Silesian community, based on the fact that most Silesians, regardless of their actual nationality, adhered to Polish traditions in their family. In Silesian circumstances almost each family in the country or rural roots could find such an example, appropriate to the new times. For the newcomers, the above was making the situation even less clear and comprehensible. It was intensified by cultural, civil, language discrepancies and making use of national issues to achieve tangible profits'[48]. At this point, emphasis should also be placed on the attitude to political culture where migrant populations, as opposed to Silesian inhabitants of this land, represented limited thinking in the categories of state of law. The settlers' mind-set were also very important. As it is noted by Piotr Madajczyk: The settlers 'were moreover mostly significantly more impulsive and willing to solve disputes using violence'[49].

According to Maria Lipok-Bierwiaczonek, mutual animosities and problems generated in the settlement period were eliminated over the years. The descendants of settlers who came to the Opole countryside 'largely identify themselves with the cultural traditions of the domestic inhabitants. They gladly take part in domestic ceremonies – not only passive, but also an active part. […] In villages with strong organisations of the German minority, festivals prepared by these organisations gather together many guests. However, it can be noted that the oldest ceremonies, cultivated even today, gather together all the inhabitants of villages regardless of the national and regional identification of particular individuals'[50]. Certainly the many factors affected this kind of integration process the effects of which can be presently observed. On the one hand, we can refer to the effect of unification processes that bring the city and the countryside closer through a gradual, but visible levelling of the inhabitants' various lifestyles. The aforementioned is particularly visible in Upper Silesia. On this ground it was easier to build an ethnic coexistence on the basis of a certain acceptance between the indigenous residents and the newcomers. The fact that the region under discussion is very extensive, and the folk culture that was shaped there is non-uniform should not be disregarded.

[48] *Ibidem*.
[49] *Ibidem*.
[50] Maria Lipok-Bierwiaczonek, *Etnograficzny obraz Górnego Śląska*, [in:] *Historia Górnego Śląska*, p. 378.

The specific character of ethnographic sub-regions of the Upper Silesian land was shaped over years and that specificity is very strongly instilled in a given region. The first concerns of the indigenous inhabitants of the land towards the settlers and cultural codes they brought, and which could be read as a potential hazard for regional identity, were replaced by relative tolerance and peaceful coexistence. The next generations of settlers started naturally harmonizing with the cultural landscape of the regions and participating in its life on the terms of social coexistence[51].

Serious transformations of the Silesian countryside that shaped the social community of its inhabitants were initiated along with political-economic transformations in 1989[52]. The countryside of all three voivodeships covering the Silesian land became the subject of processes typical of transformations of rural areas throughout Poland. However, certain regional characteristics in comparison with the rest of Poland and within different voivodeships, i.e. Lower Silesia, Opole and Silesia, should be indicated. There is no way to discuss in the restricted space of this chapter all the areas comprising the issues, and thus the most typical were chosen. In the 1990s, in the Silesian countryside, a significant growth in political, economic, social and cultural transformations has been noted that, by overlapping, led in various forms to clashes between the *old* order with the *new* order, contributing to its deformation and an attempt to create a third way. For the countryside, *used* to a slower pace of changes, this process was a true shock. According to Maria Halamska, the Polish countryside in the years 1989-2009 was covered by four great processes, which had a substantial impact on forming social communities in these areas. These are: deruralisation (a gradual reduction in the proportion of the rural population in the national population); disagrarianism (a limitation of the effect of agriculture and farmers on the economy and society as a whole, including on the rural society); the shaping of a new model of agriculture and restratification (changes in the social structure of the countryside that brought the modification of the hierarchy within it)[53]. They made the countryside occupy a new position in the society, but also (which is of key importance from the point of view of discussions of this chapter) the creation of a new structure of the countryside as a social subsystem[54].

[51] *Ibidem*, p. 373-378.

[52] Stanisław Witold Kłopot, *Gospodarka chłopska na Dolnym Śląsku u progu zmian systemowych*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 1 (1995), p. 72-78; Maria Halamska, *Transformacja wsi 1989-2009: zmienny rytm modernizacji*, 'Studia Regionalne i Lokalne', 2 (44)/2011, http://test.studreg.uw.edu.pl/pdf/2011_2_halamska.pc [last access 26.08.2014].

[53] M. Halamska, *op. cit.* p. 6.

[54] *Ibidem*.

The Lower Silesia and the Silesia voivodeships are among the Polish regions with the smallest share of rural population in total regional population. After 1989, it was (in %) as follows: for the whole country in 1990: 37.0; in 2000: 38.2; in 2007: 38.8; for Lower Silesia: 28.5; 28.4 and 29.4, respectively; for the Silesia voivodeship: 19.0; 20.6 and 21.6. The Opole voivodeship was clearly above the national average with respective indicators for particular periods of time: 48.3; 47.6 and 47.5[55]. At the same time, the diverse dynamics of rural population in different voivodeships should be indicated. The downward trend of the share of rural population is observed in the Opole voivodeship, and its regular growth is observed in two other Silesian voivodeships. The concerned growth in the case of the Silesia and Lower Silesia voivodeships relates largely to villages located in the neighbourhood of big cities, with Wrocław being a perfect example. The representatives of urban intelligentsia, businessmen, etc. are more and more willing to settle down there. Growth in wealth of some social groups favour for living in the countryside which is still a kind of fashion. In the abovementioned communes, the population clearly grows and functions changing from agricultural to non-agricultural, which involves a transformation of the economic structure, employment and education. These villages are more and more strongly affected by the metropolis[56].

A separate problem generated by the aforementioned settlement phenomenon is the question of integrating of 'persons displaced' from urban areas with socially and culturally established rural communities. Their houses are seldom erected between the existing buildings in a village. Most often they take the form of separate dense housing estates built on the boundary of a village, and often are separated with walls. A question may be asked: to what extent do new inhabitants of villages lying outside of agglomerations want, and to what extent are they allowed or able to become a valuable and permanent element of those villages? How is this neighbourhood perceived by native inhabitants? Due to its being a new form, this phenomenon is still awaiting thorough analysis.

The progress in transition from 1989 was accompanied by the process of disagrarianism of the countryside of the Lower Silesia, Silesia and Opole voivodeships. In the period under discussion, the percentage of the rural population working in agriculture clearly fell[57].

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55 *Ibidem*, p. 8.

56 *Ibidem*, p. 8-9; E. Berendt, *Powojenny*, p. 156; Przemysław Wiszewski, *Wykorzystane szanse. Ćwierćwiecze rozwoju (1989-2014)*, [in:], Przemysław Wiszewski, Rościsław Żerelik, *Wielkie zmiany wiejskiego świata. Monografia historyczna gminy Kobierzyce*, Wrocław 2015, p. 209-211.

57 M. Halamska, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

The phenomenon of shaping a new model of agriculture played an important role in the process of changes in the social structure of the countryside as well as of the increasing social gaps throughout Silesia[58]. The 1990s are a period of changes in the structure of ownership in the countryside, including the bankruptcy of State Agricultural Farms (PGR), changes in the so-called subsistence quasi-peasant farms or finally the formation of large commercial (market) farms with a significant role in the economy. In the countryside of Lower Silesia, a proper agrarian structure is built on the ground of large farms, and of supplementary importance to quasi-peasant farms. In the case of the Opole voivodeship, we can already draw a clear margin of the quasi-peasant economy[59]. The situation in the countryside of Upper Silesia is definitely different, with clear predominance of small farms. In the entire agricultural structure almost 80% of them produce for themselves, with 20% for the market[60].

After 1989, in the countryside in Lower Silesia, Opole and Silesia, a clear tendency of acceleration of restratification processes is visible. According to Maria Halamska 'the social structure of the Polish countryside [including the areas discussed in this paper – JNS] is changing into the structure of a post-modern society, which is proven, among other things, by a reduction in some gaps when compared with the city (education, income). Membership in the EU affects the maintenance of the pace of restratification'[61]. The concerned process resulted in, among other things, a clear tendency of elimination of the so-called peasant-workers for the benefit of a multitude of professions determined by the growing presence in the countryside of small manufacturing, services and agriculture used for non-production purposes. The countryside is no longer a place where only farmers live and work. The social structure of the countryside has ceased to be dominated by the figure of a peasant (quasi-peasant, according to Maria Halamska) – the owner of a small farm. In this case, an increasing role is played by the income from off-agricultural sources. However, on the other hand, having a farm is for the farmer an element of identity and self-identification[62]. This process is leading more and more to a restriction in the dominance of terms related only to physical work. The number of specific blue-white-collar workers is clearly increasing[63].

[58] *Ibidem*, p. 13.
[59] *Ibidem*, p. 16.
[60] *Program Odnowy Wsi Województwa Śląskiego na lata 2006-2010*, [in:] http://slaskie.pl/pow/pow_1htm [last access 27.08.2014], without pagination.
[61] M. Halamska, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
[62] *Ibidem*, p. 19.
[63] *Ibidem*, p. 17-18.

A permanent phenomenon in the countryside landscape are the seasonal emigrations (mainly abroad), resulting in an increase in farms' income[64]. The phenomenon of economic emigration is particularly clearly visible in the Opole voivodeship and relates, first of all, to the indigenous population inhabiting dense clusters of the central and eastern rural communities of the province[65]. In the case of the aforementioned region, we are talking about the common and mass character of both economic emigration and the so-called 'suspended emigration' including people staying and permanently registered in Germany, and not unregistered in Poland (in 2001, the prevalence of the latter form of migration was estimated)[66]. According to researchers of the problem in the period under discussion (after 2000), every third person of a productive age who made up part of the indigenous community was working abroad. This group is dominated first of all by young people (aged 18-35), mostly men[67]. The phenomenon of economic emigration observed in the area discussed above contributes, on the one hand, to a reduction in the level of unemployment and an increase in the level of material welfare of the inhabitants not only of the cities, but equally of rural areas[68]. However, this situation also generates adverse effects for the social community of the region. The decision of young people to start paid work is reflected in an unwillingness to invest in their education reduced in many cases to purely vocational education[69]. Economic emigration, initially only for the purpose of earning good money in the short run results in extended stays abroad for many years, and often permanently. This phenomenon generates a process of loosening social ties as well as connections with the region.

All the aforementioned processes are part of the economic transition of Poland after 1989 and have proceeded faster and deeper where the level and pace of socio-economic developments are more dynamic[70]. It is clearly visible in the rural areas of Lower Silesia, the Opole and the Silesia voivodeships.

The period of transition and accession of Poland to the European Union have become a huge impulse for serious and deep social transformations. On the one hand, they are the source of forces that led to a major destruction of the rural communities rooted economically, socially and culturally in the period of the People's

[64] *Ibidem*, p. 19-20.
[65] Romuald Jończy, *Wpływ wyjazdów zarobkowych na rozwój województwa opolskiego*, [in:] *Rozwój Śląska. Wczoraj - dziś - jutro. IX seminarium śląskie. Publikacja pokonferencyjna*, Gliwice-Opole 2004, p. 206-207.
[66] *Ibidem*, p. 208.
[67] *Ibidem*, p. 210.
[68] *Ibidem*, p. 212.
[69] *Ibidem*, p. 216.
[70] M. Halamska, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

Republic of Poland (PRL). One outcome of this special shock, which after all, took various forms was, also across the whole of Silesia, a sense of frustration, and in some cases of solitude and being left without assistance (in the case of employees related to the State Agricultural Farms that were going bankrupt), a fear of changes, the disappearance of the previous way of thinking about running a farm, and the painful confrontation with the market economy. However, on the other hand, the aforementioned transformations modernised, as a consequence, the countryside, and have become the foundation to defining a new notion of rural community, becoming to an increasing extent the source of uniting forces rather than destructive forces.

The issues of forces uniting and destroying identity and a sense of social community in the countryside after 1945 in the whole Silesia within the present Lower Silesia, Opole and Silesia voivodeships are very wide and complex notions. Within the limited framework of this article, attention was paid only to selected aspects. Certainly, a clear specific nature of different phenomena comprising the problem discussed here can be indicated with regard to the Lower Silesian, Opole or Upper Silesian countryside. It is generated by historic, political, economic, social and cultural experience.

In the case of Lower Silesia, as noticed by ethnologists, cultural science experts and historians, despite the deep changes that took place particularly clear after 1989, the cultural identity problem of contemporary inhabitants of Lower Silesia is still valid. Elżbieta Berendt pays attention to this issue, writing: 'settlers who arrived here after the war, even in the case of totally instilling a cultural environment in Lower Silesian, still feel like citizens of their spiritual homeland – left at the very beginning of the settlement road. The generations born in Lower Silesia cannot get rid of a feeling of being torn between the cultural traditions of their families and the pre-war heritage of the region. The youngest usually reject any thoughts concerning tradition, identifying themselves with mass culture models'[71].

Attempts at defining a Lower Silesian character are made by scientists from different areas all the time. However, the most important thing is the fact that this process continues to live on dynamically in the depth of the society itself, as well as in rural communities, which can be seen, among other things, in the revival (which had already been created the People's Republic of Poland) of folk groups as well as in the activities of cultural curators[72]. As Elżbieta Berendt notices, the aforementioned campaigns often entail chaos, both in terms of the people responsible for

[71] E. Berendt, *Powojenny*, p. 156; R. Żerelik, *Z Beskidu*, p. 85-86.
[72] *Amatorski ruch artystyczny*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 15 (2010), p. 231-247.

performing the functions and the cultural offices as a whole and in terms of people who pretend to be bearers of this culture and tradition[73]. This is, however, a phenomenon unavoidable in a process as complex as building a notion of regional/local community.

Upper Silesia is characterised by multiculturalism but is also a place of strong identification with local communities and their own sub-regional cultures, that manifests itself with tangible elements of heritage (e.g. architecture, traditional costume, daily use of objects) and intangible ones (folk dances, songs, ceremonies and customs). The popularisation of modern information carriers or the clear cultural approximation of the countryside to urban centres has the effect of deepening the cultural unification process in Upper Silesia. We can speak however about a clear regional identity by distinguishing between ethnographic sub-regions which show some characteristic features. The phenomenon points to a deep, authentic, decades-long, establishment of the population in the region. An additional factor supporting this process is the resilient activities of various kinds of social and cultural organisations in the countryside, led by the Volunteer Fire Departments, the Association of Rural Women, vocal musical societies and folk groups that stimulate and integrate the campaigns of local communities at the same time for the purpose of maintaining a regional culture[74].

As shown by the example of the Upper Silesian, Opole and Lower Silesian countryside, the process of building a social community in the context of a specified region is a very complex process. The impact of its course is exerted by many factors, starting with the natural landscape; the motives that determine the bond with the region; historical experience; the broadly understood definition of cultural heritage; the degree of one's own cultural identity and the strength of attachment to the land. As Maria Lipok-Bierwiaczonek notices: 'The sense of connection with the cultural heritage of one's family land is first of all a process that occurs in one's consciousness, which combines knowledge and emotions'[75].

[73] E. Berendt, *Przeszłość*, p. 247.
[74] M. Lipok-Bierwiaczonek, *op. cit.*, p. 373-388; *Program Odnowy Wsi*.
[75] M. Lipok-Bierwiaczonek, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

Grzegorz Strauchold

Urban communities

Abstract

From 1945 a large proportion of the inhabitants of Silesia was replaced. In place of the displaced Germans, Polish settlers appeared. Many of them made their way to cities considering them to be the most appropriate places for permanent residence. Cities in Upper Silesia experienced rivalry among immigrant groups and the ethnic Polish population that remained in the area. Urban communities that emerged in the post-war decade were also subject to ideological formation. The ruling Communists wished to create - throughout Poland - a completely new society. From the beginning their dominance in economic life was seen in the more prominent cities of Poland. In large centres state authorities hoped that 'classless' communities would be formed. They were to consist of controllable masses of employees that accepted the ideology of the state. The authorities thought that they would manage to win the permanent support of urban residents for their objectives. The mainstay of the pro-state views at the time in Poland was considered to be the Upper Silesian Industrial District. In 1980 there was another workers' rebellion. It took place in both parts of Silesia. Social aspirations were suppressed by force by the introduction of martial law in 1981. The result in Silesian cities, even in the smaller ones, was the consolidation of opposition groups. They were hunted and dispersed by the communist political police, yet they existed. The fortress of the opposition - on a national scale - was Wrocław. It was a powerful centre of intellectuals' and workers' movements. Nowadays, more than a quarter of a century after the fall of communism it seems that the urban communities of Silesia are well established and can - within their capabilities - resolve real, local social needs. To a large extent - but not completely - they are freed from the pressure of short-term ideologies.

Keywords

settlers, multiculturalism, industry, infrastructure, re-building

Silesia was incorporated into Poland in two phases: in 1922, as the culmination of diplomatic, military and plebiscite manoeuvres – initiatives that were the result of the defeat of Germany and their allies in World War I, and in 1945, as a result of the German defeat in World War II. It may thus be treated as a province nearly completely acquired by the Polish state in the first half of the 20th century (apart from fragments that became part of the former Czechoslovakia and are currently in the Czech Republic). The fact that the previous German part of Upper Silesia, and the completely German Lower Silesia were incorporated into Poland, made this land not only the most important part of the Recovered Territories as they became known, but also the most important part of the entire state as such due to its demographic and economic potential.

The change to the Polish-German border and the intention to displace the entire German population from Poland resulted in tremendous changes that took place within cities. Their development has varied over several centuries of Silesian history. Since the beginning of the 13th century, when the Polish Kingdom was divided into districts, people from Western Europe intensively colonised a part of Silesia (currently known as Lower Silesia). They came primarily from German lands and were invited by eminent Silesian dukes, Henry I the Bearded and Henry II the Pious, and later on, by their descendants. The settlers cleared woodlands thereby rendering wilderness habitable, established completely new villages and towns on the site of (or next to) previous Slavic settlements. This process, which lasted several hundred years, led to the creation of a large number of towns of various sizes in Lower Silesia. That made this land the most urbanised part of the historical Polish territories. There were important towns, such as Legnica and Świdnica, but Wrocław, considered the capital of the province, was the largest one. This settlement network, which survived for several hundred years, remained until 1945, when Lower Silesia was incorporated into the Polish state[1]. The inhabitants of the towns were involved in trade, craft, and manual production until the industrial period. Upper Silesia developed in a slightly different way. Its most important towns were Opole and Nysa, which were owned by the bishops. Urbanisation did not progress here before the industrial period. The situation changed increasingly rapidly after Habsburg Silesia was annexed to the Kingdom of Prussia as a result of the Silesian wars in the 18th century. An intensive settlement campaign was initiated here ('Frederick's colonisation' as it was called). The basis for a modern (for the time) industry was created. The expansion of a dense railway network played a significant role all over 19th century Silesia, in the meantime, a large and flourishing industrial region with coal mining and metallurgy as its primary economic sectors was created in Upper Silesia before the end of the 20th century in an area previously covered by forests. The Upper Silesian Industrial District became at that time – and this process didn't slow down for nearly the entire 20th century – a cluster of towns located next to one another. Thus, it became the most urbanised area of eastern Germany and, in the 20th century, of south-western Poland. The division

[1] The Polish propaganda at the time of communism put a strong emphasis on the urbanisation of 'Piast Silesia', which in 1945 was recovered for Poland. The first thing that was particularly emphasised, was that it was thanks to the efforts of the Polish communist authorities and their powerful ally, the Soviet Union. See e.g.: Władysław Jan Grabski, *300 miast wróciło do Polski. Informator historyczny 960-1960*, Warszawa 1960; *Miasta polskie w tysiącleciu*, ed. Mateusz Siuchniński, vol. 1, Warszawa 1965, vol. 2, Warszawa 1967.

of Upper Silesia into the eastern industrial part and the western partially agricultural and partially industrial part was reinforced at that time.

Significant changes took place during the industrial period in the previously highly urbanised Lower Silesia. A black coal mining and coking coal production area was established near Wałbrzych and Nowa Ruda. This strengthened the urbanisation of this part of Silesia with Wrocław remaining the most important city. At the end of the 19th century it was a metropolis with a population of several hundred thousand and a large industrial centre. At the same time, a certain specialisation of rural areas with their own local urban centres was taking place. This can be illustrated by looking at the examples of Legnica and Świdnica, both of which became regional agricultural centres that grew fruit and vegetables[2].

Before 1945, despite the defeat of Germany in World War I and the global economic crisis, the urbanisation processes in Silesia did not stop. Demographic changes took place in the part of Upper Silesia that was granted to Poland in 1922. The Polish part experienced a certain, although not radical, replacement of the local German population by Polish and Jewish immigrants.

From 1945 on, the situation has changed dramatically. To avoid repeating the discussion from the chapter on ethnic issues, I will only broadly indicate the impact of processes that have taken place since 1945 in these urban communities that were created as a result of Polish colonisation. Numerous local *native* Silesian communities remained in Upper Silesia, primarily on the right bank of the Odra River. Though they were fewer in number due to the deportation to Germany of the Silesians who were considered an unwanted German element by the Polish authorities, then under the allied occupation. Their place was taken by Polish people from beyond the pre-war Polish-German border.

The relocated Silesian Germans' place in the southern and western part of Upper Silesia was also taken by Polish people from the central and eastern territories (lost by Poland to Soviet Russia). The German population was almost completely

[2] The history of Silesian cities in the industrial period is an object of interest in academic centres in both Poland and Germany. The Herder Institute in Marburg and the Institute of History of the University of Wrocław have published the following volumes of *Historyczno-topograficzny atlas miast śląskich. Historisch-topographischer Atlas schlesischer Städte*. See e.g.: *Historyczno-topograficzny atlas miast śląskich/Historisch-topographischer Atlas schlesischer Städte,* vol. 1: *Görlitz/Zgorzelec*, ed. Christoph Waack, series eds Dariusz Gierczak, Winfried Irgang, Wolfgang Kreft, Grzegorz Strauchold, Marburg 2010; t. 2: *Oppeln/Opole*, eds Krystian Heffner, Wolfgang Kreft, series eds Dariusz Gierczak, Winfried Irgang, Wolfgang Kreft, Grzegorz Strauchold, Marburg 2011; vol.3: Węgliniec/*Kohlfurt*, ed. Jacek Dębicki, series eds Dariusz Gierczak, Klaus-Peter Friedrich, Wolfgang Kreft, Grzegorz Strauchold, Marburg 2012; t. 4: *Nowa Sól/Neusaltz*, eds Hans Jürgen Klink, Jolanta Rusinowska-Trojca, series eds Klaus-Peter Friedrich, Dariusz Gierczak, Wolfgang Kreft, Grzegorz Strauchold, Marburg 2013.

replaced by the Polish population in almost all of Lower Silesia. Only the industrial region of Wałbrzych and Nowa Ruda was inhabited by a few dozen thousand local Germans for over ten years after the war[3].

The incoming Polish settlers shared several typical characteristics related to their place of origin: they mostly came from large and medium towns; or from small towns and rural areas; they had similar educational and professional experiences[4]. They came from the so-called 'old lands' (that were under Polish rule before and after World War II), from the land known as the *Kresy* (approximately 52% of the pre-war territory of the Republic of Poland), that had been lost to the Soviet Union (Hitler's active ally from 1939-1941), and sometimes, in smaller groups, from Polish migrant communities in Yugoslavia, Germany, France, Belgium, or Romania.

There were few large cities in pre-war Poland. The central lands ('old lands') included the capital of the state – Warsaw, along with Łódź, Kraków, and Poznań. There were also several smaller ones, such as Bydgoszcz, Lublin, Radom, or Kielce. Agricultural areas, with small towns as their local centres, dominated the demographics and the settlement landscape. The urbanisation rate was even smaller in the eastern outskirts of Poland (*Kresy*). The largest towns there, Lviv and Vilnius, were not the largest metropolises on a national scale. There were several smaller towns and settlements, however, rural areas prevailed. Polish immigrants who came to Silesia – the *Recovered Territories* – from abroad came from rural areas (Yugoslavia, Romania) or from urbanised and industrialised parts of Germany, France, and Belgium.

The nearly complete extermination of Polish Jews by German Nazis was a very important factor that determined the social composition of settlers from Poland. Polish Jews often made up the majority of populations in small towns before 1939, particularly in what was then eastern, southern and central Poland. But after 1945 their presence in Silesian towns was much more rare.

The smallest group of Poles who started settling Silesia in 1945 were people with higher education (university diplomas and secondary school diplomas). This was the group that was most harmed by the war and the German and Soviet occupation as far as classification according to education was concerned. This resulted

[3] See an excellent paper from older literature: Krystyna Kersten, *Kształtowanie stosunków ludnościowych*, [in:] *Polska Ludowa 1944-1950*, ed. Franciszek Ryszka, Wrocław 1974, p. 74-176.

[4] For more on this topic, see e.g. *Polskie Ziemie Zachodnie. Studia socjologiczne*, ed. Andrzej Michalak, Andrzej Sakson, Żaneta Stasieniuk, Poznań 2011; Mirosława Błaszczak-Wacławik, Wojciech Błasiak, Tomasz Nawrocki, *Górny Śląsk. Szczególny przypadek kulturowy*, Warszawa 1990.

from the deliberate actions taken by the organs of terror of these states. Groups of well-educated Polish people, primarily from Lviv, which was annexed to Soviet Union, Warsaw, which was completely destroyed by the Germans, and from Poznań, came to Silesia. Workers from Warsaw and municipal services employees from Lviv were experienced and professionally qualified. However, the vast majority of Polish settlers in towns were people from rural areas and small towns who had a low-level of education or often none at all. Those who came from small towns were involved in craft and trade before the war. Settlers from rural areas were involved in farming. However, it was typical that many of them were knowledgeable about agricultural engineering albeit on a very low level. This group included small-scale farmers and landless people who had previously earned their living by working as hired labour for wealthier peasants. They had often worked occasionally, on a seasonal basis.

This mass of people arrived in Silesia and took the place of the previous inhabitants. Many of them went to towns as they considered them to be the best place to settle permanently. In places where they encountered the previous residents, who still lived there, the factors that contributed to their attitudes towards them were supplemented by the issue of rivalry between nations and desire to avenge the wrongs that had been inflicted by the Germans. These issues are described in more detail in the chapter on ethnic issues.

In the initial period, the specific groups stayed together because they had originated from the same territories. This resulted from differences in traditions, lifestyle, sometimes traditional clothes and regional dialects. There were often differences in religious practices among the population whose vast majority were Catholics. The situation was similar also in the case of their wartime experience. We also cannot forget that when Poland regained independence in 1918-1919 after 123 years of non-existence as a state, the integration of Polish communities into a single Polish nation was a huge problem. These issues were not completely resolved before the outbreak of World War II. Regional differences – often substantial – remained and were reflected among the settlers in Silesia.

The structures of the Catholic Church were an integrating element. However, the origin of the faithful and the clergy (both local and immigrants), especially in Upper Silesia, was the subject of intense controversies.

The differences in urban communities were gradually decreasing in significance in larger towns, where old regionalisms of settlers eroded due to the mixture of various groups and from the performance – often in large groups – of the same activities by people from various parts of Poland and the immigrants, from the start.

This can be illustrated by looking to Wrocław, which was nearly completely destroyed, where the reconstruction of the city and the launch of large industrial plants played an integrating role. Regional differences – and also factors that slowed down the creation of homogeneous communities – were more visible in smaller towns. If they were populated by regional groups that were evidently different, the integration was difficult.

Regardless of the size of the cities, settlers perceived one another through the prism of stereotypes which had been born much earlier for many years after 1945, even in the 1960s (two decades after the war). That is why settlers from the central and eastern regions perceived settlers from the Wielkopolska region (referred to as *pyry* – a local name for potatoes) as unfriendly, rude, and 'pro-German' – this notion included their praiseworthy attitude towards duties and work. People from the Wielkopolska region, usually much better educated, also in terms of professional qualifications, perceived settlers from other lands as primitive and non-educated. People from the Eastern Borderlands (Kresy) were viewed by other groups of settlers as a group of pitiful beggars. In addition, they were seen as underdeveloped in terms of civilization and culture. They were not prepared to live in the areas vacated by the Germans that were characterised by high culture and – despite war damage and plunder – wealth. Without further inquiry into the validity of these mutual stereotypes and even resentments, it is impossible to ignore the factors referred to above. They slowed down the formation of homogeneous municipal communities in Silesia for a long time[5].

The new Polish urban communities in Silesia were developing under various conditions related to their everyday existence. It was not difficult to find employment in industrial areas that sustained minor or no damage. However, such work often required highly professional qualifications. This was the case in the Upper Silesia and Lower Silesia coal regions. In these areas the majority of settlers had to make do with the hardest physical work that did not require any qualifications. It was more difficult to find a job in smaller towns. The development of a free market in the first years after the war was effectively blocked by the communist economic policy that was based on the socialist ideology shaped in Soviet Russia[6].

[5] An interesting analysis of the community of a little Lower Silesian town was presented by Dariusz Niedźwiedzki, *Odzyskiwanie miasta. Władza i tożsamość społeczna*, Kraków 2000.

[6] See e.g.: Marian Muszkiewicz, *Szanse pozarolniczego sektora gospodarki prywatnej na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych po 1945 roku (ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Dolnego Śląska)*, [in:] *Gospodarka i społeczeństwo w czasach PRL-u (1944-1989)*, eds Elżbieta Kościk, Tomasz Głowiński, Wrocław 2007, p. 70-85.

Hence, urban communities born in the first decade after the war were also subject to a shaping impact. The communist government wished to create a completely new society throughout all of Poland[7]. The policy of creating *a new man* in regions incorporated in 1945, including Silesia, was implemented under slightly different conditions than in other parts of Poland. The assumptions of the communist *engineering of the soul* considered the areas of the new Polish colonisation more prone to the shaping of social attitudes than were expected by the ideological establishment. This policy was divided into several stages. The first stage was aimed at eliminating the settlers' acceptance of the free market economy laws and instead forced them to accept the state's dominance in all areas of social life, including *social* ownership over private property in economic life. This stage also involved the gradual questioning of the Catholic Church's societal authority - from the late 1940s on. The stated objectives were to be more feasible in the newly annexed regions because local communities were initially divided and had not taken on any specific shape so far. Their members were often corrupted by the war and had no sense of affiliation except to their circles. Communists believed urban communities to be an excellent area for the implementation of their ideological objectives, primarily those in larger cities. Rural areas, dominated by private owners and the inhabitants of smaller towns directly associated with the rural area, were perceived as areas difficult for ideological *shaping*. Effective domination over the social life of these areas – through the use of pressure (as well as repression) to nationalise (*socialise*) the economy – was present only in the fields related to economy. For this reason, small towns, which in the mid-1950s were deprived of the natural *juice* flowing from the market economy, where the war damage often had not been repaired at all, fell into stagnation[8]. The lack of investments in the infrastructure of regions that were undamaged when they were taken over resulted in their gradual degradation. Urban communities in small towns were also degraded. Permanent local elites that would represent the genuine interests of the residents and perform tasks for the benefit of the communities were not formed. What is more, borderland regions sustained a considerable outflow of population. This was related to restrictions in these areas. Small, local economic centres did not provide the opportunity for advancement, nor were they able to satisfy the basic needs of the residents with regard to daily necessities. The situation was becoming more and more difficult

[7] Among rich literature on this topic, see: <*Budujemy socjalizm…*>, eds Robert Klementowski, Sebastian Ligarski, Wrocław 2010; Marta Brodala, Anna Lisiecka, Tadeusz Ruzikowski, *Przebudować człowieka. Komunistyczne wysiłki zmiany mentalności*, Warszawa 2001.

[8] See e.g. Ivo Łaborewicz, Przemysław Wiater, *Szklarska Poręba*, Szklarska Poręba 2011, p. 169-251.

in rural areas in regions located far from industrialised areas. Another important factor that affected the opinions of the repatriates from the Kresy and their attitude towards their new place of residence were their hopes that the tide of history would turn and they would be able to return to their homeland. Life was slightly easier in larger urban centres provided that they were not almost completely destroyed during the war like Wrocław or Głogów. The hardships of life in towns full of rubble discouraged many newcomers and made them leave for other regions, which included a return to central Poland - to their former place of residence.

The domination of the communists and their political allies in economic, and therefore social life, was visible from the beginning in the more significant towns. They were the ones who organized great public works, clean up, rubble removal, and began the recovery of towns from wartime destruction[9]. State institutions also managed the launch of the industry which, from the beginning, was almost entirely in the hands of the political establishment. State authorities counted on the successful formation of *classless* communities in large towns. These communities were to consist of controllable *masses* of workers who accepted the ideological shape of the state. An almost complete control of the economic aspect of the settlers' life was achieved through the management of jobs. This fact was used to centre social life – on a wide scale – around objectives indicated by the official propaganda. An attempt was made to integrate urban communities on the local level through jobs. Thousands of factory workers (in later decades, the factories were so big that they employed several thousand people) were to become centres for creating *the new man* who, let me repeat, was completely subordinate to the communist authorities and accepted their objectives. Those expectations were to be implemented also by accommodating the companies' employees in the same housing estates. However, the authorities faced resistance to this process also in large towns – this was predominantly passive resistance. For several decades after the war, their main problem was the fact that urban communities did not feel that they were *at home* (in the territorial sense, which resulted from the perceived risk of another change to boundaries that would be unfavourable for Poland) and that they existed *for themselves* (in the sense of being a subject and not an object). These two attitudes affected the condition of urban communities in Silesia for a long time. Apart from them, primarily among migrant groups, regional differences between the settlers and their descendants were getting weaker and weaker. Young people were

[9] The communists praised their respective initiatives in numerous studies. See: *Dolny Śląsk w Polsce Ludowej*, ed. Władysław Biełowicz, Wrocław 1970; *Ziemie Zachodnie w granicach Macierzy*, ed. Gerard Labuda et al., Poznań 1966; *Dolny Śląsk*, ed. Władysław Biełowicz, Wrocław 1963.

getting married and children were being born. In the 1950s, a *baby boom* took place and was largest in Lower Silesia.

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As a result of the political breakthrough of 1956, a charismatic communist politician, Władysław Gomułka, returned to power in Poland. In the 1940s, he was the leader of the communist Polish Workers' Party and the head of the Ministry of Recovered Territories. As the leader of the Polish United Worker's Party (PZPR), which stemmed from the Polish Workers' Party (PPR), he started a new policy towards western and northern territories, including Silesia[10]. Undoubtedly, the new political practice, which received definite support from the central political power, particularly in the initial period, brought about changes. Attempts were made to empower, to a clearly defined extent, the city residents. Attempts were also made to overcome the crisis in small towns by stimulating their internal markets, providing shops with daily necessities, and initiating public activities that were supposed to facilitate life in them. In larger cities, and primarily in Wrocław, which still had not been rebuilt, attempts were made to release social energy[11], including personal energy (so-called 'small production energy') for the purpose of clean up, rubble removal, and reconstruction. At that time, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, regional associations that included local urban elites and aimed at the empowerment of local communities were established in various parts of Silesia.

However, Gomułka and his people, who acted under specific geopolitical circumstances, did not implement any actual democratic reforms. They also did not implement the economic reform which would introduce the principles of free market to a large extent. Until the end of the 1960s, the inhabitants of Silesia, the settlers and their descendants, lived in constant uncertainty with regard to the durability of the post-war western boundaries of the Polish State.

In the 1960s, the central communist authorities decided to make use of the demographic boom which, as stated above, was most visible in Silesia, to achieve its ideological goals. First of all, there was a political offensive targeted at young city-dwellers who did not remember the war. Its goal was to make use of young people's enthusiasm which had been shaped by state kindergartens, schools at all levels and universities as well as *education* in state-owned companies from their childhood

[10] Grzegorz Strauchold, *Powrót na <zaginiony> zachód. Polityka Władysława Gomułki wobec Ziem Zachodnich i Północnych w latach 1956-1957*, [in:] *Klio viae et invia. Opuscula Marco Cetwiński dedicata*, ed. Anna Odrzywolska-Kidawa, Warszawa 2010, p. 449-463.

[11] S. Ciesielski, *op. cit.*

whilst *turning back* on older generations[12]. Young people who were systematically educated outside their families, lived in new flats owned by the state (formally co-operatives) and benefited from an actual surplus of employment, were to become the principal supporters of the communist party. This group was the target of great propaganda events that were organised primarily in Wrocław, on the subsequent anniversaries of 'the return of the western and northern territories to the Homeland', and on the 1000th anniversary of the founding of the Polish State[13]. At the same time, city residents were encouraged to take part in works for the benefit of the public that consisted of tidying up and arranging their nearest surroundings. It is difficult to assess to what extent state propaganda reached the young people and their circles and shaped support for the Polish United Worker's Party (PZPR) among the urban population. The pretentious and superficial nature of official initiatives, even if their participants, recruited on a top-down basis, were numerous, could not be, after all, an indicator of the real situation. The fact remains that events organised in cities by the Church also gathered crowds. And they were not taking part in them to meet any official obligation[14].

The 1960s were not favourable to the policies implemented by the communists in cities. In the late 1960s, economic regress, stagnation, as well as a reduction in real income and increasing problems with purchasing daily necessities were more and more visible. These difficulties were present even in the industrial heart of the country – Upper Silesia, where Edward Gierek was the local leader of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). Society's fatigue and dissatisfaction grew. No one identified with the goals of the central government. The divergence between the expectations of the authorities and the goals of the public was clear in Wrocław, one of the centres of the oppositional intelligentsia in 1968. At that point, the government's violent hostility towards educated and independently-minded people, was surely not favourable for the condition of the local community.

In the late 1970s, in the face of a dramatic growth in the prices of food products which had been scarce for a long time, a social protest was organized on the coast, in the north of Poland, and then violently crushed by the authorities. As a result, Gomułka lost power and Gierek became his successor and the leader

[12] *<Jesteście nasza wielką szansą>. Młodzież na rozstajach komunizmu 1944-1989*, eds Paweł Ceranka, Sławomir Stępień, Warszawa 2009.

[13] In the millennium campaign, clearly targeted against the Catholic Church, communist propaganda *forgot* to add that the millennium of the Polish state resulted directly from the millennium of baptism of the monarch, duke Mieszko I, the first historical ruler of lands, which would be called later 'Poland'.

[14] Grzegorz Strauchold, *Wrocław - okazjonalna stolica Polski. Wokół powojennych obchodów rocznic historycznych*, Wrocław 2003.

of the party. To calm down the uproar in public opinion, he proposed – and for several years successfully executed (due to large loans from the democratic West) – a policy whose aim was to first fully satisfy basic needs and then make society rich. At the same time, the indoctrination continued, particularly in cities, including Silesia. The authorities believed that they would eventually succeed and gain the permanent support of the urban population. At that time, the Upper Silesian Industrial Region was considered to be a stronghold of pro-state views. The policy of a *happy life* was implemented until the mid-1970s, and it collapsed spectacularly in 1976. The irreformable socialist system could not satisfy societal needs. Another rise in prices, in June 1976, resulted in protests in some companies in Wrocław, the largest city of Lower Silesia. In Upper Silesia, where the government took care to satisfy the needs of the people to the maximum extent (at the expense of other regions), the situation was under control.

However, the apparent public peace, particularly in the leading industrial cities (including ones in Silesia), was maintained in spite of the deepening socio-economic crisis. In 1980, another revolt took place[15]: This time almost all over Poland. Wrocław and Upper Silesian industrial cities were among the most important centres of protest. Within a dozen or so months, a great societal invigoration took place. There was 'an explosion' of freedom wrested from the communist authorities by way of strikes. The independent self-governing trade union 'Solidarity' ('Solidarność'), which had millions of members and covered all of Poland, was created. Undoubtedly, societal activity under conditions that included growing political tension and difficulties with supplies, to a large extent caused the consolidation of local urban communities in Silesia. Millions of people felt more at ease and comfortable. The experiment, which dangerous for the state authorities, was stopped brutally on 13th December 1981 by the declaration of the martial law and bloody reprisals in the Upper Silesian mines that were striking. Some protesting miners were killed. Paradoxically, the martial law and its consequences resulted in the consolidation of opposition circles in Silesian cities, even the smaller ones. They were tracked down and broken up by the communist police, but they carried on. Wrocław became the stronghold of the opposition on a national scale. It was a powerful centre of opposition movement of workers and intellectuals.

If 1989, when the Polish transition to democracy started, and communism collapsed, important Wrocław and Upper Silesian factories, strongholds of anti-communist opposition, e.g. 'Katowice' Steelworks, also played an important role

[15] For more information on the topic of recurring cycles in social protests see: Jerzy Eisler, *<Polskie miesiące> czyli kryzysy w PRL*, Warszawa 2008.

in the process. The introduction of democracy and a free market resulted in true social empowerment on a scale that had not been seen since the end of World War II. In Silesian cities, the social initiative was completely freed up. The arduous process of *arranging* environmental issues (particularly neglected in the industrial region of Upper Silesia), transportation issues, and the functioning of municipal services began. In 1990, the local government was restored. Local authorities started emerging as a result of free elections. Undoubtedly, the extent of social consolidation in the cities along the Odra River was affected by the great flood of 1997.

