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Dimensions of Silesian Identity









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Introduction

This book is peculiar in nature. It is an account of our studies and considerations on a very important region of Poland that is Upper Silesia. The peculiarity of the region has long attracted interest of sociologists (let us mention only the studies by Father Emil Szramek or subsequent studies by Professor Józef Chałasiński in the 1920s and 1930s) but it became a topical issue after 1989 when in the air of democracy and freedom of speech there emerged a possibility of expressing its identity by regional communities. Sociologists of Katowice, especially gathered at the university took on this scientific challenge and the research we carried out jointly or separately (in cooperation with younger co-workers) account for the development of sociological reflection on the peculiarity of the region.

The texts included in this book have been written between the years 1998–2006. Some of them have been published before, great majority will be published for the first time although the empirical material we refer to has been collected earlier, in some cases – before 1989, the year of historical turn in Poland. Putting together the papers prepared in different periods we wanted to reveal how our understanding of the studied problems was changing together with the transformation of the situation in the Upper Silesia and in the whole country after 1989. The papers included to this volume are of various character – some are more or less esseyistic kind of statements on a given subject, some – more "traditional" kind of sociological reports based on empirical data. However, they do account for true scientific involvement aimed at understanding the social phenomenon of this particular region.

The book on the one hand renders a certain sequence of research projects showing how from one study there followed problems to subsequent studies and, on the other hand, it has been arranged so that to gather up texts devoted to problems which were least remote from one another.

The first five texts account for an attempt of sociological description of the process of revival and subsequently, in the newer conditions, creation of regional identity – Silesian identity. The process has been very complicated and so was the political fate of the people living in this region, both native Silesians and newcomers from different parts of the country. The texts indicate not only the ingredients of the identity but particularly certain social dynamics connected with their emergence. Thus it should be stressed that the process of creation of regional identity in Upper Silesia has not ceased yet, so we were fortunate to have studied the phenomena in motion, in *statu nascendi*.

The following text is devoted to the creation of political representation in the region, certainly being part of the broadly understood regional identity but it also accounts for the extent to which political conditions have determined and are still determining relations between the political identity of the region and the policy of the whole country.

The seventh text is devoted to the role of regional media. Indicating the media as an important factor of creation of regional identity is justified not only by the peculiarity of the region itself but also by the fact that throughout several decades of the twentieth century the Silesian voivodship (previously the Katowickie voivodship), the city of Katowice in fact was the second biggest media centre in Poland (after Warsaw). Considering the number of media recipients in the region, this is where media used to be a real social force. Without an analysis of such a social actor it would be hard to describe the dynamics of reproduction and production of certain elements of regional identity.

Another text is devoted to the role of women in politics, a matter which is important not for its quantitative point of view but as a symbol and indicator of the role of women in transformations from the traditional model of Silesian family where woman played an insignificant role in public life to new solutions considering women's public activity.

Next two texts concern a key issue – economic restructuring, mainly of coal-mining industry. Coal-mining used to be not only the strongest branch of industry in the region but also a factor considerably co-creating the whole organisation of social life – and in the broadest sense of the word co-creating. It was difficult to find a sphere of life in the region which would not have been dependent, even if indirectly, on coal-mining. The fast restructuring of the sector, closure of collieries, unemployment among miners, pauperizing of the whole mining quarters or towns are particularly important elements in the whole process of creation of present-day identity of the region.

Finally the last text is a kind of opening to debate, this time both social and political debate over the future of the region. This last text renders

the frame of mind of some political elites in Silesia and allows to look, at least approximately, at which direction the process being described of creation of modern regional identity will go in.

To end we wish to thank all our numerous co-workers, questioners, interlocutors, in a word everybody who has become for us directly or indirectly a source of knowledge of the processes described. The fact that we succeeded in carrying out some important studies despite frequent difficulties in providing financial resources to this end does account for the "scientific spirit" of several teams of our co-workers. Without their help there would not be these studies nor this book. However, that does not mean that they should take responsibility for any content of the book, all of the responsibility is on the part of the authors themselves.