Currently, after more than a quarter of a century since the collapse of communism, it appears that the urban communities of Silesia are consolidated and can – if possible – strive to pursue actual, local social needs. At least until 2008 they are largely, though not completely, freed from the pressure of temporary ideologies[16].

[16] *Rozmowy o dwudziestoleciu. Wypowiedzi radnych Rady Miejskiej Wrocławia z lat 1990-2010*, Wrocław 2010.

Grzegorz Strauchold

Ethnic issues

Abstract

The tragic events of the first half of 1945 led to the overturning of the current Silesian world. The victorious Red Army, with no knowledge of the ethnic situation in the ethnically mixed Upper Silesia, avenged itself on the residents. Many people were imprisoned in detention camps, which were originally established to detain the Nazis, thousands of them were killed, regardless of their national origin and views. Thousands were forcibly deported deep into the Soviet Union. Many of them died there. The re-Polonization and rehabilitation activities towards the native population yielded only partially positive results. For several decades, when the Polish authorities did not officially recognise the German minority, the ethnic relations in Upper Silesia were frozen. Only the transformation that started in Poland in 1989 allowed recognition of the existence of the German minority.

Keywords

displacements, resettlers, multiethnicity, multiculturalism, Eastern Borderlands, autochthones, Volksliste, polonisation

As a result of War World II radical changes occurred in the borders of Central-Eastern Europe as well as in Silesia. During the meeting of the leaders of the Great Coalition in Teheran (1943), the line of the Odra River was initially adopted as constituting the basis for a new western Polish state border. This involved recently defeated Germany's losing a number of territories in the east. During the next conference, in Yalta (February, 1945), it was limited to the quite inaccurate definition of Poland's obtaining land in the west. This official message hid a secret agreement made in the summer of 1944 between the Soviet Union and its puppet government in Poland, concerning the probable marking out of a new Polish-German border on the Odra River and the Nysa Łużycka River, along the western border. Based on this agreement, in the newly acquired German areas, a Polish civil administration was created alongside the occupying Soviet authorities. It should be added that Polish communists, at least until 1943, had not planned to incorporate such large German areas. It was not until the first half of 1944 that they went along with the Soviet line of argument and accepted a broad plan of incorporation. It was part of a political game played first and foremost for Polish citizens facing harsh reality of Poland losing over half of its pre-war territory for the Soviet Union. The Western superpowers, allied with Moscow, expressed their consent.

The situation in the Silesian areas taken from the Germans and given to the Poles started to turn tragic with the winter of 1945. The Soviet troops occupying Upper Silesia committed a number of war crimes on civilians regardless of their affiliation and national associations. From the area of pre-war Polish Silesia many thousands of young people (men and women) were forcibly taken to the east to work in Soviet industry[1]; first of all, in the coal mines. A similar policy was also then used in the, up until that point, German part of Upper Silesia. Polish authorities, and at the same time, Polish settlers reached the area that so far had not known the horror of war and where as a result of driving away the German armies stationed there, horrible events took place.

During the last meeting of the leaders of the Big Three in the summer of 1945 in Potsdam it was decided that the final shape of the new Polish-German border should be determined at a later date during a peace conference. So far, temporarily, German areas up to the line of the Odra and Nysa Łużycka Rivers were supposed to be under Polish administration. This was not supposed to be an occupation, nor a Polish incorporation. At the same time, it was decided to forcibly resettle the entire German population from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The above two decisions, the provisional border and the determination to deport the Germans to occupation zones, were in conflict with one another. After all, the boundaries of Poland at that time had not been finalised. In addition, recently defeated Germany had no say on the new shape of the border.

Based on this, starting in 1949, German public opinion along with the authorities of the democratic Federal Republic of Germany, questioned the Polish state presence in the territories of eastern Germany. Resettlement of the German population was defined similarly as a prejudicial 'expulsion'. On the other hand, Polish authorities from the beginning, and at least since the Potsdam decisions, claimed that the new border had been finalised and that the matter was not open to further discussion. They then implemented a policy of comprehensive integration with the rest of the Polish state. It faced tremendous difficulties from the very beginning. This policy in the areas of Upper Silesia – which up until 1945 had been German – was justified by the presence of over a million people from the Silesian population that were of ethnic Silesian origin (of Polish extraction). The border transformations of 1945 and related events in the first few years following the war have had a great impact on current attitudes and for decades later the views

[1] *Wywózka. Deportacja mieszkańców Górnego Śląska do obozów pracy przymusowej w Związku Sowieckim w 1945 roku. Faktografia – konteksty – pamięć*, eds Sebastian Rosenbaum, Dariusz Węgrzyn, Katowice 2014.

of the local population. After all, it took place only twenty years after the decisions taken at the Treaty of Versailles, the Silesian uprisings and the plebiscite of 1921[2]. The echoes of Polish- -German disputes – in themselves bloody – over Upper Silesia were still alive. Problems that had their origins in those events and often had still not been resolved. Generations who were adults, at the time when World War I ended, were still alive, (they had been in their twenties then and in the 1940s were only about 40 years old). In the meantime, among the Silesian population new generations had appeared. Subject to (along with the rest of the local population) from both sides – Polish (anti-German) and German (anti-Polish) propaganda, but also often subject to the *beauty* of the totalitarian influence of National Socialism.

The political game for the Polish western boundaries firmly influenced the intra-Polish moods among nationalities occupying the former eastern German areas. First and foremost, among Poles (also immigrants) and Silesians with various national provenance. And among those from the local Silesian population who were not able to clearly state their nationality. This group was present in the Silesian areas throughout the post-war period. Its existence, in a number difficult to specify, has been noted in contemporary times.

The issue of the border was solved much later as a result of a number of agreements. The first was signed on the border of Zgorzelec/Görlitz in 1950 between the communist government of Poland and the communist government of the German Democratic Republic that took its orders directly from Moscow. The East German communists were forced by Stalin to sign the treaty. This treaty, signed 'on behalf of the German nation', had no impact on the actual legal-international status of the Polish western boundaries. It was the result of Moscow, acting from its geopolitical centre, treating the foreign policy of the Soviet protectorates as a tool. It was also an element of the Soviet dictator's game on a wide international arena related to the creation of two German states.

Although the Federal Republic of Germany did not border directly with Poland, its governments questioned the new borderline, moreover they deemed themselves to be the heir of the whole history of the state and the German nation. They did not recognise the existence of the communist German Democratic Republic. In view of the former, it was officially considered in Bonn (capital of Federal Republic of Germany) that Germany functioned legally within its boundaries of 1937 that had existed prior to Adolf Hitler beginning his territorial expansion policy

[2] See *Region divided. Times of nation-states (1918-1945)*, eds Marek Czapliński, Przemysław Wiszewski.

in Europe. At the same time, in the German lands within decades after the war, significant events took place concerning the people forcibly resettled from the lands east of the new border. Those people, resettled as Germans (including from Silesia), were not a uniform national group. Among the prevailing indigenous Germans, there was also a numerous group of Silesians with a different degree of national awareness – both German and Polish. Among those deported, there was also a group of Silesians without any national awareness, *closed off* in strictly local groups that had been transferred from domestic areas. In the Soviet occupation zone of Germany (from 1949 operated by the GDR) repatriated people from the east had no opportunity to show their true attitudes towards the harm of being expelled from their homeland. Among those who in the following years did not go to the western occupation zones (from 1949 operated by the FRG) the sense of harm and frustration increased, all the deeper, because it could not be expressed publicly. These groups undoubtedly would have constituted a political-ideological back-up towards the eastern Germany border claims against Poland in the second half of the 1950s and in the 1980s. However, it was a situation unknown to the public of both societies.

In western occupation zones and, above all, since the establishment of the democratic Federal Republic of Germany, the groups of *the expelled* were fully free to act and expressed their views[3]. Furthermore, in this respect they received many years of significant aid and the full support of the state. It was this group, concentrated in the Association of the Expelled, who in 1950 led to the adoption of 'the Card of the Expelled' which emphasised the right to return to their Homeland and renounced 'revenge'[4]. Information about the activity of these circles, their position on the invariability of the border as of 1937 and the aforementioned 'Card' reached the inhabitants of Upper Silesia and undoubtedly influenced the attitudes of at least

[3] During these several decades of democratic freedom of expression, the issues of expelled Silesians and their complex – largely psychological – relations with their lost homeland have also been interesting to Polish researchers. In West Germany, during the post-war decades, a lot of literature was generated on this topic. See e.g. from among German and Polish studies: Joachim Rogall, *Wojna, wypędzenie i nowy początek. Rozwój Śląska i los jego mieszkańców w latach 1939-1995*, [in:] Joachim Bahlcke et al., *Śląsk i Ślązacy*, Warszawa 2001, p. 198-217; Beata Ociepka, *Dziedzictwo wypędzonych*, [in:] *Wspólne dziedzictwo? Ze studiów nad stosunkiem do spuścizny kulturowej na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych*, ed. Zbigniew Mazur, Poznań 2000, p. 715-736; Aleksandra Trzcielińska-Polus, *'Niewidzialny bagaż' Ślązaków pochodzenia niemieckiego w RFN*, [in:] *Wspólne dziedzictwo?*, p. 737-762; Gregor Ploch, *Miedzy <hajmatem> a ojczyzną. Górnoślązacy w Nadrenii Północnej-Westfalii po 1945 roku*, [in:] *Górny Śląsk i Górnoślązacy. Wokół problemów regionu i jego mieszkańców w XIX i XX wieku*, ed. Sebastian Rosenbaum, Katowice-Gliwice 2014, p. 246-258.

[4] See among others http://www.slaskiesprawy.tripod.com/Artykuly/karta_wypedzonych.htm [last access 13. 04. 2015]; http://www.bund-der-vertriebenen.de/charta-der-heimatvertriebenen/charta-in-deutsch/ [last access 13. 04. 2015].

part of the Silesian population settled in Poland who were of various ethnic origin and with varied national attitudes.

Within a decade of the 1960s, even among people who had been born after the war, western German society had a very difficult time of coming to understand the scale of crimes committed on behalf of Germany during the war, particularly in eastern Europe. A gradual change in social views, against the opinion of the *expelled*, created the basis for reflections over the line of the Polish-German border established in 1945. The New Eastern Policy was initiated during the chancellery of Willy Brandt. This social democratic politician implemented the two-decade-old policy of the first, Christian Democratic Chancellor of the FRG – Konrad Adenauer. This outstanding politician, in fact the creator of post-war democratic Germany aimed at achieving a permanent agreement with the nearest neighbours in terms of area; including Poland and Czechoslovakia. The obstacle to agreement with Warsaw, apart from its lack of sovereignty from the Soviet Union, was the permanent dispute over the boundaries. In the summer of 1970 Brandt concluded an agreement with the Soviet Union on the inviolability of the boundaries of Germany as designated in 1945. It is noteworthy that, the agreement was not actually signed by the bordering states. Furthermore, West Germany, sticking to the boundaries as they were defined in 1937 had a mandate to this type of agreement, signed by the USSR an expression of recognition by Bonn of Moscow's acting as a protectorate over Poland. This *Realpolitik*, well-known since the time of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, made it possible to enter into an agreement with Poland. In December 1970, just before his political downfall, the leader of the communist party (the Polish United Worker's Party) Władysław Gomułka signed an agreement in Warsaw to standardise relations with the FRG. Included in the statement on the inviolability of the existing border was an introduction to the complete 'cancellation' of the Potsdam provisional border. In 1972, after a difficult – which should not be surprising – debate, the December Treaty was ratified by the West Germany Parliament (Bundestag). This enabled, in turn, the final regulation of the former German lands of the Polish Catholic Church administration.

The final closing of the border case was possible after the initiation of democratic changes in Poland (since 1989) and after the reunification of Germany as a result of the disintegration of the Soviet Empire at the turn of 1980s and 1990s. In 1990, the Conference 2 + 4 was held to unite Germany (with representatives of both German countries, the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France present). This made it possible in 1990-1991 to sign two Polish-German treaties that finalised the border. This political *marathon* in Central-Eastern Europe

undoubtedly had an effect on the attitudes of the people living in Silesia, particularly in Upper Silesia. At the level of bilateral relations tremendous importance was given in the form of a reconciliation mass in the Lower Silesian Krzyżowa, on the former property of anti-Nazi opposition politician Helmut von Moltke in 1989. It was there that, the finally legal, German minority appeared that inhabited most of all Upper Silesia.

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Settling the border and national matters concerning the historical Silesian areas played a role in the revived Polish-Czechoslovakia dispute. Prague returned to its territorial borders of the first years after World War I when it had aimed at incorporating a number of Upper Silesian territories, which it considered, in accordance with historical truth and a partially ethnic truth, as being a part of Czech heritage: the German Kłodzko area (the former County of Kladsko). It was not successful in this endeavour. On the other hand, as a result of a short armed conflict with Poland and taking advantage of mediation with western powers, it obtained part of industrialised Cieszyn Silesia (the former Austrian Silesia) known in Poland as Zaolzie. This was mostly the area inhabited, above all in rural areas, by the Polish Silesian population. In 1938 in Munich, the western powers (Germany, Italy, France and Great Britain) decided to partition Czechoslovakia and to transfer its extensive (inhabited mostly by Germans) areas to Berlin. In view of this, through a military ultimatum, Warsaw forced Prague to accept the incorporation of Zaolzie into Poland. In 1939, after defeating Poland, Germany incorporated that area directly into the German Reich. During the war years, the dispute concerning this small territory prevented a full agreement with regard to further post-war cooperation between the Polish government-in exile, and the Czech emigration environments. The conflict returned in spring 1945, in early May of that year, the victorious Red Army transferred power over Zaolzie to the Czechoslovak authorities. At the same time, Prague put forward a grievance against the till then German border areas in Upper Silesia[5]. Using not only the historical argument from a few hundred years before, but also an ethnic one. This line of argument endeavoured to show that the people inhabiting the boundary areas on the previous German side were a Moravian population. The situation in this area truly indicated the presence, besides the population's using German, of inhabitants that spoke the South Silesian dialect mixed with a Moravian one[6]. The people of Moravia were treated in Czech political thought as

[5] Piotr Pałys, *Kłodzko, Racibórz i Głubczyce w stosunkach polsko-czechosłowackich w latach 1945-1947*, Opole 1997.

[6] See: *ibidem*, p. 9-18; Anna Bindacz, *Pogranicze śląsko-morawskie na przykładzie powiatu raciborskiego*, [in:] *Śląsk w czasie i przestrzeni*, eds Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, Grzegorz Strauchold,

a slightly separate Czech language national group. In addition, the authorities of the renewed Czechoslovakia demanded areas within the Kłodzko Valley. The above areas had been since the winter of 1945 *via facti*, but with prior approval of the Soviet authorities, occupied by the Polish administration. In turn, Warsaw put forward claims for Zaolzie. In May-June 1945 an intervention took place of Czechoslovakian troops on the disputable areas[7]. The Poles planned to militarily intervene in Zaolzie in June. Open war between these two allies of Moscow was near but Stalin's intervention prevented it. The *status quo* border was preserved when the Poles occupied the previous, unchanged border of Czechoslovakia and Germany on the Silesian section. The delimitation of the border took place in 1958, however, even now bilateral negotiations are conducted concerning portions of land in mountain areas.

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The Polish authorities, which until the summer of 1945 had taken control over all, formerly German, Silesian lands faced a very complex issue concerning the national composition and ethnic attitudes of the local Silesian population.

The *local* population should be understood as all the national and ethnic groups living in that area. These were first of all Germans, living in both parts of Silesia. They originated from two major groups: the descendants of subsequent settlement waves that began arriving in the Middle Ages up until the end of the 18th century, and from the local Slavic population, which in the process of natural assimilation lost its primary ethnic nature and became Germans. This process lasted from the 19th century up until the first half of the 20th century. It did not completely end even after 1945 when nearly all of Silesia had been unified within the boundaries of Poland.

In the group of local Germans there were also people who came to Silesia during the period of its sudden industrialisation and urbanisation (in particular to Upper Silesia) beginning in the second half of the 19th century. These were officers, teachers, and the technical personnel of local industry. Naturally, German military units had stations in the country. The presence of garrisons, particularly in smaller centres, had a great impact on the shape of local communities as well as the state of their economy. In historical Lower Silesia, with the exception of small areas in the northeast, the German population, both Evangelical and Catholic, dominated. Its centre was a thousand-year-old city named Wrocław.

Wrocław 2009, p. 123-131.

[7] Marcin Kordecki, Dawid Smolorz, *Atlas historyczny. Górny Śląsk w XX wieku. Zbiór map edukacyjnych. Historischer Atlas Oberschlesien im 20. Jahrhundert. Eine Sammlung pädagogische Landkarten*, cartographic editors Dariusz Przybytek, Anna Osowska, Gliwice-Opole 2013. See ibidem, p. 32, map: *Górny Śląsk po 1945 r. /Oberschlesien nach 1945*.

A far more complicated situation of nationality affected settlers in German Upper Silesia. In many municipal centres, in particular in the largest ones, the German speaking population dominated. It also prevailed in the lands located on the left bank of the Odra River – not directly at the river, but around towns of Niemodlin, Nysa, Głuchołazy, Prudnik, Głubczyce. As I pointed out above, the Upper Silesian population with its crystallised, non-municipal, national awareness, survived until the arrival of the Polish authority with a whole lot of baggage from its turbulent experience from the years directly after World War I, but also with the baggage of the years that passed during World War II. While the Polish Army resisted the Germans in 1939, the Wehrmacht was welcomed ostentatiously with flowers in Silesia, as the national army, which had again liberated Silesia and reunited it with the German Homeland. The years to come were similarly complicated, when the previously Polish part of Upper Silesia was incorporated directly into the German Reich. All elements of Polishness were removed and the Silesian population of Polish ethnic origin were deprived of their national identity and persuaded to them to become Germans (and thereby Nazis). The German Volksliste was a tool of distinguishing the conformable, but also repressing the stubborn. It did great harm to the state of internal national awareness among the native Silesian population and became the next source of its miseries after World War II[8].

At the beginning of 1945 this Silesian group of inhabitants – often steeped in the ideals of National Socialism and divided until 1939 – experienced horrible things on the part of the victorious Red Army[9]. Soviet troops were treated by the locals in all respects as an absolutely foreign, invasive army. These inhabitants considered the Wehrmacht and SS as their own army particularly in circles that had feelings towards or relationships with not only the nation, but even the culture of Germany civilisation. They defended, as best they could, their German (ideological) homeland and their local, Silesian homeland (Heimat), as well as a number of local homelands. The impact of these events, even the most drastic, although typical for war would not have, in spite of the scale of committed crimes, mass robberies and rapes, strong effects on the previous national, social, local bonds without other events having taken place. And so, within the entire German east, including Silesia, at the request of NSDAP a plan was implemented that concerned a maximum evacuation of the largest population groups of the invaders from the East and a plan to leave behind the so-called ‘bare land’. This was the method applied on Stalin’s orders to Belarus in 1941. Therefore, it was possible to force

[8] Ryszard Kaczmarek, *II wojna światowa (1939-1945)*, [in:] *Historia Górnego Śląska*, p. 255-266.
[9] Zygmunt Woźniczka, *Represje na Górnym Śląsku po 1945 roku*, Katowice 2010.

part of the Silesian population to escape of their own free will to the west, though not from all the territories. Upper Silesian industry was supposed to operate up until the end to meet the needs of the German economy, therefore, the majority of the population remained in this area. Also, the extensive areas of the Sudetic Foreland were not evacuated, and were held by the Wehrmacht until the end of the war; part of those evacuated remained there. Most Silesian inhabitants didn't have to be forced to leave. People – and as it turned out, very reasonably – were terrified of the coming Soviet troops and escaped westward. It is estimated that the Silesian areas were abandoned at that time by roughly 1,5 million people[10].

Chaos on the escape routes, often fired on by aviation and Soviet tanks, resulted in broken bonds - not only local bonds, with neighbours, but often with family. When fronts past through Silesia, Soviet authorities, according to what had been agreed upon in Yalta, detained and deported thousands of young Silesians to the Soviet Union, it is estimated at more than 40,000 people[11].

Many failed to return. Those who survived came back gradually from the end of the 1940s to the early 1950s. This campaign and its consequences sowed the seeds for the following conditions of social consistency in this area. When, often irretrievably, family and local communities were torn apart. Even worse, the whole local population, both under Soviet and under Polish power, was subject to a widened investigation to track down the Nazis. As a result, numerous closed camps were created, where many people were held without court sentences. In horrible conditions, they were not only starved, beaten up and raped, but also murdered[12].

Despite the tragic realities of the conquered German east – fragmentary information of which reached the west – natural German citizens both evacuated by the authorities of their state as well as runaways (as they were called then in Polish nomenclature 'voluntary') returned to recover their properties, to reconnect with families, to re-establish local bonds with neighbouring communities. This phenomenon took place all over Germany, not just in its eastern territories. The irreversible

[10] For forced migration from eastern German lands, see: *Wysiedlenia wypędzenia i ucieczki 1939-1959. Atlas ziem Polski. Polacy Żydzi Niemcy Ukraińcy*, eds Witold Sienkiewicz, Grzegorz Hryciuk, Warszawa 2008; Beata Ociepka, *Deportacje, wysiedlenia, przesiedlenia – powojenne migracje z Polski i do Polski*, Poznań 2001; Bernadetta Nitschke, *Wysiedlenie ludności niemieckiej z Polski w latach 1945-1949*, Zielona Góra 1999.

[11] Dariusz Węgrzyn, *Internowania i aresztowania mieszkańców Górnego Śląska przez NKWD ZSRS w 1945 roku i ich produktywizacja w ramach systemu obozowego GUPWI NKWD/MWD ZSRS w latach 1945-1953*, [in:] *Wywózka. Deportacja mieszkańców Górnego Śląska*, p. 73-111; Sebastian Rosenbaum, Dariusz Węgrzyn, *Deportacje z Górnego Śląska do Związku Sowieckiego w 1945 roku. Katalog wystawy stałej w Centrum Dokumentacji Deportacji Górnoślązaków do ZSRR w 1945 roku w Radzionkowie*, Katowice 2015.

[12] Z. Woźniczka, *Represje*; Piotr Madajczyk, Danuta Berlińska, *Polska jako państwo narodowe. Historia i pamięć*, Warszawa-Opole 2008, p. 273-290.

fact of this process was something that those returning did not realise. They found it incomprehensible to separate the historical, as was commonly thought, German lands from their homeland. They were not aware of the far-reaching consequences of the II World War that Germany had both caused and lost.

The stream of those returning was increasing. For example Wrocław, almost empty after the long-term, damaging siege it had suffered, in autumn 1945 was inhabited by a few hundred thousand Germans, its primary inhabitants. The Poles who settled in the meantime were a visible minority among the inhabitants of the ruined city[13]. The phenomenon of returnees was extremely troublesome for the new Polish authorities in Silesia not only for physical but also for logistical reasons. The main goal of Poles was to remove all Germans from Poland's new boundaries which included those who had been living in Poland prior to the war, as well as those who had been living in the areas referred to in the official Polish propaganda as 'Recovered Territories' (Silesia and Pomerania).

The mass resettlement of 'the uncomfortable' population to its ideological homeland became a method of settling internal conflicts and sanctioning changes in the borders after World War I. The affiliation of disputable lands was initially supposed to be decided by plebiscites. However, it was a highly imperfect method and immediately after the Great War it was abandoned. The cure-all was to be, compulsory or forced, resettlement. It was treated as a benefit that this permitted the avoidance of the mass slaughter of the local, nationally foreign population. For general acceptance of the method of compulsory relocations of great importance was the fact, that Nazi government in Berlin years before World War II used German minorities to destabilise neighbouring countries, to which Germany made territorial claims. In this view, during the World War II allied superpowers reached a consensus that demonstrated the need to remove the entire German population from central-eastern Europe. As I have mentioned, in the summer of 1945, during a conference in Potsdam, decisions such as these were made regarding Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

The supporter of a campaign that forced millions of people whose ancestors had resided there often since the Middle Ages to abandon their homes was the Prime Minister of Great Britain Winston Churchill. He confirmed the relevance of these population movements to the Prime Minister of the Polish government-in-exile general Władysław Sikorski. However, it was not him, but Stalin – who was the leading 'practicing person' among politicians of Allied states with regard to the quick resettlement of many nations within the boundaries of the Soviet Union

[13] M. Ordyłowski, *Życie codzienne*, p. 24.

– who gave the green light to the subordinate, Polish puppet authorities. It was appointed in Moscow by Stalin in the summer of 1944, in order to remove any effectiveness of the lawful government-in-exile – residing in London – on the situation in Poland. Stalin's approval coincided with the national policy that had already been implemented that summer 1945 by the communists from the Polish Workers' Party (PPR). Having already been fully subordinated to Moscow, they planned to introduce socialism to the Polish state. At the same time, they intended, to avoid national conflicts in the future and as an answer to commonly expressed moods of all of Polish people, to rid Poland of, within its new boundaries, all major national minorities – starting with, Germans and Ukrainians. In view of this, since the spring of 1945, long before the conference in Potsdam, the resettlement of the German population from the border areas was conducted absolutely and brutally, with the use of troops. It is estimated that on a national scale these so-called 'wild relocations' included hundreds of thousands of people. Often as in the case of the border city of Zgorzelec/Görlitz, the campaign consisted in not allowing in any Germans who went to part of the city on the left bank of the river, and not allowing on to the right bank of the Nysa River any Germans. Along with expulsion, the property of the local population was immediately lost, formally taken over as a property of the Polish state, actually very often taken by Poles already in these areas[14]. Such rapid deportation, in fact expulsion, caused the re-creation of human bonds and family bonds among local Germans. Some of them would see their relatives and the remains of their properties no sooner than after a few dozen years, despite the fact that some of them resided – literally on the other side of border rivers – in the communist state of East Germany that was formally, politically and ideologically allied with Poland.

Therefore, as early as in the first post-war months two processes were interwoven: the homecoming of the German population evacuated and running away from the front and the German population thrown out of their houses by the Polish authorities in an absolutely unannounced and unprepared campaign. Justified by the need to protect the new, western borderland against unrest, which could be reinforced by the presence of the settled local, native German population.

[14] Małgorzata Ruchniewicz wrote about this drastic operation: 'in Lower Silesia, these relocations were on a relatively extensive scale and covered a broad strip of border counties in the western part of the region. These events, due to their brutal and poor organization, harmed Poland on the international stage. They also brought economic damage, since facilities abandoned in a hurry had been looted by looters of all kinds. In addition, there was not enough labor during harvest. The ruthless nature of the operation has become the basis for the very emotional notion of <expulsion>', see. Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, *Lata 1945-1948*, p. 643.

To the mentioned above events that affected the inhabitants of (until then) eastern Germany we can add the stay of many thousands of young men in Allied captivity. Their absence undoubtedly had an effect on the state of durability of their families and cohesion of the local communities they originated from. The final factor that caused a relative disintegration of German, Silesian society was the loss of mass of fallen soldiers of the German army. Some of them were the heads of families.

The German Silesian community was almost annihilated as the homogeneous society, starting from 1946, as a result of the compulsory relocations determined during the conference in Potsdam. Before the start, local Germans attempted in any way possible to set up their lives. They lived in the hope that they would not be deprived of their homeland, that the old boundaries would be reinstated. They organised, also with the quiet, pragmatic assistance of Polish authorities, schools, places of financial, health, and spiritual care for the German population without any rights. It was extremely difficult in a situation when the legal actions of the Polish state deprived the German population of any property, and also the rights to which Polish citizens were entitled[15]. Germans received much lower pay for work than Poles (it sometimes happened that they did not get paid at all, and they still had to do their work), and also lower ration cards. It should be emphasised that the numerical dominance of young women with children and old men was characteristic of all population groups (regardless of their nationality) throughout Silesia. Families deprived of their most valuable working members fell victim to poverty and violence. Prostitution among women and girls grew large in number as a result. The community deprived of young men was even more prone to disintegration, and even moral corruption.

At the beginning of 1946 – with the approval of and in cooperation with the allied authorities of occupation zones of Germany, Poles began to displace the local German population on a large scale, including from Silesia[16]. The numbers indicated

[15] See: *Decree of 8 March 1946 on abandoned and post-German property*, 'Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej', 19 April 1946, No. 13, item 87; *Rozporządzenie Ministra Sprawiedliwości z dnia 21 maja 1946 r. o określeniu osób, których majątek przechodzi na własność państwa*, [in:] *Ustawodawstwo Polski Ludowej,* vol. I*, Zbiór przepisów prawnych ogłoszonych w Dzienniku Ustaw w latach 1944-1947. Według stanu prawnego na dzień 31 grudnia 1956 r.*, Warszawa 1957, p. 492-495; *Dekret z dnia 13 września 1946 r. o wyłączeniu ze społeczeństwa polskiego osób narodowości niemieckiej*, 'Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Informacji i Propagandy', Warszawa 25 November 1946, No. 8, item 100.

[16] It is estimated that approximately 1 million 35 thousand Germans were deported from Lower Silesia to the occupation zones of Germany by the end of 1946. Displacements in a much smaller scale were also continued at a later date. See: Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, *Lata*, p. 645. The quoted author revised her calculations in her later publication to 1 million 110 thousand of displaced from this territory. See: Eadem, *Ewakuacja, ucieczka i wysiedlenia ludności niemieckiej z ziem na wschód od Odry i Nysy Łużyckiej w latach 1944-1947*, [in:] *Ziemie zachodnie*, p. 134. It has been

by Polish and German researchers often considerably differ from each other. It was found in the latest study on displacements that until 1950 300,000 – 400,000 people were displaced from the area of Śląsk (Katowice) voivodeship in its post-war boundaries, covering the entirety of Upper Silesia. It was to account for approximately 20% of the whole of residents of this area during the war[17].

It was assumed that the result of this operation would be to get rid of any national foreign element. It was however intended to leave German citizens of Polish ethnic origin behind. I will discuss the question of this group in further detail later in this chapter. I will however emphasise here that the displacement of Germans had far-reaching consequences. Where this population previously was an overwhelming majority of a closely inhabited population (in Lower Silesia and part of Upper Silesia), local communities completely disintegrated. Simply, they ceased to exist. Great masses of people who had made up nearly the single population in given areas disappeared. The people were transported – under different conditions, sometimes tolerable, sometimes outrageous, and sometimes threatening their health and lives[18] – to the occupation zones never fully rebuilt their own bonds. Scattered across different areas in eastern Germany, they had no possibility (apart from strictly informal small groups) to suggest that they still existed as a community coming from given areas and having given social, neighbourly, family traditions. They could operate legally and ostentatiously in the occupation zones and western Germany. However, they did not live together here either (much less closely) in one area. They kept in touch with each other in various ways – in person, by mail, by mass media and at meetings of their various organisations. The organisations were set up according to geographic origin. It was however only a surrogate of the old communities. With the passing of time, bonds weakened and fewer people remembered 'the good old days'. Along with personal remembrance (because the written one was evoked in numerous publications), the German Silesian dialect passed into oblivion - I think almost completely.

estimated that in 1945 there were 1,8 - 2 million Germans in Upper Silesia. It was not a precise expression in view of the uno.ecognised national condition of this population. According to estimations in the post-war period – as part of the Potsdam displacements, approx. 450,000 Germans were deported from Upper Silesia. Given the insufficient condition of the documentation kept and the great, multilateral changeability of migration, any statistics at that time in this respect they are strongly uno.eliable. Deportations of many thousands of local Germans to the Soviet Russia were not without significance for these statistics. See: A. Dziurok, B. Linek, *op. cit.*, p. 271-272.

[17] Bernard Linek, *Wypędzenie*, [in:] *Leksykon mitów, symboli i bohaterów Górnego Śląska XIX-XX wieku*, eds Bernard Linek, Andrzej Michalczyk [in print].

[18] See: Maria Podlasek, *Wypędzenie Niemców z terenów na wschód od Odry i Nysy Łużyckiej. Relacje świadków*, Warszawa 1995; P. Madajczyk, D. Berlińska, *op. cit.*, p. 238-252.

Displacing Germans or people considered to be so by the Polish authorities complemented the work of breaking up Silesian mixed families. Families, where German, Polish, and ethnically Silesian (the so-called 'ślązakowcy') elements came together extremely often in Upper Silesia. Where there was the whole range of ethnic *colours* and even of *colours* with a non-specified sense of national affiliation. Correspondence – heavily restricted at the beginning – was the only means of communication for them. This was subject to the interference of censorship and the communist political police throughout the whole period of 'real socialism' in Poland. At a later period – also under the watchful eye of agencies of communist power – visits from the west became more possible in given places of residence. Trips as part of the 'family reunification' campaigns were an attempt to establish broken or terribly weakened bonds, and definitely one of the important reasons for the decision. I will return to these issues in later parts of the chapter.

However, it did not succeed in removing all Germans by the end of the 1940s from the areas where they had lived in close groups up until 1945. The Polish authorities had no influence on the Germans who were employed in the landed estates and factories controlled by the Soviet authorities (army). It was not even allowed to count them. This situation took place all over the western and northern territories that had been incorporated into in 1945 Poland[19].

The Polish authorities often could not completely get rid of the German civilian population for economic reasons. Often, the former German lands were insufficiently populated by the Poles who were arriving. When, towards the end of the 1940s the collectivisation of agriculture began, it was often necessary to employ local Germans. The largest group of local Germans was employed – as necessary specialists – in the coal and coking industry near Wałbrzych and Nowa Ruda in Lower Silesia. As a result, local neighbourly German families and even local communities survived in a partial manner for several years after the war in a limited area. At the end of the 1940s, it was estimated that approximately 60,000 Germans would stay in Lower Silesia. In Upper Silesia, approximately 80,000 Germans were to stay there after the displacement had taken place, at the end of 1950s. At least, this is what resulted from ethnic declarations related to the 'passport action'[20].

[19] See: Mirosław Golon, *Majątki ziemskie na ziemiach odzyskanych pod radziecką administracją wojskową w latach 1945-1950*, [in:] *Władze komunistyczne wobec Ziem Odzyskanych po II wojnie światowej*, ed. Stanisław Łach, Słupsk 1997, p. 279-299; Stanisław Łach, *Społeczno-gospodarcze aspekty stacjonowania Armii Czerwonej na ziemiach odzyskanych po II wojnie światowej*, [in:] *Władze komunistyczne wobec Ziem Odzyskanych*, p. 255-278.

[20] Stanisław Jankowiak, *Migracje z Górnego Śląska po drugiej wojnie światowej*, [in:] *Górny Śląsk i Górnoślązacy*, p. 228.

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The Soviet army, which had been driving the Wehrmacht from Upper Silesia since the beginning of the winter of 1945, did not realise the ethnic nuances in the area. Its principal tactical objective in this territory was to defeat the Germans as quickly as possible. Ordinary soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and probably even the personnel of the lower officers' corps saw in the population they encountered the damned Germans on whom it would be finally possible to take revenge for the years of crimes committed against the civilian population of the Soviet Union. When the victorious troops entered the area of pre-war Upper Silesia from the east, they knew nothing about the border questions of recent years, about the incorporation of lands that had belonged to the Polish state into the Reich in 1939. The soldiers saw a country which in appearance looked like a German one, which was deprived of any visible attributes of Polish character. After all, the situation in these areas was far more complicated than it could be suspected at an initial superficial glance. As I mentioned before – alongside the German native population, a Polish-speaking population (Silesians of Slavic origin) was also living in these areas – more numerous than German neighbours at least on the right bank of the Oder River. After experiencing the atrocities of the front, after kidnapping and transporting a large number of teenagers away to the Soviet Union, and after installing the Polish administrative authorities, another act of Silesian tragedy began. The Germans were subject to forcible transport to the occupation zones of the German state (see above). It became necessary to deal with the problem of the 'German People's List' (the *Volksliste*) in areas that before the war had belonged to the autonomous (within the Polish state) Silesian Province. It was introduced by the German authorities during the war for several purposes: to remove Polish Silesians from these lands; to finally Germanize those who, given their origin, and their pro-German ethnic attitudes, in the opinion of the German Nazis were fit to be quickly absorbed into the German nation. Also, an important reason for the introduction of this *Volksliste* – divided into four groups – was to obtain large amounts of recruits who could be conscripted into the German military forces. The German People's List (*Volksliste*) divided the Upper Silesian community of Slavic/Polish ethnic origin. Quite a number of Silesians considered themselves to be ethnic Germans; many people declared their German character out of opportunism or from fear of repression and this repression followed. In the case of traditional Upper Silesian families, the father was the only breadwinner of the family. At the time, these were families with many children where mothers were bringing up offspring and running a household. The deprivation of such a family of the only breadwinner, imprisoned at best,

meant that the wife and children, tragically, had nothing left to live on. The Polish government in-exile, staying first in France, and then in London took a stand not to increase the losses of the Polish civilian population in Lower Silesia by resisting the *Volksliste* action. Furthermore, local Polish Catholic priests received confidential instructions not only to discourage, but even to encourage the Silesians to sign the German People's List (*Volksliste*). As a result, a great number of young men of Slavic lineage ended up in the German military forces. At the end of the war, they encountered Polish army on the Italian front fighting against the Germans in the ranks of the Allies. In this situation several thousand of them deserted the Wehrmacht and joined the Allied Polish Army.

The Polish administration that had been formed in the areas of Upper Silesia which before World War II belonged to the Polish state from the very beginning had to face the question of the *Volksliste* which was signed by approximately 1 million people. The character of the new Polish governments was also complicated. Since July 1944, the Polish Committee of National Liberation, a puppet institution, completely subordinate to Moscow, was active in Polish areas. It was transformed into the Provisional Government of the Republic of Poland at the beginning of 1945. It was still subordinate to the policy of the Soviet Union. It was the administration of this government (that competed with the legal Polish government in exile, in London) which covered an area of the pre-war Polish Silesian Province during the first months of 1945. It fulfilled three basic objectives: 1. to get local industry started; 2. to get rid of the entire local German civilian population from this area; 3. to prepare this area and its residents for the introduction of socialism in Poland as adopted from the Soviet Union. Therefore, the nationalist, anti-German aspirations (supported at the time almost uncritically by the whole of the Polish nation) and strictly ideological aspirations, propagating solutions which were indeed unpopular in Poland at the time, perceived – as they were – as imposed from the outside by administrative and physical terror, were alternating in terms of their relations with the local society. Additionally, the administrative staff of the Polish authorities in the area of pre-war Polish Silesia had mainly come from the outside. These were officers from the former Russian Partition and the former Austrian Partition or as it was said at the time: from the Congress of Poland and Galicia. Naturally, younger people, brought up in an independent, pre-war Poland were arriving too. A similar wave of Polish officers came to the Silesian Province in 1922. These officers were also seen as foreign, as an unwanted import. The situation repeated itself after twenty-three years, but this time the main, local administrative bodies were being managed by the communists who were recognised in traditional, conservative and Catholic

Upper Silesia as even more foreign, incomprehensible, and simply harmful. All the more that the area was really quickly filled with communist political police along with civil service officers. These were Public Security Offices (UBP – Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego). During their operational work, employees of these offices did not refrain from using physical pressure, torture and murders on both real and imagined opponents of Warsaw government. Those subject to violence, as a matter of fact throughout Poland, could not seek justice or protection among the administrative authorities; there was absolutely no such possibility. Furthermore, even the highest administrative authorities had little (and in the initial period, no) impact on the operations of the Public Security Office (UBP) in the initial period in the Silesian areas (united in the Polish state in 1945). Including in camps formed by the political police where a local population was put without any judicial decisions, regardless of its ethnic origin, or ethnic declarations. These places of confinement are remembered by the Silesians as criminal centres with a very high death rate because of the poor living conditions, poor food, gruelling, unpaid work, but also because of the common beatings, the torture of detainees, the rape of women and the killing of imprisoned Silesians. The difficult circumstances in which the residents of ethnically mixed Upper Silesia were forced to live at the time often led to the extreme complete disintegration of families, and to the breakdown in local, neighbourly communities – not only in the German civilian population but likewise in the Silesian population of Slavic/Polish origin.

A functioning stage of the camps, particularly in their most drastic, criminal form was closed after several months of the presence of the Polish state in Silesia. In its pre-war Polish part, it was necessary to solve the question of the Volksdeutsches; people who signed the German People's List (Volksliste). A media witch-hunt broke out demonizing those people by calling them traitors to the Polish nation, allied with the deadly and criminal German nation. An inconsistency, and a substantive failure to examine local problems and the arrogance of the communist authorities who considered themselves to be the all-powerful rulers in the Silesian area made itself felt again. Apart from media raptures over 'regaining Silesian land unified again in the Motherland after hundreds of years of being apart', a wave of criticism – and all its consequences – fell on the Upper Silesian Population. This quote is my compilation from a few dozen press titles of the time. Communists indeed needed Silesian miners, metallurgists, industry workers to maintain continuity of the operations of the whole powerful industry of the Upper Silesian industrial centre. They assumed that the loss of German workers deported to the occupation zones of Germany would be evened out by the Polish Silesians and the Polish population coming

in. Most likely to their utter surprise the number of this group of workers was considerably reduced by the above-mentioned forcible deportations of thousands of people taken to work deep in the Soviet Union. On top of this, as a result of the implementation of a nationalist policy of condemning the signatories of the Volksliste in this area (i.e. a Polish part of Upper Silesia already before World War II), it turned out that there would be practically no one to start up the local industry necessary for the state to function. Under such circumstances, the rehabilitation campaign was initiated. As a result, most Silesians of Polish origin and pre-war Polish citizens who had signed the German People's List for various reasons were 'acquitted' and formally recognised as full citizens[21]. However, not all were successfully 'rehabilitated'. No doubt, some of this group legitimately. It is, however, not possible to indicate a closer group of people who were not rehabilitated because of actual pro-German attitudes during the war and occupation. All the more, it is difficult to indicate people who – using, which needs to be emphasised – *law* established towards the German civilian population in Poland at the Potsdam Conference were recognised to be illegitimate traitors. The circumstances were hot and pressing. Not only in the policy of the Polish communist authorities, but also in the deeds of officials who were far from communism and in the public opinions of the Polish settlers incoming to this area, all local Silesians were at least suspected of the German sense of nationality, or, at least, of pro-German attitudes in 1939-1945. Combined with the willingness to make up for war, material and moral losses, the arriving Poles, feeling the support of the administration, did not refrain from depriving the local population of their properties. Not only of the equipment from flats and farms, but also of fixed properties. All this confusion was another element negatively influencing a local, Upper Silesian group of Polish ethnic origin. It was tearing the group apart, depriving it of a large part of its previous residents, stigmatising it in the opinion of Poles of at least suspicions, an uncertain element. Similarly, just as in after World War I this ostracisation of the Silesians on their own land was also a result of a failure to understand the specific nature of the areas to which the Poles were arriving. The attitudes of the Polish settlers, their mental and material condition and the intellectual horizons of the time will be discussed further in this chapter.

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The Polish administration which, from the beginning of 1945 covered the eastern German territories, encountered on a part of those territories an urgent problem

[21] Adam Dziurok, *Problemy narodowościowe w województwie śląskim i sposoby ich rozwiązania*, [in:] *Województwo śląskie 1945-1950. Zarys dziejów politycznych*, eds Adam Dziurok, Ryszard Kaczmarek, Katowice 2007, p. 539-604.

of the so-called Polish autochthones[22]. 'Autochthones' were at the time in official (and soon in public) opinion understood as those previously German citizens who were of ethnic Polish origin. Therefore, any other nationalities permanently living on the incorporated areas were not – in advance – recognised as autochthonous, but as the incoming ones. That is secondary to 'Poles' who had been living there 'for ages'. Germans were foremost included in the category of foreigners, who *ex definitione* were consistently refused the right to stay on their family, native lands. It was part of the policy of the victorious Allies, and with the policy of the communists, but also even the nationalist Polish Workers' Party (PPR) and was common among all Poles who hated everything that was German. This was above all the result of the terribly cruel, criminal occupation of the Polish territories during World War II.

The largest group (estimated by the Polish authorities with excessive optimism to be 2 million people) of those 'autochthones' lived in German until 1945, in western part of Upper Silesia. Some 30,000 – 40,000 of the Polish autochthones were to live in Lower Silesia right after the war had ended according to really uncertain estimates. Including approximately 3,000 representatives of this group in Wrocław, the largest Silesian city[23].

During the inter-war period, particularly during the reign of the national socialists in Germany (1933-1945) the group was subject to propaganda efforts on the part of the German administration and education that tried to eliminate the hazard of Polish national self-identification of this approximately one million mass of people of Slavic/Polish ethnic origin. Berlin was all the more worried that events from 1919-1921 in Upper Silesia would reveal that a large group of Silesians who considered themselves to be Poles lived there. However, as I have already pointed out several times, it is impossible to precisely determine the national provenance of those people. After the division of the previously German Upper Silesia in 1922 into a Polish and a German part, the local population showed a wide range of national attitudes on both sides of the newly created border. At the same time, a large group of the local population was ethnically indifferent. It was characterised

[22] See on this topic e.g.: Grzegorz Strauchold, *Pożądani i niekochani. Ludność rodzima na Śląsku w optyce władz państwowych w latach 1945-1949,* [in:] *Górny Śląsk i Górnoślązacy*, p. 156-170; Bernard Linek, *Weryfikacja narodowościowa i akcja osadnicza na Śląsku Opolskim*, [in:] *Województwo śląskie 1945-1950*, p. 605-639; Grzegorz Strauchld, *Autochtoni polscy, niemieccy czy… Od nacjonalizmu do komunizmu (1945-1949)*, Toruń 2001; Zenon Romanow, *Polityka władz polskich wobec ludności rodzimej ziem zachodnich i północnych w latach1945-1960*, Słupsk 1999.

[23] Elżbieta Kaszuba, *Dolnośląski tygiel. Ludność regionu w pierwszych latach po II wojnie światowej*, [in:] *Śląsk, Polska, Niemcy na przestrzeni wieków. Studia historyczne ofiarowane Profesorowi Mieczysławowi Paterowi w osiemdziesiąta rocznicę urodzin*, ed. Teresa Kulak, Toruń 2008, p. 173-174.

by an attachment to its localness, and to its more distant ideological homeland for the state of its closest neighbour. Besides continuously propagating German national attitudes towards official and social factors, a group of Silesians from the German part of this region (known in Poland as Opolszczyzna or Śląsk Opolski) aware of their Polish background was seriously weakened by the migration of large numbers of activists to the Polish part of Silesia.

Ethnic censuses are almost always burdened to some extent with the intentions of the political centre that organises them. Furthermore, the questions about national affiliation contained within them are to some extent subject to deformations through the intentional actions of the respondents who often give answers which seem safe and convenient to them. Such deformations must also have occurred in an ethnically mixed Silesian area. As a matter of fact, on both sides of the Polish-German border. Particularly in a situation when the questions were shaped with the intention of obtaining answers that expressly indicated national attitudes. One can imagine how the image of the national shape of the Silesian areas was deformed by quite a large group of people with no formed national attitudes living there.

It is this group which became the target of particularly increased campaigns undertaken by the national socialists starting in 1933. These campaigns were encountering considerable difficulties with the middle- to old-aged, mainly Catholic, Silesian population. Statistics reveal that in this area – as compared with many other regions of Germany, the Nazis had relatively small support. Greater results were gradually achieved in the field of attracting young people, teenagers and children. The totalitarian National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), as extremely nationalist, as it was, at least formally, socialist, and anti-religious used very popular buzzwords. It promised people entering the working age protection against the effects of the world economic crisis and often kept its word; there were workplaces and the construction of cheap housing. Using the possibilities to interfere in education and how teenagers and children were brought up, the Nazis offered these groups attractive forms of recreation (and thereby shaping their expected ideological and national attitudes) which many of their parents would not otherwise be able to afford. Undoubtedly the above operations could, in some groups of young, weaken bonds with the Catholic Church and the models they had taken from their traditional Silesian families.

The World war completed the work by inflicting great losses on young generations sent to the front and acting as a *school* of national and ideological attitudes for a huge mass of Silesian young men as well as for girls serving in auxiliary

organisations, even in the anti-aircraft service. When, at the beginning of 1945, the German and Soviet front was passing through Polish Upper Silesia on its way to the German part of this region, the national and ideological attitudes of its residents of Slavic origin were the joker in the pack.

All groups of Silesians regardless of national provenance, or lack thereof, experienced the atrocities of battles on the front and the advance of morally depraved, immature, and uneducated young people. The Soviet armies expected revenge, alcohol and women (regardless of their age). They came very often from the Soviet Asian republics, and knew nothing about the conquered areas they were passing through. Similarly, as in all areas of the German East, and likewise in Silesia, residents partially bolted in panic, part of them were also forcibly evacuated by the German authorities, and part stayed where they were. The results of these migration movements, taking place under the extreme conditions of chaos, battles and winter, were the large losses in people. It was further increased by the criminal acts of the Soviet troops firing on columns of escapees and committing genocide on the people left behind. As a result, the local Silesian communities were seriously impaired and deprived of a large part of their residents and subject to the cruel repressive policy of the invading Soviet authorities. The occupied German areas were also treated as a reservoir of free, slave labour both here, and deep in Soviet Russia.

While there were no doubts at the time that the Polish administration policy was aiming to get rid of all the local Germans from the occupied areas of the Reich (that had actually been incorporated into Poland), there was a far more complicated game for the aforementioned autochthonous population. During World War II, both in the occupied country, and in the circle of the Polish government in-exile, a discussion was held concerning the objectives and needs of the Polish, post-war ethnic policy on postulated German lands. Generally, it was assumed that in the face of the Polish population's losses as a result of war and occupation it could not be allowed to lose German citizens of, as it was popularly stated at the time, Polish origin. Frequently, they were directly called Poles. In the Polish propaganda, the fact that they were living in the eastern part of Germany was to be one of the main arguments for incorporating these areas into the Republic of Poland. It was therefore intended to use this argument at a future peace conference, to ultimately establish the new borders of Poland[24].

Another imperative of the Polish national authorities was a result of the paradox of state borders. In September 1939, Poland was the victim of two aggressors:

[24] See e.g.: G. Strauchold, *Myśl zachodnia*, passim.

Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. It was therefore natural that a victorious war for the Poles (because no alternative was assumed) was to be the full restoration of its territorial integrity. At the same time, territorial compensation on the part of Germany for war losses was planned. The straightened border was also to increase the safety of the Polish state in the case of another invasion from the west. If the absolute displacement of the German population from the incorporated lands had been planned, considered to be a disloyal, dangerous national minority, it should have surely been filled with the Polish population. On account of the expected broadening of the state to include these territories a problem of settling them by a sufficient number of ethnic Poles emerged. It was impossible to displace all the German citizens from the lands incorporated in this situation. People noticed and often warned against the danger of absorbing large numbers of the Polish autochthones who had been seriously Germanised. It was noticed that Nazi ideology was predominate in part of them. However, they were necessary to be consistent with the national interest of settling and integrating the former German eastern territories by Poland. This is the reason why the foundations of a state policy involving this group had already been prepared during the war. It was also attempted as far as possible to, albeit in a very limited scope, prepare the largest groups of Poles living earlier under the German occupation for a meeting with the autochthones and living with them.

These considerable achievements of (western) political thought, also revealed in the underground scientific publications, were adopted by the Polish communists. During the first years of war, they were not interested in demographic matters in areas which could possibly be incorporated into the Polish state that had arisen from the ruins. However, in the final period of the world conflict it became possible to incorporate the German eastern lands into Poland. This solution was supported by the dictator of Soviet Russia and a patron of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR) - Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin. His concepts materialised in the summer of 1944 in part of the Polish lands that had been liberated/occupied by the Red Army. The Polish communists formed a puppet government there, one that was dependent on Moscow. It competed with the Polish central authorities in exile in London. In this situation, their interest in the areas, which after the war were to be incorporated into the Polish state, rapidly grew. The communist leader Władysław Gomułka realistically used the achievements and staff of the Polish democratic conspiracy. Including their reflections on the Polish autochthones by utilising Marxists' ideological assumptions, further enriched by class threads. The plans included leaving, on the incorporated German lands, citizens of Polish ethnic origin due to their origin and

professional and social behaviour. Many thousands of Silesian workers were to increase, also across the whole state, the number of people working with their hands in industry. This, in turn, enhanced the most valuable, in the communists' opinion, group of people in a state of *true justice*. Naturally, they did not disregard the need to start, with the hands of the Silesians, Upper Silesian industry. It related both to the former pre-war Katowice Voivodeship and the previously German portion of Upper Silesia. Until the Polish settlers acquired the relevant professional skills, they were to also fill the gap left behind by the forcibly removed German workers. However, there were exceptions even to this rule. In the period directly after the war, the indigenous Silesian Germans, veterans of the pre-war Communist Party of Germany (KPD) were admitted to the ranks of the PPR members causing an uproar.

Another group the communists wanted were Silesian peasants of ethnically Polish origin. They were the majority from among the approximately one-million strong group of Slavic origin. They were conversant in high-level agricultural techniques on their farms and fulfilling, in the communist *mythology*, alongside the leading workers, the class basis of Marxist society. Initially, the leaders of the PPR did not have any problems with the fact that this was a group of individual, generally quite minor owners, and that they were deeply attached to the Catholic religion. In the interpretation proposed by Lenin, minor owners of agricultural farms were supposed to be the natural allies of workers. Especially because, which was true, industrial farmers came from these environments.

Therefore, the expectations of the Polish government in exile (and its national, secret agencies) were paradoxically adopted and filled in terms of class by Polish communists. The local 'indigenous' population of Silesia were to remain on their family territories as citizens of Poland. It rapidly turned out that this was a very reckless project. A part of this Silesian group ran away or was evacuated in the face of the approaching front: often far, as far as to the central German regions. Not all of them returned to their local homelands after the war. Their permanent absence meant the impoverishment of local communities and the termination of direct contacts with the closest local environment. Communication with the former place of residence in the slightly later period could be ensured only by correspondence, and then by visits. Often – which is described in more detail further in this chapter – Silesian communities that stayed in deep Germany, were expanded by future campaigns, the 'family reunion' campaigns.

Others, in the dramatic first few months of 1945, escaped not very far and immediately after the front's pasage decided to come back to their places of residence and their properties. Those properties had often been completely destroyed, and

in the best case ravaged by the victors and incoming Polish settlers. After all, the Silesian stalemate, painfully patched up for the next few decades and not even entirely solved today, was 'enriched' as a result of the immediately conducted Polish settlement operation. The Polish authorities decided that, straightaway after the seizure of subsequent German territories, they would be populated with Polish settlers from the hinterland[25]. However, it should be emphasized that the incoming people, apart of a small group, hardly had or had completely no idea about the specifics of the occupied land. People from the eastern territories of the pre-war Polish state lost to Soviet Russia were searching for a new place to live. The newcomers from the central lands were searching not only for a place to settle, but very often were coming to the eastern German territories to get rich easily, compensate for war losses, seize possessions and real estate. Large groups were coming to the 'Recovered Territories' only in order to possibly loot soon and at a possibly small expense, and then to immediately come back to the hinterland. There they were selling obtained items. Apart from the moral substantiation, undoubtedly strong as a result of the destructive German occupation of Poland, the approved legal solutions were pointed to. They caused the deprivation of the German population (and all the German citizens on the conquered territories were commonly considered as such) of the right to their previous properties, not only real estate.

The Poles who came to the Silesian territories (including to the Upper Silesian territories, which had so far been inhabited mostly by German citizens of Slavic/Polish ethnic origin) treated them from the outset as fully German (i.e. as being inhabited by Germans). They did not know, and often did not want to know, that the majority of the local inhabitants were their ethnic kinsmen. The Polish settlers, especially the temporary robbers coming *for a while* were not familiar with the intricacies and nuances of the ethnic policy of the Polish state. And even if they were familiar – which could be the case (e.g. among mid-level clerical personnel) – they treated the information as unnecessary ballast. Under no circumstances did such information dissuade Poles from achieving their adopted goals. As a result, not only illegally but also legally, the local population, even the one with Polish-sounding surnames who used the Slavic Silesian or Silesian-Moravian dialect, were commonly regarded as Germans and deprived openly of their property. Such practices, often performed at the behest of administrative decisions and supported by the Polish Civic Militia and Public Security Offices (UBPs), were not prevented

[25] More information on the social composition of this population, its territorial origin and the consequences of settlements on its psychological condition will be presented in later parts of this chapter.

even by documents indicating the participation of the given Silesians in a pre-war Polish minority movement in Germany. Not only were the locals deprived of their apartments, equipment, family heirlooms, workshops and fields constituting the condition of their existence; typically, attempts were made to add those people, as soon as possible and unconditionally, to the deportation transports of the German population and to the occupation zones in Germany. The deportations were compulsory, without taking into consideration ethnic origins. At the same time, the transports included a lot of people, Silesians among them felt they had the right, based their national and class origin, to remain in the Polish state. This group could not withstand the living conditions in Poland, in which, as a member of the 'German' population, they were deprived of their human and material rights. This included even former Silesian insurgents, militarily fighting in the period between 1919-1921 to incorporate Upper Silesia to the revived Polish state. Many of them, when deportation period ended, were running away, through the 'green border' (illegally) to Germany. This practice, which took on a different intensity in the second half of the 1940s, took place regardless of the official efforts undertaken by the Polish authorities to leave as much of the Silesian population of Polish origin in Poland as possible. Displacements and escapes of autochthones were just another elements (besides the previously described displacement of the German population) affecting the *en mass* destruction of local communities. This undoubtedly detrimental situation was intensified by the even today unsolved (probably insoluble) dispute concerning agricultural farms between their legal local owners and the Polish settlers who were willing to take them over. This competition, during which both one and the other party was both the defeated and the winner, caused the even bloody settlement of personal scores to result in fatalities.

State authorities, pursuing their population policy in Upper Silesia were moving in zigzags determined by consequences of at the same time often executed policies: the settlement policy and a policy to prepare society to accept the Marxist social experiment (in its Stalinist form). First of all, an optimum criterion was to be found to separate the German population (intended for compulsory displacement) from the Silesians who demonstrated traits of their affiliation to the Polish nation, as it had been assumed in advance. After months of trial-and-error, the concept of 'ethnic verification' was developed. It consisted in a statement being made by a commission, separately for each Silesian, as to whether a given individual and their family were Poles or Germans[26]. This ethnic selection was adopted by the local population very cautiously, with distrust and disbelief. It was indicated that

[26] See among others: G. Strauchold, *Autochtoni polscy, niemieccy*, p. 47-70, 165-169.

it was another (only within a quarter of century) plebiscite requiring the local population to prove its rights (as Poles) to remain on their native land, possibly (though often not always) on their own properties. Indicating the precise criteria of the verification procedure was problematic. Additionally, positive verification meant legal recognition of a local as a Pole. Even without taking into account the imperfection of the Polish clerical staff at that time – providing the basis for local verification commissions, as well as their very frequent personal interest in acquiring the property of a negatively verified *German*, attention should be paid to the fact that the problem was almost insoluble; particularly, in the event when the issue covered a population of nearly one million. A basic question was which criteria should be adopted to undoubtedly prove the nationality of the person being examined. It was even more difficult in the event when many Silesians of Polish origin did not want to undergo verification, considering it insulting their dignity. And at the same time there was quite a numerous group which was undergoing this process to remain on the land of their fathers and maintain their life's achievements, even if those people felt German, regardless of their ethnic origin.

In Silesia, and then in all the incorporated areas, the concept of mixing subjective with objective criteria was used. The objective might include a Polish- sounding surname, knowledge of the Slavic Silesian dialect and even appearance. They were to be characterized by typically Slavic/Polish characteristics: blond hair and blue eyes. All of that however did not automatically imply that the verified individual was a Pole. Thus the criterion of behaviour during wartime was introduced. Commissions, to which activists of the pre-war Union of Poles in Germany were to be incorporated, were examining how the verified individuals (and their families) had behaved under German rule. The commissions analysed whether they had done damage to Poland and Poles and whether they had demonstrated, which under the war conditions was very risky, a pro-Polish attitude. The commissions analysed whether they had helped Polish compulsory workers who'd been brought from the occupied Polish lands. As a result of those actions, implemented under the conditions of the post-war disorder during the displacements of Germans and the inflow of Polish settlers, in the area of Opole Silesia until autumn 1946, the process of ethnic verification covered the majority of the qualifying population (according to the criteria adopted at that time). In total approximately 660,000 people were regarded as Poles[27]. It was a very big population. For years, it was the largest group among the inhabitants of the previously German Upper Silesia that had been *united*

[27] Maciej Hejger, *Przekształcenia narodowościowe na ziemiach zachodnich i północnych Polski w latach 1945-1959*, Słupsk 2008, p. 136.

with Poland. This number slightly increased at the last stage of the verification operation. At the same time, the Polish authorities estimated that from among those positively verified as Poles approximately 77,000 people had national German views[28].

From among the Lower Silesian 'indigenous population' (inhabiting the newly created Wrocław Voivodeship) few representatives of this group were verified. Considered *a priori* as Germans – made easier by the fact that they were largely of Evangelical denomination which, in the eyes of Poles, was a clear sign of Germanness – were rapidly displaced by the communist political police. Thus, within the boundaries of Poland, the Evangelical micro-world of Slavic Silesians practically ceased to exist. On the other hand, generally on their native land local Poles of Evangelical creed remained in Cieszyn Silesia (divided in the 1920s between Poland and Czechoslovakia).

Small in number, but politically very important issue was the 'Polonia' (Polish migrants community) in Wrocław, the largest urban centre in Silesia, in its historical capital. It should be emphasised that the Poles living there, generally aware of their Polishness, were migrants (or descendants of migrants) from Upper Silesia and Greater Poland from the turn of the 19th and 20th century: from the times, when the whole of Silesia and Greater Poland were within the Prussia Kingdom (the German Empire). By 1949, approximately 2,800 people from this group were verified[29].

The result of a positive ethnic verification was to give Polish citizenship to Polish autochthons. The respective act was adopted by the temporary Polish parliament (State National Council) in April 1946. A natural, it would seem, process gave rise to another difficult problem. The act of citizenship required the concerned parties to submit a declaration of faithfulness to the Polish state. Many positively verified people did not want to fulfil this formality, for various reasons: honour, which was in particular the case of the members of the pre-war Union of Poles in Germany; some of the positively verified were showing actual, pro-German, attitudes; condition-dependent reasons, when quite a high number of the positively verified feared the revenge of German authorities after the possible restoration of the pre-war boundaries. Additionally, the Polish authorities, implementing Marxist aims alongside national goals, got caught in a trap of performing almost *by force*, as they were under time pressure, the act of giving Polish citizenship to the previous

[28] Grzegorz Strauchold, *Polska ludność rodzima ziem zachodnich i północnych. Opinie nie tylko publiczne, lata 1944-1948*, Olsztyn 1995.

[29] Grzegorz Strauchold, *Powojenne dzieje Polonii Wrocławskiej – czy udana próba <przywrócenia> ojczyźnie?*, 'Rocznik Wrocławski', no. 2/1995, p. 142.

German citizens. The pragmatic goal of Poles was the approval of the *recovered* Silesian Poles to the planned parliamentary elections, termed as elections by the legislative Sejm. The Sejm was to complete the post-war interim system and adopt a new constitution of the Republic of Poland. Polish communists that had agreed to these procedures at the Yalta Conference (February 1945) did not intend to give power to the winners of the democratic elections. In their opinion, Silesian workers and peasants with Polish citizenship, theoretically completely having been given back their civil rights and the right to own properties, were to vote in line with the expectations of the communist propaganda.

In June 1946 the electoral game resulted in the 'Peoples' Referendum'. It was a form of postponing parliamentary elections. In fact, it was supported by legal, anti-communist opposition concentrated in the Polish People's Party (PSL). The referendum became a test site allowing the communists to draw conclusions from true result that was unfavourable for them. The result, kept secret from society for the next few dozen years, showed the communists that the positively verified 'autochthons', granted with Polish citizenship (in the place of their previous German citizenship) largely voted against the intent of the authorities. Particularly severe for the communist establishment were 'autochthons'' negative votes for the question of whether they acknowledge the new boundaries of Poland in the west and in the north. Such attitudes were an argument for the representatives of the authorities who did not trust the verified people and had doubts about their authentically Polish ethnic intentions. Critical opinions about 'autochthones' after referendum passed by higher administrative officers to the lowest level administration and those opinions presented in numerous press comments made the situation in Opole Silesia (i.e. until recently the German part of Upper Silesia) complicated. Certainly they affected the local, Silesian population on both sides. On the one hand, they showed the strength of the pro-German sympathies of this group, but also the scale of their resistance to communist indoctrination. On the other hand, they resulted – maybe in an involuntary, but inevitable – in tightening of the policy towards 'autochthons' in local communities. The result was a self-fulfilling prophecy; the cohesion of the local, incumbent communities was once again disturbed. Again there was a group that because of the obvious electoral frauds committed by the officials wished to leave (and in some part left) their native lands. Again, among the local, incumbent communities elements that indicated the temporary nature of the Polish, and clearly fraudulent, authority were strengthened. It resulted in persistent and reinforced moods of at least caution towards the national goals of the Polish state. On the other side of the barricade, a deep distrust of administration was indicated

and strengthened with regard to the Polish consciousness of those 'autochthons' who had been positively verified. It resulted – in particularly at the *bottom*, at a very local level, in a tightened policy towards 'Germans' – i.e. autochthones. This, in turn, made this group isolate themselves in their local environments and feel a sense of continuous harm not only on the part of the Polish settlers but also on behalf of the Polish state. It was a downward spiral with no end in sight. Especially the policy implemented in Upper Silesia policy under the guise of Polish nationalism, particularly in the late 1940s, was an increasingly weaker disguise for the true goals and expectations of the communists.

Contrary to the conciliation statements of the communist authorities, including the leader of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) and, at the same time, the Minister of the Recovered Territories Władysław Gomułka, the political centre decided to firmly shake up the autochthonous environment to show who held power in Poland and what real limits of presenting views were. Held in Warsaw in autumn of 1946, the Congress of Autochthones and work (at least nominally) meeting at the end of that year was to serve this purpose. In the atmosphere of threats and undisguised blackmail the gathered autochthonous activists (including from the Opole region) were requested to vote (implicitly – entire groups of the native population were requested to vote) for the communists and their allies in the approaching parliamentary elections.

We are currently not able (and perhaps we will never be) to reconstruct the electoral sympathies of the Polish autochthones in the course of the elections. After the lesson of the Peoples' Referendum, the communists nearly brought the method of electoral frauds on a national scale to perfection: manipulation supported for months by their terrorist operation, effectively eliminated opportunities of the opposition for electoral success. During that time, the communists, with the active, involved participation of the anti-communist, the patriotic nationalist civil environments (Polish Western Association) were conducting a campaign to combat any signs of Germanness. It was expressed in the sound of the surname, in inscriptions on occasional tapestries in kitchens, in German hits played in Upper Silesian clubs, in singing German songs, and speaking German in public. In fact, eavesdropping was also used to find out whether the language hated by most Poles was not spoken within a given four walls. This method, being *a rebours* reflection of the practices used in the Prussian state towards Poles in the early 20th century, could not, contrary to the expectations of its initiators, result in significant controversies of pro-German, nationally undecided or frankly nationally indifferent Silesians towards Polishness.

This policy, named by official propaganda as 're-Polonisation' was in fact very often a knowingly conducted 'Polonisation'. Even without taking into account the crazy rush in normalising the situation in the 'recovered' territories (lands that were in a truly destroyed and destabilised state), the sources of failure of the efforts undertaken should be attributed to unresolved property issues, including exceptionally painful issues of the agricultural farms lost by the 'autochthones' and the Polish settlers. People who had property rights, confirmed on German land and property deeds were, often several times, thrown out from their own land and transferred to other farms in other areas. It was another factor that deformed the traditional, local communities that had been shaped over a long time.

In 1947, communist Polish Workers Party (PPR) came to full power in Poland. Therefore, it was concluded that the post-war period of state integration and the reconstruction of its fixed structures had been finalised. The communist authorities considered the integration with the rest of the lands incorporated in 1945 at the expense of Germany as a success. This decision had an ideological basis and was also a result of internal fighting in the PPR. Its previous leader and, at the same time, the Minister of the Recovered Territories Władysław Gomułka was dismissed in 1948 and could have no effect on the policy. In the later period, he was subjected to repressions. This political game, linked to the intention of the political centre to start a severe construction of the socialism system modelled on the Soviet one, meant the end of the 're-Polonisation' policy of the Silesians of ethnic Polish origin. This also meant that their national verification process was completed. Thus they remained, in a mass of several-hundred thousand, in their own country, although not necessarily in their own flats and on their own farms. At that time no surveys were conducted which would be able to at least approximately investigate the actual ethnic views of those people.

The most numerous group of inhabitants in the areas of the former German Upper Silesia was not, however, contrary to loud propaganda statements, an object of satisfaction on the part of the communist decision-makers. The *recovered* people were disappointed with the Polish government, definitely reluctant to forcedly implement communism, strongly connected with the Catholic Church, trusting (if they trusted at all) only in their local leaders. In this situation, not so long before they had been verbally and publicly praised for 'keeping Polishness alive' in spite of 'a few centuries of Germanisation', at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s a policy was conducted to destroy their social networks and deprive their local leaders. The latter were generally deprived of any performed functions, and some of them were imprisoned. An attempt was made to create new leaders from among those Silesians who

had accepted, without reservations, the ideological course of the state authorities[30]. The range of activities taken included attempts to gain the support of the local population for communist ideals. The actions taken above did not manage to disintegrate the mass of several-hundred thousand of nationally-verified Silesians more than before in the period 1945-1948 as a result of various plagues affecting the incumbent population. However, the ideological attack in a way froze the still unresolved problems of this population, including the issues of real national sense. A similar phenomenon also occurred in the pre-war part of Upper Silesia. After the 'rehabilitation' particularly national problems were consciously hidden and forgotten by administration.

To sum up, the population of Silesia entered the 1950s in poor mental and physical condition. The effects of the Second World War very strongly disturbed its views of the world, its social structures, its regional and local bonds that were shaped for generations. However, this native Silesian microcosm did not disappear completely. The local population, which remained the majority from among the various groups living in Upper Silesia, survived as a group, although it was getting weaker in subsequent decades due to the waves of emigration to Germany.

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The population of Silesia of various national orientation – largely of Evangelical denomination – also lived in the areas of the post-1740 Habsburg Silesia which also consisted of Cieszyn Silesia. After World War I, as a result of the Polish-Czechoslovakian armed conflict concerning this area, it was approximately divided along the Olza River. Therefore, the area remaining beyond the River, outside the borders of Poland was called by Poles – Zaolzie. The divided Cieszyn Silesia was inhabited by Polish/Silesian, Czech, German and Jewish (in the cities) population. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, this area was the centre of the Polish national movement, and also a centre of separate Silesian nationality supporters. The Silesian/Polish community separated by a border was unified for a short time in 1938. Then, in the face of Czechoslovakia's partitioning, Warsaw forced Prague to give Zaolzie to Poland. Less than a year later, Poland was defeated and occupied

[30] See: Piotr Madajczyk, *Polityka polska wobec ludności Górnego Śląska w latach 1944/1945-1989*, [in:] *Górny Śląsk i Górnoślązacy*, p. 198-216; Bernard Linek, *Polityka aparatu bezpieczeństwa wobec ludności rodzimej na Śląsku Opolskim w latach 1945-1960. Założenia i realizacja*, [in:] *Komunistyczny aparat represji i życie społeczne Opolszczyzny w latach 1945-1989*, ed. Ksawery Jasiak, Opole 2012, p. 157-165; B. Linek, *Weryfikacja narodowościowa i akcja osadnicza*, p. 636-639; Michał Lis, *Losy lokalnych przywódców polskich na Śląsku Opolskim w okresie stalinizacji życia*, [in:] *Ziemie Zachodnie i Północne Polski w okresie stalinowskim*, ed. Czesław Osękowski, Zielona Góra 1999, p. 187-193; Bogdan Cimała, *Stalinizacja Polski i jej skutki na Śląsku Opolskim*, 'Studia Śląskie', 56 (1997), p. 77-100.

by Germany and the Soviet Union. Berlin incorporated the area of Cieszyn Silesia directly into the Reich, and the Germanisation policy conducted on the local population was similar to the activities undertaken at that time in occupied Polish Upper Silesia. To avoid repressions, as well as to emphasise, to at least part of the local Silesian population, their real national attitudes, relevant pro-German statements were signed by a large part of the population. In May 1945 the Polish-Czechoslovakian border was restored to the Olza River. Poland was again deprived of a few tens of thousands of the densely inhabited Silesian population of Polish origin. This division has been continued up to today. However, in the last decades it did not cause frictions between both states. The situation was different directly after the war, when Prague and Warsaw were on the brink of war[31]. At the same time, both central decision-making centres were conducting a clear policy concerning the local Silesian population in Cieszyn Silesia. On both sides of the border, people regarded as Germans had to leave their native land and go to the occupation zones in Germany. On the Polish side, the campaigns concerning the remaining Silesian population were similar to the campaigns towards the Silesian population of Polish origin that inhabited the pre-war Polish Silesia Province[32]. On the Czechoslovakian side, the local population of Polish origin was initially subjected to persecution – imprisonment and deprivation by the Polish institutions of their property, etc. This was justified by a formal subordination of the local population to the Nazi's Germanisation policy. These activities of the Czechoslovakian authorities striking at the cohesion of the local communities caused part of the Polish activists to migrate to the Polish state. In 1950, the census showed that Zaolzie was inhabited by 59,500 Poles. At that time, they accounted for 18.6% of the total local population.

The Polish national minority lives in Zaolzie up to today. Its number has been gradually decreasing, both as a result of the arrival of the indigenous Czechs to these areas and in the process of natural assimilation to the Czech nation. The number of Poles in this territory (in the Moravian-Silesian Region in the Czech Republic) is currently estimated at 28,430 (data from 2011)[33]. The fact that this area features a metallurgical and mining centre is also of great importance. In the intensely urbanised and industrialised area, mobility of the arriving and exiting population made the established local structures gradually disappear[34].

[31] K. Nowak, *op. cit.*, p. 287-288.

[32] See: Krzysztof Nowak, Alicja Pylypenko-Czepczor, *Problemy narodowościowe na Śląsku Cieszyńskim*, [in:] *Województwo śląskie 1945-1950*, p. 655-680.

[33] http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaolzie#Wsp.C3.B3.C5.82czesno.C5.9B.C4.87 [last access 13. 04.2015].

[34] See: K. Nowak, *op. cit.*, p. 287-292; Joachim Rogall, *Wojna, wypędzenie i nowy początek. Rozwój Śląska i los jego mieszkańców w latach 1939-1995*, [in:] Joachim Bahlcke et al., *op. cit.*, p. 259-260.

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At the same time that the Polish authorities conducted the operation to displace the Germans, the verification and 're-Polonisation' of the indigenous population, they were organising mass resettlements of millions of Polish settlers to the western and northern territories. Several intentions underlay this many-year-long operation. The communists intended to gain, through the acquisition of eastern German lands, the support of at least part of the Polish society which had just acknowledged a loss of more than a half of the pre-war territory, all for the benefit of Moscow. The post-German territories were loot, despite the war damages, mass demolitions and predatory exploitation by the Soviet occupying authorities. They were intensely industrialised and urbanised. Until the disasters of 1945, a culture of advanced agriculture had been used on them. The areas deprived of the prior German inhabitants were to become a source of land for the landless peasants and small-scale farmers from the hinterland. 'The Recovered Territories' were to host, again in place of the German, Polish population that had been driven out from the Eastern boundaries of pre-war Poland, when these lands were taken by Soviet Russia. Among other communists' aims the most important was the need to put as many Poles as possible in new territories. All that in order to maximise the launch of the industry, speed up recovery and make the agricultural economy effective, thereby eliminating the threat of hunger.

The Polish settlers were not a uniform group. Diverse groups from different regions of Poland were flowing to 'the recovered' Silesia, including from abroad. People coming from the old areas of the German and Polish borderland had the shortest distance to cover. Some of them were coming to find a new place to live, some (the looters) to get rich quick, take what could be taken and return to their birthplace. I will add that the looters also came from territories located deep within Poland. The main feature of the incoming population, the old territories (namely within the boundaries of Poland before the war and after the war) was the possibility to return to the old places of residence in the case of failure of finding new life in the areas left by Germans. However, it should be emphasised that very often a physical return did not imply a stable life situation. In the 'old' territories, despite the draconian agricultural reform, there was no land to be divided between landless and small-scale peasants. The inhabitants of the cities that had been destroyed (Warsaw being the most radical example) and the countryside had nowhere to return to, at least initially. People settling on Silesian land were coming in groups and individually, suddenly taken forever from their previous, predominantly small-town and rural environments. After they arrived, with time they created new, incumbent

Polish communities, generally concentrated around the Catholic Church and their parish-priest. In the areas where, soon indirectly after the war (the cooperative and parcelling settlement), collective forms of management were introduced, from 1949 State Agricultural Farms started to serve as a gathering centre.

But even if the settlers rested permanently in Silesia they retained a lively bond with their birthplace, with neighbours and friends. Already a few dozen years after World War II, a characteristic feature were summer trips of the settlers' descendants who had been born in Silesia (and in other *recovered* areas) to 'grandmother and grandpa' living in the central and eastern part of Poland. However, the Polish population coming to the new territories was not facing a demographic void. The local German population of Silesia kept on living there for several years (from the beginning of 1946 in decreasing numbers). This population was meant for displacement, therefore it did not provoke mass, or drastic reactions from the migrant Poles (since, apart from robberies and rapes, crimes were also taking place). Often the families of settlers were living together temporarily, both in cities and villages, with Germans in their own houses. The old community was being systematically eliminated by deportations to the west, a new one was being created. With more and more children being born, and people starting to get married, local networks of dependencies were gradually created, within a dozen years, the Polish community of a settlement origin was created.

However, in the turbulent 1940s, this process was not peaceful. After all, Silesia, in particular its Upper part was inhabited by approximately one million multitude of Silesians of Slavic/Polish ethnic origin. I have briefly presented its fate above. I would like to point out that in general for all arriving Poles almost every local was either an open German (and thus intended for displacement), or a disguised German. And thus a German who was to remain there, strengthening the German element and depriving the settlers of the possibility of taking over their apartment or farm. Considering such situations to be prejudicial, the settlers were putting the blame on the Polish state authorities, who made it possible to displace absolutely all local 'Germans'. Relations between the immigrant group and the remaining group, the local group excluded from displacement (autochthones) were not good in the first years after the war. Both communities were closed in their environments and not living together, but side by side. For years mutually true or invented accusations were a feature of everyday life. The national integration under a uniform Polish community was not progressing.

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Another wave of the Polish settlement arriving in Silesia covered people from the Eastern Borderlands (Kresy) lost for the benefit of the 'allied' Soviet Union and from the hinterland of this huge state. After an allied agreement with Nazi Germany in 1939, Stalin directly incorporated approximately 52% of the Polish state to Soviet Russia. Moscow recognised this fact as a permanent and legal delimitation of the eastern border than the actual demarcation line between the Soviet Union and Germans. According to international law, the Polish authorities abroad considered the pre-war borders as still accurate – *de iure* (though not *de facto*). The issues of the final, legal marking out of the border of the Polish state with its eastern neighbour were settled in August 1945 by way of an agreement between the Soviet authorities and the Polish Temporary Government of National Unity, created as a result of an allied agreement made at the Yalta conference in the winter of 1945. Then, the border was marked out, which, until now, has undergone only cosmetic changes.

For the general public in Poland, and, above all, for Poles living in the areas occupied by the Soviet authorities between the years 1939-1941 and 1944-1945 (between the years 1941-1944 these lands were occupied by Germany at war with USSR), the Eastern Borderlands (with the main cities in Lviv and Vilnius) were a continuous and integral part of the Polish state. The war history of those territories was burdened by the many tragic events that struck the local Polish communities. During the first Soviet occupation, a few hundred thousand Poles were deported to Siberia and to Soviet Kazakhstan. At the same time, in the ethnically diversified-Polish and Ukrainian – territories of Volhynia and eastern Galicia homicide of Poles took place, conducted by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and part of the local rural Ukrainian population. The removal of the German army from the Eastern Frontier and the arrival of the Red Army resulted in the Polish independence guerrilla forces' – manifesting themselves as a legal, Polish field administration – destruction by Soviet military units, and in subsequent deportations of a few tens of thousands of Poles to the USSR. Additionally, Poles found out that the lands where they were living were now an integral part of Soviet Russia. Under the agreements concluded at the end of 1944 between the Soviet authorities and Moscow's puppet Polish government, Poles from the Eastern Borderlands could theoretically opt: to stay within the boundaries of the USSR as Soviet citizens or migrate to the west, to lands that were to be incorporated into Poland at the expense of defeated Germany. In order to achieve the expected propaganda effect of this often forcible resettlement, the whole operation was designated as 'repatriation'. This term was to suggest that

Poles from the east (who were also coming back from deportation to Siberia and Kazakhstan) were 'retuning' to their homeland. Abandoning native lands and settling on someone else's land were to be an act of historical justice, restoring in the west the Polish status of possession from almost one thousand years before.