The revival of regional tradition in Upper Silesia and the new formula of Polish national identity[1]

1. The problem

Poland is actually a country in which widespread social and political discussions are held regarding the reform of administrative division of the country, leading to decentralisation. Until 1989 Poland has been a highly centralised state, in which communists managed at both the local and regional level using the local and regional committees of the Communist party for that purpose. A centralised political system adopted an unitary vision of Polish national identity, which has been based upon the conviction that the whole nation is ethnically homogeneous. It did not leave much room for the expression of cultural differences of the Poles, regional and ethnic distinctiveness were never mentioned in official political discourse. Of course it did not mean that any kind of cultural differences was totally rejected but that they were manipulated ideologically according to the needs of Communist propaganda – folklore being considered as a manifestation of popular culture very often served as a decoration for official ceremonies.

The democratic transformation started in 1989 in Poland opened the floor for public debates concerning ethnic and regional divisions and partitions (followed in some cases with political revindications of decentralization and regionalisation), as well as the necessity to create a new formula of national identity, taking into account the substantial cultural differences of Polish society and linking large social groups, clearly standing out in culture. Nowadays it is a very important problem in Poland, broadly discussed by many Polish researchers (J. Wódz, 1997) and its special importance can be best observed exactly in Upper Silesia – the region in

[1] First published in *Folk*, 2000, Vol. 4.2, pp. 41–56.

south-west Poland where the large part of native population did not feel too much attachment to the Polish national culture (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1999). Upper Silesia is a typical example of borderland, where different ethnic groups and different cultural traditions are mixed up. In the Silesian melting pot for centuries Polish, Czech-Moravian and German influences were clashing and their importance was always connected with the affiliation of this region to the wider politico-state structures. The cultural identity of this region was shaped in the long-lasting history of this region – the crucial importance for the formation of the cultural face of Upper Silesia had the 19th century when first under Prussian and then German domination the process of industrialisation based on the extraction of coal and steel engineering started, favouring the influx of Germans to Upper Silesia. The existed here Upper Silesian regional culture, treated by Polish ethnographers and historians as a regional version of Polish folk culture has been exposed during the 19th century to German industrial and bourgeois culture. The process of germanisation of the Upper Silesian culture which begun in 17th century was never completely successful. The cultural distance of Upper Silesians from German population favoured the development at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries of the Polish national awareness, culminated in the pro-Polish movements at the end of the World War I, the time of Plebiscite and the Silesian Uprising (1919, 1920, 1921) which resulted in admission of the small part of Upper Silesia to the reborn after the time of partition Poland (N. Davies, 1986: 116).

The interwar period in this part of Upper Silesia has been marked by the efforts of new Polish authorities to strengthen the ties with other parts of Poland, repolonise the public institutions and diminish the importance of German position in economy. The Polish-German relationship was a matter of many tensions and conflicts in Polish Upper Silesia in the 20-ties and 30-ties but also there were some other types of ethnic clash as for example between the Silesian autochtons and the Polish intelligentsia – coming to Upper Silesia from other parts of Poland. The confrontation of the regional Silesian culture with Polish national culture has been stimulated by the fact that Silesians who voted for Poland in the Plebiscite were dissatisfied with the promises of the social promotion given to them by Polish plebiscite propaganda. One of the reasons of such a state of affairs was not sufficient acquisition by the Silesians of the Polish literary language which made difficult the upward mobility of autochtons. There were of course other reasons for the misunderstanding and tensions – we are not going to present them here. What is important for further explication it is the fact that in the pre-war period in Polish Upper Silesia the essential incompatibility of the cultural pattern, customs, mentality and language of the autochtons and newcomers was recognised by Polish authorities

(N. Davies, 1986: 123; J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1999: 49). The actions undertaken by Silesian Voievode Michał Grażyński to valorise the Silesian regional dialect and culture have been dramatically broken by the World War II (N. Davies, 1986: 69). After painful experience of Nazi's occupation the Silesians lived drama of post-war nationalistic verification carried out by Soviet military authorities and Polish Communist security officers. Mass arrests and deportations of German population, forced labour in Soviet Union of people treated as Nazi's collaborators or traitors left in the minds of many Silesians the feeling of humiliation and aversion to new regime and, also, to people coming to Upper Silesia after the World War II.

Later on, in the fifties, when the process of massive socialist industrialisation had begun, thousands of Poles from all over the country came to Upper Silesia (especially in 50s and 70s) working in the coal-mines, steel factories and chemistry. The newcomers were located in big housing estates at a distance from the old workers quarters inhabited mainly by native population. The migratory process very strongly influenced the ethnic structure of the region. Many Silesian families decided to leave Poland and emigrated to Germany in different periods of the post-war Poland (1945–1947, after 1956, in early 70s and after 1981). The native Silesian communities separated from the rest of population by their cultural traditions, dialect, everyday life customs have found themselves symbolically dominated by the institutionalised, symbolic culture, transmitted by official institutions. There is no space here for a larger description of the complex situation which was created by such domination but, without any doubts, for native Silesians this meant a very serious restrictions on the way of expressing their cultural identity (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1999: 52).