Like settlers from the central Polish lands, 'repatriates' did not encounter a demographic void in Silesia. However, contrary to the people from the hinterland, they had nowhere to return and even did not want – even if they had such possibility- to again be in the Stalinist hell, on 'inhuman land'. Their relations with the Polish 'autochthons' – seemingly between two Polish ethnic groups – were very difficult. Despite signs of mutual recognition between the communities the tragic fates shared by both showed through in their relationships. The repatriates were perceived very often by Silesians as 'Ukrainians', 'Russians', etc. Their misery and general backwardness in (even before the Soviet and Polish robberies) material equipment were noticed by the Silesians. The newcomers reciprocated with a number of epithets unambiguously indicating the Germanness of would-be local Poles. There is an additional bitterness that was added by the fact that it was not only the Silesians who were nationally indifferent. The migrants from the Eastern Borderlands featured a group (e.g. among part of the element from Polesie, one of the most isolated geographical lands in pre-war Poland) who didn't feel like they belonged there. And how could they be 'local' in a completely foreign land, on which they were permanently located by a twist of fate? Therefore, relations between the true locals and people from beyond the Bug River – i.e. from Eastern Borderlands – in the post--war years were bad. It is difficult to claim that the first decade witnessed integration within the Polish nation.

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As a matter of fact, the purpose of this chapter is to consider the ethnic issues in the newly incorporated Silesia, however, I decided – quite superficially – to look closer at different groups of Polish settlers in the context of their relations with the local Silesian group. It was not perceived by them as being part of the Polish nation. Often newcomers from beyond the Bug River were not perceived by locals as non-Poles. It created a unique confusion when the Silesians were supposed to be, in the eyes of official propaganda, real Poles and often they did not consider themselves as such. After all, they did not always recognise themselves as Germans. On the other hand, the newcomers perceived Silesians *en bloc* as Germans, almost without exception. After all, some Silesians considered themselves to be Germans. The local population considered these large groups of Polish settlers from Easter Borderlands as a non-Polish population. They were often perceived as Ukrainians

for example. This, seemingly uniform national-Polish crucible had to underlay the unresolved – until today – integration process. In the post-war decade this combination created a mutual ethnic foreignness that was continuously present in these Silesian areas where locals and newcomers met.

In a way, on the fringe of these national issues, several smaller Polish groups had arrived in Silesia in the first post-war years. First of all, in Lower Silesia where the displaced German population left large settlement voids. It was a threat of the direct degradation of the civilisation for the areas populated and urbanised for several centuries and industrialised within the 19th century.

In the years 1946/1947, in the Bolesławiec district and in the town of Bolesławiec itself, a group of more than 15,000 people of re-emigrants settled from what was then Yugoslavian Bosnia[35]. These were Polish settlers who had descended from the Austrian Galicia (and their descendants) who, at the invitation of the Austrian government, settled there at the beginning of the 20th century when this part of the Balkans belonged to the Habsburg Monarchy. After the dramatic experiences of World War II, the Poles who were living in an increasingly hostile environment decided to leave (return) to within the new borders of Poland. *En bloc,* there can be no doubt about the Polish national sense of those people. However, throughout the decades of living in Bosnia they acquired a number of local customs (clothes, cuisine, plum brandy – strong, local alcohol with a deep flavour), adapted many local words into their language. The settlers were also accompanied by spouses who came from the local, catholic Croatian population. The group adapted well to the local conditions. But many of them, even of those who were born after the war in Lower Silesia did not lose touch with Bosnia and even now stay in touch today. Similarly, there were some exotic newcomers who came from the Romanian region Bucovina. Identical processes took place in this small group (of approximately 4,000 people) just as it had with the Bosnian Poles. Also at this point there were no doubts as to the Polish self-definition of settlers.

A small group came from occupied Germany (approximately 10,000 people). It came as a surprise to the Polish authorities, who counted on the professional knowledge of those people who had been living in industrialised Saxony but, first, in the industrial heart of Germany – the Ruhr district. They were very necessary to maintaining the operation of the industrial district in the neighbourhood of Wałbrzych and Nowa Ruda. As I have mentioned before, due to the lack of qualified staff in this area

[35] Adam Baniecki, *Polskie osadnictwo z Jugosławii w powiecie bolesławieckim 1946-1947*, [in:] *Znowuż <z kuferkiem i chlebakiem…> Tom poświęcony Wielkiemu Humaniście Julianowi Janczakowi*, eds Beata Konopska, Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, Grzegorz Strauchold, Wrocław 2014, p. 351-394.

a large group of Germans were kept, since they were necessary as qualified workers, miners, etc. This gap in staff was filled to some degree by immigrants from France and Belgium. On a scale of the whole state, the number of these immigrants is calculated at approximately 50,000 people. Coming from the local industrial-mining-metallurgical districts, the settlers – immigrants – from Western Europe in general felt Polish. However, it was possible here to notice consequences of staying for many years, in nationally foreign environments, as characteristic elements in both clothes and language[36]. The *Frenchmen*, settled, first of all, in Lower Silesian in mining and metallurgical centres, to some extent isolated themselves from other Polish groups. Similarly, Poles who had come from central Poland and the Eastern Borderlands looked at them with distrust. This mutual perception, and the resulting disintegration of local Polish settlers had multiple causes. For the *Frenchmen* other settlers, of course with a great deal of generalisation, seemed to be a multitude of badly-dressed poor people, with a low level of culture and civilisation. In turn, the settlers from the eastern directions perceived the immigrants from the West, with a great deal of generalisation, as conceited, rich and, above all, supporters of communism. It is a fact that from among those arriving from France and Belgium, officers of the communist political police and prison services were recruited. Such attitudes, although also familiar to other groups of Polish settlers, were additionally stigmatised the *Frenchmen*.

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Some Silesian areas were inhabited not only by people of German or Polish origin. In the south and western part of Upper Silesia, on the German-Czechoslovakian borderland (near Racibórz and Głubczyce) the Moravians resided. Their dialect was very similar to the southwest dialect of Polish Silesians. It can be stated that these two dialects were interlaced at the intersections where they had been neighbours for centuries. Some of them, on both sides of the border, considered themselves a part of the German nation. They also had regional, Moravian awareness, which they did not always consider to be an element of the Czech national and language heritage. These people live in the areas of the present Polish and Czech borderland even today. Presently, on the Polish side as well, they have multiple national and regional self-definitions: local Silesian, Moravian, German, and Polish. Nonetheless, it is a community that has survived the historical turmoil of the 20th century and in general kept the sense of an incumbent local community. In the second half of the 1940s it was necessary to conduct an official verification procedure to recognise these people as Poles (!). However, the documentation of the Ministry

[36] See: Julian Janczak, *Dzieje stosunków etnicznych*, [in:] *Dziedzictwo kulturowe Dolnego Śląska*, ed. Zygmunt Kłodnicki, Wrocław 1996, p. 30-32; E. Kaszuba, *Dolnośląski tygiel*, p. 165-178.

of Recovered Territories has estimated the number of Moravians in this territory at the end of 1945 at approximately 4,000[37].

The area incorporated into Poland in 1945, the Kłodzko Valley, neighbouring with historical Lower Silesia near the town of Kudowa Zdrój, was inhabited by the Czech population until post-war times. This was the 'Czech corner'. Czechs also lived in the districts of Strzelin and Jelenia Góra, near the official border between Czechoslovakia and Poland. In those areas their number was estimated at about 7,000 people. The presence of this group was, apart from historical arguments, the basis of Czechoslovakian territorial claims involving Poland in 1945. Therefore, just as Prague wanted them to stay where they were, Warsaw wanted to remove this population as soon as possible. Several years after the war almost no trace was left of this group. These people either left for the occupation zones of Germany as the German national element, or to Czechoslovakia. A small community, functioning continuously since the Middle Ages within the area comprising the historical Bohemian Crown, had not survived on its land in so volatile and dramatic circumstances as in the first half of the 20th century.

The present spatial area of Lower Silesia has been determined in 1945 following the course of the Polish-German and Polish-Czech (former Polish-Czechoslovakian) border. For this reason, like Kłodzko Valley it is considered to be part of Lower Silesia, this land also comprises the eastern fragment of Lusatia which, by a twist of fate in Potsdam, was found in 1945 within the borders of the Polish state. A small area between the border of the Nysa Łużycka (Zachodnia) River and its mouth in the Odra River, and the Bóbr River (itself a historical western border of Lower Silesia) was inhabited after the end of the war by a small group of Slavic Sorbs. It is difficult to determine, even approximately, their number, and for the Polish authorities it was considered a German population. Furthermore, and for this reason, this group has not survived on its own land, in the Silesian crucible. In a short time, the prevailing majority left for the land beyond the Odra River as an element associated with the German nation in terms of culture, language and to some extent, consciousness.

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The group of Polish settlers who arrived in the new territories in the west, free of the vast majority of their past inhabitants, in the first years after the war was not that large to fully populate them. In these lands a settlement void was created, to be necessarily filled for the fruitful exploitation of its lands. Consequently, the state

[37] M. Hejger, *Przekształcenia narodowościowe*, p. 297-298.

authorities made a number of decisions. They enriched, voluntarily or compulsorily, the ethnic composition of the 'Recovered Territories'.

One of these group were Polish Jews. From among the pre-war millions, few survived the war and the Holocaust. They were estimated at about 300,000 people, less than 10% of the pre-war population. A few dozen thousands of them survived the German occupation in the Polish territories. Several hundred thousand found shelter under the Soviet occupation, and then – to save their lives – left for the hinterlands of Soviet Russia. Often it was not a voluntary process. They were subject to the same treatment as Poles. They were deported to Siberia and to other remote regions of the Soviet Union. But they survived.

But the Silesian community of German Jews did not survive the war. Those who in the first years of the war did not emigrate from Germany were killed by the Nazis. During 'the crystal night' of 1938, a large part of their tangible belongings was destroyed[38].

The Jews appeared in Silesia that had been incorporated into Poland as early as 1945. This large group appeared in Upper Silesia. What was then the Katowice Voivodeship in mid-1946 was inhabited by more than 25,600 Jews. They settled mainly in Katowice, Bytom, and Gliwice[39]. However, a far greater number of the survivors, usually who had come from the USSR, settled in Lower Silesia. This population is estimated at 80,000 to 100,000 people[40].

The place where the majority of them settled was related to a thesis that had been adopted and implemented by the communist authorities' thesis concerning the 'productivisation' of the Jews. It was to create conditions where all of them would deal with earning money in state-controlled industrial plants. Some Jews from the Łódź and Białystok textile industrial districts, were sent to Lower Silesian textile districts: Dzierżoniów (at some point, 36.8% of the inhabitants) and Bielawa because of their professional experience[41]. Numerous clusters established there were sometimes called 'the republic with a star'. This name involved two issues.

[38] In an entry being presently in print for a lexicon, Barbara Kalinowska-Wójcik wrote: 'After the war, Upper Silesian Jews who survived the extermination became co-founders of <Verband ehemaliger Breslauer und Oberschlesier in Israel> (*Association of Former Wrocław Citizens and Upper Silesians in Israel*), and they published in 1996 *yizkor book*, namely a memory book, entitled *Katowice: the Rise and Decline of the Jewish Comunity*, containing their memories from their stay in Upper Silesia', see: eadem, *Żydzi: Od edyktu emancypacyjnego do zagłady*, [in:] *Leksykon mitów, symboli i bohaterów Górnego Śląska* [in print].

[39] *Ibidem*.

[40] See on Jewish settlements in Lower Silesia E. Kaszuba, *Dolnośląski tygiel*, p. 172; Bożena Szaynok, *Ludność żydowska na Dolnym Śląsku 1945-1950*, Wrocław 2000; Szyja Bronsztejn, *Z dziejów ludności żydowskiej na Dolnym Śląsku po II wojnie światowej*, Wrocław 1993.

[41] Bożena Szaynok, *Żydzi w Dzierżoniowie (1945-1950)*, [in:] *Dzierżoniów – wiek miniony*, eds Sebastian Ligarski, Tomasz Przerwa, Wrocław 2007, p. 25-33.

Both were and are also now a type of myth about remarkably long life. The first one is the alleged pursuit by the local, Lower Silesian Jewish society to found a settlement area with undefined autonomy. The second involves, not always true, the stereotype that Polish Jews clearly supported communism. The fact remains that the survivors were trying to rebuild a glimpse of their former life in the completely foreign post-German lands, in an environment of often malevolent and even hostile Poles. Jews had their own cultural institutions, co-operatives, and flourishing sports clubs[42]. Besides the textile district, this large number settled in Wrocław, Wałbrzych and Legnica. It could not be a completely successful attempt, first of all, for psychological reasons. Jews associated their stay in Poland, even within its completely new borders, with residing in the cemetery of their tragically deceased nation. The turning point in the history of Polish, including for Silesian Jews, was the Kielce pogrom of June 1946. This horrible event, not quite explained even today[43], resulted in a fierce desire to emigrate from Poland. An additional impulse was the establishment in 1948 of the State of Israel in the areas of Middle-Eastern Palestine. These three factors (Poland as a cemetery, Poland as a country hostile towards Jews and the establishment of the Jewish state) made the Holocaust survivors gradually leave Poland. As a result, in 1950 in Katowice Voivodeship (Upper Silesia) only 3,800 remained, and in Wrocław Voivodeship (Lower Silesia) at the end of 1949 only few more than 43,000 Jews remained[44].

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Ukrainians came to Silesia together with the so-called repatriates from the Eastern Borderlands. They mostly concealed their nationality. They aimed at escaping from Soviet Ukraine where the Ukrainian national movement was being persecuted and where, for several years, a harsh battle for independence had been waged with the Soviet troops. The Ukrainians who came to the western and northern lands were also, similarly in hiding, the members of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army – guerrilla fighting with the Polish troops in the south and eastern areas of post-war Poland. Both groups were relatively small and it is not possible to specify their numbers.

A far greater, compulsory, migration of the Ukrainian population to 'the recovered lands', including Silesia, began in 1947. It was related to an internal conflict

[42] Tamara Włodarczyk, *Sport żydowski na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945-1959*, [in:] *Z dziejów sportu na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych po II wojnie światowej*, eds Jarosław Maliniak, Piotr Sroka, Grzegorz Strauchold, Wrocław 2014, p. 97-117.

[43] An excellent, pioneering work on this subject was published by Bożena Szaynok. See: eadem, *Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946*, Wrocław 1992.

[44] Bożena Szaynok, *Ludność żydowska na Dolnym Śląsku 1945-1950*, Wrocław 2000, p. 194.

including the Polish inhabitants of the aforementioned south and eastern areas and the Polish army with the Ukrainians living there. New migrants consisted of different regional groups. The largest of them were Lemkos. Even today, in the academic field, both in Poland and Ukraine, there remains endless discussion on whether Lemkos are a regional Ukrainian group or a separate nation. Also the group concerned is divided on that matter.

At the turn of 1944/1945, in Poland, within its new boundaries, revised very seriously to the disadvantage of Warsaw in the east, the local Ukrainian population were forcibly displaced. As a result of this strictly conducted operation, nearly half a million Ukrainians were displaced to the Soviet Ukraine. According to estimations, approximately 150,000-200,000 Ukrainians remained in Poland. Part of this population took part in the independence fight of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army against the Polish troops. In view of the persistence of the conspiracy and guerrillas, the state authorities made a decision concerning the forcible displacement and dispersion of the remaining Ukrainian population across the western and northern lands. The operation 'Wisła' started in spring 1947. Its pretext – after all untrue – was to be the death of the Polish Deputy Minister of National Defence General Karol Świerczewski in an Ukrainian ambush. It was assumed that the Ukrainian population would not be settled in large groups in new places of residence. The objective of the campaign was to maximise national, social, and also the religious disintegration of the deported. Approximately 150,000 people were displaced. According to highly imprecise estimates, 13,000-21,000 were brought to Lower Silesia[45]. The settlement method consisted in dividing the deported into small groups and settling them away from each other in rural areas populated earlier by the Polish settlers. This very method caused the isolation of Ukrainians from their regional (rural, neighbour, and even family) communities. Living around Poles were definitely hostile towards Ukrainians. They treated them equally with Germans as a the most hostile nation towards Poland, charged *en bloc* for the genocide committed by Ukrainians against Poles in Volhynia and in Eastern Galicia during the war. Often there were not enough houses for the newcomers, and even if there were some, they were already demolished. In the first period the deported did not have school classes in their national language or pastoral services – Orthodox and Greek Catholic. The settlers were under the continuous intensified surveillance of the communist political police, by a number of secret collaborators from among their elites. The above factors caused, particularly in the first period, an almost total disintegration of the Ukrainian community. They did not undergo Polonisation

[45] E. Kaszuba, *Dolnośląski tygiel*, p. 170.

– as expected by the state authorities, but were closed off in small groups awaiting better times[46].

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Another group that, unwillingly, was permanently placed in Silesia were the Roma people. During War World II, the Roma people (called 'Cyganie – Gypsies' in Poland as late as the last decades of the 20th century) had been sentenced to extermination by the German Nazis. As a result, approximately 20,000 Polish Gypsies lost their lives. After the end of the war, the survivors tried to continue their previous, nomadic lifestyle. Gypsy caravans re-appeared on the roads in Poland, and the surviving Roma people, staying in groups isolated from the external world cultivated their own customs, languages (dialects) and way of life. The presence of a closed group, resistant to external infiltration, could not be reconciled with the ideology of the new, communist authorities. The ideology aimed at comprehensive control over every social group, every individual. It also required the inhabitants of the state to be totally submissive and support Marxism.

The settled population did not have clear opinions of the Roma people. On the one hand, their utility (specialisation by group: breeding horses, making frying pans, liming boilers useful in households and industry) and their colourful, interesting folklore were noticed. On the other hand, some of the inhabitants showed attitudes unfavourable towards Roma people, who were treated as troublesome neighbours. They were accused of alleged mass thefts and frauds. According to estimations from the mid-20th century, Roma people in Poland numbered approximately 30,000. Of these 25% were living a settled lifestyle and 75% a nomadic lifestyle. At the beginning of the 1950s, the state authorities prevented the Roma people from living a nomadic lifestyle and forced them to settle in cities, also in Upper and Lower Silesia. Still, the authorities were struggling with the issue of wandering Gypsy caravans until the first half of the 1960s.

A ban on the nomadic lifestyle undoubtedly destroyed previous Gypsy lifestyle. They were administratively driven out of their pure world of wandering, that

[46] These subjects are covered by extensive literature. See among others: Jarosław Syrnyk, *<Po linii> rewizjonizmu, nacjonalizmu, syjonizmu… Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec ludności niepolskiej na Dolnym Śląsku (1945-1989)*, Wrocław 2013; Roman Drozd, *Ukraińcy w Polsce wobec swojej przeszłości (1947-2005)*, Słupsk-Warszawa 2013; Stefan Dudra, *Cerkiew w diasporze. Z dziejów prawosławnej diecezji wrocławsko-szczecińskiej*, Poznań 2009; Jarosław Syrnyk, *Ludność ukraińska na Dolnym Śląsku (1945-1989)*, Wrocław 2007; Piotr Gerent, *Prawosławie na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945-1989*, Toruń 2007; Roman Drozd, *Postępowanie władz komunistycznych wobec Ukraińców w latach 1944-1956*, [in:] *Władze komunistyczne wobec Ziem Odzyskanych po II wojnie światowej*, ed. Stanisław Łach, Słupsk 1997, p. 229-239; Grzegorz Strauchold, *U źródeł prawosławia w Polsce współczesnej*, [in:] *Prawosławni – skąd? Tutejsi! Katalog wystawy*, Wrocław 2007, p. 12-33.

they had known from birth. Forcing them into a settled life largely destroyed the colourful folklore of these people and many traditional behaviours. The stay of this extraordinary group in Silesian cities (a big group was placed in Wrocław, in Lower Silesian, and the first post-war organisation of this group – Association of Settled Gypsies – was created in Wałbrzych, Poland in 1952) was undoubtedly an enrichment. The Roma people under these new conditions tried to maintain communication between members of the former Gypsy caravans. In subsequent decades, despite the Catholic faith they commonly practiced, they were isolated from Polish environments. An invariably and extremely difficult problem was educating Roma children in primary schools. For dozens of years, many Poles considered them as unwanted neighbours. Mutual unfavourable stereotypes have persisted to a certain extent among both these national groups up to the present time[47].

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The national crucible of Silesia, also under Polish rule from 1945, featured, by a twist of fate, the Greek and Slavic Macedonians from Greece. During World War II, in occupied Greece an ideological polarisation took place. Apart from the primary objective of recovering their independence the conspiracy leaders set different ideological goals. At the end of the war, in the face of the German occupation armies' withdrawal, in Greece a civil war broke out between the supporters of communism and the supporters of the King in exile. In 1949, the communists lost, the effect of which was the emigration of some combatants and their families to countries who were part of the USSR. Including around 14,500 people to Poland. They were directed mainly to Lower Silesia, and predominantly settled in cities. Large groups settled in Zgorzelec[48] and in Wrocław. In the later period, some settlers were sent to other regions of the western and northern lands. Although, at least

[47] See among others: Łukasz Sołtysik, *Romowie w polityce komunistycznych władz Polski (1944/1945-1989)*, [in:] *Internacjonalizm czy…? Działania organów bezpieczeństwa państw komunistycznych wobec mniejszości narodowych (1944-1989)*, eds Joanna Hytrek-Hryciuk, Grzegorz Strauchold, Jarosław Syrnyk, Warszawa-Wrocław 2011, p. 249-269; M. Hejger, *Przekształcenia narodowościowe*, p. 312-313.

[48] As Maciej Hejger wrote: 'The assailants were creating here [that is in Zgorzelec – G.S.] a unique community, closed for aliens, giving the city quite specific character: they led their social life at the door of their houses, they wore dark clothes, hanging their drying bed linen in shades of gray on their balconies and windows. This community was keeping its military group character, strictly subordinated to the decisions of the Greek [communist] party authorities and was isolated from the Polish inhabitants. [Initially] The refugees were not working, they were supported by the state, undergoing treatment, convalescence and acclimation', M. Hejger, *Przekształcenia narodowościowe*, p. 376-377. See also on this subject: Elżbieta Opiłowska, *Uchodźcy polityczni z Grecji w Zgorzelcu*, [in:] *Błogosławiony kraj? Szkice o historii i pamięci Dolnego Śląska*, eds Dagmara Margieli-Korczewska, Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, Wrocław 2011, p. 227-239; *Vademecum historii Górnych Łużyc*, [collective work, no scientific ed.], [Lubań 2010], p. 246.

formally, they were communists, they were carefully watched by the communist political police. They rapidly learned Polish and generally lived with in their new Polish environment without any issues. However, it should be emphasised that many families of immigrants cultivated their traditional lifestyle in which the man made decisions about family life, and women, particularly young women, were subject to more intense control. It was to prevent their possible depravation (according to traditional Greek criteria) and acculturation among Poles. These types of educational methods were present in among the refugees from the Balkans as late as at the end of 1970s. The newcomers from Greece were expecting to return to their homeland: however, is was not possible for many years[49].

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The first post-war years completely shook up Silesian communities. It covered both traditional communities, those who had *always* lived here, and those communities which had come here as a result of the war, often against their will. Silesian Germans were mostly forced to leave their homeland. Those groups that remained were only a shadow of their former communities. Similarly, history was brutal for the locals of Slavic/Polish origin. Many of them had already left Silesia at that time, some voluntarily, some who had been recognised as German by the Polish authorities. The remaining group of more than one million people had to grapple with rehabilitation campaign in the area of the pre-war Polish Silesia, eliminating Germans, and in the area of the former German Upper Silesia with the its ethnic verification-combined with a 're-Polonisation' campaign aimed at selecting an ethnically Polish element suitable for total Polonisation. All the above groups of Upper Silesians were to different extents connected with German culture and civilisation. *Polish order* was perceived as a disturbance of their previous, traditional lifestyle. Undoubtedly, a demographic revolution on this territory was not favourable for the preservation of local communities in their previous form (before 1945). Even among those communities that managed to stay in their homeland.

The Polish groups coming to the Silesian lands came alone from various directions and had different lifestyles, experience, and even political views were replaced in Lower Silesia by the almost completely displaced Germans. In Upper Silesia they were confronted with the local German, Polish, regional element: often without precisely defined national views. The Polish settlers were the casualties of a disastrous war. These groups were broken down at a familial, material, and

[49] For different aspects of the stay of the refugees from Greece, see also: Anna Kurpiel, *Uchodźcy z greckiej wojny domowej na Dolnym Śląsku – zarys problematyki*, [in:] *Ziemie Zachodnie*, p. 157-169.

mental level. The process of creating a new, Polish social fabric at the end of the 1940s was just starting.

Ukrainians (and Lemkos), Gypsies (Roma people), Greeks and Macedonians who arrived in Silesia against their will, for different reasons, were closed up in their small groups where they were trying to very seriously re-cultivate their torn social bonds.

The time of deepened integration, to different extents and not accepted by all, was still to come, along with the geopolitical and ideological changes in Poland.

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After the death of Stalin, the dictator of Soviet communist Russia in 1953, changes were gradually introduced in the policy of the communist authorities in Poland. Initially they didn't aim at a democratisation of the highly repressive political system. It was planned to improve the operation of the party-state authorities and eliminate particularly gross transgressions. However, the increasing social activity could not have been suppressed. Especially that gradually within the communist party (PZPR), internal divisions were taking place between the supporters of a certain liberalisation of state functions of the state and the supporters of maintaining the political system without any great changes. The liberalisation tendencies were clearly strengthened after the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in early 1956. The culminating point of liberalisation changes in Poland took place in October 1956. This month the persecuted in 1950s by Stalinists leader of the Polish communist party from the second half of the 1940s and the head of the Ministry of Recovered Territories during that time, Władysław Gomułka returned to power. In autumn 1956, he became the 1st secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Worker's Party (PZPR).

Among the many difficulties he had to face, including most importantly the pacification of stormy social attitudes and earning the trust of the executives of the Soviet Union, the issue of the policy conducted in the western and northern lands required urgent handling. The situation there was not good in Silesia as well[50]. The local industrial centre concentrated around Wałbrzych and Nowa Ruda, as well as near Bolesławiec, generally undamaged during the war, was operating well. However, the decapitalisation of assets: factories, machineries and housing was progressing. This was also an area extraordinarily difficult to live in because of the environmental pollution. However, at that time that case had not been dealt with. Lower Silesia was largely destroyed by the persistent fighting during the end

[50] Grzegorz Strauchold, *Powrót na <zaginiony> zachód. Polityka Władysława Gomułki wobec Ziem Zachodnich i Północnych w latach 1956-1957*, [in:] *Klio viae*, p. 449-463.

of the II World War and ravaged by later Soviet and Polish requisitions. Cities such as Wrocław or Głogów were almost completely ruined. In the post-war decade no significant reconstruction of housing had been undertaken and emphasis was put on getting the local industry started and the removal of mines (in the entire 'Recovered Territories') from arable land. Thus, towns did not have enough apartments for the Poles who were arriving, the Lower Silesian countryside, during the fighting and soon after them, was almost completely deprived of livestock. In the border areas (with Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia), as a result of strict regulations, a demographic slump was recorded. A number of towns in the neighbourhood of the borders ten years after the war had fewer Polish than German inhabitants than before the war. This poor financial condition coexisted with a bad social condition. The local population of Silesia: the remainders of the ethnic Germans and the native population of Polish origin mixed with each other, in general, did not feel good in their homeland. Mass deportations from the first six years after the war disturbed the functional bases of these local communities. Verification, rehabilitation and re-Polonisation did not yield the results expected by political decision-makers. Not all people who, according to the criteria followed by the Polish administration, could be considered Germans were displaced, and the groups left were not only groups that fulfilled the top-down defined criteria of Polishness. Furthermore, the remaining Silesians were not attracted to Polishness (national, state, and cultural customs). In the mid-1950s, they more and more boldly manifested their dissatisfaction with prevailing relations and often pro-German sympathies. These feelings were related not only to strictly national issues. The common among Silesians opinion emphasised that there was a higher standard of living beyond the Elbe River, (in the Republic of Federal Germany 'the German economic miracle' was being established at that time), in the country that had lost the war, than in Poland, the country that had won the war. The attitudes of the native population were also affected by the strong (in the past years) efforts of the communist to indoctrinate the local population towards the full acceptance of communism. This kind of behaviour was detrimental to the social structures and bonds of the local population that had been shaped for at least a few decades. The communists did not achieve their goal, though their efforts were to a measurable extent an element that weakened social cohesion. Indoctrination treatments were seen by the locals as a threat to their traditional social order. It was giving rise to defensive reactions, and at the same time was confirming a popular thesis that the Polish state in this form was not a state expected by many Silesians. Also – in general – Polish settlers were still treated by the locals very cautiously.

In the post-war decade, social integration did not take place in Upper Silesia, the area divided up between various local and migrant groups. The Polish, post-war migrants, who, on the whole, accepted the existence of the Polish state but did not accept it as an entity with a specific ideological face. Opinions such as these were not odd to any Polish settlement group. Peasants from the old land, closely connected to their birthplaces did not accept forced agricultural collectivisation. The repatriates from the USSR in general were subordinate to Moscow and refused to accept the communist Polish state in its ideological form. Those people were even more furious, because they continued to feel like strangers in a strange land, irretrievably deprived of their birthplaces. All the Polish groups were against the incumbent population. They did not trust it, did not believe, which was often justified, in its formally Polish character. The Polish settlers in general were afraid of ongoing changes to the boundaries and return of the German state to these areas. The number of factors above resulted in, also in the mid-1950s, in failure to form a uniform social fabric which would be comprised of all the groups – incumbent groups and settlers. However, a groups of incomers were creating gradually closer, even family bonds although this was to a much lower extent between local and immigrant populations.

In the area of Upper Silesia the condition of Polish settlement groups was similar. However, Poles who had come to this part of Silesia were not living in the vicinity of the local population. Almost all Lower Silesian Germans had been deported to occupied Germany. The largest cluster of the Polish autochthones was in Wrocław. Its small number was not visibly reflected in the image of the city. In some municipal centres and villages the presence of the almost commonly hated Ukrainians/Lemkos, who were forced to move there as part of the 'Wisła' operation, was more visible and acknowledged by Poles.

The above outlined problems were universal for the whole territories incorporated into Poland in 1945. Gomułka, well-oriented in the issues of those territories in the first post-war years, declared and initially conducted the reorganisation of the Polish policy there. Government and parliamentary commissions were appointed: they were to handle urgent local problems. With the prior approval of the state authorities, as a result of the efforts of veterans of the so-called 'western thought' (i.e. group of scientist and politicians focused on reflection upon status of 'Recovered Territories' in Polish tradition and state), concentrated in the 1940s in the Polish Western Union, in 1957 the Association for the Development of the Western Territories (TRZZ) was appointed. Its goal, as a social organisation with apparent autonomy towards the political centre of the country, supported any

official initiatives whose aim was to support and put into practice the Polish state's objectives in the new territories[51]. Therefore, it aimed at obtaining an optimum, comprehensive integration of these territories and population with the rest of the Polish state. The TRZZ was also to initiate moves that, with social efforts, were to bring these state goals closer.

An element of this new policy of the state was the revision of its attitude towards national minorities. The policy concerning the German population of Silesia was very twisted. Starting in the early 1950s the policy, which was also a derivative of the communist German Democratic Republic, towards ethnic Germans (estimated in 1950 at 200,000 people[52]), who had managed to stay in their birthplace, was liberalised. Additionally – which is noteworthy – officially the existence of Germans in the areas of Upper Silesia was not noticed. It was officially assumed that from among the former inhabitants only the Polish autochthones stayed there. A visible element of this interpretation was the ban that persisted up until the last decades of the 20th century, on teaching German in local schools. The situation was different in Lower Silesia. There a group of a few dozen thousand locals Germans has survived: they were useful in the industrial district of Wałbrzych and Nowa Ruda. They had – in connection with the change in policy towards Germans from the beginning of the 1950s – their schools, journals, and cultural activities were permitted (which, in turn, was due to relations with the communist German Democratic Republic). This unique micro-world was not however in a geopolitical vacuum. The Lower Silesian Germans were undergoing a strong communist indoctrination in strict connection with the communists from the GDR. This group, starting from the 1950s, was systematically decreasing through one-way trips under a 'family reunion campaign'. These migrations which were particularly destructive to the numbers of Lower Silesian Germans were to the GDR and the FRG in 1956. At that time, approximately 23,500 people left Lower Silesia[53].

At the beginning of the 1960s, the importance of the actual German minority as the dense, local population was marginalised. In 1957 in Wrocław Voivodeship, approximately 16,000 Germans remained, including at that time 7,000 who had applied for leaving Poland and reunite with their families in GDR or FRG. Nonetheless as a result of the policy initiated in 1955-1956, also in Wrocław, the remnants of the former German enclave had the possibility to conduct legal cultural

[51] G. Strauchold, *Myśl zachodnia*, p. 424-433.
[52] Zbigniew Kurcz, *Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce na tle innych mniejszości*, Poznań 2001, p. 6.
[53] See: Bernadetta Nitschke, *Położenie ludności niemieckiej na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1950-1959*, [in:] *Ziemie Zachodnie i Północne Polski w okresie stalinowskim*, p. 195-203; Beata Ociepka, *Niemcy na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945-1970*, Wrocław 1992, p. 26-47.

and social activities. In 1957, the German Socio-Cultural Association, based in Wałbrzych, was registered.

It is noteworthy that these people were considered to be Germans, and, at the same time, they were not considered to be a legal German minority until the beginning of the democratic changes in Poland in 1989. Also the group of Polish autochthones in Wrocław was systematically decreasing. Despite difficulties in getting passports and permission to migrate to Germany, these people continued to apply for the possibility to change their citizenship and country. Even those who before World War II were consistently involved in the Polish minority national movement. As a result of these processes, the area of Lower Silesia was almost deprived of communities with social bonds shaped in much earlier periods.

The situation in the areas of Upper Silesia was much more *lively*. The sympathies and antipathies of different groups of the incumbent, local population in general did not undergo changes in the subsequent decades. However, the 1960s and 1970s, were slightly different. Officially, this territory was inhabited, besides the Polish settlers and their descendants, only by Poles-Silesians. They were both from the pre-war Polish part of Upper Silesia and from the pre-war German parts of this land. This was an axiom the Polish authorities did not intend to deviate from. Not only for emotional reasons, related to the severe anti-German phobia resulting from traumatic experience of War World II among the immigrants and inhabitants of the 'old lands' and the former German occupation of Polish territories. The axiom of leaving only native Polish people in the western and northern territories (the term 'Recovered Territories' was used much less frequently) was unalterable also for pragmatic geopolitical reasons. After all, despite the unlimited demonstrations in Poland for 'permanent regulation' of the 'inviolable' Polish-German border, its line was not regulated at all under international law. What in Poland, in the opinion not only of authorities, but also the majority of Poles, was regarded as a closed case in the summer 1945 in Potsdam, according to the Potsdam interpretation it was still an interim border. After World War II no peace conference was held which was supposed to indicate the final shape of a new Polish-German border, recognised by international law. In this situation, Warsaw had to force itself in a way to manifest the fact of 'non-existence' on Upper Silesia of any German minority who had come from environments either 'rehabilitated' (namely cleared from the odium of signing the Volksliste during the war), or verified as Poles from among German citizens living in the pre-war German Upper Silesia.

Such conditions did not have an actual impact on the attitudes of the local, native Silesian population. Still within this population it was possible to see – next

to the (illegally) declared German population, or population showing pro-German sympathies, and declared (in particular in pre-war Polish Upper Silesia) Polish nationality – population, who easily changed national declarations or could not precisely be identified with any specific national denomination. The real views of those people, who were a permanently established large group of the still pre-war population and its descendants, was in the centre of initiatives taken by the Association for the Development of the Western Territories. In the 1960s, the social organisation collaborated less and less strictly with the state authorities. There were reasons to be worried. Constantly within the 1960s, and 70s, large groups from among the local population expressed the desire to permanently leave Silesia for Germany, first of all, for the democratic and rich Federal Republic of Germany. In view of these direct mass attitudes, the Polish administration was of ambivalent and hesitant view. It was interested in removing from Silesia the element that was 'Germanised' and reluctant to join the socialist way of life. On the other hand, it was not interested in losing people with generally high professional qualifications, who extremely useful in the Upper Silesian industry. Additionally, the emigration tendencies were proof of the failure of the Polish national integration policy, and of the failure of the socialist social experiment. The passport policy in the course of the decades of the 1960s and 70s, was subject to fluctuations – which was also influenced by events of a far broader geopolitical and economic nature. Nonetheless, the Upper Silesia was abandoned by waves of people.

For the social condition of the Silesian native community, emigration has had at least a double meaning. The emigrants were dissatisfied with the inability to cultivate their Germanness. They were also dissatisfied with the social, Polish environment around the native population, treated by the incoming Poles (and often by their descendants) at least distrustfully in their own, native land. They were awaiting the prosperous life in the FRG, as well as – in the case of older generations – pensions due to them for the years they spent working in the German state[54]. People who didn't accept socialism left their birthplaces. They found socialism unacceptable not only because of their economic concepts, but also because of its policy of atheization, which was in stark contrast with traditional Silesian virtues.

[54] In case of inhabitants of Poland receiving pensions from abroad, a convertion would be performed of the so-called foreign currencies (dollars, pounds, francs, marks etc.) by the exchange rate officially binding in the Polish state. Since in the times of the so-called real socialism, artificially overvalued exchange rate of zloty against western currencies was maintained, in fact the beneficiaries of foreign pensions were receiving far lower amount than they are entitled to. In fact, it was a common practice to pay – instead of real foreign currency amounts – their equivalent in the form of the so-called retail certificates printed in Poland by the state. They could be exchanged only in state stores with western goods at prices imposed by the Polish state.

It destroyed the social fabric that had existed for generations, and survived the dramatic events of the second half of the 1940s.

The mass migrations had high price for Silesian society. Families, inhabitants of industrial neighbourhoods, numerous inhabitants of the countryside were disappearing from the social landscape of Upper Silesia. Shaped long ago the social bonds were weakening. Often adult emigrants left for FGR but their children remained inn Poland. The passport policy of the communists did not guarantee the freedom to visit both ways. For many families only letters and parcels were left as tools for maintaining relations with relatives in abroad. Both of them were controlled by the communist political police. Being in touch with migrated members of a families was treated as a hazard, maintaining and fuelling revisionist ('revenge') tendencies among the remaining native population in Silesia, that of namely, challenging the Potsdam borders.

The exchange of letters and packages containing *the wonders* of the West world coupled with the understandable longing to reunite families and reunite social bonds only served to intensify the sense of criticism towards the sad reality of socialist Poland. The period of severe confrontation between society (concentrated around the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union 'Solidarność') and the communist political authorities between August 1980 and December 1981 resulted in an increased willingness to emigrate. In the case of the native population of Silesia, they wanted to emigrate to Germany. In the case of other groups in Silesia, they wanted to emigrate to anyone of democratic and rich western states.

According to the latest estimates during the years 1950-1989 between 300,000 and 400,000 people left Upper Silesia. As a result, the percentage share of the native population in the Opole Voivodeship (within the boundaries as established in 1950) decreased from more than 50% in total in 1950 to over 30% in 1989[55].

The national condition of the autochthones within the 14-year period of Gomułka's rule (1956-1970) was subject to various politicians and communist political policy as well as formally social experiment, i.e. Association for Development of Western Territories, actually organically related to the establishment. Not being able to admit openly that the Polish national-integration policy failed and not being able to consider the existence of German minority from among positively verified native population, the Polish communists decided to strike in the form of revisionism. This very broad term was defined – in general – as challenging the Potsdam borders and challenging all the Polish nationality left on the native

[55] Bernard Linek, *Wypędzenie*, [in:] *Leksykon mitów, symboli i bohaterów Górnego Śląska* (in print).

land. It was assumed that these types of views, sometimes publicly demonstrated, could be eliminated by intensified actions in the social, material, psychological sphere, but also by creating a repressive, police state[56].