The situation has radically changed after 1989 when the possibility of the expression and articulation of interests of regional and ethnic groups appeared. Our task is to present some constituents of the situation prior to 1989, before the democratic changes took place, and then indicate the ongoing processes of revival of regional identity, which will be followed by the presentation of consequences that those processes will have in relation to the new formula of national identity. We shall base our reasoning mainly upon the results of our own empirical studies, which we have been carrying out for many years in Upper Silesia, the region where the revival of regional identity has been, as to compare with other regions of Poland, most dynamic. Its clear manifestation was the establishment of many organisations representing the interests of native Silesians like the Upper Silesian Association or the Movement for the Silesian Autonomy and the organisations of German minority growing up very quickly after 1989 in Upper Silesia. As we will try to demonstrate further, the revival of the Silesian identity was from the beginning associated with revindication for the

decentralisation and regionalisation (or autonomy) of the country, considered by the representatives of new regional elite a crucial element in the course of preserving the cultural identity of Upper Silesians.

2. The situation in the years 1945–1989

The period of totalitarianism, although very differentiated internally (from the stalinism of the first years, through attempts at democratisation which started in 1956, to the gradual decrease of restrictions in the field of personal freedom and liberties beginning in 1970s), nevertheless invariably kept bringing about and promoting the anti-regional vision of national identity. Considering the fact that freedom of speech and democracy did not exist, such a policy was relatively easy to implement. At the same time, however, the myth preaching the cultural homogeneity of the Polish nation was strengthened, which myth served, paradoxically, not only the communists in power, but also part of the anti-communist opposition. We mean here both the opposition that was based upon the political traditions of nationalistic parties of the so-called "National Democracy" stream (abbreviated as ND), and part of the opposition concentrated around the Catholic church, which also constructed a clearly unitarian formula of national identity (hence the slogan: "Pole-Catholic", the crucial importance of the social, political, and symbolic role of the Primate of Poland, hence also the acknowledgement of the sanctuary of the Virgin Mary in Częstochowa a symbolic place of worship of all Poles). At the same time, yet somehow in hiding, regional cultures kept developing, that were unable to find place in public life on a wider scale, due to lack of freedom.

The Polish national identity which developed in such conditions reached readily indeed to romantic traditions and examples, which were very strong especially in those areas which in the 19th century, that is following the partitions of Poland, belonged to Russia. Let us remind here that Poles had no independent state throughout the 19th century, as the country had been divided into three parts, occupied by Russia, Austria, and Prussia, respectively. In the 1830s and later, the romantic trend appeared to develop very substantially among Poles, deprived of their homeland (it developed mainly in the territories occupied by Russia, where there were two national uprisings, in 1830 and 1863), which trend sustained the national spirit through creating cultural symbols of national attachment. That convinced the Poles strongly that in order to survive difficult periods in its history, the nation has to believe in national myths which are compulsory for all, which symbolically unite all social groups. When the state did not exist,

such a myth had a more profound meaning than the reality itself, the latter being treated as extraneous and imposed upon the nation. That romantic tradition served, in the years 1945–1989, as basis for expanding the canon of national identity as particularly centralised and unitary, based on romantic education. In such a situation, not only was it impossible for regional identity to develop (as no freedom of speech existed), but also that romantic formula of national identity kept developing.

The above situation affected Upper Silesia in a peculiar manner. It is a region situated in Southern Poland, with the highest concentration of old industry in the country (mainly mining, metallurgy, and old metal-processing industry), with intense concentration of inhabitants in a huge agglomeration (J. Wódz, 1990). Why was the situation of the region so peculiar?

As we already mentioned in the beginning, the region is a typically trans-border one, although at present situated almost entirely in Poland. Upper Silesia, taking into consideration its history in the 19th century, as well as after World War I, until 1945 (M. Wanatowicz, 1994), that is during the period in which both the regional identity and national identity got formed, was divided between various states and cultures. The major ones were the culture and state of Poland and Germany, yet one should not forget that the southernmost part of the region remained under the influence of Czech culture, while belonging territorially to Austro-Hungary and later to Czechoslovakia. Thus, we deal with a region with a firm trans-regional feature, and the culture of which was always clearly distinct from that of Poland's central regions. Let us take the opportunity to note that the situation of Upper Silesia was by no means exceptional in Central Europe, as there are many trans-border regions in that part of the continent (J. Wódz, 1994).

There is, however, a certain feature of the tradition and regional culture in Upper Silesia, which proves to be of extreme importance for the problem discussed here, namely, the region had, neither in 19th nor 20th century, nothing to do with Polish romantic tradition developing in other Polish territories. It is obvious, then, that the romantic models and symbols, summoned today as basis for debate on Polish tradition, do not in any way refer to the traditions and consciousness of Upper Silesia citizens. As will be seen later, this will be a vital element stimulating some regional groups for cultural revindications in Upper Silesia (K. Wódz, 1994).

Let us now concentrate upon what happened to regional culture and regional identity in Upper Silesia in the period before 1989. Throughout the post-World War II period the region was treated in a special way by the communist authorities. The special treatment consisted, on the one hand, of the fact that the authorities paid attention to the development of

traditional industries (mining was one of the basic branches on which the state earned hard currency), thus also to the development of towns located in the region, on the other hand, special care was taken to make the political control eliminate any manifestations of cultural distinctness of the region. As a result, we had a situation in which the native inhabitants of the region reduced their cultural life (in which the specific distinctive features of Silesian culture were manifest) to family relations and relations within local communities.

At the same time, as we have already written, there was a continuous migration of people from other regions of Poland to Upper Silesia which, towards the end of 1980s, resulted in a situation where the native inhabitants of Upper Silesia became a minority. Thus, we deal with a situation in which regional culture has developed only through informal relations (face to face direct relations), whereas the regional group itself turns into a minority on its home soil. It was therefore natural that in the late 1980s the regional cultural and political **elite** of the Silesians started to define Polish culture as the dominating one, while their own culture was that of a minority.

3. 1989 – Evolution towards democracy

The democratic changes that took place after 1989 implied, from the very start, two major changes for Upper Silesia: a) the possibility of expressing the local culture freely, development (often really rapid) of the feelings of regional identity, and emerging regional political revindications, and b) a new situation for the industry in the region, which resulted from the acceptance of free market economy rules (let us remind here that during the communist regime the free market principles were rejected in economy, instead of them there was planned economy, centrally planned too, which meant steering from Warsaw).

It appears obvious that the consequences of the revival of regional identity entailed rejection of the previous model of national identity. In several regions of Poland, in which the revival of regional identity has been present since 1989, those processes have been visible, although they manifested themselves in the most obvious and acute way in Upper Silesia, where they openly turned against the symbolic of unitary national tradition (e.g. against the symbolic role of Warsaw as the capital of the country).

Before we move on to discuss the issues of regional culture, let us ponder for a while upon the economy of the region. It so happened in Upper Si-

lesia that the collapse of the economy (typical in market economy for old industrial regions) became a driving impulse of radicalisation in cultural revival and regional cultural revindications. The collapse of the economy in Upper Silesia (K. Wódz, 1994a) meant atrophy of the social significance of professions important for that region (mainly the profession of miner) which referred directly to the regional tradition, construed in late 19th century exactly on the basis of industrial professions. The traditional regional culture in Upper Silesia developed as a specific and unique mixture of Polish folk culture (the people who, in the late 19th century, immigrated on a mass scale to newly established industrial settlements and later to towns, were of rural origin), and the industrial tradition (mainly mining and metallurgy) established within the framework of German administration and economy.

In such a situation, the acknowledging by Poland, in 1989, of market economy principles, and the subsequent crisis in mining and metallurgy, implied not only an economic crisis, but also the collapse of the social basis for development of regional culture. That fact allows to comprehend the radicalism of certain regional revindications in Upper Silesia, using the cultural identity as a resource for political mobilisation of the regional community against the "Centre", very similar in its form and content to ethnonationalisms described by E. Hobsbawn (E. Hobsbawn, 1992: 220–221). In that situation, the revival of regional tradition in Upper Silesia has had three dimensions:

a) the dimension of cultural revival,

b) the dimension of structuring of regional identity in the form of a series of social revindications and establishment of the structure for associative life,

c) the political dimension, being a consequence of the two indicated above, and referring, at the same time, both to Polish national identity and the structures of the state.