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The situation among Polish settlers and their descendants who had been in the western and northern territories was different. Even without taking into account their largely critical attitude to realities of life in a socialist state, and in addition subject to Soviet Russia, progressing social transformations could be noticed. The population who had come from different places of Poland and different parts of Europe, within the 1960s, and 70s, underwent a process of internal integration, also in Silesia. Despite the often stark visible differences – e.g. between people who had come from the 'old lands' and the now lost Eastern Borderlands and the so-called 'Frenchmen' (immigrants from France and Belgium) and newcomers from what was then Yugoslavian Bosnia – the Polish population was indisputably more and more integrated. People were getting married and having children who did not identify with any group or place where they had resided before 1945. Holiday and culinary customs were beginning to overlap. This integration was supported by the school and a more and more progressive uniformity to social life at all. It was propagated – *nolens volens* – by the mass media: press, radio and television which had become more and more commonly available. The 1970s can be considered as the period in which the establishment of a – more or less – uniform Polish society from different settlement groups in Silesia came to fruition. This did not mean, however, that this sense of achievement carried over to create an empowered, civic society. We cannot apply to those times our contemporary understanding of the term 'empowerment' or 'citizenship'. After all, the communists did not refrain from undertaking actions which were aimed at persuading the inhabitants, including the incorporated territories and Silesia, where they were living as fully empowered citizens. However, both notions were clearly embedded in structures and activities fully controlled by the political establishment. Particularly in the 1960s, in the period of Władysław Gomułka's dominance of Polish politics, communists initiated the great, cyclical celebrations of 'the return of Western and Northern Territories to the Homeland'. The population was encouraged to take part

[56] See: Grzegorz Strauchold, *Niemcy czy Polacy? Tak zwani autochtoni ziem zachodnich i północnych w myśli teoretycznej Towarzystwa Rozwoju Ziem Zachodnich. Próby wypracowania skutecznej polityki integracyjnej* [in print]; Maciej Hejger, *Koncepcja walki z rewizjonizmem zachodnioniemieckim ekipy Władysława Gomułki*, [in:] *Nad Odrą i Bałtykiem. Myśl zachodnia: ludzie – koncepcje – realizacja do 1989 r.*, eds Magdalena Semczyszyn, Tomasz Sikorski, Adam Wątor, Szczecin 2013, p. 489-495; B. Linek, *Polityka aparatu bezpieczeństwa*, p. 157-165; Z. Romanow, *op. cit.*, p. 192-198.

in *spontaneous* social acts *en mass* aimed at decorating their nearest environment: squares, lawns, backyards. When the following leader of the communist party, Edward Gierek (1970-1980), celebrated anniversaries of 'the return', it became more modest and less publicised by propaganda. Assuming total social integration between the incorporated territories within the state and the Polish nation – the national propaganda focused on the success of socialism in Poland which was naturally supposed to bring overall improvement to the lives of all Poles. Because the complexity of the attitude in the native Silesian population, though obvious, was no longer recognised. The German minority, though real, had still not been legalised.

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In the post-war period, the social attitudes and bonds were under the considerable influence of another factor: the Catholic Church. Its role as an instigator of integration activities in the Polish settlement groups cannot be overestimated. However, the integration would only appear secondly. During the early years, priests (parish priests – *first line soldiers*, and hierarchs) were trying to make the settlers feel at home. Both in their ideological homeland – the Polish state – and in their small local homelands. For reasons I described in more detail above, it was very difficult. Particularly in relation to the repatriates from the East. The intentions and actions of the communist state authorities did not help the Church in their activities. In the initial period, they were cooperating with the Catholic Church in the name of the common national good in the 'Recovered Territories'. At the end of the 1940's, the communists became very confrontational with the Catholics. With various fluctuations, this policy remained unchanged until the end of the real socialism in Poland in 1989.

The Church was facing an even more difficult challenge than the Polish settlement groups in the areas inhabited by the domestic Silesian population. The Church, as a common structure, should – *ex definitione* – take care of all its members. It was extremely difficult under the conditions at the time. German Catholics were perceived not only by common church members, but also by the Polish clergy as having come from the outside, like all Germans – as the perpetrators of the Polish nation's incredible suffering during the war. The local German clergy that had taken care of Silesians was subject to mandatory expulsion. The previous German administrators absolutely could not return to their Bishop's seats on the incorporated lands. Any native priests of Slavic/Polish ethnicity, tolerant of all the Silesian Catholics, and who had lived there for a long time, were suspected by the incoming population, by priests and settlers alike, as being covertly of German origin. The

Silesians who stayed after the Germans had been expelled did not trust the arriving Polish priests. The incoming clergy did not trust the local parish priests. A many-sided vicious circle was created. The Priest Bolesław Kominek, the first Polish Papal administrator in Opole Silesia (pre-war German Upper Silesia) tried, as much as he could, to solve these issues[57]. He was a native Polish Silesian, who had been born in the German Empire, and lived in the inter-war period in the Polish autonomous Katowice Voivodeship. A man of three cultures: Polish, Silesian, German[58]. He was also distrusted to a various extent by particular groups of the local population. Moreover, since the end of the 1940's, the communist administration had him in their sight. In 1951 the papal administrators in the 'Recovered Territories' were compulsory expelled by the communists. They were replaced by hierarchs who were generally submissive towards the political authorities.

As a result of the transformations of 1956 in Poland, the bishop's seats in the western and northern lands were taken by hierarchs accepted by the Polish Primate, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. In Wrocław, Bishop Bolesław Kominek took office. During his service (until his death in 1974), he played a tremendous role in creating social bonds associated with the Catholic interpretation of the faith in Silesia. The policy conducted by bishop Kominek and approved by Primate Wyszyński was also significant for its attention to ethnic issues. The Wrocław priest has been consistently propagating the cult of St. Hedwig (Jadwiga), the patron of Silesia for a long time. She was the wife of medieval Silesian and Polish duke Henry the Bearded. She came from Bavaria. This Silesian duchesse of Bavarian origin has been consistently promoted as a general patron of the land and all of its inhabitants, regardless of their ethnic origin and national provenance. It is difficult to precisely estimate whether the cult of St. Hedwig affects mutual relationships between different national/ethnical groups living in Silesia. Undoubtedly however, the activity of bishop Kominek has meant that 'the German Saint' has been gradually accepted by Polish settlers and their descendants. The more so that anniversaries of the 'return of the western and northern lands to their Homeland', associated with her and, celebrated also by the Catholic Church, are indicated as imperative to the Polish character of Silesia, a Polish historical land connected to Poland in 1945 'for all times'.

[57] Andrzej Hanich, *Ksiądz infułat Bolesław Kominek, pierwszy administrator apostolski Śląska Opolskiego (1945-1951)*, Opole 2012; Jan Kopiec, *Kardynał Bolesław Kominek jako administrator apostolski w Opolu w latach 1945-1951*, [in]: *Wokół Orędzia. Kardynał Bolesław Kominek prekursor pojednania polsko-niemieckiego*, eds Wojciech Kucharski, Grzegorz Strauchold, Wrocław 2009, sp. 41-49.

[58] Grzegorz Strauchold, *Kardynał Bolesław Kominek w trzech kulturach*, [in:] *Wokół Orędzia*, p. 29-38.

However, the most important, a very controversial achievement of bishop Kominek was the famous letter of Polish bishops to German bishops of autumn 1965. It was, in fact, an invitation sent at the end of the Second Vatican Council to German hierarchs for the celebrations of the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland in 1966[59]. The text, written in German by Kominek, and approved by Primate Wyszyński, contained a cross-sectional evaluation of the thousand-year-long Polish-German relationship that, for a few hundred years, were also full of good mutual relations. With regard to the most tragic, recent period of mutual neighbourhood – World War II, and the resulting mass, compulsory migrations (both German and Polish), the author included words of Polish forgiveness and a Polish request for German forgiveness. Again, we are unable to specify clearly whether such an approach actually affected the attitudes at that time, e.g. of any Germans living in Silesia, or any Silesians who felt an association with German culture. Nonetheless, this extremely important document cannot be ignored as a potential factor in forming the attitudes among the native population and their descendants. Incidentally, the letter caused furious reactions among the Polish communists, especially by Ist secretary of PZPR, Władysław Gomułka. They considered the intervention of the Catholic Church in the state's monopoly over foreign policy unacceptable, and contrary to Polish *raison d'etat*.

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The new policy towards national minorities, initiated as a result of the 1956 transformations, was also significant for the non-Polish inhabitants of Silesia other than the Germans. The Ukrainian Socio-Cultural Association, formed in 1956[60], was a place for the Ukrainian/Lemko diaspora to keep in touch with their cultural traditions and social life. By permitting licensed, socio-cultural only activity, the communist authorities tried to effectively channel any initiatives coming out of this community[61]. Undoubtedly, the situation improved when scattered groups of believers from the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic Churches tried mostly to find some way of getting by without a school in their own language, or a pastoral service. Now, this situation has improved. Undoubtedly, it helped to integrate the very scattered Ukrainian diaspora around the newly created institution, schools and eastern denomination churches that had been set up for the Silesian Ukrainians. It should be added that, when the Soviet authorities in 1946 liquidated the Greek-Catholic

[59] From among more recent scientific papers on this subject, see the book quoted above: *Wokół Orędzia*.

[60] See: Jarosław Syrnyk, *Ukraińskie Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne (1956-1990)*, Wrocław 2008.

[61] J. Syrnyk, *<Po linii> rewizjonizmu, nacjonalizmu, syjonizmu...*

Church in Ukraine (of the Byzantine-Ukrainian liturgy), the Polish communist authorities followed suit and would not permit any free, legal functioning of this denomination until autumn 1956.

Ukrainian self-integration was not easy due to the diaspora being scattered around, and because of a lack of priests. The licensed Ukrainian/Lemko activities were under the watchful care of the communist political police, who were now going by the name of Służba Bezpieczeństwa (Security Service). They were trying, not without some success, to find secret collaborators in these communities to control the 'Wisła' operation victims more efficiently. These communities were aware of this activity, but probably not of its scale and effectiveness, which must have affected the community's level of mutual integration, divided by its historical experiences anyway. This issue became urgent – paradoxically starting in 1989, Ukrainian national minority could, without ideological obstructions, pursue their national ambitions. The Ukrainian/Lemkin diaspora is mainly situated in Lower Silesia, most of all, in the urban centres of Wrocław, Legnica and Świdnica. It tries to integrate the local, Lemko communities through a number of cultural initiatives, such as folk festivals that reach far beyond the borders of Silesia, Poland, and beyond simply being Ukrainian.

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The October (1956) transformations did not pass by the community of the Silesian Jews. In the middle of the 1950's a wave of social condemnation of Polish Jews was becoming gradually more apparent. In the opinion of *the man in the street*, they were collectively blamed for crimes that had been committed by Jewish officers of the Ministry of Public Safety (political police). This does not change the fact that, despite the stereotypes common in Poland at that time and in contemporary times about the Jews supporting communism, the political police were specifically interested in this group[62].

These strong anti-Semitic attitudes made Silesian Jews want to emigrate, to the state of Israel or any other western country. Emigration during this period unquestionably weakened the diaspora, which first tried to establish itself and create its social structure directly after the war, and then after the wave of emigration starting from Poland in 1946. In 1966 in Upper Silesia, 1,500 Jews were counted.

[62] Bożena Szaynok, *Tematyka żydowska w działalności MBP/MSW (1945-1989)*, [in:] *Internacjonalizm czy…? Działania organów bezpieczeństwa państw komunistycznych wobec mniejszości narodowych (1944-1989)*, eds Joanna Hytrek-Hryciuk, Grzegorz Strauchold, Jarosław Syrnyk, Warszawa-Wrocław 2011, p. 270-295.

In Lower Silesia, in the early 1960s, before the anti-Semitic campaign of 1967-1968, the number of Jews was estimated at 7,000-8,000 people[63].

For the Silesian, but also for the Jewish community nation-wide, the events between 1967-1968 were the breaking point. At that time they fell, in a broad context, a victim of the Middle-Eastern, Cold-War game between the East and the West. As a consequence of the so-called Six-Day War between Israel and the coalition of Arab countries, as well as an end in relations between Poland and Israel, ordered by Moscow, an anti-Semitic persecution like never seen before took place in Poland. At that time it was known as the anti-Zionist campaign. It was, in a narrower context, the result of internal clashes for power in the heart of the communist Polish United Worker's Party (PZPR). The long-time leader Władysław Gomułka, representing the 'old ones', confronted General Mieczysław Moczar, representing the 'young ones' - by no means a young man himself. The witch hunt against 'Zionist elements' within the communist party, the army, science, economy, started in 1967, was overlapped by a wave of protests from the intelligentsia (often made up of the committed members of the PZPR), and of students, against this form of socialism in Poland. Among the leaders of this protest, a group of Jewish Poles was also present. All this complexity allowed the managing team of the state led by Gomułka to point at towards a Jewish/Zionist domestic enemy. In the atmosphere of intimidation and authentic persecution, which involved broader groups of the society, most of the Jews were forced to emigrate from Poland. The previously strong Wrocław Jewish Centre was almost totally marginalised at that time. In 1970, 900 Jews remained in entire Upper Silesia. The dramatic end of the 1960s resulted in the Silesian Jewish group being almost completely eliminated and in its institutional life being terminated.

After the democratic reforms initiated in Poland in 1989, both the official, and the social atmosphere towards the remaining Jewish diaspora has changed. In Silesia, the religious communes in Wrocław and in Katowice are currently active. But together they have no more than 500 members[64].

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In the period after the introduction of martial law in Poland (from 13 December 1981), ethnic issues were frozen, in Silesia as well. However, in the 1980s the Upper Silesian German minority – still officially not recognised – voiced their expectations. Contrary to the position of Polish Primate Józef Glemp, but also with

[63] http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historia_%C5%BByd%C3%B3w_na_Dolnym_%C5%9Al%C4%85sku_po_II_wojnie_%C5%9Bwiatowej [last access 15. 04. 2015].

[64] B. Kalinowska-Wójcik, *op. cit.*

the tacit permission of the episcopacy, the bishop of Opole, a native Upper Silesian, Alfons Nossol, was running pastoral services in German for Upper Silesian Germans. During that time, in the 1980s, a time very difficult for the general public in Poland, representatives of the native Upper Silesian population were still immigrating to Germany. Again, family, neighbourhood and bonds of friendship were terminated – at least in terms of direct contact.

The Round Table in 1989 began the democratic transformations in Poland. National minorities, also those living in Silesia, got their freedom from this still young democracy. The most significant fact was the official recognition by the Polish state of the German minority. Living, often concentrated, in the largest (difficult to count precisely, according to census of 2002: c. 107,000) number in Opole Silesia (in the pre-war, German part of Upper Silesia). Also, in the historical capital of Silesia, where the German minority survived in a small number (according to census of 2002 in the territory of Lower Silesia remained c. 2,200 Germans), the German Socio-Cultural Association was established in Wrocław in 1991[65].

It is noteworthy that, the Upper Silesian organisations of for minorities have been filled almost 100% by native Silesians (and their descendants), verified in the 1940s as Poles. It was often very difficult to identify full characteristics of the national German minority, a number of problems was significant and middle and younger generations generally could not speak German. Emigration to Germany among the local population was so extensive that it resulted in questioning the existence within the borders of Poland (in this case in Upper Silesia) of some more numerous, concentrated German population[66]. The native population of Silesia, not only those demonstrating their German nationality, expected to commemorate their military casualties of World War I and II. This postulate raised, and often raises today, lively objections on the side of the Polish resettled population[67]. These two, both national, but also *common* human sensitivities, derived from so different historical experiences, could not be reconciled. Areas of division, that had obviously existed much earlier, but could now be openly expressed, appeared between the two communities. Living together, side by side, for half a century, during which the older *war* generations were gradually perishing, and gradually replaced by generations born after World War II.

[65] Katarzyna Ćwikła, *Niemieckie Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne we Wrocławiu*, [in:] *Śląsk w czasie i przestrzeni*, eds Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, Grzegorz Strauchold, Wrocław 2009, p. 275-285.

[66] B. Linek, *Wypędzenie*.

[67] Gerard Kosmala, *Konflikt o pomniki żołnierzy niemieckich poległych podczas I i II wojny światowej rozgrywający się w województwie opolskim w latach 1992-2004*, Wrocław 2007.

One manifestation of the German minority's existence in Poland was the famous Polish-German reconciliation mass in Krzyżowa in Lower Silesia in November 1989. At that time, the democratic Prime Minister of Poland Tadeusz Mazowiecki and the chancellor of the recently unified Germany Helmut Kohl exchanged piece signs. This gesture took place before large crowds, among whom there representatives of the German minority in Poland were clearly visible, most of all, from Upper Silesia.

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The recent twenty five years in democratic Poland, a member state of the European Union since 2004, was a time of controversy, but issues of the national minorities have stabilised and calmed down, in Silesia as well. After initial Polish worries concerning their loyalty towards the Polish State, the legal Silesian German minority was stabilised. They preserve their national character, often in cooperation with official agencies of the Polish state, scientific ones. Similarly, the native Upper Silesian population is concentrated in various organisations, emphasising their Silesianhood, but also their connection with the nation and the Polish state. The authorised Silesian Autonomy Movement (RAŚ) has been operating in Upper Silesia since early 1990. Declaring their desire to restore the autonomy of the Silesia voivodeship (with its capital in Katowice), modelled on the one that existed during the interwar Republic of Poland. RAŚ pursue legal recognition of the Silesian nationality, and the introduction of a broad, social circulation of the Silesian-national version of history, raise many controversies, both among officials, and among many Poles[68]. In 2011 during the National Census, this national option was chosen by 847,000 respondents. Among them, 376,000 stated this as their only nationality[69]. So far, attempts to legalize the Silesian nationality have been hindered by Polish courts.

Undoubtedly, despite several decades, the campaign of Polonisation and socialist indoctrination of the native Silesian population, preferred by the Polish communist state, has failed. It is still a multicolour pallet functioning freely to spread their national beliefs and views, democratically.

Thus, Silesia, now inhabited mostly by conscious Poles, is a place also for groups with national ambitions different from Polishhood. The most numerous ones originate from the local Silesian population. The province is nationally supplemented

[68] See: Tomasz Kamusella, *O Schlonzsku i nacjonalizmie*, Zabrze 2008; idem, *Schlonzsko: Horni Slezsko, Oberschlesien, Górny Śląsk*, Elbląg 2001; Dariusz Jerczyński, *Historia narodu śląskiego*, Zabrze 2003.

[69] http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narodowo%C5%9B%C4%87_%C5%9Bl%C4%85ska [last access 15. 04. 2015].

by its active Ukrainian-Lemko, Romani diaspora. To a much lower degree by Jews and Macedonians. The Lithuanians arrived immediately after World War II and Armenians, Karaims, Tatars concentrated until 1939 in Lviv (now in Ukraine), also live here – but in a very limited number.

Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel

Cultural and regional identity in Silesia after 1945 (selected issues)

Abstract

Cultural and regional identity as a source of cohesive and disruptive forces in the region that determines the Silesian people's and social groups' affiliation is a very broad and complex subject. The cultural and regional identity is deeply embedded in the experience of the past. Its formation is a continuous, organic and dynamic process which is constantly affected by geopolitical, social and economic factors. The construction of this identity is equally influenced by factors resulting from personal attitudes embedded in individual personal interpretative framework and in the collective view. At the same time, this issue is crucial for the region's population.

A particularly important date that marked the beginning of a new stage in the formation of the cultural and regional identity is 1945. Lower Silesia, Upper Silesia and Opole Silesia faced different but equally complex problems. The process was very complicated in each area.

Keywords

region, identity, culture, nation, society, settlement, cultural heritage, homeland, cultural landscape, Lower Silesianity, Silesianity, village, town

Issues concerning cultural and regional identity in Silesia are among the most important research issues. They are dealt with by historians, ethnologists, cultural anthropologists, historical geographers as well as sociologists, art historians, German and Polish philologists alike[1]. They remain a source of interest for journalists and publishers, evidence of which is a debate organized by 'Gazeta Wyborcza' (Wrocław branch) in October 2014 in the capital city of Lower Silesia entitled 'Identity of Lower Silesians. A union of many cultures' with scholars, politicians and social activists as participants. These issues are also at the centre of interest of local authorities, who initiate a number of activities related to monitoring and statistical research, as well as those that contribute to identity shaping. At this point we shall not thoroughly reflect on the issue (while mentioning the rich literature

[1] See *Śląsk. Rzeczywistości wyobrażone*, passim; *Śląsk, Schlesien, Slezsko. Przenikanie kultur*, passim; *Trudne dziedzictwo. Tradycje dawnych i obecnych mieszkańców Dolnego Śląska*, passim; *Dolnoślązacy? Kształtowanie tożsamości mieszkańców Dolnego Śląska*, passim; Paweł Banaś, *Oswajanie Ziem Zachodnich. Dolny Śląsk na pocztówkach pierwszej powojennej dekady*, Warszawa 2009; *Śląsk – etniczno-kulturowa wspólnota i różnorodność*, passim; *Etnologia i folklorystyka wobec problemu tworzenia się nowego społeczeństwa na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych*, ed. Dorota Simonides, Opole 1987, passim.

on the subject), but it is necessary to indicate the most important conclusion stemming from scholars' research and analyses, as well as research carried out by public authorities (special consideration should be given to a report from the study entitled 'Identity of inhabitants of Lower Silesia' – project implemented by Social Monitoring Centre and Citizen Culture in Wrocław, published in December 2011) that in Lower Silesia we must deal with the ongoing development of a regional identity rather than its actual existence[2].

The problem is characterized by a great number of issues which must be considered by researchers, and which are also characterized by their multidimensional nature. This chapter focuses primarily on issues concerning the cultural and regional identity of Silesia in the context of an analysis of cohesive and disruptive forces of people and social groups against the background of historical phenomena after World War II with regard to the present Lower Silesia, Opole and Silesia voivodeships. Due to the extensive nature of suggested research issues, an attempt was made to show the problem through the prism of selected examples.

When dealing with the issue at hand, it is necessary to point to the fact that it is not possible to speak of the phenomenon of a single Silesian cultural and regional identity. Lower Silesia, Upper Silesia and Opole show clear and very deep diversity, and their own special character in this regard. This fact results from a number of events as well as political, social and economic processes that took place in the region over centuries. Geopolitical transformations of Silesia due to War World II and their consequences in the form of such things as changes to boundaries, state and ethnic affiliation, as well as deep ethno-geographic and cultural transformations, reinforced the aforementioned divisions, and to a large extent constitute the foundation for forces exerting a disruptive impact on communities inhabiting the area. At the same time, they provided the basis for the construction of new social groups, defined by the determinants of place and time, which started in 1945.

The beginning of the formation of the post-war cultural and regional identity of Lower Silesia is related primarily to the nearly complete exchange of the population with simultaneous breaking of all regional traditions. As noted by Andrzej Zawada, this was the reason for the phenomenon known as the 'amputation of memory'[3].

[2] *Tożsamość mieszkańców Dolnego Śląska*. Research report, project implemented by Social Monitoring Centre and Citizen Culture in Wrocław (Culture Institution of Local Government of the Lower Silesia Province) Wrocław, December 2011; www.cmsiko.pl/resources/files/raporty/tozsamosc.pdf [last access 29.04.2015], p. 46.

[3] Jürgen Joachimsthaler, *Wielokrotnie wyobrażana prowincja. Śląsk między wizją a rzeczywistością*, [in:] *Śląsk. Rzeczywistości wyobrażone*, p. 496.

The policy of the Polish government and the strengthening communist regime focused on the one hand on polonisation of this land through settlement by Poles, while, on the other hand, on the cultural dimension in the broad sense, by the search for 'Polish-speaking stones' (elements of Silesian past strongly connected with Poland and Poles) and the undertaking of various cultural and social activities which would promote the Polishness of Lower Silesia[4]. It is necessary to emphasize the fact that state policy was adapted to a clearly anti-German rhetoric, whose core was the propaganda of continuous threats of German territorial claims towards the region[5].

Other factors will also contribute to the formation of cultural and regional identity in the new geopolitical conditions of Upper Silesia and the Opole region. These regions were subject to ethnic transformation, but not on as large a scale as in the case of Lower Silesia[6]. The main problem was the self-identification of the native population. This was determined not only by their own beliefs, but also by their attitude towards the Polish and the German heritage of this land, and the attitude of the Polish authorities which carried out ethnic verification. As noted by Jürgen Joachimsthaler: 'In post-1945 Opole Silesia, it was necessary to base on the Polish tradition that had been just assigned to the region'[7]. This problem is different in Upper Silesia, where there was a division between Polish, German, Silesian and Czech identities[8]. A problem which additionally complicated the cultural and regional changes was the attitude of the native population towards the Polish settlers from the eastern and central territories, who brought their own cultural heritage[9].

In Lower Silesia, the basic determinants that shaped the cultural and regional identity of the region during the first post-war decades include the following: new settlers' attitudes towards existing the cultural heritage developed by the German inhabitants; the extent to which they referred to and cultivated their own cultural heritage; construction of relations with other settlers and ethnic groups; policies of state authorities towards Polish settlers shaped through the prism of actual actions and propaganda towards the Recovered Territories as well as the German state; economic policy in Lower Silesia in terms of industrialization and urbanization. At this point, it is necessary to emphasize that, despite some natural similarities, the construction of the cultural and regional identity is different in cities and villages or small towns.

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[4] Zdzisław Hierowski, *Program kulturalny dla ziem odzyskanych*, 'Odra', no. 7/1945, p. 1.
[5] J. Joachimsthaler, *op. cit.*, p. 479-480.
[6] See chapter in this book: Grzegorz Strauchold, *Ethnic issues.*
[7] J. Joachimsthaler, *op. cit.*, p. 481.
[8] *Ibidem*; Dan Gawrecki, *W poszukiwaniu górnośląskich tożsamości*, [in:] *Historia Górnego Śląska*, p. 71-72.
[9] A. Dziurok, B. Linek, *op. cit.*, p. 274-275.

Regardless of where the settlers came to Lower Silesia from in the period just after the war, their attitude towards the existing German cultural heritage was ambivalent. On one hand, the negative opinion resulted from their painful wartime experience, which made them see the creators of the local culture as followers of Nazism. On the other hand, it was totally different from the material and spiritual heritage that the newcomers had previously known. Despite the fact that the Polish authorities applied the principle of latitudinal resettlement, i.e. movement to regions with similar geographical and climatic conditions (often it was not possible to implement this principle), it was not possible to avoid problems related to the unfamiliarity of the local landscape, which was one of the key factors determining the identity of the place. Settlers' motivation was also important (forcible resettlement and removal from the previous cultural space for geopolitical reasons, or voluntary departure from the previous place of residence in search of better prospects)[10].

The negative attitude towards the German cultural heritage took various forms for decades, and was to some extent present until the transformations of 1989. It is necessary to cite such phenomena as the destruction of various buildings, even historical ones, reconstruction of homesteads and their adaptation to conditions known from the place of origin, degradation of urban and rural infrastructure, change of topographic names, polonisation of the spiritual culture, primarily with regard to legends and fables[11]. Along with the departure of the German population from Lower Silesia, the local folklore as well as some professions and services

[10] Jakub Tyszkiewicz, *Integracja czy asymilacja? Polska polityka wobec polskiej ludności napływowej i Niemców pozostałych na ziemiach zachodnich i północnych*, [in:] *Postanowienia i konsekwencje konferencji w Jałcie i Poczdamie. Materials from historical part of VIII Silesia Seminar. Śladami śląskich losów wczoraj – dziś – jutro*, ed. Michał Smolorz, Gliwice-Opole 2003, p. 49-58; J. Janczak, *op. cit.*, p. 30-32; Magdalena Rostworowska, *Nowi osadnicy*, [in:] *Dziedzictwo kulturowe*, p. 261-293; Wanda Czapran, *Rola więzi krewniaczych w kształtowaniu się społeczności lokalnych na Dolnym Śląsku*, [in:] *Etnologia i folklorystyka*, p. 61.

[11] Georg Thum, *Die fremde Stadt. Breslau 1945*, Berlin 2003, p. 171-210; 338-392; Jakub Tyszkiewicz, *Propagandowe aspekty tzw. odzysku cegły we Wrocławiu (1945-1955)*, [in:] *Pod dyktando ideologii. Studia z dziejów architektury i urbanistyki w Polsce Ludowej*, ed. Paweł Knap, Szczecin 2013, p. 190-196; idem, *Ziemie obiecane. Były tereny niemieckie przejęte przez Polskę i ich losy w latach 1945-1948*, 'Pamięć i Przyszłość', 2010, no. 1, p. 7-17; idem, *Jak rozbierano Wrocław*, 'Odra', no. 9/1999, p. 17-21; idem, *Wrocławska Dyrekcja Odbudowy. Próba ratowania tkanki miejskiej w latach 1946-1949*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 54 (1999), no. 3, p. 421-434; M. Ordyłowski, *Życie codzienne*, p. 42-44; idem, *Walka o polskie nazwy wrocławskich ulic*, [in:] *Nazwa dokumentem przeszłości regionu. Tom poświęcony Wielkiemu Profesorowi Stanisławowi Rospondowi*, eds Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, Grzegorz Strauchold, Wojciech Kucharski, Wrocław 2010, p. 291-300; Mateusz J. Hartwich, *Kulturowe oswajanie krajobrazu w Karkonoszach po 1945 r.*, [in:] *Nazwa*, p. 443-447; Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, *<Matecznik sprzeczności?>. Spór o <właściwe nazwy> na Dolnym Śląsku po II wojnie światowej w świetle prasy regionalnej*, [in:] *Nazwa*, p. 221-237; P. Banaś, *op. cit.*, p. 6; A. Nasz, *op. cit.*, p. 21-22.

vanished. A journalist who visited Szklarska Poręba in 1946 described a very common sight: 'the architecture of some houses […] agglomerates its whole ugliness. The new owners modify them to fit our taste. The ones who do it the fastest and most thoroughly are village women, who destroy all Tyrolean figurines, hearts with inscriptions, German illustrations, and sometimes books. And all of this is done passionately: so that there is no trace of those... (some vulgar expression is usually included here)'[12]. Such an atmosphere particularly hindered the creation of social bonds based on cultural and regional identity, especially just after the war, because it had not been defined yet, and as time has told, shared hostility towards the German cultural heritage was not enough to bind people together.

The ambivalent attitude towards the existing cultural space gave rise to a sense of alienation, loneliness, hostility, and rejection of the unknown. The reaction to the aforementioned attitude was the process of domesticating the Lower Silesian cultural landscape. This was done in many ways. As noted by Paweł Banaś, this *domesticating* was to a large extent brutal and ruthless; it consisted in appropriation and destruction of everything which was associated with 'Germanness', initiatives aimed at removing once and for all the 'German spirit' which 'flew over the houses – like a bat' at night[13]. Apart from *domesticating* understood in this way, there were also intentions to transform the German cultural space in order to create a replacement for the previous way of life and living conditions[14].

The *domesticating* of the cultural space in Lower Silesia includes two threads. One consisted of individual activity, while the other was one of collective *domesticating*. With regard to the former category, it was determined by the attitudes of particular individuals, their experiences from the past, motivation to settle in a particular place, and the personal approach to the situation and their own cultural heritage. On the other hand, we may speak of collective *domesticating* of the cultural space which, as noted by Paweł Banaś, was 'a complex process of creating a vision concerning the Recovered Territories' using various measures, methods employed by multiple decision centres, activists of various professions (e.g. teachers, historians, writers, poets, and cultural activists), and lastly, society in its broad sense[15].

Diverse forms of *domesticating* the cultural landscape were not facilitated by the sense of temporariness, which itself was additionally stimulated by various factors such as fear of a German return or the tense international situation and fear

[12] K. Ruchniewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
[13] Paweł Banaś, *Oswajanie Ziem Odzyskanych*, Warszawa 2009, p. 6; D. Skrzeszewska-Bieńkowska, *List ze Szklarskiej Poręby*, 'Odra', no. 29/1946, p. 6.
[14] I. Topp-Wójtowicz, *Folklor*, p. 156.
[15] P. Banaś, *op. cit.*, p. 6; J. Nowosielska-Sobel, *<Na barkach…>*, p. 112-126.

of a new world war. Stanisław Gajewski mentioned the situation in Wrocław in the latter half of the 1940s: 'Many people lived out of a suitcase'[16]. The *domesticating* of the landscape in Lower Silesia was a long and complex process. In spite of its various levels and multiple directions, it was a necessity for the people settling in Lower Silesia, and they often had to take part in it against their will. In 1946, the problem was mentioned in 'Odra' by S. Kolbuszewski: '[…] a man cannot constantly live among strangers, live with the sense of temporariness and without reference to the past and the tradition. Life is durable only when there is a home and there is the feeling of being at <home>. And <home> means not only material objects, but also the <spiritual atmosphere>'[17].

The key phenomena of the latter half of the 1940s included the widespread sense of temporariness. However, as pointed to by Małgorzata Ruchniewicz 'as far as the public mood is concerned, the sense of alienation, temporariness, and various destructive attitudes were dominated by the desire for stabilization that encouraged the whole Lower Silesian population to overcome problems related to life in those uncertain times'[18]. The settlement process was accompanied by a number of phenomena that resulted in the creation of the basis for the birth of a new cultural landscape in Lower Silesia. This means primarily cultural diffusion, i.e. permeation of new cultural forms from outside; cultural clashes, i.e. contact between various cultural groups; cultural assimilation – absorption of the existing culture by immigrants. All these phenomena occurred simultaneously, but their intensity differed depending on circumstances (including political conditions and propaganda of the Polish state), generating both positive and negative effects for settlers and the cultural landscape[19]. Their presence and effects were visible in almost all areas of life. What is meant here is material and spiritual culture, e.g. the architecture of homesteads and interior design, clothing and culinary habits, folk traditions, beliefs, mentality, ways of working, hobbies and social activities, art[20]. The indicated phenomena

[16] For: M. Ordyłowski, *Życie codzienne*, p. 237; G. Thum, *op. cit.*, p. 266-270.

[17] Stanisław Kolbuszewski, *Kolumna duchów nad nami*, 'Odra', no. 42/1996, p. 2.

[18] M. Ruchniewicz, *Lata 1945-1948*, p. 653.

[19] J. Nowosielska-Sobel, *Oswajanie*, p. 49-50.

[20] I. Topp, *Swoi i obcy*, p. 218-220; *Początek nowego świata. Pierwsze lata powojenne we wspomnieniach polskich osadników*, [in:] *W kraju Pana Boga. Źródła i materiały do dziejów Ziemi Kłodzkiej od X do XX wieku*, eds Arno Herzig, Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, Kłodzko 2010, p. 341-359; Elżbieta Berendt, *Współczesna twórczość ludowa*, [in:] *Dziedzictwo*, p. 297-333; M. Rostworowska, *op. cit.*, p. 261-293; E. Berendt, *Powojenny*, p. 145-156; A. Nasz, *op. cit.*, p. 18-22; W. Czapran, op. cit., p. 59-77; Dorota Simonides, *Folklor jako odzwierciedlenie tworzenia się nowych społeczności regionalnych na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych*, [in:] *Etnologia*, p. 133-150; Heno.yka Wesołowska, *Współczesna obrzędowość rodzinna w procesie kształtowania się nowego społeczeństwa na Dolnym Śląsku*, [in:] *Etnologia*, p. 79-98; eadem, *Zwyczaje i obrzędy*, [in:] *Dziedzictwo*, p. 337-357; eadem, *Tradycje regionalne*, p. 159-166; Jadwiga Pawłowska,

are the source of both cohesive and disruptive forces in various Lower Silesian communities, which to some extent has been presented in this volume, in articles on rural and urban life in post-1945 Lower Silesia[21]. It must be noted that these processes laid the foundations for a new cultural landscape in Lower Silesia, which reflected the history of the region and the vision of its future like a proverbial mirror. The problem is the uniform and clear definition of the Lower Silesian that would serve as the core of the regional community's identity. This difficulty has not been overcome in spite of multiple attempts taken by the government (both under the communist and the post-1989 democratic system), local government, academics, churches, social and cultural activists, and the media[22].

In the rich assemblage entitled 'Lower Silesianity', we may find a wide range of notions which are used for reference in the field of identity by various social groups with manifold divisions. There are no rigorous appeals to a canon. This fact proves the openness of the Lower Silesian population towards external cultural artefacts which are not generally seen as a threat to their identity, but an element of it, or in extreme cases an indifferent one[23]. Due to the restrictions related to the form of the chapter, it is not possible to list all the aspects of this particular issue. In order to provide evidence to support this thesis, it is worth noting a few selected observations.

Elżbieta Berendt, when writing about the unresolved issue of the cultural identity of a contemporary inhabitant of Lower Silesia in the context of forming the region's post-war society during the settlement period, stated: 'even if they have become rooted in the Lower Silesian cultural environment, the settlers who came here after the war feel citizens of their spiritual homeland that was left where their

Pożywienie ludności dolnośląskiej wsi Pracze w pow. milickim w latach 1945-1960, 'Prace i Materiały Etnograficzne', 2 (1963), p. 337-377.

21 See in this book relevant chapters by Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel i Grzegorz Strauchold.

22 *Pierwsze lata istnienia Towarzystwa Miłośników Ziemi Kłodzkiej*, [in:] *W kraju pana Boga*, p. 398-405; J. Nowosielska-Sobel, *<Czy istnieje Polak sudecki?>*, p. 21-43; I. Łaborewicz, *Integracja ludności*, p. 45-59; Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, *Budowa kłodzkiej tożsamości regionalnej jako zadanie czasopisma 'Ziemia Kłodzka' w latach 90. XX w.*, [in:] *Dolnoślązacy?*, p. 61-71; Wojciech Kucharski, *Patrocinia kościołów wrocławskich jako źródło do badań przemian kulturowych na Dolnym Śląsku po 1945 r.*, [in:] *Nazwa*, p. 411-425; Ivo Łaborewicz, *Wybrane uroczystości państwowe i lokalne w Kotlinie Jeleniogórskiej w latach 1945-1958*, [in:] *Piastowsko-komunistyczna satysfakcja?*, p. 65-80; Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, *<Kulturalny koloryt naszego miasta przybiera na sile u progu jesieni>. Wymowa propagandowa świąt regionalnych na przykładzie <Września Jeleniogórskiego> w okresie PRL*, [in:] *Piastowsko-komunistyczna satysfakcja?*, p. 81-107; Grzegorz Strauchold, *Uroczystości państwowe na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych organizowane we Wrocławiu w latach 60. XX w.*, [in:] *Piastowsko-komunistyczna satysfakcja?*, p. 145-150; Marek Ordyłowski, *Obchody Tysiąclecia Państwa Polskiego na Dolnym Śląsku*, [in:] *Piastowsko-komunistyczna satysfakcja?*, p. 167-180; J. Ługowska, *Przedmowa*, [in:] *Dziedzictwo*, p. 9.

23 E. Berendt, *Powojenny*, p. 156.

journey began. The generations born in Lower Silesia cannot get rid of the split between the cultural traditions of their families and the local pre-war heritage. The youngest usually reject any reflection on tradition, and identify themselves with the models provided by mass culture'[24]. This attitude towards cultural and regional identity is shaped both in the individual and the collective form. In the case of families where the memory of lost homeland of their grandparents – pioneers of the settlement of Lower Silesia – is particularly vivid and recollected beyond times of religious holidays or family occasions, this embedding in the Lower Silesian cultural environment is more hard and complex, including (in some cases) youths already born in the region.

A significant role in the promotion of memory of the first settlers' homeland and, at the same time, its establishment as an important fixed element that shapes the cultural and regional identity of the contemporary Lower Silesian population, is played by local mass media, which may be illustrated with initiatives undertaken by the Lower Silesian branch of Polish public television in Wrocław. The clearest example is Grażyna Orłowska-Sondej's work as a journalist and her programme entitled 'Studio Wschód' (Studio East), which has been produced for over a decade. More than 400 broadcasts that she has authored, which are a kind of travelogue from the former eastern territories of Poland, familiarise 'inhabitants of Lower Silesia with their grandparents' and great-grandparents' place of birth, the history of the land which was a part of our homeland for centuries. On the other side of the border there are relics of our past, our relatives' and our heroes' graves. We cannot forget about them. Studio Wschód cultivates this memory. It is a history lesson for the young. Teenagers not only watch the broadcasts, but also participate in them – they take part in journeys to the former eastern Polish territories, see places where their families came from, take care to tidy great historical necropolises and small rural Polish cemeteries which are ruined. Studio Wschód shows Polish Eastern Borderlands, joins families who lost touch due to the stormy history, reminds us that the roots of several million citizens of our country stem from there'[25].

A similar role is played by the great social campaign, referred to on the website of Studio Wschód as the 'Lower Silesian levies', entitled 'Save grandfather's grave from neglect'[26]. It was initiated by Grażyna Orłowska-Sondej, who has also coordinated the action for over ten years. The patrons of the initiative are the

[24] *Ibidem*.
[25] *Studio Wschód*, [in:] http://www.tvp.pl/wroclaw/spoleczne/studio-wschod [last access 17.09.2014].
[26] *Mogiłę pradziada ocal od zapomnienia*, [in:] http://promotion.org.pl/mogily/mogily.htm [last access 17.09.2014].

Lower Silesian Voievodship Office and the Lower Silesian Education Authority, together with the Wrocław branch of Polish public television. Cardinal Henryk Gulbinowicz, an exceptional personality strongly connected to the post-war history of Lower Silesia, has also used his authority to support the initiative. This campaign is addressed to the young generation of Lower Silesian citizens, who donate a symbolic penny to rescue necropolises in the former Eastern Borderlands or take part in trips to the East (mainly to Ukraine) to clean up Polish cemeteries, and thus shape their identity in the context of their ancestors' history. As stated on the official website of Studio Wschód: 'Among those ruined and forgotten graves, there are graves of grandfathers and grand-grandfathers of young inhabitants of Lower Silesia. Many young people do not know or remember this. They have not been made aware of the fact by their families. But there is an opportunity to become familiar with the history of their families and the history of their nation. It is possible to experience a specific lesson of patriotism'[27].

A huge role in recording Eastern elements in Lower Silesian identity was played by the 'myth of Lviv'. For decades it was commonly believed that to Wrocław majority of Polish settlers, especially members of local inteligentsia, came from this former Polish, now Ukrainian city, which has strongly contributed to the cultural landscape of the Silesian capital[28]. And although in the contemporary consciousness of the residents of Wrocław, there functions a verified version of the statement that the post-war inhabitants of the city derived from different regions of pre-war Poland and not only from Lviv or the Eastern Borderlands, in the context of identity, region and culture, the references to the myth of Lviv are very vivid. That is demonstrated in initiatives taken by the leading cultural institution in Wrocław, so-called National Institute of Ossoliński Family (exhibitions, publications, conferences, and cultural events), which functioned as Polish cultural centre before 1939 in Lviv and after 1945 was transferred to Wrocław. The special place of Lviv's memory is also visible in educational and pedagogical initiatives addressed to the young generation. Of symbolical character is the fact, that the cultural emblems of Wrocław are Panorama Racławicka and the statue of Aleksander Fredro – both taken as Polish cultural heritage from Lviv[29].

[27] *Ibidem*.

[28] Jan Eggers-Dymarski, Joanna Gizewska, Karin Lenk, Gabriele Pfeifer, *Pomiędzy starą a nową ojczyzną. Lwowianie we Wrocławiu*, [in:] *Polski Wrocław jako metropolia europejska. Pamięć i polityka historyczna z punktu widzenia oral history*, http://homepage.univie.ac.at/philip.ther.breslau/htr [last access 17.09.2014]; M. Ordyłowski, *Życie codzienne*, p. 27; G. Thum, *op. cit.*, p. 157-158.

[29] Jarosław Maliniak, *Ze Lwowa do Wrocławia. Fedro – świadek historii*, Wrocław 2011; http://panoramaraclawicka.pl

The post-1989 involvement of local government, social organizations, cultural activists, scholars, educational institutions, media and the Lower Silesian population in cultivating the memory of the regions the first post-war Polish settlers originated from turned out to be exceptionally effective, since it has given rise to a fixed element of the identity of the regional population, and though not everyone refers to it in an identical manner, everyone demonstrated awareness of it as a distinctive feature of Lower Silesia as a part of Poland. The driving force behind its creation was certainly the fact that it could not be emphasised for several decades under the communist system, until the political transition of 1989. The awareness of eastern roots cultivated in the privacy of the home exploded in free Poland, thus proving its strength and durability.

The elements that constitute the contemporary cultural and regional identity of the Lower Silesian population include positive references to the land's German cultural heritage. The negative rhetoric of the communist authorities that significantly contributed to the Lower Silesians' perception of the previous cultural landscape, whose aim was to produce a force that would bind the new inhabitants of the region together against what was thought to be the emblem of an enemy who threatened the geopolitical status quo, is long gone. In 2000, Elżbieta Berendt observed that: 'our age is characterized by favourable inclusion of acceptable pre-war cultural resources in the Lower Silesian heritage. It is reflected also in top-down actions which are too often associated with somewhat artificial attempts to create an ideal model of tradition which could become common for contemporary inhabitants of Lower Silesia'[30]. This is also consistent with Jürgen Joachimsthaler's opinion that 'contemporary inhabitants of Lower Silesia are able to refer not only to the medieval Polish traditions of the region, but also accept and appreciate traces of Germanness which were erased over decades as fixed characteristic features of their region'[31].

The exploration and assimilation of selected elements of the German heritage is visible not only in such a huge city as Wrocław, but also in smaller towns and villages[32]. The development of this element as a binding factor for the identity of Lower Silesian society is a very complex process. This complexity is certainly still affected (especially with regard to members of older generations) by the negation of the German heritage of the region that dates back to the communist era. In the late 1990s and the early 21st century, another important factor appeared.

[30] E. Berendt, *Powojenny*, p. 154.
[31] J. Joachimsthaler, *op. cit.*, p. 479.
[32] G. Thum, *op. cit.*, p. 510-526.

It was noted by Jürgen Joachimsthaler: 'this slow acquisition of German history has had to be achieved since 1989 in the form of new local consciousness against the centralism of Warsaw'[33]. It is not only recognition of the German cultural heritage in Lower Silesia (which has resulted in such phenomena as conservation of the material culture or references to traditions in the case of spiritual culture), but references to it as a valid element of the identity of the place and the people that resulted in a sharp response from journalists, social and cultural commentators, and academics, such as scholars from Warsaw, who used the opportunity to ask questions about the identity of the region, and particularly the identity of Wrocław, where these process started earliest and have been the most dynamic. The fiercest adversaries of Lower Silesian openness include professor Jerzy Robert Nowak, who has stated that Wrocław is being 're-Germanized', and Piotr Semka, a journalist, (who writes for such publications as one of biggest Polish journal 'Rzeczpospolita'), who questions initiatives undertaken by the authorities of the Lower Silesian capital with regard to the replacement of the post-World War II name of Max Berg's architectural masterpice, exhibition hall (built between 1911-1913): 'Hala Ludowa' (Eng. 'People's Hall') with its original one, 'Hala Stulecia' (Eng. 'Centennial Hall', Ger. 'Jahrhunderthalle' – the hall was built to commemorate hundreth years' anniversary of issuing the proclamation 'An mein Volk' by Prussian king Frederick III Wilhelm, which started Prussian uprising against Napoleon and was believed to be a major step towards the unification of Germany under Prussian hegemony)[34].

Such debates certainly affect the shaping of the identity of the Lower Silesian population. It seems that the policy of openness is being changed, at least for the foreseeable future, because generations for whom Lower Silesia is their 'little homeland' as their place of birth are entering adulthood and coming to the fore. Globalisation factors, which are omnipresent in our culture, also play an important role. As observed by Jürgen Joachimsthaler, the younger generations of Lower Silesia cannot notice that 'there is a huge gap between the meaning assigned to the space and their own perception thereof. The German past which was denied but still was perceived had to be slowly reconstructed as *terra recognita*. […] <overcoming of the past> [here: relocation of Germans and covering up their presence in Lower Silesia during the post-war period – JNS] consists in searching for a reference to the identity of those previous inhabitants of German origin, who are fortunately absent,

[33] J. Joachimsthaler, *op. cit.*, p. 479.

[34] Beata Maciejewska, *Zakończmy wojnę wrocławsko-pruską*, published in www.wyborcza.pl, 28.03.2009, now [in:] http://www.wroclaw.gazeta.pl [last access 17.09.2014]; Jerzy Robert Nowak, *Pełzająca germanizacja Wrocławia*, part 1 (16.02.2009) and part 2 (20.02.2009), published in: 'RODAKpress. Magazyn interentowy', [in:] http://www.rodaknet.com [last access 17.09.2014].

and the transition period between the arrival of Poles and the compulsory resettlement of Germans – not easy for those directly affected – is shown as a missing link that virtually becomes the community's myth of initiation'[35].

Another factor which characterises the problem of the cultural and regional identity of the Lower Silesian population is 'the extent to which settler's regional cultures are acknowledged as highly valuable, and therefore promoted and cultivated', which some ethnologists believe to not only act as an element of their identity, but also to be an opportunity for the development of tourism[36]. Due to various phenomena and processes that took place in the post-war decades (e.g. the policy of the communist authorities, who attempted a kind of cultural *Gleichschaltung* of Lower Silesia, negative consequences of cultural events which fostered ethnic tensions among settlers, urbanization of some rural areas, transformation of the model of life due to modernisation, migration, and impact of mass culture), we can observe the exclusion of 'ethnological phenomenon', i.e. the diverse richness of cultures of settlers[37]. We may speak of their revival in recent years, proof of which includes active folk song and dance ensembles (including both amateur and professional groups) or events related to culture and entertainment which are supported by local authorities and media. We should pay attention to such phenomena as the activity of Polish Radio in Wrocław, which has established the 'List of folk hits' hosted by Małgorzata Majeran-Kokott for years (boasting nearly 100,000 listeners every Sunday morning)[38]. As stated on the official website of the 'List…': 'We want to highlight the exceptional character of Lower Silesia compared to other regions of Poland. We have a unique cultural melting pot which makes it possible to identify songs, traditions and folk costumes from almost all regions of pre-war Poland. After World War II, we could find here settlers from the Eastern Borderlans, former inhabitants of the Kielce, Rzeszów, Mazowsze, Polesie, Podhale and Zamość regions. Re-emigrants from Bosnia, highlanders from Romania and Lemkos are also numerous. All these people brought their traditions, customs, ceremonies, music, and folk costumes, which are still kept as their most valuable treasure. They were separated from their homelands, mixed in the cities and villages of Lower Silesia, and they were trying to save their heritage from oblivion. Cultural identity made it possible to distinguish one's own people from strangers, it gave a sense of pride in affiliation with a specific community. In order to achieve it, they most

[35] J. Joachimsthaler, *op. cit.*, p. 497, 500.
[36] E. Berendt, *Powojenny*, p. 154.
[37] *Ibidem*.
[38] Robert Migdał, *Małgorzata Majeran-Kokott propaguje modę na ludowe*, 06.11.2011, [in:] http://www.gazetawroclawska.pl [last access 18.09.2014].

often established folk groups that performed folk songs, presented their rituals, and even culinary traditions. Today, it is a generation of old people who are slowly dying out. It is extremely important to strengthen and preserve their heritage, which will always remain a valuable and unique characteristic of Lower Silesia'[39].

This specific revival of the memory of Lower Silesian multiplicity of cultures and its promotion as the factor distinguishing and binding the region's communities is not always well-thought out nor based solely on knowledge of the region's history, but also on the sensitivities and expectations of local inhabitants. This problem is discussed by ethnologists: 'therefore, the activities of those who control the past, perhaps due to their inability to cope with its complexity, and try to use only selected material as the basis for the sense of Lower Silesian identity, are troubling'[40]. Many mistakes occur in particular during attempts to combine cultural elements of German heritage with the regional culture brought by the post-war settlers.

Thus, the major determinants of the cultural and regional identity of Lower Silesia include the search for a point of reference, a kind of model. Elżbieta Berendt writes that 'in spite of the fact that over 50 years have passed, this region, which absorbed variety of threads during the post-war period, has not developed the form and content of a new model that would be common for all groups. The need to identify such an ideal model is purely practical. A region which is opening up for tourism needs simple definitions of what makes it different from other parts of the country. […] We want to identify a valid and consistent system of signs and symbols which would be shared and integrate the regional community, but reference to only one of the local traditions may result in distorted images of history, while the increasingly frequent promotion of a simplified vision of the pre-war tradition may result in a mutilated one'[41].

The search for distinctive Lower Silesian features in the context of self-identification of communities towards the environment and the simultaneous pursuit of common points of reference as social bonds is evident not only at the folk culture level, but also in the context of literature, music, cuisine, etc.[42] The aforementioned discussion on the regional character of high and folk culture is determined

[39] About the 'List of folk hits' of Radio Wrocław [in:] http://www.ludowe.prw.pl [last access 18.09.2014].

[40] E. Berendt, *Przeszłość*, p. 248.

[41] *Ibidem*.

[42] Andrzej Zawada, *Czy istnieje literatura dolnośląska?*, 'Dolny Sląsk', no. 9/2001, p. 251-257; Ewa Kofin, *Pytanie o <muzykę dolnośląską>*, [in:] 'Dolny Sląsk', no. 9/2001, p. 258-263; Aneta Augustyn, *Plebiscyt: Wybieramy potrawę i produkt Dolnego Śląska*, 'Gazeta Wyborcza', Wrocław, 06.08.2010, [in:] http://www.wroclaw.gazeta.pl [last access 18.09.2014]; *Nasze Kulinarne Dziedzictwo – Smaki Regionów (konkurs)*, [in:] http://www.produktyregionalne.pl/nkd.html [last access 18.09.2014].

by widespread globalization factors. The result of these tendencies is the fact that inhabitants of Lower Silesia continually seek regional flavours, but they will also be equally eager to try sushi, which is served in numerous restaurants, as well as other Asian food venues, which are ubiquitous in Wrocław.

The definition of the Lower Silesian identity includes the need to determine the cultural specificity of sub-regions as a fixed element. Untill 1989, under the Polish People's Republic (PRL), such tendencies could be to a various extent observed in spite of measures taken by the communist authorities. A perfect example is the Kłodzko Valley, or the Jelenia Góra Valley[43]. The conditions for such initiatives were particularly favourable after the 1989 reforms[44].

A broad regional movement, which could to some extent be seen in Lower Silesia during the first post-war social and political thaw in 1956, and which was fully developed in the 1990s, can be considered the source of significant binding forces for regional communities. The great debate on the character of the Jelenia Góra region, which took place in late the 1960s and early 1970s, both among journalists and at the level of local authorities and society at large, was a clear sign of the awareness that there are features which make this region somewhat distinct from Lower Silesia. The initiators of and participants in this debate on the distinct identity of the 'Jelenia Góra region' pointed to differences in the natural landscape (which to some extent proves the end of the *domesticating* that had started in 1945), distinctive cultural features (related to both material and spiritual heritage), different mental features, but also the economic characteristics of the region, which was defined as its success[45].

The force of the regional movement, which was determined by the activities of the local selfgovernment, educational institutions, social and cultural associations, and media, particularly local newspapers, was shown clearly after 1989 and still is an important factor that contributes to the identity of the local population. Its success is based on the strength of civil society. Although development of this idea has slowed down at the political level due to the crisis of the elites, it still remains an active element in culture. Its power is based on the fact that regionalism is a social movement that results in activities by various groups which may contribute to the creation of distinctive features of the region that constitute its strength in the fields of culture and economy[46].

[43] M. Ruchniewicz, *Budowa*, p. 61-71; J. Nowosielska-Sobel, *Czy istnieje*, p. 21-43;I. Łaborewicz, *Integracja ludności*, p. 45-59.
[44] Anatol Jan Omelaniuk, *Transformacja a regionalizm*, 'Dolny Śląsk', 3 (1996), p. 266-273.
[45] J. Nowosielska-Sobel, *Czy istnieje*, p. 41-43.
[46] A. J. Omelaniuk, *op. cit.*, p. 267; M. Ruchniewicz, *Budowa*, p. 64.

At this point, it is necessary to indicate another important factor which is mentioned by Anatol Jan Omelaniuk: 'the absence of an own local and dynamic culture which local communities would create and identify with makes them useless and vulnerable to the easy and expansive contemporary mass culture of American haste and success that is ruthless in making people dependent'[47]. The conviction of various communities is that identification of determinants of a regional identity and cultivation of its distinctive elements through various initiatives may provide a strong and sustainable barrier against mass culture and dilution of identity.

In the discussion of the regional movement in Lower Silesia in the context of cohesive or disruptive factors that affect its population, it is possible to ask about the extent to which cultural self-identification of its sub-regions may constitute a negative determinant, i.e. a factor that hinders the identification of 'Lower Silesianity'. This issue must be further examined. Nowadays, we may be tempted to say that from the perspective of other issues that are constitutive for the identity, the identification of small regions does not result in the risk of separation, but rather reinforces the value of 'Lower Silesianity'.

The subject of cohesive and disruptive social forces in the context of cultural and regional identity as a historical phenomenon in Upper Silesia and Opole Silesia after 1945 is equally complex and has as many aspects (while for other reasons) as in the case of Lower Silesia. Owing to its extensive nature, it requires discussion of numerous issues. The constrains related to the form of the chapter result in the fact that only a few threads have been selected to illustrate the issue and show distinctive characteristics compared to Lower Silesia.

After 1945, fundamental changes took place in the identity of Upper Silesia[48]. As a result of geopolitical transformations affecting territorial changes, profound demographic and ethnic changes took place[49]. They affected the cultural and regional identity of the region. First of all, we are speaking about the resettlement of a large part of the German community. As noted by Dan Gawrecki, 'this population was indisputably the carrier of the Silesian or the Upper Silesian identity, and, being aware of their attitude to their homeland, it departed, usually unwillingly, to various parts of Germany'[50]. The German population that remained in this territory declined further in the following period (particularly after 1956). The situation

[47] A. J. Omelaniuk, *op. cit.*, p. 268.
[48] Dan Gawrecki, *W poszukiwaniu górnośląskich tożsamości*, [in:] *Historia Górnego Śląska*., p. 71.
[49] See in this book chapters by Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel (about administrative changes) and Grzegorz Strauchold (about ethnic issues).
[50] D. Gawrecki, *W poszukiwaniu*, p. 71.

of the Polish population was also complicated. In the early post-war period it underwent a process of ethnic verification. A very important issue was the arrival of numerous Poles from central Poland as well as re-settlers from the former eastern Borderland Territories, and also Polish emigrants from France and Belgium, all of whom brought their own cultural baggage[51]. The aforementioned geopolitical and demographic changes had a destructive effect on the identity of different social groups that lived in Upper Silesia. However, this situation was an opportunity to develop a new quality in the field of identity. The question is: did this meet the public's expectations?

The question of 'who is an Upper Silesian?' arises for the inhabitants of the region, as well as academics, politicians, journalists and all those observing the situation from the outside, i.e. fellow citizens of states inhabited by former or present residents of Silesia. The answer includes a broad range of facts, processes and phenomena which, depending on the place, time and context, were and in some circumstances still are sources of both cohesive and disruptive forces for the regional community in terms of cultural and regional identity. It is necessary to point out such issues as the exploitation and politicisation of the issue not only in the communist (PRL) era, but also after 1989. The answer is made more complicated by the polarization of attitudes towards the nation in the context of historical experience. Myths, stereotypes and prejudices that are rooted not only in the experience of the 20th century, but also the 19th century, are important here. The situation is not made easier by the attitudes of researchers and academics who describe problems of cultural landscape and community identity with the use of a wide range of ambiguous and unclear terms, which is emphasized by the co-authors of 'A History of Upper Silesia': 'this is actually not proof of researchers' helplessness with regard to this phenomenon, but an attempt to reflect ambiguous attitudes'[52]. Unfortunately, after 1945, there were (and still are) cases where the academic discourse was an extension of the political discourse[53].

In this broad thematic field, there is an issue that has been particularly noticeable since the 1990s and deserves particular attention, i.e. the problem of the 'Silesian nation'[54]. It excites the minds, impacts the consciousness and provokes debates among the Upper Silesian population, politicians, journalists, and academics,

[51] Ryszard Kaczmarek, *Ludzie – stosunki demograficzne, struktura społeczna, podziały wyznaniowe, etniczne i narodowościowe*, [in:] *Historia Górnego*, op. cit., p. 55; A. Dziurok, B. Linek, *op. cit.*, p. 271-276; E. Kaszuba, *Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku*, p. 445, 451-463, 446-467.

[52] R. Baron, A. Michalczyk, M. J. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 467.

[53] *Ibidem*, p. 472.

[54] *Ibidem*, p. 473; R. Kaczmarek, *Ludzie*, p. 55.

particularly historians, sociologists, ethnologists and linguists[55]. The climate and intensity of polemics on the subject as well as significant involvement of society has set a new direction in the construction of regional identity.

Conclusion

Cultural and regional identity as a source of cohesive as well as disruptive forces within the region that defines people's and social groups' affiliations in Silesia is a very broad and complex issue. The roots of cultural and regional identity stem from past experience. Its formation is a continuous, organic and dynamic process which is constantly affected by geopolitical, social and even economic factors. The construction of identity is equally influenced by factors resulting from personal attitudes embedded in individual personal interpretative frameworks and the collective perspective. At the same time, this is an issue of critical importance for population of the region because, as noted by Dan Gawrecki, 'individuals, in defining their own identities, the essence of self-discovery, seek and become aware of their place in historical processes and shape the conditions for their own conscious activity in their own way'[56]. A particularly important date marking the beginning of a new stage in the formation of the cultural identity of all parts of Silesia is 1945. Lower Silesia, Upper Silesia and Opole Silesia faced different but equally complex problems.

In Lower Silesia, it was the construction of a cultural and regional identity practically from scratch due to the relocation of the native German population. As noted by Jürgen Joachimsthaler, in the case of the post-1945 Opole region it was necessary 'to rely on newly ascribed Polish tradition (which meant neglecting autonomous traditions of Polish language or the Polish-Silesian minority in this region). After 1989, differences between the Katowice region and the Opole region were fixed: in Opole Silesia the issue of identification with the region became the central point for a developing identity that reached beyond social divisions, whereas a similar Upper Silesian regional identity has always been promoted, and only a few young local authors reject this model which, in their opinion, constitutes the

[55] *Nadciągają Ślązacy. Czy istnieje narodowość Śląska*, ed. Lech M. Nijakowski, Warszawa 2004; Marian Grzegorz Gerlich, *<My prawdziwi Górnoślązacy…>. Studium etnologiczne*, Warszawa 2010; Elżbieta Anna Sekuła, *Po co Ślązakom potrzebny jest naród? Niebezpieczne związki między autonomią a nacjonalizmem*, Warszawa 2009.

[56] D. Gawrecki, *W poszukiwaniu*, p. 57.

continuation of tradition and debate from before the political breakthrough […], but the issue has not become less important for most of the region's inhabitants'[57].

Upper Silesia is a region with complex ethnic relations, and a wide and rich range of cultures. As stated by the authors of *A History of Upper Silesia*, this complexity 'remains despite the fact that this area has been a part of a single state for over fifty years', and processes that constitute the phenomenon of the Silesian nation 'are also a reaction to regional, ethnic and national identities that were suppressed by PRL authorities for decades'[58].

A rich collection of questions about the cultural and regional identity of specific parts of Silesia after 1945 as forces which constitute the local population also includes the following: is it possible to incorporate the notion of a Silesia without geographic, administrative and historical divisions into the agglomerate of Silesian identity? To some extent the answer is provided by Jürgen Joachimsthaler, who states that the inhabitants of the region '[…] create Silesia anew (also through exchange with its former inhabitants) as a collective poetic vision. As their Silesia. As their work of art. Their aesthetic space for meaning and interpretation'[59].

[57] J. Joachimsthaler, *op. cit.*, p. 481.
[58] R. Baron, A. Michalczyk, M.J. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 473.
[59] J. Joachimsthaler, *op. cit.*, p. 513.

Przemysław Wiszewski

New Silesia or new post-Silesian regions?

Abstract

The reflection on the issue of cohesion of the community that inhabited the basin of the River Oder in 1945 enables formulation of a thesis that the year 1945 was the ultimate turning point ending the period of the residents of the River Oder basin as a regional community. In its character this phenomenon was historically unprecedented. Its first mentions are found at latest in the interwar period. It was then that the dominance of the nation as a reference point for citizens of countries undermined the importance of regional ties. However, after 1945 the depth, complexity of changes associated with the exchange of population, heterogeneity of migrants and conscious differentiation of the government policy towards individual parts of the former Silesia led to a rejection of the traditional concept of Silesia. On the one hand, after 1945 new regions, or maybe community administrations, which justified their existence by appealing to selectively presented elements in the past of Silesia, were formed. During this period the importance of regions as reference points for the identity of inhabitants declined. Local connections, for which a locality is variously defined, prove much more important. The time of the basic significance of assets and clear regional structures for the identity of the inhabitants of Silesia - and perhaps not only for them - was long gone.

Keywords

region, regiogenesis, Silesia, voivodeship, identities

Reflection on the issue of coherence in the community inhabiting the Odra River Basin after 1945 leads one to hypothesise that historical Silesia ceased to exist as a living and integrated socio-cultural structure in spite of the fact that peace settlements after War World II could have facilitated integration of the region. A vast majority of historical Silesian lands became part of a single country (Poland). At the same time, the economic distinctness of historical Silesia and other Polish regions is obvious. In theory, population exchange in this territory was an opportunity to build a new society whose members would share a cultural background, and a similar world view. It may seem that the above thesis is either incorrect or exaggerated. There were, and still are, institutions that emphasize their Silesian roots and aspire to represent the entire historical region[1].

[1] One of them is the Conference of Rectors of Silesian Universities (KRUŚ), an association of rectors of six universities not only from Poland, but also from the Czech Republic, established in 2003. It consists of the University of Wrocław, Opole University, the University of Silesia in Katowice, the University of Economics in Katowice, Slezská Univerzita in Opava and Ostravská Univerzita.

First of all, it is necessary to clearly separate the use of expressions such as *Silesia* and *Silesian* from the historical region. For Poles, the notion of Silesia means only a small part of the former region, i.e. the part of Upper Silesia that contains Katowice and its coal industry. All of the remaining areas are referred to using more specific adjectives. As a result, the meaning of Silesia indicated above is treated the same as when referring to the regions of Lower Silesia or Opole Silesia. Although this phenomenon may be incorrect in terms of terminology, it expresses ongoing changes when regions are shaped. Similar processes, though on a much smaller scale, can be observed outside of Poland. For the people of the Czech Republic, the natural area which is known as Silesia is the area near Opava. On the other hand, in Germany there is a tendency to build the *identity construct* as is known, which states that a part of Silesia belongs to Germany. Görlitz is regarded as a Silesian city where the 'Schlesisches Museum' was created[2] in spite of the fact that Zgorzelec/Görlitz was one of the major historical cities in Lusatia. But true, it was part of the Prussian, then German province of Silesia (1815-1919, 1938-1941) and Lower Silesia (1919-1938, 1941-1945).

This terminological fluidity and creativity concerning the use of expressions that refer to *Silesia* results from a break in the administrative and cultural continuity after 1945. From the moment that Polish authorities took over the new lands in the west, their policy focused on their full integration under the structures of the state. This meant that even if the previous administrative division or the specific nature of the economy had been referred to, the emphasis on their historical or cross-regional nature was omitted. As a result, it was possible to minimise their binding character in the scope of a broader regional identity. On the other hand, measures taken by the authorities led to the formation and strengthening of structures with far smaller territorial extent. Because of this the identity of three communities has been strengthened since 1950: the mining region of Silesia with its capital in Katowice, Opole Silesia, and Lower Silesia with the regional capital in Wrocław. The last one was additionally split into smaller administrative units – voivodeships (provinces) – in 1975. This resulted in the reinforcement of tendencies to form small regions which referred back to the tradition of either a principality (Legnica, Świdnica) or a geographic and cultural specificity (Jelenia Góra). Their associations with the idea of Silesia and Lower Silesia were very loose. Another Polish administrative reform of 1999 emphasized the strength of the autonomy of Opole Silesia.

The significance of this organisation for its members may be testified by the fact that after 12 years of its existence it still does not have its own website indexed by Google.

[2] See http://www.schlesisches-museum.de/ (retrieved on 03.09.2015).

It also stressed some malleability in local regionalisms. The newly-created Lower Silesian voivodeship with its capital in Wrocław turned out to have significant potential as a centre which could create a different region when compared with the rest of *Silesia*. This has not eliminated the identity of smaller communities which would later become part of this new region which, in and of itself is diverse.

Despite its advanced infrastructure and industrialization, in comparison with the other regions of Poland, the economic identity of Silesia failed to become a factor that strengthened coherence in the historical region. On the contrary, economic life was characterised by a lack of industrial cooperation on a regional scale with simultaneous support for cooperation between local companies, manufacturers and recipients across the entire country and the focusing of production on particular territorial units (coal in Katowice and Wałbrzych areas, copper mining around Głogów and Lubin and automotive factories in Tychy and Bielsko) by the PRL (Polish People's Republic) authorities. As a result, the functioning and dynamic economic changes in Silesia led to a strengthening of coherence – but at the local level. They facilitated the integration of local communities with the national community. The regional business dimension was blurred; a situation that did not change after 1989. Factors that reduced the regional dimension of economic activity was joined by the globalisation of economic life. Only certain sectors of the economy have their own regional specificity, these are primarily those related to tourism. In this case, we are dealing with integration within new regions and communities that have a malleable, undefined administrative structure (Pogórze Sudeckie, Kotlina Jeleniogórska, and Kotlina Kłodzka).

A similar result, namely the reinforcement of local bonds at the expense of regional bonds, was caused by the integration processes that occurred after 1945 within rural and municipal communities in the historical Silesia region. It should be emphasised that their nature differs in each particular region. For the entire Odra region the main problem was the internal integration of local town communities. Nearly all communities, large or small, were struggling with the same problem – how to unite newcomers from different parts of Poland? In the case of Upper Silesia and the region of Opole there is a problem concerning native inhabitants who had the feeling of being *at home* and regarded migrants as an external element who were only staying temporarily in their communities.

In cities, the integration of residents proceeded faster, especially where the development of industry forced employees who had come from different circles to cooperate. Similarly, the residents faced common challenges – cleaning up towns, setting up infrastructural elements, general difficulties – these factors accelerated

integration. This process was slower in rural areas. A sense of local community was built up faster in communities that were resettled from the neighbouring villages in the East; a frequent occurrence in Lower Silesia. Partial integration in rural areas with a mixed population took more time, at least two generations. Integration was made more difficult by differences in the professional and social positions of farmers who owned their farms and the agricultural employees of state-owned farms.

After 1989, the construction of a local identity within the cities gained momentum. On the other hand, migration from villages to cities resulted in the dwindling of rural communities, but strengthened their coherence. In any case – except for Wrocław whose status as regional capital was preserved – it has not influenced the identification with *Silesianity*. In opposition to the aforementioned case, this reinforced identification with the local community. It is worth noting the problem concerning the effects of the great migration of the urban population on neighbouring villages after 1995. On the one hand, it divided the residents of the rural community into the *old* and the *new*, and the latter group was only very loosely associated with the rural communities. On the other hand, the close relation of the new residents with a neighbouring city extended the territorial range of *locality*. It was not limited to the boundaries of the city, it stretched more and more into the rural environment.

Since the inhabitants of the Odra river basin were divided after 1945, is it possible to indicate elements which united the community? It appears that this would be of no use for the entire area of historical Silesia. Nothing stresses the separateness of the two communities, the Lower Silesian community and the community of Upper Silesia and the Opole region, than the activity of those who support the *Silesian nation* as it is known. The reference to the *Silesianity* of the native inhabitants as opposed to *Polishness* may in some way affect the region of Opole or Katowice. Lower Silesia does not recognize this issue. The lack of a strong environment of native inhabitants and building a sense of community around the subject of migration became the basis for building *Lower Silesianity*. As a cultural structure, it is blurred and undefined, but it is a specific attitude towards reality that features an openness to cultural diversity, a tendency to assimilate newcomers, but also an attachment to the national myth as the unifying element of the community. The strength and autonomy of the regional identities of Upper Silesia and Opole Silesia can be proven by the fact that the sense of belonging to regional communities can easily be awakened and used for political purposes when compared to Lower Silesia. This area is dominated by local identities, though

the sense of pride concerning its contribution to the success of Lower Silesia has also been developing since 1989, along with the economic growth of the region.

There are many arguments in support of the thesis that the year 1945 is the final date in the history of the inhabitants of the Odra River Basin as a regional community. This historical event was not unprecedented in nature. It was anticipated by the dominance of a nation as a reference for citizens of states during the inter-war period. Since 1945 the deep and complex nature of changes related to the replacement of the population; heterogeneity of the migrants and the conscious diversity of the authorities' policy towards particular parts of the historical Silesia resulted in an exceptional situation. We can observe the ongoing formation of new regions, but also the decreasing importance of regions as reference points for the identity of their inhabitants. Local bonds have turned out to be more meaningful, and the definition of their locality varies. The time when the fixed and explicit regional structures were of primary importance for the inhabitants of Silesia – perhaps not just for them – is over.

Przemysław Wiszewski

A Prothean region. The changing shape of Silesia (12th-21st centuries)

Abstract

In the five-year long duration of the Cuius regio research project 26 authors from Germany and Poland tackled the issue of cohesion of Silesia as a region. The final effect is far from clear. The researchers' analyses have proven, without a doubt, that the region which can be defined as the community of dwellers on the shores of the Oder has a very dynamic nature. The historical Silesia, formed from autonomous states (the Silesian duchies) into a region in the 14th and 15th centuries was from the start an idea dependant on the historical conditions which govern the functionality of countries. This commonality fractured completely into four realms in the 19th century. Within the confines of Prussia (later Germany) Lower Silesia, Opole Silesia and Upper Silesia formed as distinct units and within the confines of Bohemia – Cieszyn Silesia (Opava Silesia) formed. However, 'Silesia' remained a reference point in the context of regional activities of societies living in the Oder's shores area. Silesia was, and still remains, of import to both the local communities, as well as new regions, as a stabilising point elevating the rank of social activities relevant to it. The Silesian regional community both was and remains exceedingly vibrant, changing, actualizing itself through strong and vibrant local identities. Silesianness was and still remains necessary as a constant reference point for the ever-changing forms of dependence of entire local communities as well as their individual members. Ultimately, the region remains an open area, multicultural and deeply divided. Exactly as it always was during the long centuries of its existence.

Keywords

regiogenesis, nation-states, ethnic identity, regional identity, nation, regional economy, multiethnicity, multiculturalism

For political scientists and sociologists, a region is chiefly a separate territorial unit together with its inhabitants, which is not a country, but shares some of its attributes in terms of population governance or landscape consumption[1]. In such a view, the presence or lack thereof of a sense of community based on a shared view of the future is of secondary importance. But from the standpoint of a historian, this form of organizing the life of a community cannot be seen as a proper region. Its existence is merely administrative, temporary, lacking the relations which bind the members of this 'region' and preserving its continuity through decisions those

[1] Philippe De Lombaerde, Frederik Söderbaum, Luk Van Langenhove, Francis Baert, *The problem of comparison in comparative regionalism*, 'Review of International Studies', 36 (2010), p. 736.

members make, regardless of external, changing administrative decisions. Administrative divisions, as long as they are permanent and correlate with other factors influencing the formation of relations between inhabitants, may be a starting point in the formation as well as transmission of a regional community based on a conscious and purposefully designed regional identity.

Linking the administrative borders of a region with a historical justification of the shared fate of the former inhabitants of this territory therefore has an undoubtedly positive impact on its permanence. It makes its existence independent from political changes at the state level, as the justification for its existence lies beyond the scope of changes resulting from transient political priorities. In the case of regions whose existence can be recognised in sources for centuries, a number of factors binding the members of a community rooted in a particular geographical area, particularly regional identity, must be presumed. Therefore, the object of interest of scientists cooperating within the framework of the 'Cuius regio...' project was the complex relationships determining the existence of regional communities. The task of the scholars was to determine the strength of the factors responsible for creating or destroying the cohesion of regional communities, particularly in the context of the genesis of regions, as well as the duration of geographical regions and changes to them[2]. The Polish team studied Silesia, understood as a community of the inhabitants of the Odra River basin bound by administrative ties, but above all sharing cultural, economic, and political interests alongside a self-identification with the ideal Silesian community existing in the past and present of our heroes: their regional identity.

The awareness of Silesia has been alive, or perhaps we should more accurately say has been recorded in sources for the past eight and a half centuries, roughly since 1163. However, the mere presence of 'Silesia' as a community in sources does not provide information regarding the social range of the phenomenon or its persistence. In other words, by intuitively appealing to the ideal category of 'Silesia', have historians failed to perceive the need to define a social group in regard to which we may refer to a keen sense of belonging to the region? What significance did a sense of connection with Silesia have in its inhabitants' important decisions? What has led to Silesia, as an ideal type, uniting a community living

[2] See *Entre Portugal e a Galiza (Sécs. XI a XVII). Um olhar peninsular sobre uma região histórica*, ed. Luís Adão da Fonseca, Porto 2014; *Catalonia and Portugal. The Iberian Peninsula from the Periphery*, eds Flocel Sabbaté, Luís Adão da Fonseca, Bern-Berlin-Bruxelles et alii 2015; *Regions in Clio's Looking Glass. How Historiography Shaped Europe's Spatial Identities*, eds Dick de Boer, Luís Adão da Fonseca (in print); *Different Europes. The Historical Evolution of Territorial Identities and Attachments as Formative Forces in a Changing Europe*, ed. Dick de Boer (in print).

in a geographical area, appearing with regularity in historiographical, political, and economic sources since the second half of the 12th century?

In the case of Silesia, the appeal to the 'genius loci', the ideal strength rooted in the landscape that would push residents to create a community, is not convincing. The geographical nature of the area did not determine the necessity of cooperation among inhabitants across the Odra basin – and such cooperation was usually not recorded. Why, then, did the inhabitants of the lands around the Odra desire for Silesia to be commemorated, and for belief in the existence of a region as a territorial and social phenomenon personified by Silesia to last?

The answer to the question 'Why does a region exist?' could be answered with the general definition already given above: the reason for its existence is to support the higher structure of administration, *id est* the state. That said, in the case of Silesia, this answer does not explain the continuity of its regional awareness, lasting from the second half of the 12th century up to the present day despite multiple and profound changes in administrative structure. Apparently, the continuity of the region corresponded and still corresponds with the needs of its residents, which are not satisfied by the immediate or local community, nor a sense of belonging to a large body of subjects under a supreme ruler, and later – to the nation. After 1945, when Silesia was faced with a brutal disruption to the cultural, economic and political ties serving as the basis for the functioning of the region, it might have be thought that 'Silesianness' would not be able to survive the replacement of existing (mostly German) inhabitants with a heterogeneous, largely distrustful (mostly Polish) community which was hostile to the culture that had previously developed in the region. And yet, despite all the difficulty, the idea of Silesia has survived. Why did – and today why do – the people of Silesia want it to exist for them and in them? How do they support its existence – if, in fact, they do? What is the extent to which the region supports the involvement of its residents?

Do the inhabitants need the region, and if so, what, exactly, do they need it for?

Geography and natural factors

It would be difficult to assume that the formation of the region, and then the continuity of Silesia was decided by natural conditions. Neither the Odra river nor its basin system served as a unifying force for the lands lying within its reach. This was because neither in the Middle Ages, nor in the modern era, was there a river-based network for the exchange of goods and services which would unite local

economies within the larger region with more specific economic profiles. The Odra itself also did not become a trade route for the transport of goods essential to the local economies in terms of export[3]. With the exception of the southern border, clearly marked by the mountain ranges of the Sudety Mountains and wooded areas of its foothills, it is impossible to identify clear natural barriers defining the territory of the Silesian region. On the contrary, it is a part of the Central European lowlands in the north, and highlands in the south, extending at least from the Elbe to the Bug. Geographically, northern Silesia is closer to Greater Poland region, the middle to the Lausitz and the Kalisz region, and the southern to Lesser Poland than to one anthroporegional area[4]. Archeological research has not confirmed the existence of any regional specificity in the material culture of the peoples inhabiting the Odra basin before the birth of state institutions as well. At most, according to one of the hypotheses we might assume a growing dependence of the middle Odra basin community on the political association of Silesians, or the creation of a regional sense of unity based on their traditions. The chronology of such a process, called 'Silesianisation'[5] by Stanisław Rosik, would be vague and difficult to identify. Especially given that, beyond the geographical scope – itself controversial - of Thietmar of Merseburg's notes regarding the 'pagus silensi', we do not know whether and to what extent the Odra basin identified with 'Silesia'[6] before the reign of Boleslaus I the Tall (1163-1201). It would seem that regardless of the source of the Silesian - Ślężan tradition as the idea for unifying the Odra basin under the name of 'Silesia', the rise of the same Silesia as a region has to be understood in conjunction with factors resulting from the operation of state entities. Paradoxically, the first centuries of the existence of the states of the Přemyslids and Piasts are connected with the creation, or at the very least the functioning, of a geographical barrier separating the north-western and south-eastern lands of latter Silesia, the so-called forest clearing ('Przesieka'). Even the weakening of its significance as the result of decisions by the princes in the 13th and 14th centuries on felling

[3] Teresa Kulak, *Gospodarka i procesy społeczno-gospodarcze na obszarze Śląska (od połowy XVIII wieku do 1918 roku)*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 69 (2014), no. 3, p. 41.