We shall discuss those issues briefly, to focus then upon two other issues in a more detailed manner. These will be: the emergence of regional ideology as a particular form of revival of regional identity, and the problem of influence of Silesian regionalism upon the changes in national identity in Poland. We mention those two issues although it is not our plan to discuss them at the very moment.

Let us, then, move to the first issue, that of cultural revival. When freedom of speech reappeared, it quickly resulted in manifestation in public life of those forms of regional culture which had been blocked previously, both by censorship, and a specific auto-censorship mechanism, which derived from being afraid of consequences of being accused of cultural separatism. The most manifest instances of reappearance of Silesian culture, soon after 1989, comprised: using the Silesian dialect in public by persons

who kept that knowledge concealed in public life before, the appearance of inscriptions and shop-signs in the regional dialect, launching of programmes in local media (radio, TV) in local dialects, also programmes which referred to local rituals and cultural traditions. In those spheres of life, in which regional culture was linked with worship (e.g. the cult of Saint Barbara among miners), there was a return to the religious content of those traditions (one should keep in mind that the official atheism of the state in the previous epoch prohibited referring to religious traditions).

Another important phenomenon was that of revealing in public those elements of culture which were related to the connections between Silesian and German culture. Our research indicates that those relations with German culture, although oftentimes distorted substantially, existed before only in private contacts of native inhabitants (K. Wódz, 1993, 1995). An important part of this process was an introduction in the programme of elementary and secondary schools new curricula of regional education, aimed mainly to get acknowledged pupils with the history and culture of the region. These initiatives proved to be very successful in revitalising of many local traditions and played important role in the crystallisation and institutionalisation of cultural content of regional identity.

Abstaining from getting involved in profound detailed analysis, one can risk making a point that the first elements of cultural revival of the regional identity involved a specific social movement, which took the elements of regional culture out of the sphere of social and community life (e.g. out of old districts inhabited by workers, exclusively of Silesian origin) in order to introduce them to public life in the region. That was accompanied by the native inhabitants gaining worth, as the very fact of their belonging to the minority Silesian culture (minority, of course, as opposed to the majority Polish culture) used to be the factor which often resulted in putting them in worse social situation.

Let us now take a look at the structuring of that regional identity. As is the case for any social movement, that one also began the structuring process through appointing leaders. There were two factors that made such appointments easier. The first of them was making reference to the, already existing, structures of anti-communist opposition, among which the major in Upper Silesia were: "Solidarity" social movement, the structures of Catholic church. The other one was the fact that it was the local elections of 1990, not the parliamentary elections of 1989 that resulted from the "Round Table" political agreement (and whose political importance was by far greater, as it was after Solidarity's victory in the parliamentary elections of 1989 that the country moved towards a democratic system), which accelerated the emergence of local cultural and social elite.

The regional elite appointed in the early 1990s considered it their duty to structure the regional identity. The origin of the Silesian elite varied substantially, yet it invariably referred to the regional origin and demonstrated the attachment to regional culture. Although, generally speaking, that elite was rather connected with the anti-communist opposition, the issues of political past were never put forward, as the fact of belonging to a common culture and tradition was considered more important than political opinions.

The next stage in structuring the identity consisted of a series of cultural and social revindications proposed by regional elite. An example here may be the debate upon the need of introducing to schools in the region a special subject labelled "regional education", the postulated introduction of history of the region to the curricula, etc. Those demands appeared spontaneously, yet made it possible to concentrate relatively large groups of native inhabitants around the elite.

The stage in identity structuring that followed was the establishment of a few dozen various regional organisations and associations. Those organisations were of a very different character, what they had in common was their direct reference (through the subject or scope of activities, or only through the symbolic use of the adjective "Silesian" or "Upper Silesian") to the region. With time, those organisations or associations could be grouped according to the sphere of activities (e.g. culture, economy, education, transport, etc.) or their range (e.g. limited to specific towns or even districts, or comprising the whole region). As time went by, two associations began to play a principal role in the region, namely Związek Górnośląski (Upper Silesian Union) and Ruch Autonomii Śląska (Movement for Silesian Autonomy). Both those associations aimed mainly at revitalisation of the regional identity, which found expression mainly in numerous and varied social and cultural activities they undertook. Both associations began also to take on an ever important role.