[4] Gerard Kosmala, *Charakterystyka geograficzna Śląska*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 67 (2012), no. 4, p. 7-28; idem, *Geographical characteristics of Silesia*, [in:] *The Long Formation of the Region Silesia (c. 1000-1526)*, ed. Przemysław Wiszewski, pp. 19-39 (the book is available at http://www.bibliotekacyfrowa.pl/Content/49790/Cuius_regio_vol_1.pdf).

[5] Stanisław Rosik, *Kształtowanie się Śląska (do 1163 r.). Czynniki integracji regionalnej*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 67 (2012), no. 4, p. 31-51; idem, *The formation of Silesia (to 1163). Factors of regional integration*, [in:] *The Long Formation of the Region Silesia*, pp. 41-64.

[6] See Przemysław Wiszewski, *Region wrocławski - region śląski. Podziały terytorialne a kształtowanie wspólnoty regionalnej w XI - pierwszej połowie XIII w. Esej źródłowy*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 66 (2011), no. 3, p. 11-25.

the forest and the establishment of new settlements was done not in order to connect the two parts of the region, but to increase the princely income and acquire treasure from more settlements.

This situation changed slightly in later times. Indeed, in the second half of the 19th century, especially in the interwar period, the Odra began to serve as a transport route for coal from the Upper Silesian Basin to the north. However, the impact of this route on the development of a sense of regional community was limited. The direct effects of its existence were felt by few inhabitants, as the frequency and volume of traffic was so low that – with some exceptions (towns of Kędzierzyn-Koźle, Gliwice) – they did not significantly affect the shape of the local economies, even in the case of settlements located directly along the river[7]. Thus, the biggest economic revolution associated with the natural resources of Silesia, that is, the expansion of mining and the use of bituminous coal during the Industrial Revolution, for a long time did not entail valuing those natural resources as a factor unifying the entire regional community which would describe its character as a symbolic element that defines the nature of local socioeconomic life. This was despite the fact that in the first half of the 19th century, coal mining achieved similar dimensions in both Lower and Upper Silesia. The situation first changed during the second half of the 19th century, when the dynamic growth in mining of minerals rendered heavy industry a symbol of Upper Silesia. In the 20th century, there was even a radical shift of identification of 'Silesia' in Polish culture from the Odra basin area to the lands of Upper Silesia, associated with coal mining and subjected to intensive industrialization. In this case, there was a specific interaction of geographical factors with ones which were either political, economic or cultural. As a result – and this is a paradox of sorts – in the end, a geographical factor played a significant role in the creation of a new Silesia. However, to what extent it is a permanent phenomenon remains debatable.

[7] See Miron Urbaniak, *Czynniki integrujące i dezintegrujące gospodarkę Śląska w latach 1918-1945*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 68 (2013), no. 4, p. 33-55; idem, *Integrating and disintegrating factors for the economy of Silesia in the interwar period*, [in:] *Region Divided. Times of Nation-States*, pp. 67-96 (the book is available at http://www.bibliotekacyfrowa.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=64229&from=publication).

State - central and local government

As pointed out above, the formation of the Silesian region was determined by the functioning of state institutions. Assuming an automatic relationship between the extension of a state institution to the Odra basin lands and the rise of a region in the same area seems rather hasty. Although there are many indications that in the early Piast monarchy, perhaps even in the 10th century within the state of the Přemyslids, Wrocław played an important role in the network of the state's main strongholds, and after the year 1000 in the organization of the Church. The lands related to Wrocław could have functioned as an administrative unit. The fighting of the Přemyslids and the Piasts over control of the Odra basin in the second half of the 10th century and in the first half of the 11th can confirm the distinctiveness of the territory within state institutions[8]. However, it is not possible to determine either the range or the character of such an entity (one or many, administration organized similarly or differently than the other lands of the monarchy), or awareness of its existence as a sustainable entity surviving in the social awareness of any social group. Testimony to the poor identification of the Odra basin as an entity with a separate form of any sort of identity is the lack of commemoration of creation of the bishopric of Wrocław in the year 1000. The institutional memory of the Church stubbornly combined the creation of the bishopric with the person of the duke of Poland, Casimir the Restorer (1039-1058) up until the times of modern critical historiography.

There is no record of the Odra basin lands bearing a specific and lasting name that would allow the crystallization of a sense of distinctiveness among its residents, or at least its elites, from other subjects of the Přemyslids or Piasts, until the second half of the 12th century. There is a strong argument for the functioning of the Silesian lands up until 1138, and maybe even longer, as a complex of unspecified borders and potential internal divisions, without strong ties between various social groups, not to mention ties which would bind the community as a whole, in the historic region. The frontier character of the lands could affect the specific organization of local administration, focused on defense against raids by neighbours. However, the geopolitical situation did not lead – or at least we are not aware that it did – to the emergence and consolidation of a particular ethos of the local population as a whole at the time. There were no narratives or habits which would distinguish them from other subjects of the Přemyslids and Piasts. Finally, the recognition of communities living in the lands near Odra as forming one region prior

[8] For more detail, see S. Rosik, *Kształtowanie się Śląska*; idem, *The formation of Silesia*.

to 1138, and perhaps even to the second half of the 12th century, seems rather anachronistic.

The situation was different when the Odra basin lands drastically changed their function, and were converted from the border of a larger state unit into a separate state institution. More precisely – into two, and shortly thereafter into more such institutions. This change occurred not so much during the brief reign of duke senior of Poland, Ladislaus the Exile (1138-1141), as in the days of his sons, Boleslaus the Tall and Mieszko Tanglefoot. It was they who, after returning to Poland from exile in 1163, built their authority here. They also divided the land among themselves, and also between the sons of Boleslaus the Tall (Konrad, reigning in Głogów, and Jarosław, the bishop of Wroclaw, wielding Opole). The reign of Boleslaus and Mieszko perpetuated the distinction between the southern Odra basin and middle and northern Odra basin. The areas covered by the authority of one prince, and soon an entire dynasty descended from two brothers, solidified their political distinctiveness. At this point, the fusing element of this distinction in the case of Boleslaw the Tall and his successors reigning over the middle and northern Odra basin was the introduction of a separate name, which would define a new area and community – Silesia. A little later, Mieszko, followed by his successor, adopted a different form of identification in relation to the lands of the south--eastern Odra basin, namely a reference to the name of the capital of the duchy – Opole and introduce the form 'dux de Oppul'[9]. Paradoxically, the fact of belonging to a particular state was not the force behind the creation of the Silesian region, but the conversion of an unspecified administrative unit of the monarchy into state units linked by the kinship of dynasts, yet separated by political contradictions.

This does not mean that since c. 1175, the idea of Silesia embodied in the political game became the leading determinant of political discourse, uniting the elites of the Odra basin for centuries in the name of the idea of 'Silesianness'. As a matter of fact, from the emergence of the first signs of a regional identity up until the extinction of the Silesian line of the Piast dynasty (1675), an internal division into duchies overseen by rulers either independent from one another, or at least striving to maintain the widest possible margin of independence, was characteristic of the history of Silesia as a region. This was also not changed by the payment of tribute by most of the princes to the king of Bohemia (1327-1336), nor by that king directly asserting authority over selected duchies. Not only did

[9] P. Wiszewski, *Region wrocławski - region śląski*; Wojciech Mrozowicz, *W poszukiwaniu śląskiej tożsamości regionalnej (do 1526 r.)*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 67 (2012), no. 4 p. 140-143; idem, *Regional identity in Silesia (until 1526)*, [in:] *The Long Formation of the Region Silesia*, pp. 215-235.

the individual princes, but even officials representing the Bohemian king in the Duchy of Świdica- -Jawor (which he ruled since 1368 and directly since 1392) sought to emphasize its distinctiveness from the rest of the Silesian territories[10]. At the same time, the Duchy of Wrocław, although directly administered by the king, sought rather to cooperate with the princes ruling individual duchies of the province. These same rulers, not guided by the idea of Silesian unity, rarely acted in concert; when they did so, it was only in the face of a grave threat. In most cases they pursued their own objectives, on their own, while ignoring the decisions of their 'Silesian' neighbors[11].

The result of this situation was the specific functioning of the Silesian duchies within the Kingdom of Bohemia, or more broadly since 1526 within lands ruled by the Habsburg monarchy. On the one hand, as a result of the converging interests of Bohemian kings, princes, and estates of the duchies of Silesia in the 15th century, there was a transformation of separate national entities – duchies – into the elements co-creating Silesia as a province and land of the Kingdom of Bohemia. The symbol of this change was the emergence and consolidation of the custom of convening the Silesian Parliament and the appointment of the royal prefect for the entire Odra basin from the second half of the 15th century. The lands comprising the Odra basin officially began being referred to as the Lower and Upper Silesia. But neither the creation of local, pan-Silesian authorities, nor of the royal offices which shared the very same character, shattered the deep divisions between Lower and Upper Silesia; nor did this occur within each of these parts, as the autonomy of duchies and later the free state countries in the administrative structure of the Kingdom remained. The local government offices, particularly the Silesian Parliament, functioned as an integrating force for the elites of the province, although the extent of this integration was moderate. After all, alongside the Silesian

[10] Marcin Pauk, Ewa Wółkiewicz, *Struktury administracyjne Śląska jako czynnik spójności prawno-ustrojowej (XII-XV w.)*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 67 (2012), no. 4 p. 61, 67, 73; iidem, *The administrative structure of Silesia as a determinant of legal and constitutional cohesion (12th-15th century)*, [in:] *The Long Formation of the Region Silesia*, pp. 65-91; Gabriela Wąs, *Instytucje i zarządzanie w procesach integracji i dezintegracji Śląska*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 68 (2013), no. 2, p. 11-13; eadem, *Institutions and administrative bodies, and their role in the processes of integration and disintegration of Silesia*, [in:] *The Strenghtening of Silesian Regionalism*, pp. 21-73 (the book is available at http://www.bibliotekacyfrowa.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=73766&from=publication).

[11] Przemysław Wiszewski, *Destrukcyjne czy spajające region? Grupy społeczne na średniowiecznym Śląsku w kontekście aktywności politycznej (czwarta ćwierć XII-XV w.)*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 67 (2012), no. 4, p. 119, 129-134; idem, *Region-integrating or region-disintegrating? The social groups of medieval Silesia examined in the context of their political activity (from the last decades of the 12th century to the 15th century)*, [in:] *The Long Formation of the Region Silesia*, pp. 129-165.

Parliament, which had significant fiscal and less formal advisory powers, there was a whole heterogeneous structure of parliaments of duchies, and even individual *weichbilds* (administrative units consisted of a town and neighbouring villages). At the same time, equipping the royal offices, especially those connected to Prague and representing mainly the interests of the Bohemian estates, with pan-Silesian competences provoked resistance against central authority[12]. The situation changed as a result of the Thirty Years War to the extent that it resulted in a slow exchange of the political elites. Princes and native patricians, mostly Protestant, seeking to maintain the existing autonomous position of duchies, were replaced by people promoted or brought from the outside by the royal authorities. Catholics came from outside of Silesia; ruling over its lands owing to royal favor, they were closely associated with the power of the Habsburgs and supported the operation of central offices[13]. The resistance of traditional administrative structures, the strength of the local traditions of autonomous duchies, and finally the political weakness of the Habsburgs made it impossible until the end of their rule over the united Silesia (1740) to centralize power in the province. Forces of autonomous tradition on the one hand, and of centralization efforts on the other – both in the context of the local government, as well as from the perspective of the royal authorities – were kept in relative balance.

Occupation of the majority of Silesia by Prussia (since 1741) was of inestimable importance for the functioning of Silesia as a region. On the one hand, administrative reforms by the Hohenzollerns dismantled the old elements of the duchies' autonomy and ended the heterogeneity of the region's power structures. The first step toward this, taken shortly after the seizure of Silesia, was the abolition of most of the powers of local government institutions, both at regional and local levels. But even then the existence of the historical network of duchies and *weichbilds* was retained. In this aspect, the decisive change was the nationwide reforms of Stein and Hardenberg introduced in the years 1807-1821. Historical administrative divisions were then replaced by a system based on the French model, seeking to abolish

[12] G. Wąs, *Instytucje i zarządzanie*, p. 9-14, 20-22.

[13] Gabriela Wąs, *Struktura społeczna i grupy społeczne w procesach integracji i dezintegracji Śląska jako regionu (1526-1619)*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 68 (2013), no. 2, p. 51-53 (on the pro-regional and maybe even pro-local character of the Silesian nobility, and chiefly pro-local of the bourgeoisie until 1619); eadem, *Social structures and social groups in the processes of integration and disintegration of Silesia as a region (1526-1619)*, [in:] *The Strenghtening of Silesian Regionalism*, pp. 103-126; Arno Herzig, *Die Region Schlesien (1618-1740). Die sozialen Gruppierungen und ihre Bedeutung für die Identität des Landes,* 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 68 (2013), no. 2, p. 60 (on changes within the Silesian aristocracy), 65-66 (on the exclusion of protestant bourgeoisie from the political life of the region), 72 (on the weak sense of regional identity among the aristocracy and the educated bourgeoisie being the group which passed on the idea of this identity); *idem*, [in:] *The Strenghtening of Silesian Regionalism*, pp. 127-143.

the old divisions of the duchies and rationalize the size of the basic administrative units of counties (*Kreise*), in isolation from the ancient traditions of *weichbilds*. As a result, the Prussian Odra basin was transformed into something similar to the other administrative entities of the Kingdom of Prussia: the province of Silesia. This did not mean, however, that the administrative structure of the province supported the development of regional identity. On the contrary, in accordance with the underlying principles, it sought to weaken the potential threat to the centralized state which a strong regionalism could pose. Therefore, next to the pan-Silesian framework of the province, there were divisions into regencies (*Regierungsbezirks*): Głogów, since 1809, the short-lived Legnica (1815-1820), Dzierżoniów, Wrocław and Opole. As a result, while on the one hand the Prussian reforms reinforced the importance of Silesia as a separate, strong administrative unit – which was reflected in the incorporation of Saxon Lausitz into Silesia at the end of the Napoleonic era – on the other hand, the division into regencies strengthened separatisms, especially that of the south-east, namely Upper Silesia, from other Odra basin lands[14]. We must also keep in mind that after 1740, a period of dividing the united since the 15th century Silesian lands between the Kingdom of Prussia and the Habsburg monarchy began. As a matter of fact, this division has not been undone to this day. Subsequent historical events only strengthened it. The end of World War I and the creation of two new states, Czechoslovakia and Poland, led not only to the division of Upper Silesia between Germany and Poland, but also to the division of Habsburgs' Cieszyn Silesia between Poland and the Czech Republic. The latter division persists to this day.

Despite the presence of the first permanent division of Silesia in 1741, the period of rule exercised by the King of Prussia, later the Emperor of Germany, was crucial in the formation of a broadly-accepted idea of Silesian unity. Despite administrative reforms repeatedly carried out until 1945 and the actual disintegration of the unity of Upper Silesia in 1921, the belief of local elites in the integral administrative unity of the Prussian Odra basin was successfully maintained for over a half century. However, one cannot deny that the activities of the state in this respect were, at best, ambivalent. On the one hand, they abolished the heterogeneity of the administrative structure which had supported the unification of Silesia, and thus the internal cohesion of the province. On the other hand, the authorities freely manipulated the borders of both external and internal provinces. Interestingly, these

[14] Piotr Jaworski, *Administracja państwowa i samorządowa na Śląsku w latach 1740-1918 jako czynnik integracji/dezintegracji regionalnej*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 69 (2014), no. 3, p. 14-20.

attempts were tempered by the pressure of tradition, and perhaps even the myth of unity of the whole of Silesia. Already in October 1919 the German parliament passed a law on the division of the province of Silesia into two new provinces: Lower and Upper Silesia. This was closely related to the political needs of the day resulting from the upcoming referendum on the future belonging of Upper Silesia to Germany or newly re-born Poland. This division corresponded to the division of Silesia into two parts, already visible in the previous decades and even centuries. This does not mean, however, that the German inhabitants of Upper Silesia wanted to break from the existing administrative traditions. Even though they accepted the division of the province in 1922, they rejected the possibility of transforming Upper Silesia into a separate German country in the referendum, and voted to remain in Prussia instead. This decision highlights the dominance of state identity and Upper Silesian identification over any pan-Silesian sentiment[15]. The latter undoubtedly was still alive in the elite circles of Lower Silesia, which had not come to terms with the division of Silesia. The Upper Silesian elites strongly supported the idea of the distinctiveness of their lands, which was confirmed by the Upper Silesian Parliament's adoption of heraldic signs distinct from the Silesian ones[16].

A similar phenomenon could be observed in the part of Upper Silesia which was incorporated into Poland in 1921. There we could also observe very strong tendencies to separate Silesian lands, but in this case they were to be torn apart from the other components of the state. The autonomy of the Silesian province introduced after the normalization of state borders went further than the independence of the German province of Silesia. It was also contested by Polish politicians, especially after the May coup of Józef Piłsudski (1926). As a result, the Polonization activities carried out in Silesia only boosted the desire to maintain its autonomy. What is more, they aroused resentment among the indigenous population, strengthening the emotional component of the conviction of the need to maintain as far-reaching independence of the region from any state entity as possible.

The years of Nazism in Germany and the Second World War did not fundamentally change the situation shaped in the period of 1919-1922. Indeed, the Nazis did support the concept of the unity of Silesia within the Reich. But they agreed to the joining of both Silesian provinces only on the eve of the war, in 1938. However, when the German Silesian province annexed the Polish Silesian province and

[15] Tomasz Kruszewski, *Śląskie władze administracyjne wobec przekształceń terytorialnych Śląska (1918-1945)*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 68 (2013), no. 4, p. 11, 13; idem, *Silesian administrative authorities and territorial transformations of Silesia (1918-1945)*, [in:] *Region Divided. Times of Nation-States*.

[16] T. Kruszewski, *Śląskie władze administracyjne*, p. 15.

some districts of Lesser Poland, the decision to divide Silesia anew was taken. In December 1940 Silesia was broken up – one might say, traditionally – into the provinces of Lower and Upper Silesia[17]. The large Silesian province proved to be too uniform and difficult to manage for it to be maintained over a longer period of time. The final interwar period deepened the division of the Odra basin into two areas. The activity of the Nazis in many ways fostered the amelioration of centrifugal tendencies, including regionalisms. However, in the case of Silesia, it favored the division of the region. While the Lower Silesian elites wanted to maintain the unity of the province, the inhabitants of Upper Silesia increasingly emphasized the distinctiveness of their community. And finally, this option proved attractive to the authorities, as it allowed them to manage the smaller communities more effectively, which by nature were more easily covered by uniform legal activity, including those relating to control and repression.

The tendency to maintain and even multiply these divisions remained after 1945. In 1946, it was decided to create two voivodeships (provinces) – Wrocław and Silesia (with its capital in the city of Katowice) – referring to the historical traditions of administration, although without some of the northern lands included in the Greater Poland region. In 1950, from some counties of the Wrocław province and some from Greater Poland, a new unit was created: Zielona Góra voivodeship (with the name that came from its capital, town of Zielona Góra). At the same time, the names of Lower Silesian administrative units consistently avoided any references to their affiliation with the historical region of Silesia. These were reserved for Upper Silesia, as referring to the *Polish* heritage of the interwar Silesia voivodeship. This trend survived even after the establishment of a new entity in 1950, namely the Opole voivodeship[18].

Even when assuming the primacy of historical arguments for polonization of local names, the importance of the past and continuity of tradition in the functioning of the new Silesian communities were clearly emphasized. However, these references to the past were not made from the perspective of regional interest, but rather the national one. The primacy of the immediate needs of the central government elites over the need to shape regional identities of the new residents of the Odra basin became even more pronounced during the subsequent administrative reforms. Upper Silesia was treated as a separate region – the mainstay of Polishness, the symbol of the fight against Germanization, in addition to its heavy industrial economic

[17] *Ibidem*, p. 26-27.

[18] Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, *Zmiany administracyjne i wybrane instytucje jako źródło sił spajających i rozprężających spójność społeczeństwa Śląska po II wojnie światowej*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 70 (2015), no. 3, p. 3.

profile, corresponding to the policy of the new government. These elements rarely arose in Lower Silesia, populated by immigrants and migrants. This was decisive when it came to determining the importance of Silesia in the official and, soon thereafter, the vernacular language of the new Polish state's residents. 'Silesia' was not land along the Odra with its capital in Wrocław. Katowice took over the role of the latter, which was then assumed by the whole conurbation of Upper Silesia; soon, it was the highly industrialized part of southern Silesia that came to be consistently referred to as Silesia.

The great administrative reform of 1975 even more clearly emphasized the tendency to treat in an arbitrary manner any and all administrative traditions and historically-formed territorial bonds. Upper Silesia as a part of the Katowice voivodeship maintained relative uniformity within the province, with the separation of less urbanized lands that became part of the Bielsko voivodeship. Other Silesian lands, however, were divided into six small units whose boundaries had almost no reference to the historical administrative divisions of Silesia. The largest fragmentation affected the oldest Silesian lands, as though a relatively large, separate Opole voivodeship was retained, the lands of Silesia proper on the middle course of the Odra were divided into five regions, with some of them being additionally incorporated into the new Leszno voivodeship consisted mostly of Greater Poland lands. The situation was only partially changed by another administrative reform of 1998. Once again, the adjustment of borders was guided rather by current economic and political interests than historical consideration. As a result, the lands of historical Silesia were divided between the Lubuskie, Lower Silesian, Opole and (again) Silesian voivodeships, including the former lands of Upper Silesia. The past community of these lands is barely reflected in any joint political, economic, and even educational initiatives. The banner of 'Silesia' is occasionally waved for the purposes of unifying larger interest groups. However, complex administrative positions cause difficulties in developing any kind of cohesive policy, and thus in assigning such groups a specific meaning in the social space. From the administrative standpoint, relationships are shaped by current needs, for whom the history of the Odra basin is not of crucial importance.

In over 840 years of the functioning of the Silesian region, the decisions made by state authorities addressing the Odra basin lands and regarding the shape of the administrative order did not play a uniform, clearly defined role in the functioning of the Silesian community. Of course, the long ideological and administrative pressure on preserving one Silesian centre of power, together with maintaining the corresponding borders within one state, visible especially in times of the Habsburgs, led

to the development of the geographical scope of the region as an administrative entity. However, the hypothesis of constancy of the provinces and communities of Silesia in terms of administrative relations in the framework of even one state is difficult to justify by the sources. Indeed, the historical tradition of the administrative division strengthened the sense of unity of the region up until the Prussian reforms carried out in the first quarter of the 19th century. However, after its implementation, the new administrative order emphasized the heterogeneity of the Odra basin rather than its unity. This was met with a lively response, particularly from the elites of Upper Silesia, whose connection with Wrocław was questioned from the beginning of the 15th century. The activities of state authorities in determining the administrative framework of the Odra basin communities through all this time had a very relative character in relation to the cohesion of the region. The ultimate goal of all power elites of countries including the Silesia within its borders was to use the idea of the region as a tool for facilitating the management and operation of the Odra basin. The historical unity of these lands was helpful, but it could also be an obstacle to the realization of the current interests of state authorities. Grassroots and local government activity in the management of territories along the Odra from the Middle Ages up until 1740 balanced the centrifugal tendencies and a sense of belonging to one Silesian community. However, this factor has been marginalized since the Prussian times, with the focus on realizing state policy, which shaped the perspective of local governments on the history and shape of the region. It is also in this case that we can observe the desire to maximize the benefits of particular social groups on different levels of the administrative structure. The idea of the region was a potential binding factor in their actions, which was exploited in convenient situations. Yet it was never a permanent element, nor did it clearly define and cover all the inhabitants of the region as a part of political, administrative, and ideological activities undertaken by local government.

One may risk the statement that the region of Silesia was created by transforming parts of the Odra basin into a state entity during the 12th century, which later took the shape recognized today as historic by dint of the fragile agreement between the elites of the Bohemian Kingdom and Silesia itself concerning the participation of the regional community in the management of the Kingdom. It should, however, be noted that at least from the late 13th century until the end of the Habsburg era, the will of the rulers and others in power was a factor too weak to bring about radical changes to the shape and role of the region. Those occurred with the use of some forms of traditional regional identification, the identity of its inhabitants. Changes effected without taking this factor into account were of a transitional

nature. However, after 1740, we can additionally observe a tendency on the part of state authorities to play a greater role in creating the inhabitants' perception of their region. Breaking the historical traditions and the introduction of a new system of administrative divisions in the first quarter of the 19th century shaped a new, clearly divided Silesia. This acceptance of the duality of the region had already led to the domination of the idea of division rather than unity of the Silesian community before the outbreak of World War II. The history of the efforts of the Nazi authorities to restore the division of Silesia underline that the monolithic region had ceased to be an appropriate unit for the nation-state. This trend, along with the shift of identification of Silesia from the areas in the central basin of the Odra to the area surrounding Katowice has remained a reality of the Polish state until today.

Identification/regional identity.

The main problem in the study of regional identity remains the fact that the sources directly relating to its existence are very pragmatic in their approach. They were, and in fact still are, messages designed to convince the reader to a vision of some aspect of the world around them, and above all, to support a particular view of the current political situation. Also, the element of persuasion in this case is the appeal to a historical tradition that defines the identity of the members of the target audience. In recent times it has become difficult to use the results of analyses of the content of medieval or modern regional chronicles, because the result is the construction of models of operation of a regional community proposed by the authors of these works, which may be shared by the members of groups comprising their political base[19]. However, the compatibility of such proposals with the actual beliefs of the inhabitants of the region can be assumed only after confirmation in other types of sources. Especially if one manages to capture the wide dissemination and consideration of such a model of a region's existence in the current political,

[19] Sometimes, however, a contemporary analysis of the regional chronicles reveals the author's views on the importance of the function of the regional community in the wider state community, but does not allow for the identification of a group which would support his vision of reality. Such is the case with the works of Abbot Arnold of Lübeck, who renders the rulers' care regarding the 'status terrae nostrae', Polabí, the focal point of his narrative. Especially in the context of the spread of Christianity and their care for the local community. Except that apart from the generalities concerning the people to whom the book was dedicated, nothing specific concerning the potential environment which would share the views of the abbot outside of his own monastery can be said, see Helmut G. Walther, *Zur Verschriftlichung nordelbischen Sobestbewußtseins um 1200 in der Chronik Abt Arnolds von Lübeck*, [in:] *Schriftkultur und Landesgeschichte. Studien zum südlichen Ostseeraum vom 12. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Matthias Thumser, Köln-Wiemar-Wien 1997 (=Mitteldeutsche Forschungen, vol. 115), p. 18-21.

economic and social activities of the potential addressees of such messages. In other words, regional identity exists in the form of a possibility, a phenomenon suggested to its consumers on the pages of works studied by historians, but its true face is revealed only through confrontation of the generated results with actual decisions regarding important issues related to the community.

Examining the results of deliberations of the researchers involved in the 'Cuius regio...' project in this way paints a picture which is far from uniform. Starting from 1175 and the first use of the term 'the prince of Silesia' by Boleslaw I the Tall, the local Piast dynasty consistently promoted a vision of Silesia as a solution closely associated with the dynasty, its heritage, its natural area of power. Such was the view of the relationship between the rulers and the region as presented in the written in the 2nd half of the 14th century 'Chronica principum Poloniae'[20]. And although from the end of the 13th century, and at the latest since the mid-14th century, the Odra basin in fact was almost the sole area of political activity of the local Piasts, it did not mean there was a shared desire among the whole political elite of these lands to work together. Belonging to the regional community gained in importance in the face of danger, both military and ideological, as in the case of Hussitism or other political dominance which discriminated against the local elites, or in respect of fighting the centralist tendencies of the Bohemian kings from the end of the 15th century up until the Thirty Years' War. However, even in moments of particular danger, especially when the threat was perceived as less defined, as in the dispute with King George of Podebrady, the elite of the Silesian duchies evaluated the political reality in different ways and engaged in separate, uncoordinated actions, justifying such behavior with a view to the good of their duchies. At the same time, beginning in the 15th century it was most frequently a native duchy or even town which served as a point of reference in both historiographical reflections and in the descriptions of the land closest to the author's heart; this, however, was also true in respect of the political decision-making process[21].

Beginning with the 13th century, awareness of the existence of the Silesian region was ever present, as a potential being, in the reflections of intellectuals[22].

[20] Wojciech Mrozowicz, *W poszukiwaniu śląskiej tożsamości regionalnej*, p. 143-144.

[21] *Ibidem*, p. 153-154.

[22] See Wojciech Mrozowicz, *Od kiedy możemy mówić o istnieniu tożsamości ślaskiej? Uwagi na marginesie średniowiecznego dziejopisarstwa śląskiego*, [in]: *Radices Silesiae - Silesiacae Radices. Śląsk: kraj, ludzie, 'memoria' a kształtowanie się społecznych więzi i tożsamości (do końca XVIII wieku)= Schlesien: Land, Leute, memoria und die Herausbildung der sozialen Bindungen und der Identitäten (bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts)*, ed. Stanisław Rosik, Thomas Wünsch, Wrocław 2011 (=Radices Silesiae - Silesiacae Radices, eds Marie Bláhová, Stanisław Rosik, Thomas Wünsch; vol. 1), p. 135-147.

A particularly strong emotional relationship with Silesia as their homeland was declared by Silesians educated in the spirit of humanism in the 16th century. This trend, stressing love for the country from which they came, was also present in the educational process in a growing number of schools. It provided the opportunity to spread this attitude and thereby enhance the consistency of the educated elites at provincial level. Over the next two centuries this trend was maintained, but with a compelling addition. While in the 16th century, alongside numerous works praising Silesia, there were many texts devoted to Wrocław as its capital; from the mid-17th century there was also an increasing number of writings in which emphasis was placed on commitment to the smallest, local community. Also, narratives about Silesia as a province are frequently divided into individual stories of particular duchies[23]. Undoubtedly, the activities of local historiographers, cartographers and antiquarians introduced the concept of Silesia into the mainstream ideological discourse of the Silesian elites in the 16th century, thus creating conditions for establishing and consolidating their bonds throughout the region. This trend, however, collapsed along with the destruction of the importance of pan-Silesian self-government institutions in the period following the Thirty Years' War. The intellectuals of that time strengthened the bonds of local communities' educated elites with their own local cultural heritage. The feeling of belonging to a regional community receded into the background.

The functioning of the regional identity of the Catholic clergy of Silesia is yet another issue. Since its inception, Protestant clergy has been organized in accordance with the principle of subordination to particular rulers of duchies. It is hard to identify a pan-Silesian identity of the Lutheran clergy as a phenomenon rooted in the administrative shape of the Church. The situation was different with the Catholic clergy, which, organized within the framework of the bishopric comprising the lands of historical Silesia, could act as a factor disseminating a vision of the region as a point of reference in the construction of identity by the inhabitants of the Odra basin[24]. In fact, researchers point to specific pan-Silesian activities which also served the integration of the local community – legislation of the diocesan synods promoting the cult of St. Hedwig across the Odra, and in the modern period, visitations by emissaries of the bishop, who tried to restore uniformity

[23] Lucyna Harc, *Śląska świadomość regionalna w okresie nowożytnym (do 1740 r.)*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 68 (2013), no. 2, p. 98-106; eadem, *Determinants and catalysts of Silesian regional identity (1526-1740)*, [in:] *The Strenghtening of Silesian Regionalism*, pp. 189-201.

[24] See Blanka Zilynská, *Role církevních institucí v procesu integrace slezského regionu*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 66 (2011), no. 3, p. 37-49.

to the religious culture of the local clergy throughout the bishopric[25]. However, the protocols of such visitations indicate there was significant differentiation in both the situation of the clergy in the diocese, as well as in its approach to basic issues of ritual and dogma in the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century. And yet, we lack historiographic works concerning the history of the Wrocław bishopric – not bishops! – emphasizing the relationship of its history with the history of the region, which would be available at the same time and in a similar form to a wider range of readers. The exceptional involvement of the clergy in the creation and copying of catalogues (biographies) of bishops did not seem to mark the dissemination of a regional identity[26]. Rather, it suggests seeking support for their own vision of the world in the tradition set by the dynastic paradigm, the search for order in the rhythm of the continuity of power over the diocese. Once again, without emphasis on the privileged relationship of the bishopric and its borders with Silesia. Finally, both medieval and the modern historiographical reflections on the past of the region fail to reveal an emphasis on the relationship between the creation and functioning of the bishopric and the existence of Silesia as a regional community.

It is beyond doubt that the bishops of Wrocław were aware of the existence of the region and appealed to it from the 14th century, particularly since the 16th century, when they began holding the office of general royal governor (*Haubtmann*) of Silesia. For the political elites of the region, they were the natural, honorary regional leaders. This did not, however, mean that they consistently acted as animators of a political movement striving to strengthen the region's cohesion. Perhaps there was a synchronicity of separate phenomena – the existence of the region as an entity belonging to the secular socio-political sphere was not perceived as connected with the existence of the bishopric, as a unit with a different foundation and objectives for its existence? For even the Bishop of Wrocław became the prefect of Silesia not because of the majesty of his office, but because of the fact that from the late 13th century, the bishop was a Silesian duke based on his title to the Nysa-Otmuchów land, and from the middle of the 16th century he was the only Catholic among the Silesian dukes. The existence of a feeling of separateness of the two orders, of secular and church administration, among the bishops of Wrocław in the 16th century can be indicated by their avoidance – despite being, since 1536, the prefect of the province – of making any stronger efforts at preservation of the Roman faith in Silesia. Although they were sometimes criticized for it by canons of their own cathedral chapter, in this way they managed to keep peace in a country

[25] W. Mrozowicz, *W poszukiwaniu*, p. 148-153.
[26] *Ibidem*, p. 152.

dominated by Protestants[27]. At the same time, one should remember that historiographical declarations of lower-ranked medieval clergy attest to their deep attachment to the local reality – the city in which a monastery was located ('The Chronicle of the Abbots of Żagań') or the surrounding villages that were part of a monastery's demesne ('The Henryków Book'). It did not prevent the authors from also appealing to more complicated concepts of political reality, such as the region, the local duchy or its rulers. Such references are, however, only marginal, sparse among meticulous descriptions of local history[28].

The occupation of Silesia by Prussia until the Napoleonic Wars did not lead to any major changes in the scope of the province's inhabitants' identification with the chosen community. The treatment of the region by the authorities as a new, Prussian colony did not allow for emotional bonds with the new state to be established quickly and uniformly. However, this did not strengthen emotional ties on the basis of an 'us (Silesians) versus them (Prussians)' dichotomy. Silesian society was deeply divided in this regard. Positive references to the new authorities were made by the German-speaking Protestants, supported by the Prussian kings not only in the religious sphere, but also in terms of social advancement. Catholics, on the other hand, had a much more reserved view of the rulers of Prussia, and in extension to Silesian neighbors that supported them, especially in the face of growing discrimination after the end of the Seven-Years' War (1763), and particularly after the 1766 defection of the Bishop of Wrocław, who settled in his lands within the territory of the Kingdom of Bohemia[29]. Most of the burghers also had a negative attitude towards the new rulers, but without the creation of a pan-Silesian movement. Their self-government rights were taken away, they were burdened with high taxes and affected by obstructions to the development of economic activity. Economic difficulties after the Seven Years' War led to the emergence in 1770 of a pan-Silesian organization of the nobility, which was to support indebted landowners with preferential loans. This indicates the existence of a strong feeling of class identity among that social group, in regards to the nobility living within the borders of the Prussian province of Silesia. However, this did not extend to the creation of any common narration or bond that would lastingly connect all of the nobility in Silesia and that would strive to organize it into a relevant political force[30]. The relations within the noble class were a manifestation of concern for

[27] See: Gabriela Wąs, *Dzieje Śląska od 1526 do 1806 roku*, [in:] M. Czapliński, E. Kaszuba, G. Wąs, R. Żerelik, *op.cit.*, p. 149-151.
[28] W. Mrozowicz, *W poszukiwaniu*, p. 154.
[29] G. Wąs, *Dzieje Śląska*, p. 218-219, 242-243.
[30] *Ibidem*, p. 236.

their own economic safety and the social status of the whole group, expressly distinguishing the nobility from other social groups of Silesia. Also, for the first time in the region's history the rulers of Prussia clearly favored one ethnic group – Germans. This was visible *inter alia* in the colonization campaign supported by King Frederick I, which was intended to disrupt homogenous Polish settlements, especially in Upper Silesia[31]. As a result, the number of factors dividing Silesians increased, and the force of negative emotions proved to be too weak to create a sense of unity.

Only during the Napoleonic Wars, after the reforms of Stein and Hardenberg and in the years around the Spring of Nations (1848-1849) was a major change effected in the approach of the inhabitants of the Odra basin to their identification with the region. On the basis of the uprising of the nobility and academic youth against Napoleon, in support of the liberation of the country, i.e. the Kingdom of Prussia, a patriotic discourse was founded in 1813 on the Silesians' special bond with Prussia and the Hohenzollern dynasty. It was officially supported by the authorities and was widely reflected in the literature (including historiography) and education. However, it did not contain much substance that would unite Silesians horizontally, as co-inhabitants of the region. It supported a vertical identification of all subjects with the king and the Kingdom of Prussia. A real revolution in building pan-Silesian relations based on the acceptance of a common cultural heritage was brought only by the 1840s. This is when the 'The Society of Lovers of Silesian Antiquities' was founded. Historical regionalist research also become more common. The canon of discourse about the past began to include such terms as the *Schlesische Heimat* in relation to the whole of Silesia, comprised of smaller *Niederschlesische*, *Mittelschlesische* and *Oberschlesische Heimat*, used in reference to communities within each of the Silesian regencies. Such categorization of cultural and geographic bonds was a simple reflection of the new administrative order. And although this formula for constructing identity abandoned historical tradition in favor of the administrative context, it proved to be remarkably effective, as it was grounded in the contemporary reality. It was also supported by the authorities, as the development of bonds within the borders of the regencies and the province as a whole went hand in hand with emphasis on Prussian identity, and after 1871 – a German identity. The third element of the hierarchy of identity was the *Vaterland* – fatherland, the highest value[32].

[31] T. Kulak, *Gospodarka*, p. 43.

[32] Teresa Kulak, *Problem tożsamości narodowo-kulturalnej mieszkańców Śląska w latach 1741-1918*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 69 (2014), no. 3, p. 110-111, 117-119.

The ideology of state regionalism, developed in Silesia after 1813-1815, was meant first and foremost to strengthen the inhabitants' bond with the state, that is, Prussia, and later the German Empire, with its national, German ideology. This led to greater cohesion in society occupying the territories of Lower and Middle Silesia, which became (sub)regions within the Silesian province. But this effort also led to the disruption of social cohesion, particularly in Upper Silesia where, in the 19th century, a major part of society used the Polish language, and the lower social classes identified first and foremost with their local communities. For these people, the highest level of identity was Upper Silesia. The aggressive Germanisation policy, although it impelled many inhabitants to accept the new, German-language culture, was also opposed by many others. As a result of these ethno-cultural disputes, the strong separateness of Upper Silesia from the other parts of the province was reinforced[33].

Across the whole 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, until 1918, the dominant narration among the elites stressed the absolute, almost eternal bond between Silesia and the German culture and ethnic element. This aspect is emphasized by monographs of the history of the region and by descriptions of local histories. Their authors also actively supported the idea of a cultural and civilizational breakthrough connected with the seizure of Silesia by Prussia in 1740. But this close connection between regionalism and the interests of the state and nation was what allowed for the development of the movement. Also, it is difficult to unambiguously determine the stability of its influence on the wider group of the region's inhabitants. They received primarily only two types of information – about the past and the future of the Kingdom of Prussia, Germany and the German nation, and about the local history and their own surroundings. But it is through the local history, usually strongly grounded in the history of the duchy or the region, which could shape a feeling of belonging to a wider, regional community among its addressees, including children taught about the history of their *Little Homeland* in local schools. It is, however, hard not to conclude that the results of this process were unimpressive as far as the creation of bonds based on a feeling of belonging to a cultural, Silesian regional community is concerned.

This could be seen clearly in the interwar period, when, after over a century of influence of a universal, comprehensive system of education, two forms of identity were dominant among the inhabitants of Silesia – one of belonging to a nation, and one of belonging to a part of the old Silesia. This part could be a new region, like it was in the case of Upper Silesia, or a local space, which was much more

[33] *Ibidem*, p. 119-125.

common in Lower Silesia. The pan-Silesian level played a much smaller part in the hierarchy of identity. It is also clear that the intrusion of aggressive nationalisms in each of the three parts of Silesia – Czech, German and Polish – connected with administrative and economic pressure broke down the cohesion of identity within social groups. In the Czech part of Silesia, several forms of cultural identification were present, practically breaking with the Silesian context – the regional-national concept of the community of Sudetian Germans, a national, Czech identification of the lands of the Bohemian Crown, alongside the Czech concept of the autonomy of Těšín (Cieszyn) Silesia, in opposition to incorporating it into Moravia. The pro-Polish concept of Upper Silesian regionalism was also present[34]. The attitudes of the Silesians living in Germany were also similarly divided and associated with the national context. Among the aristocracy, there were both proponents of an autonomous state (Land) of Upper Silesia, and of close relations with Germany – or Poland. In the case of industrialists and the wealthy bourgeoisie, most were in favor of close ties with Germany. In regards to the lower level of identification, the members of this social group focused on relations within their interest group (connected with the profile of their commercial activity), and in regards to space they focused on the borders of the old districts (especially in Upper Silesia)[35]. For the first time in the history of Silesia, during the interwar period one can observe the contours of territorial and social identification of the lower social classes. In regards to rural communities, we may notice the continuation of the older strategy – focusing on the locality, accepting duties towards the state – which, aside from at the local level, did not lead to stronger social cohesion. Thigs were quite different in the case of the working class, who emphasized the local community in the territory of German Silesia, but also identified with national, German social class movements. Regional issues were of marginal importance to them. In contrast, in Polish Silesia, in opposition to attempts at Polonization and at importing the social relations more typical of contemporary Poland (low social status of workers and farmers, high status of civil servants and landowners), a strong Upper Silesian identity was forged. It included not just the urban proletariat, but also the rural population and the small number of Polish-language intelligentsia. This

[34] Bernard Linek, *Tożsamość śląska w okresie państw narodowych*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 68 (2013), no. 4, p. 101-108, 112-113; idem, *Silesian identity in the period of nation-states (1918-1945)*, [in:] *Region Divided. Times of Nation-States*, pp. 163-198.

[35] Tomasz Przerwa, *Struktura społeczna i grupy społeczne w procesach integracji i dezintegracji Śląska jako regionu (1918-1945)*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 68 (2013), no. 4, p. 59-63; idem, *Social structure and social groups in the processes of integration and disintegration of Silesia as a region (1918-1945)*, [in:] *Region Divided. Times of Nation-States*, pp. 97-127.

group's attitude towards the Polish national ideology after a period of great hope (1919-1922) was ambiguous, mostly characterized by disappointment, which emphasized the importance of the Upper Silesian identity even more[36].

The years of the Polish People's Republic strengthened the trend observed during the years 1741-1945 in relation to both new and old inhabitants of Silesia: the functioning of regional identity was to be subordinate to state/national identity. In the case of the current inhabitants of the Odra basin, the regional identity was to be linked with and used in support of Polish national identity; a similar phenomenon can, however, also be observed in the case of uprooted Silesians of German nationality. They kept, and often still maintain, strong bonds of a regional or local character (societies of inhabitants of cities or counties), but with a very strong national emphasis, which reinforces feelings of being wronged by Poles. In the case of Polish settlers, the separateness of the Silesian tradition was treated with suspicion by the authorities, sometimes even with hostility, which afflicted first and foremost the autochthonic population of Upper Silesia and Opole Silesia. Any research on local history was also meant to provide evidence of the close ties of each fragment of Silesia with the history of Poland and the Polish nation. Administrative divisions, in which the elites could try to confirm their position by appealing to the history of their part of the region, also did not help build a regional identity. This often amounted to attempts at finding a Polish context for local history. Given this, publications focused on the history of Silesia as a whole, like the popular works of Kazimierz Popiołek or the Polish Academy of Sciences' *History of Silesia* were a supplement, an approach allowing to locate the history of each local community, which rarely had insight in their own history, in the politically correct context of the history of Poland[37]. This way, regional identity became an element of national identity.

The years after 1989 brought an explosion of historiography in relation to the history of individual cities. However, the accelerated absorption of the history of Silesian communities before 1945 did not result in the building of a regional identity consistent with the old, historical borders of Silesia. A new monograph on Silesia, edited by Marek Czapliński, was written, which proved to be popular among educated readers[38]. However, there was no community that would

[36] T. Przerwa, *Struktura społeczna*, p. 63-70; B. Linek, *Tożsamość śląska*, p. 105-107, 115-117; Grzegorz Strauchold, *Zagadnienia etniczne a spójność społeczna Śląska w latach 1919-1945*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 68 (2013), no. 4, p. 81-84, 86.

[37] *Historia Śląska*, vol. 1-3, Wrocław 1960-1985; Kazimierz Popiołek, *Śląskie dzieje*, Warszawa 1976; idem, *Historia Śląska od pradziejów do 1945 r.*, Katowice 1984.

[38] M. Czapliński, E. Kaszuba, G. Wąs, R. Żerelik, *op. cit.*

appeal in a longer historical perspective to a wider audience referring to pan-Silesian ideas. Individual local governments commissioned monographs of the history of their parts of Silesia – this way the histories of Lower and Upper Silesia, as well as the history of Opole, alongside publications about the history of the Duchy of Opole were created[39]. Yet also in this case it is difficult to regard the construction of identities within the borders of the new, smaller Silesian regions as a linear and parallel process.

The identity of Upper Silesians, identified with Silesia itself, is supported by the media and political activity at the national level. The Opole identity, although it is not as ostensibly promoted and is expressed more through local politicians' references to local history, is present and can be activated in case of a threat to the existence of the Opole region as a separate administrative entity. The situation of Lower Silesia is the most complicated one. Despite the strongest historical claim to Silesian identification, it is blurred by a multitude of identities based on the old provinces, the traditions of duchies and states. There is a multitude of local cultural traditions which exist and function as a result of the transformation of customs brought by the settlers from the old Eastern Borderlands of pre-war Poland and from central Poland. Their importance fades along with the passing of the generation of migrants, yet this multitude is not being replaced by any specific regional, Lower Silesian culture, but rather by an indeterminate set of beliefs, attitudes and customs specific to local communities, without references to concrete cultural patterns[40]. The dominant position of the Wrocław metropolis further makes it difficult to create a vision of a close and a distant past that would be attractive for the community of the entire region, and which would not marginalize local communities.

Regardless of the perspective, the historically pan-Silesian identity, while still bearing some unrealized potential that could be used by interested parties, is currently in decline. There are no indications that it could become relevant again, eclipsing the new regional identities. And those identities, except maybe for the (Upper) Silesian identity, remain insufficiently indefinite and susceptible to transformation. In this context, the old, historical Silesia is currently divided into several new, emerging regions, accompanied by many local identities that together do not

[39] *Dolny Śląsk. Monografia historyczna*; J. Bahlcke, R. Kaczmarek, D. Gawrecki, *op. cit.; Opole. Dzieje i tradycja*, eds Urszula Zajączkowska, Bernard Linek, Krzysztof Tarka, Opole 2011; *Księstwa Opolskie i Raciborskie. Teoria – struktury – elity – dziedzictwo*, ed. Bogusław Czechowicz, Opole 2015.

[40] Joanna Nowosielska-Sobiel, *Cultural and regional identity in Silesia after 1945 (selected issues)* (in the present volume).

constitute a regional identity. Such a regional identity remains a vague possibility, invoked in special circumstances, and not necessarily in connection with any precise substance behind it.

The ambivalence of economy and ethnicity

There were three factors fundamental to the cohesion of the region and its decline. First, the organization of the community as a political entity, including its place in the state administrative structure. Second, the shape, organization and reach of constituents of the discourse regarding the cultural identity of the community of the inhabitants of the Odra basin in the geographical and national context. And third, the relations connecting the social groups of the inhabitants of the Odra basin in both of the aforementioned contexts, in the aspects of both internal and intergroup relations. Economic and ethnic issues were strictly connected with these dominant factors and rather strengthened their influence instead of modifying it.

The economy in the lands of the Odra basin never led in itself to unity of the regional community. This does not mean that some elements of economic activity did not strengthen the unity of selected vocational groups among the region's inhabitants. In the Middle Ages and the modern period, cooperation between centers of extraction and processing of mineral resources, especially iron ore, and specialized workshops manufacturing tools in places located far from the place of extraction (Sudetian Foreland – Wrocław) facilitated the overcoming of local barriers and the creation of an identity of a regional character. Similarly, textile manufacture and trade was also a branch of the economy that strengthened cooperation between the manufacturers of raw materials and those of the products based on them[41]. However, the influence of the mercantilist decrees of the royal authorities in both the Habsburg and the Prussian period had an ambivalent character. These actions did not lead to the creation of a strongly connected, regional Silesian economy, but instead animated a more or less universal resistance against the unfavorable solutions applied across the administrative unit of Silesia, forcing

[41] Mateusz Goliński, *Integration and the economy. Silesia in the early modern period*, [in:] *The Strenghtening of Silesian Regionalism*, pp. 93-96; Grzegorz Myśliwski, *Czy Śląsk stanowił region ekonomiczny w XIII–XV w.? Czynniki spajające i dezintegrujące terytorium regionalne pod względem gospodarczym*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 67 (2012), no. 4, p. 83-84; idem, *Did Silesia constitute an economic region between the 13th and the 15th centuries? A survey of region-integrating and regio-disintegrating factors*, [in:] *The Long Formation of the Region Silesia*, pp. 93-128.

a change in production profiles across the entire province[42]. It seems significant that it is harder to indicate in each period elements of economic life that unambiguously strengthened the unity of the region than those that deepened divisions. In the Habsburg period, the diversification of the economies of Lower and Upper Silesia was to a larger extent a result of a different level of urbanization (higher in Lower Silesia) and concentration of land in the hands of major landowners (higher in Upper Silesia). However, the difference was quantitative and not qualitative. The situation changed in the second half of the 18th century and the 19th century. Initially, Lower Silesia, especially the Sudetian foothills, was definitely more industrialized (textile production, coal and zinc mines), but in the 19th century, especially its latter half, the situation reversed. First, the mining and metallurgic industries in Upper Silesia flourished, while in Lower Silesia they developed at a slower pace, and light industry pervaded – engineering and processing of crops. Second, as a result of the textile industry's concentration around Opole, a particular profile of economic activity of the local community developed, distinct from both Lower and Upper Silesia. It did not mean, however, that the economies of these areas competed with each other. Instead, researchers suggest that these profiles of production supplemented each other in the second half of the 19th century[43]. The bonds resulting from this, however, did not manage to unite the whole Odra basin community, but instead built a feeling of distinctiveness as part of the developing cooperation of individual professional groups, or even companies. Fairs and markets also could have played an integrative role in the scale of the entire region. However, no clear correlation was possible to determine in the regional scale. At most, one can speak of negotiating their dates within larger communities of neighboring districts (*Weichbilds*) or a duchy. The circulation of goods, with the exception of trade related to the transit of materials, did not span the entire province. Local markets remained loosely connected with centers of pan-regional exchange, but did not create a cohesive system of cooperating elements[44].

It may be surprising that neither the energy revolution, i.e. universal access to coke oven gas, and later to electricity, nor the transport revolution that was the appearance and development of railways, led to the harmonization of economic life in the general Silesian scale. These changes did accelerate and increase the scale of circulation of goods, but more in respect of export outside the borders of the province, and of intensification and increase in the cohesion of individual districts and

[42] Mateusz Goliński, *Integracja a gospodarka. Śląsk w okresie wczesnonowożytnym*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 68 (2013), no. 2, p. 34-35; T. Kulak, *Gospodarka*, p. 38-39, 41-43.

[43] T. Kulak, *Gospodarka*, p. 37-68, in particular p. 58-60.

[44] G. Myśliwski, *Czy Śląsk stanowił region ekonomiczny*, p. 90-94.

localities. This was still far from the creation of a cohesive regional market that would correlate production and trade in different geographic parts of the Odra basin. Gas and energy networks, the seeds of which were visible already before 1914, flourished in the interwar period. However, they spanned selected spaces, sometimes within the borders of the old regencies (especially in Upper Silesia and the Opole area), while sometimes – like in the old Breslau and Liegnitz regencies – they did not necessarily do so. Even the coal trade did not lead to the creation of a common market in the scale of the entire province. Paradoxically, the development of rail transport, and partly river transport as well, led to the exacerbation of competition between two producers, i.e. the mines of Lower Silesia and those of Upper Silesia, within the geographical area of Lower Silesia. Eventually, the division of Silesia between the two states meant that each of these parts was to become a separate economic organism, independent from the others. Although this was hard to achieve in the 1920s, much was done in this regard, which further deepened the divisions in the Odra basin[45]. The state perspective started to play a decisive role in the functioning of the economy. The tendency to connect the regional economy first and foremost with the national economy, with the omission of the historical needs of the region, observed already in the 19th century, increased in the interwar period and after 1945[46]. The globalization transformations in the European economy over the last decades has weakened any integrative influence of the economy on the regional community of Silesia even further.

There is one significant exception – coal mining in Upper Silesia after 1945 became an icon around which the Silesian – or rather Upper Silesian – identity was to crystalize. In this case, however, the economic phenomenon significantly transgressed the borders of the influence of real economic processes on social life. Mining gained symbolic significance, almost becoming mythologized with the creation of miners-heroes that would realize the ideal of an (Upper) Silesian. This phenomenon remained constant after 1989. While economic relations in the other parts of Silesia tend to unite local communities rather than whole regions, in the case of Upper Silesia mining remains a branch of the economy that defines the identity of the region's inhabitants.

The situation is more complicated in the case of the relation between ethnic issues and regional cohesion. The deep ethno-cultural change that took place in the 13th-14th century did not eliminate Polish-language communities from the cultural commonality. It is hard to speak of any compulsion in the process of creation

[45] M. Urbaniak, *Czynniki integrujące i dezintegrujące*, p. 45-51.
[46] T. Kulak, *Gospodarka*, p. 62-63.

of a new, German-language culture of the Silesians or of any synchronicity in the changes. Multi-ethnicity, as alongside German- and Polish-language peoples the region was also inhabited by a Jewish community, was from then on a constant element of Silesia. By and large, until the Prussian period it did not evoke any special controversies, nor did it lead to divisions within the community. While historical sources include some suggestions of ethnic stereotypes or intellectual elites' animosities towards speakers of a different language, this did not extend to any wider social behaviors, nor to political decisions taken by authorities. One may even get the impression at times that this multi-ethnicity facilitated the building of a regional commonality, based on a shared administrative and legal framework and the historical and political traditions of the Odra basin's inhabitants. Appealing to these factors smoothed over the linguistic and cultural distinctions between both groups, indicating a common space for cooperation. The lack of ethnic conflict, even in the times of the Hussite Wars and the Reformation, and later the Catholic Reform, indicates that Silesians tended to overlook ethnic divisions within the region rather than to emphasize them and make them the basis of further actions. This does not mean that there was no pressure on speakers of Polish to accept the dominant German-language culture. However, it was a cultural pressure, connected with the desire to join the privileged elites, the members of which predominately used the German language. It was a natural process, indicating the region's cohesion, whose elites as a whole could be attractive to the lower classes despite the aforementioned ethnic differences. Until the Prussian times, ethnic issues were very rarely used for political purposes, and even then it was more in connection with the actions of the royal court rather than local decisions by the authorities. For the Silesians themselves, multilingualism and multi-ethnicity of communities using various dialects of German and Polish languages was not only a natural phenomenon, but also an affirmed one[47].

The situation changed in the 19th century, when ethnic issues became crucial to the authorities. While the Habsburgs after 1648 consciously built their connection with the inhabitants of Silesia on the basis of the commonality of religion,

[47] Przemysław Wiszewski, *The multi-ethnic character of medieval Silesian society and its influence on the region's cohesion (12th-15th centuries)*, [in:] *The Long Formation of the Region Silesia*, p. 167-192; Cezary Lipiński, *Kwestie etniczne i językowe na Śląsku w 'długim wieku' XVI*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 68 (2013), no. 2, p. 80-83; idem, *Silesia – issues of language and ethnicity in the long 16th century*, [in:] *The Strenghtening of Silesian Regionalism*, pp. 145-165; Jacek Dębicki, *Zagadnienia etniczne i językowe jako czynniki spajające i dezintegrujące Śląsk nowożytny? Podokres 1618/48-1740*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 68 (2013), no. 2, p. 93-94; idem, *The role of ethnic and linguistic issues in the integration and desintegration of modern-age Silesia (the sub-period between 1618/48 and 1740)*, [in:] *The Strenghtening of Silesian Regionalism*, pp. 167-188.

the Hohenzollerns in the 19th century, going with the *Zeitgeist*, appealed to the national community. This intensified especially after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, when state patriotism started to transform into national-ethnic patriotism. The privileged position of German culture in Silesia, originating in the second half of the 18th century, transformed into a Germanization campaign supported by the state. At the same time, the number of inhabitants using Standard Polish and accepting Polish culture as their own also increased. The division into Silesian Germans and Poles, supported by the authorities, became more and more strongly established[48]. After 1921, this process strengthened even further. Additionally, there was a tendency for Polonization and Czechization in the parts of Silesia belonging respectively to Poland and Czechoslovakia. This caused controversies and divisions among the regional community. Particularly during the interwar period this was connected with scorn, and even attempts at elimination of any traces of regionalism in culture or language. Only identification with one nation and one political formation was permitted – the state was to have dominant significance in the consciousness of the region's inhabitants[49].

The situation changed after 1945, in that German-language Silesians mostly left their previous places of residence and work. Resettled to different regions of the German Democratic Republic and various lands of the German Federal Republic, they were organized into the so-called *Landsmannschafts* (homeland associations). In this way, they maintained the functioning of a virtual, landless Silesian region, or rather an association of local communities, partly based on old administrative divisions (counties – Kreise). Despite the passing of the generation of refugees from Silesia, this region still functions, and through government support, it can maintain its status for decades to come[50]. On the other hand, in Silesia, the displacement of most of the Germans did not mean the automatic resettlement of the region by communities whose members used the same form of Polish or grew up in the same cultural circles. Officially, the takeover of the Silesian lands by Poles as a homogenous group was emphasized, but the multitude of different customs, different forms of the Polish language used by the newcomers from the eastern parts of the Second Polish Republic, Central Poland and autochthonic inhabitants

[48] Dorota Schreiber-Kurpiers, *Etniczność mieszkańców regionu śląskiego (do 1918 roku)*, 'Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka', 69 (2014), no. 3, p. 90-101, 104-105.

[49] G. Strauchold, *Zagadnienia etniczne a spójność społeczna*, p. 83-88.

[50] The official website of the organization 'Landsmannschaft Schlesien – Nieder- und Oberschlesien' - http://landsmannschaft-schlesien.de/ The motto of the congress of German Silesians in 2015, organized in Hannover, was 'Gemeinsam für Schlesien'. Paradoxically, after the loss of a real connection with the region, the German community of Silesians is more united than prior to 1945.

of the region, contradicted this homogeneity. This led to many local conflicts among various groups of settlers. And although they were never expressed by a wider political movement, they did not facilitate a feeling of regional community. However, later generations of the Odra basin's inhabitants, quickly in towns, and at a slower pace in rural communities, could be classified into different social groups based on their different cultural identity only to a limited extent. However, ethnic unification in the perspective of Polish Silesia did not go hand in hand with the construction of regional cohesion. Ethnic bonds connected the region's inhabitants with the national community, and this was the direction in which social consciousness was formed by education and culture. Ethnicity ceased to divide the inhabitants of the Odra basin, but it was not conducive for the formation of a regional community. The situation was different in Czech Silesia, in which there lived and still lives a large group of the Polish national minority. However, their feeling of distinctiveness is connected not with an aspiration towards a regional Silesian community, but towards the strengthening of national bonds. Regional identification played a minor role here both after the end of the two World Wars and in the present time[51].

Summary

During the five years of realizing the research project 'Cuius regio...', 26 authors from Germany and Poland, representing different academic centers, schools and research disciplines, concerned themselves with the issue of the cohesion of Silesia as a region. The result is far from unequivocal. Undoubtedly, the analyses of the researchers have born witness to the very dynamic character of the region, defined as the community of the Odra basin inhabitants connected through a feeling of primarily political and cultural commonality, and self-identifying within it under the name of 'Silesia'. Most importantly, in terms of territorial scope, Silesia has undergone deep changes. The first, hypothetical traces of this 'Silesian' identification of the 10th and 11th centuries could encompass a small territory around Ślęża Mountain. In the second half of the 12th century, the idea of Silesian identity was officially stretched to the middle and northern part of the Odra basin under the reign of Boleslaus I the Tall and his descendants. The 15th century brings further extension of this idea to the entire Odra basin, through the ideational, and partly administrative, incorporation of the lands of Opole and Cieszyn. However, already at this point, despite the use of the common term 'Silesia', there were major differences between the communities of Lower and Upper Silesia.

[51] See: Grzegorz Strauchold, *Ethnic issues*, in the present issue.

They did not disappear with the passing of ages. On the contrary, they deepened and were joined by further differences resulting from political and religious changes. This situation was not changed by the reforms of the Prussian period, which only brought about a change of the administrative division of Silesia. Next to Lower and Upper Silesia, the Opole subregion is increasingly distinctive. The part of Silesia ruled by the Habsburgs after 1740 also follows a different path. The communities of former Silesia started to increasingly differ from each other. The idea of Silesian commonality is based on historical traditions, but in the practice of social, political and economic life, the forces supporting the separateness of the sub-regions play a much greater role. Long before 1945, Silesia dissolves into smaller, sometimes new, and sometimes rooted in the Middle Ages, regional communities, very loosely connected by a pan-Silesian history. This process accelerated after 1945. Next to the relatively cohesive, virtual community of German Silesia, based on personal choice and declaration, and the well-established community of Polish Upper Silesia supported by political and economic circumstances, a number of potential regional communities function within the Polish state, continually in a state of formation. The appropriation of the term 'Silesia' in the Polish reality by the Upper Silesian community makes it hard for a cohesive identity of the inhabitants of the area of the historical, original Silesia to develop. Some of them still refer to the feeling of 'Silesianness', some have acquired the new concept of 'Lower Silesianness', and for many – the majority? – the regional context is not important. Issues of local identification are more salient. This was also largely the case before 1945.

As for nearly all the examined period, i.e. from ca. 1000, or rather from the second half of the 12th century until modern times, Silesian identity was mostly the identity of a few members of the elites. These elites were those who comprised part of the administration of the political structures of the whole Odra basin, or who, because of their acquired view of the world sought the affirmation of their identity in 'Silesianness', confronting their identity with the regional and national identities of their neighbors, or, more widely, the inhabitants of Europe. In the case of wider social groups or the entirety of the Odra basin's population, 'Silesianness' was one of many possible identifications, which was realized in special circumstances, of which there were not particularly many. The dominant economic and political behaviors and ethnic realities facilitated cooperation within smaller communities. Paradoxically, what has united Silesia throughout the ages was acceptance of its diversity, as well as a strong bond with local and Silesian issues.

This idea of diversity in unity was shattered by the era of dominance by unitary states, and later national states as well. Within composite monarchies, like that of the Habsburgs, but also Poland after 1138, a balance of authority between central and regional hubs of power was essential for the proper functioning of the administration without major internal conflicts. In the case of countries with a centralized system of government, the pressure to limit the role of the regions, including a regional identity subordinate to the interests of the state, was natural. Consequently, it led to the breaking up of regional bonds, fragmentation of a larger region into smaller, more easily managed administrative units and communities. The transformation of Silesia in the 13th-15th century from a state, and later a complex of states into a region was connected with the incorporation of the Odra basin into a state organization with a loose structure (Bohemian Crown), and at the same time with the existence of an elite interested in selectively appealing to one – Silesian – cultural tradition, despite political divisions and economic, social and ethnic realities. This strengthened their position in confrontation with both the center of power and external threats. However, from the middle of the 18th century this concept was largely abandoned, and replaced with the idea of the commonality of fate of the elites and the whole community with the fate of the state – Prussia/Germany, Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic, Poland. This significantly weakened pan-Silesian bonds. In its place, new bonds appeared within regions newly created by decisions of the central authorities. Their permanence is connected not with long-term factors, but with adapting decisions regarding administrative divisions to the geographical economic, ethnic and social distinctions. Upper Silesia is a good example of such a new Silesian region. However, the rest of the Odra basin was disintegrated.

The historical Silesia within the 15th century borders, in the view of some including Lusatia, incorporated to the province of Silesia at the beginning of the 19th century, was an idea dependent from the beginning on historical factors in the functioning of states. It was broken up in the 19th century, and currently there does not appear to be any chance of restoring the long-gone regional identity. Also, analysis of historically variable forces that joined the region together indicates that in the current political system and ideological shape of the state discourse, the chances for the formation of a strong Lower Silesian regionalism are low. Hopes are much higher in respect of the future of the community in the Opole voivodeship. Paradoxically, the pan-Silesian past is a framework in which strong local identities develop. Their connection into another regional commonality appealing to Silesian heritage as a result of changes in administrative divisions is not impossible. The

Silesian regional commonality was and remains vigorous, ever-evolving, and has constantly remade itself through living and strong local identities. Silesianness was and is needed as a fixed point of reference for the changing forms of affinity of entire local communities and their individual members. As a result, the 'Silesia' remains an open, multicultural, and deeply divided space of socio-territorial relations. Just as it has been throughout the long ages of its regional existence.

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Index

A

Adenauer, Konrad, FRG's chancellor 93
autochthones 48, 107, 109–110, 113, 115–118, 122, 124, 136–141

B

Białystok 128
Bielawa 128
Bielsko-Biała 30
Bogatynia 16, 21
Bohemian Crown 127, 196, 206
Boleslaus the Tall 178, 181, 190, 204
Bolesławiec 32, 54, 125, 134
Bosnia 61, 125, 141, 162
Bóbr, River 127
Brandt, Willy, FRG's chancellor 93
Brzesko 22
Bucovina 61–62, 125
Budziszyn 27

C

Catholic Church 15, 37–40, 50, 68, 81, 83, 86, 93, 108, 122–123, 142–144, 180, 191–192
Churchill, Winston 98
Cieszyn *see* Silesia - Cieszyn Silesia
Coal mining 14, 16, 51–52, 55–56, 78–79, 82, 90, 102, 170–171, 179, 200–201
Communist Party of Germany 111
Copper mining 16, 54–57, 67, 171
Cracow 22, 32, 62, 69
Czechoslovakia 11, 77, 90, 93, 94, 95, 98, 115, 119, 127, 135, 184, 203, 206
Częstochowa 30, 38

D

Dąbrowa Górnicza 32
Democratic Party *see* SD, Democratic Party
Dzierżoniów 128, 184, 215

E

Eastern Borderlands *see* Kresy
Elbe 135, 178
Euroregion Nysa 35
Evangelical Churches 37, 39–40, 95, 115, 119

F

Families reunion campaign 111, 137
Federal Republic of Germany 92, 93, 137, 139
Frenchmen, Polish migrants from France to Poland, settled in Silesia 126, 141
FRG *see* Federal Republic of Germany

G

GDR *see* German Democratic Republic
Georg of Podebrady, King of Bohemia 190
German Democratic Republic 22, 91, 137, 203
German minority, since 1948 14, 51, 70–71, 74, 80, 90, 137, 138, 140, 142, 146, 147, 148, 153, 171
German Silesians, before 1947 12–14, 20, 26, 32, 49, 51, 60, 68, 79, 89–90, 154, 160–162, 175–197
Gierek, Edward, Ist secretary of PZPR 16, 55, 86, 142
Gliwice 16, 74, 92, 95, 128, 154, 179
Głogów 16, 21, 55, 56, 67, 84, 135, 171, 181, 184
Głubczyce 19, 94, 96, 126
Głuchołazy 96
Gomułka, Władysław, Ist secretary of PZPR 50, 55, 85, 86, 93, 110, 117, 118, 134, 136, 140, 141, 144, 146
Görlitz 79, 91, 99, 170
Gorzów Wielkopolski 46
Górów 23
Greek-Catholic Church 144
Greeks 13, 40, 132–134
Gulbinowicz, Henryk, Archbishop of

Wrocław 38, 159
Gypsies *see* Roma people

H

Hedwig of Andechs, Saint, Silesian duchesse 40, 143

J

Jaruzelski, Wojciech 55
Jastrzębie Zdrój 55
Jelenia Góra 15, 23, 30, 31, 33, 54, 127, 164, 170
Jews 12, 40, 80, 128, 129, 145, 146, 149

K

Karaims 149
Katowice 15, 16, 23, 24, 29, 30, 38, 55, 87, 101, 111, 128, 129, 143, 146, 148, 167, 170, 171, 172, 186, 187, 189
Kędzierzyn-Koźle 179
Kłodzko 11, 19, 27, 35, 50, 65, 94, 95, 127, 156, 164
Kominek, Bolesław, Bishop of Wrocław 38, 143, 144
Kożuchów 21
Kraków *see* Cracow
Kresy 27, 80, 82, 84, 123
Krnov 21
Krosno 21
Krzyżowa 40, 94, 148

L

Ladislaus the Exile 181
Legnica 15, 23, 28, 54, 55, 56, 67, 78, 79, 129, 145, 170, 184
Lemkos 12, 61, 62, 66, 68, 130, 134, 136, 162
Lithuanians 149
Lubań 11, 21, 61, 132
Lubin 16, 55, 67, 171
Lubusz region 45–46
Lusatia 11, 21, 26, 27, 127, 170
Lusatiahood 26, 27
Lviv 80, 81, 123, 149, 159
Lwówek Śląski 61

Ł

Łódź 80, 128

M

Macedonians 13, 40, 132, 134, 149
Majeran-Kokott, Małgorzata 162
Martial law period 55–56, 87, 146–147
Mieszko Tanglefoot, Duke of Opole 86, 181
Mikołów 46
Moltke, Helmut von 94

N

Namysłów 22
Napoleon I 161, 194
Niemodlin 22, 46, 96
Nowak, Jerzy Robert, Historian 20, 120, 161
Nowa Ruda 12, 51, 54, 56, 79, 80, 102, 125, 134, 137
Nysa Łużycka, River 12, 19, 21, 26, 27, 89, 90, 127

O

Odra, River 79, 88, 89, 90, 96, 127, 153, 154, 155, 156, 169, 171, 172, 173, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 184, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 194, 197, 199, 200, 201, 202, 204, 205, 206
Olza River 11, 119, 120
Opava 21, 169, 170, 175
Operation ‘Wisła’ 12, 40, 62, 130, 136, 145
Opole 11, 14, 15, 22, 30, 32, 38, 44, 46, 54, 68, 78, 114, 116, 117, 140, 143, 147, 152, 153, 165, 167, 170, 171, 172, 181, 184, 186, 187, 197, 198, 200, 201, 204, 205, 206
Orłowska-Sondej, Grażyna, Journalist 158
Orthodox Church 39, 40, 68

P

People’s Party *see* SL, Stronnictwo Ludowe

PGR, Państwowe Gospodarstwo Rolne (State Agricultural Farm) 49, 73
Piast dynasty 25, 27, 78, 181, 190
Polesie 124, 162
Polish People's Party *see* PSL, Polish People's Party
Polish Socialist Party *see* PPS, Polish Socialist Party
Polish United Worker's Party *see* PZPR, Polish United Worker's Party
Polish Workers' Party *see* PPR, Polish Workers' Party
Polkowice 55
PPR, Polish Workers' Party 14, 48, 49, 51, 85, 99, 107, 110, 111, 118
PPS, Polish Socialist Party 14, 51
Přemyslid dynasty 178, 180
Prudnik 96
PSL, Polish People's Party 14, 48, 116
Pstrowski, Wincenty 53
PZPR, Polish United Worker's Party 16, 20, 50, 51, 54, 55, 85, 86, 93, 117, 134, 144, 146

R

Racibórz 19, 94, 126
RAŚ, Ruch Autonomii Śląska 148
Romania 12, 62, 80, 162
Roma people 131, 132, 134
Ruhr district 125
Rzeszów 40, 62, 162

S

SD, Democratic Party 51
Semka, Piotr, Journalist 161
Silesia
  Cieszyn Silesia 94, 115, 119, 120, 175, 184
  Lower Silesia 11, 12, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77, 78, 79, 80, 82, 85, 87, 95, 99, 100, 101, 102, 104, 107, 125, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 137, 138, 145, 146, 147, 148, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 167, 170, 172, 173, 175, 185, 187, 196, 198, 200, 201
  Lubusz Silesia 45
  Upper Silesia 11, 12, 14, 16, 19, 20, 22, 26, 28, 29, 42, 44, 46, 47, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 59, 68, 69, 70, 73, 76, 77, 78, 79, 81, 82, 86, 87, 88, 90, 91, 92, 94, 95, 96, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 109, 111, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 126, 128, 129, 133, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 143, 145, 146, 147, 148, 151, 152, 153, 165, 166, 167, 168, 170, 171, 172, 175, 179, 182, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 200, 201, 204, 205, 206
Silesian Autonomy Movement *see* RAŚ
Silesianity 29, 151, 157, 165, 172
  Lower Silesianity 151, 157, 165, 172
  Lubusz Silesianity 45–46
  Upper Silesianity 172
Silesian nation 166, 168, 172
Silesian wars 78
SL, Stronnictwo Ludowe 14, 48, 49, 116
'Solidarity' *see* 'Solidarność'
'Solidarność', trade union 87, 140
Soviet (Red) Army 11, 12, 13, 19, 20, 94, 96, 110, 123
State Agricultural Farm *see* PGR
Strzelin 127
Studio Wschód 158, 159
Sudetes, Mountains 28

Ś

Świdnica 54, 78, 79, 145, 170
Świebodzin 21

T

Tabaka, Wojciech, Governor of Jelenia Góra district 33, 34
Tatars 149
Thietmar of Merseburg 178
Trzebnica 46

Turoszów 21
Tychy
 'Fiat' plant 55, 56, 171

U

Ukrainians 12, 40, 61, 62, 66, 68, 69, 99, 124, 129, 130, 134, 136, 144
United People's Party *see* ZSL, United People's Party

V

Volhynia *see* Wołyń
Volksliste 89, 96, 103, 104, 105, 106, 138

W

Wałbrzych 12, 15, 23, 51, 54, 56, 79, 80, 102, 125, 129, 132, 134, 137, 138, 171, 209
Warsaw 13, 14, 24, 48, 50, 54, 80, 81, 83, 93, 94, 95, 97, 100, 105, 117, 119, 120, 121, 127, 130, 138, 161
Wołyń 62, 123, 130
Wrocław 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 34, 36, 38, 39, 40, 52, 54, 55, 72, 78, 79, 82, 85, 86, 87, 91, 95, 98, 107, 115, 129, 132, 135, 136, 137, 138, 143, 145, 146, 147, 151, 152, 156, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 170, 171, 172, 180, 182, 184, 186, 187, 188, 191, 192, 198, 199
 regency 22, 184, 194, 201
Wschowa 22

Y

Yugoslavia 12, 61, 62, 80

Z

Zaolzie 16, 19, 21, 94, 95, 119, 120
Zdrojewski, Bogdan, President of Wrocław 34
Zgorzelec 11, 21, 22, 61, 79, 91, 99, 132, 170, 210
Zielona Góra 15, 21, 23, 25, 28, 46, 186
Zionist campaign 146
ZSL, United People's Party 49

Ż

Żagań 21, 193
Żary 11, 21, 54, 61
Żytawa 19

Polish-German-Czech concordance of topographic names

Polish name	German Name	Czech Name
Biała (in Silesia)	Biala	Bělá
Bielawa	Langenbielau	-
Bielsko	Bielitz	Bílsko
Bluszczów	Bluschau	-
Bogatynia	Reichenau	-
Bogumin	Oderberg	Bohumin
Bolesławiec	Bunzlau	Boleslav, Slezská Boleslav, Boleslavec
Brochów	Bockau	-
Brzeg	Brieg	Břeh
Budziszyn	Bautzen	-
Bytom	Beuthen	Bytom
Chorzów	Königshütte	Chořov
Cieszyn	Teschen	Těšín
Częstochowa	Tschenstochau	-
Dąbrowa Górnicza	Dombrowa	-
Drezdenko	Driesen	-
Duszniki Zdrój	Bad Reinerz	Dušníky
Dzierżoniów	Reichenbach	-
Gliwice	Gleiwitz	Hlivice, Glivice
Głogów	Glogau	Hlohov
Głogówek	Oberglogau	Horní Hlohov
Głubczyce	Leobschütz	Hlubčice
Głuchołazy	Ziegenhals	Hlucholazy
Góra	Guhrau	-
Jastrzębie Zdrój	Bad Königsdorff-Jastrzemb	-
Jaworzyna Śląska	Königszelt	-
Jelenia Góra	Hirschberg	Jeleni Hora, Hiršberk
Kamieniec Ząbkowicki	Kamenz	Kamenec
Katowice	Kattowitz	Katovice
Kędzierzyn	Kandrzin	Kandřín
Kluczbork	Kreuzburg	-
Kłodzko	Glatz	Kladsko
Koźle	Cosel	Kozlí
Królewiec	Königsberg	Královec

Polish name	German Name	Czech Name
Książ	Fürstenstein	-
Legnica	Liegnitz	Lehnice
Leśnica	Leschnitz	-
Lubań	Lauban a.d. Quies	-
Lubawka	Liebau	Libava
Lubiąż	Leubus	Lubuš
Lubin	Lüben	
Lubliniec	Lublinitz	-
Mikołów	Nikolai	Mikulov
Mysłowice	Myslowitz	Myslovice
Namysłów	Namslau	-
Niemodlin	Falkenberg	
Nowa Ruda	Neurode	Nová Ruda
Nowa Sól	Neusalz an der Oder	-
Oborniki Śląskie	Obernigk	-
Oleśnica	Oels	Olešnice
Opawa	Troppau	Opava
Opole	Oppeln	Opolí
Ostrawa	Ostrau	Ostrava
Oświęcim	Auschwitz	Osvětim
Otmuchów	Ottmachau	-
Pieszyce	Peterswaldau	-
Piła	Schneidemühl	-
Polkowice	Polkwitz	Polkwis
Prudnik	Neustadt in Oberschlesien	
Pszczyna	Pless	-
Pyskowice	Peiskretcham	-
Racibórz	Ratibor	Ratiboř
Ruda	Ruda	-
Rudy	Rudy	-
Rybnik	Rybnik	-
Skwierzyna	Schwerin an der Warte	-
Sława Śląska	Schlawe	-
Sławięcice	Slawentzitz	-
Sosnowiec	Sosnowitz	Sosnovec
Stare Bielice	Altbeelitz	-
Strzegom	Striegau	Střihom
Strzelce Opolskie	Gross Strehlitz	-
Syców	Gross Wartenberg	-

Polish name	German Name	Czech Name
Środa Śląska	Neumarkt in Schl.	Slezská Středa
Świdnica	Schweidnitz	Svídnice
Świebodzice	Freiburg	-
Świebodzin	Schwiebus	-
Tarnowskie Góry	Tarnowitz	Tarnovské Hory
Wałbrzych	Waldenburg	Valdenburk, Valbřich
Wodzisław Śląski	Löslau	Vladislav
Wrocław	Breslau	Vratislav
Wschowa	Fraustadt	-
Zabrze	Zabrze, Hindenburg OS (1915-1945)	-
Ząbkowice Śląskie	Frankenstein	Frankenštejn
Zgorzelec	Görlitz	Zhořelec
Zielona Góra	Grünberg	Zelená Hora
Żagań	Sagan	Zaháň
Żytawa	Zittau	

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This book contains a collection of articles on issues related to the functioning of Silesia as a region from the end of War World II to the present day. In the book researchers have tried to analyse the function of five basic factors that helped determine the region's coherency after 1945. According to overall project's assumptions, these were: 1) changes in the administrative framework of the functioning of Silesian communities; 2) the elements of the economy that strengthened or weakened the region's coherency; 3) the way in which the division of the community that inhabited Silesia into a rural and an urban population functioned, two groups with different social statuses, goals and cultural backgrounds; 4) thorough transformations of the ethnic structure of the Oder River Basin which took place after 1945 and significantly contributed to the people's sense of affiliation to the regional community; 5) the complex issue of cultural identity or – the cultural identity of the inhabitants of the region and particular local communities.

This consistent reasoning concerning a specific period in the history of Silesia is complemented by an attempt to recognise changes in our area of interest which took place between the mid-12th and early 21st century. They show the flexible, relative nature of how a regional community functioned in the European political and cultural space by using Silesia as an example. Silesia seems to have entered the 21st century as a region – is it still one region? – split by political decisions and socio-economic processes. And yet, did the bonds of tradition and the cultural heritage of the whole region prove to be stronger than political pursuits to construct separate administrative units? Let us see!

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