Going forward to discuss shortly the political dimension of the revival of Silesian identity that took part in the early 1990s, we should first of all point out the important historic fact which weighed heavily upon the content of political revindications formulated in Upper Silesia. That fact was the autonomy of the Katowice Province (Voivodship) (that is the region of Upper Silesia) in the years between World War I and II (F. Serafin, 1996). In the interwar period, bearing in mind the circumstance that the region was a trans-border one (such were the borderlines of Europe at that time), and was inhabited by a substantial German minority, the Polish authorities attributed a special status to Upper Silesia, which found expression in limited political autonomy.

However, in the period following the year 1945 the situation of Upper Silesia changed radically. Within the existing borders of Poland, the region

ceased to be a trans-border one. Due to migration of the inhabitants of German origin to Germany in 1940s and 1950s the number of Germans living in the Katowice Province seriously decreased and, at the moment, the minority does not cause any problems for the Province. To clarify, we should add that a larger German minority still inhabits the neighbouring region, the so-called Opole [Oppeln] Silesia. For Silesian political elite recalling the separate character of Upper Silesia became the natural basis for regional political revidications formulated in 1990s, as if history stood still. Sparing any further discussion of the issue let us indicate only that the representatives of the Movement for Silesian Autonomy managed to place two of their members in Polish parliament in early 1990s, and that the political influences of that organisation ceased only after the change in election law. The proportional system then established, with a 5% threshold, eliminated all small organisations and political parties from the Polish parliament, including also the Movement for Silesian Autonomy.

The political expression of regional identity revival manifested itself in the region through consolidation of a specific type of political representation, non-existent in other parts of the country (D.L. Seiler, J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1997). This specific political representation consists of two political proto-parties, active in the region. The essence of a political proto-party lies in its acting as an associative structure (formally being a mere social association). This associative style is prone to change to a party-like one in the periods of important political events like election campaigns (local, regional or parliementary ones) when producing political discourse and putting up its own candidates in elections (or officially supporting candidates from other lists). That way the proto-party is, on the one hand, a method for organising social and cultural activities in the region while, on the other hand, serving the purpose of a specific kind of regional political party in the pre-election period. It is of interest that two such proto-parties emerged in Upper Silesia: Upper Silesian Union, which encompasses the whole region, and the Movement for Silesian Autonomy, which is active only in the south-western part of the region.

One can ponder upon the role of those proto-parties in formulating regional political revindications. They have such organisational structure which allows to create a relatively broad picture of the region, as it includes both historic elements, purely social ones, as well as cultural elements, constituting the basis for formulating political revindications. We point out to that fact because, as will be shown further in our presentation, such a method of political representation of the region influenced decisively the social and cultural content of the present regional identity of Upper Silesia, undergoing a revival.

4. Regional ideology

Revitalisation of regional identity in Upper Silesia was, as has already been indicated above, a social process with clear political connotations from the very beginning, that is since 1989. This was, undoubtedly, due to the fact that any free political debate was banned in Poland for over 40 years. The more, then, the analysis of cultural and social content of the revitalisation must indicate the links of such content with political concepts and activities. Before discussing the issues of regional ideology, which are key issues for understanding the present content of reviving Silesian identity, we would like to pay readers' attention to the tendencies, apparent in the early 1990s, for defining regional groups in an exclusive manner. Those tendencies are much weaker today than in the years 1989–1991, yet they are worth mentioning as they built the atmosphere in which regional ideology developed later. It is a phenomenon described in sociology that regional groups define themselves in purely ethnic categories, which derive the right for membership in a group from having parents whose origin is from a given region. That tendency is also visible in building a specific picture of common interest of an ethnic group, in which an individual somehow loses the right to have individual features. Michel Maffesoli labels this phenomenon "neo-tribalism" (M. Maffesoli, 1992).

In the early 1990s such a phenomenon occurred among the elite of the inhabitants who considered themselves ethnically Silesian. It went so far that in public discussions the leaders of Silesian inhabitants addressed those inhabitants who were not ethnically Silesian as "our guests", which in the specific situation and the period of early 1990s had a pejorative tinge, and was received in such a way by the non-native inhabitants of the region. As for today, those tendencies have been substantially muffled, yet when the regional ideology was formed they were strong and clearly influenced the content of regional identity. To understand that situation better, some information about the spatial arrangement of the region and its social content is necessary. Namely, *grosso modo*, the region of Upper Silesia is often identified with that of the Katowice Province, yet a part of that historic region lies outside the borders of the region, in the neighbouring Opole Province. Hence the origin of the specific independent region, Opole Silesia (Śląsk Opolski), which is characterised by absence of old industry, coal mines, and which is chiefly a farming region with a significant minority of people declaring German nationality. Also, the Katowice Province comprises some territories which have no cultural relations to the Silesian region, yet which have the same type of economy as Upper Silesia, namely old industry based upon coal mining, metallurgy, heavy industry of metal processing, etc.

The latter is the so-called Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, located in the easternmost part of the Katowice Province. In the 19th century, when Poland was partitioned, the territory of that Zagłębie belonged to the part that was occupied by Russia, while the Silesian region belonged to Germany. The geographic territory of the coal basin was simply divided into the decisively major part, which throughout the 19th century belonged to Germany, a small eastern part which belonged to Russia (which functions today as Zagłębie Dąbrowskie), and another small portion which in the 19th century was the territory of Austro-Hungary, in the southern part of the historic region, nowadays being a part of another province (that of Bielsko-Biała). Thus, today's Katowice Province comprises the historic territory of the Silesian region and a small territory of different tradition. In addition to that, the political history of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie is also quite specific. Between the wars the territory belonged to the Kielce Province (thus having no tradition of autonomy, experienced by the Katowice Province, as was mentioned before). During Nazi occupation the Germans, following a clear logic of economy, put together Zagłębie Dąbrowskie as one administrative unit with Silesia. After 1945 the communists (also using economy as a benchmark) considered such a junction useful and created the Katowice Province which included also the territory of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie.

Due to the migration of great number of people in the years 1945–1989 in the territory of the Katowice Province there were some 30% (no systematic data is available, so these are estimates) of the population who considered themselves native Silesians, while the other come from Zagłębie, but mainly they immigrated from other regions of Poland. The migration to Upper Silesia had already started after 1918, yet it was particularly intense in the years that followed 1945. The above information proves necessary to understand certain mechanisms of establishing regional ideology, cultural modifications, and social features of regional revindications, which referred clearly to the subtle differences between Silesians, native inhabitants of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, the immigrants from other regions of Poland who settled here (sometimes 2 or 3 generations ago), and the rest of the Polish population.

Let us begin by giving our definition of regional ideology. It emerged due to political need, and hence its political connotations. A few months after Solidarity won the parliamentary elections of June 1989, the election campaign started in Poland, preceding the first free and democratic local elections of 1990. From the political point of view, nowhere in Poland did structures of political parties exist at the local level. In the situation of a political vacuum the Silesian elite, which naturally wanted to have the best results possible for themselves (and thus for native inhabitants of

Silesia) in the municipalities (*gminas*) constituting the Katowice Province started to build up a specific programme for mobilising inhabitants of Silesia for the purpose of local elections of 1990.

That rapid transformation (within a few months) from enjoying the freedom of expressing the regional attachment to the need for mobilising the group for election purposes resulted in the fact that the image of the region, its social and cultural traditions, was built as a set of features selected bearing the purpose of mobilisation in mind, instead of being a spontaneous revival of regional culture. As often is the case with building images for specific purposes, we had to do with specific "inventing of traditions" (E. Hobsbawn, T. Ranger, 1983). Thus, from the beginning of revitalisation of the Silesian identity, it was an element of regional ideology (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1991) which has had a dominant influence upon the content of the Silesian identity as a whole.

The first vital element in that was the pondering upon the borderline of the territory considered Silesian, that is the land which was called "our land". The issue here was not only to find the historical truth about that borderline (although that aspect was also of value) but also to establish the symbolic borderline which would allow to distinguish between "our folk" and "strangers". It is a characteristic feature of any ideology to make any differences more acute, as this positively influences the integration of "our folk". That borderline (two tiny rivers of Przemsza and Brynica) between the old Silesian territory and that of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie suddenly became an extremely important element of shaping the regional consciousness of Silesians. That in turn greatly influenced the very verbalisation of cultural content proper for Silesian regional identity.

Those Silesian cultural features were often defined in such a way as to oppose: a) most often the cultural features of a small group of native inhabitants of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, b) the culture of those people who migrated to Upper Silesia from other parts of Poland (hence referring to them as "our guests"), and c) the "long distance of symbolic traditions" from Warsaw (upon which in years to come the idea of "internal colonisation of Upper Silesia" was built, which was supposedly implemented by the central administration in Warsaw). As can be seen here, indicating in an acute manner the problem of region borderline became a factor which shaped the cultural content of the reviving cultural identity of the region.

The other element which indicates the role of regional ideology was stressing the difference between "our folk" and "strangers", this time not based upon focusing on the importance of borders, but the difference of traditions, including also the most recent ones, such as the inter-war period and that following World War II (i.e. 1945–1989). Reference was made here

to two valuable elements of Silesian culture: on one hand to the typical tradition of old industrial regions, on the other hand to the trans-border character of the region, mainly to the relations between Polish and German culture. When stressing the industrial traditions, Silesia appeared different from the rest of the country, yet not from Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, with equally old industrial traditions. In order to be distinct from Zagłębie, it was necessary to reach for the traditions of Silesia as a trans-cultural region, with significant influence (especially in the 19th century) of German culture of work, and the German traditions of law-abiding state. Based on those traditions, a highly positive image of "our folk" was formulated, that stood out by being reliable, working well, efficiently organised, etc., while obviously such features were denied to "strangers".

In that way, the idealistic image of Silesian regional culture was propagated, employing the method known in anthropology of politics as "black screen method". According to that method, the more black the image of the "stranger" the lighter (that is better) the image of "our folk". Hence the presence of many elements referring to strangers in the reviving culture in Upper Silesia, often appearing without any deeper analysis of one's own culture which, in the process of defining through a "black screen", always comes out idealised. That was one of the purposes served by those elements of regional ideology, which clearly referred to the opposition between Upper Silesia (which represented all the positive features of the region) and Warsaw (all the negative features of a state which is culturally alien to Silesian folk). One of the prominent political activists representing the regional elite, speaking in public about the Polish state said: "we have to do with Asian (...) structure of managing the state" (cf. *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Gazeta w Katowicach), April 01, 1993, p. 3).

In a similar way, we can account for the opinions often present in the regional culture, saying that if today we deal with diminishing role of that culture it is due to the fact that the centralised Polish state (thus the negatively perceived role of Warsaw as a capital) by its thoughtless actions or even (as some think) purposely hostile actions directed at Silesia, have been making it difficult for the regional culture to develop.

The revitalisation of Silesian identity obviously becomes politically loaded (J. Wódz, 1998), yet that fact is not a distinctive feature of Upper Silesia. Such political elements may be encountered in revitalisation of other regions (e.g. Wielkopolska, Kaszuby, but also Galicja), despite being much less intense there and having different forms. If, then, we aim at presenting the problem of revitalisation of regional identity in Upper Silesia, and refer that problem to its political connotations, we need a more general approach to the issue of transformation of national identity of Poles. One must remember that the facts having to do with the overthrowing of to-

talitarianism were followed by important questions about the future modern form of national identity, and roles to be performed in that new identity by regions of clearly distinct culture.

5. Revitalisation of Silesian identity and the modern formula of Polish national identity

The process of change in the administrative division of Poland has already started. As a matter of fact, its essence lies in joining two processes: decentralisation of power, and establishment of several new, large regions, which in consequence shall change entirely the structure of both authority and administration in the country. All important political forces agree about the necessity of such a reform, although a serious dispute is going on concerning the number of such large provinces (the most often quoted amounts are 12 or 17 such new provinces – regions), and the empowering of regional authorities[2]. However, there are many signs which indicate that in the year 2000 Poland will already have a new political system, and a new administrative division in place. It appears obvious that such a political reform will result in strengthening the regions, making the "centre" weaker, in Polish reality it also implies serious changes in the existing model of national identity, centralised, unitary, and romantic at present. No wonder, then, that the loudest opposition to that reform comes from those who are traditionally-minded in politics. The objections indicate that the national identity will be dispersed, that the reform is a step which will negatively affect the feeling for Motherland and, finally, that it implies preparation for membership in the European community which will result in atrophy of the feeling of being attached to the nation, so strong in Poles so far. Fears expressed towards old regions with their own culture (there are but a few of them in Poland in fact, as the country did not exist politically in the 19th century, thus no tradition of regional division is present) imply their separatism. The whole process of administrative reform of the country thus appears to undermine the traditional formula of national identity, although it would be hard to predict the influence of reform of the state upon the future formula of national identity. Is a painless change possible – from traditional, romantic, and unitary, to civic one, considering cultural differences between regions? Will the regions, in their cultural,

[2] Finally, the 16 Regions (Voivodships) were created by the Act on Voivodship's Self-Government, adopted by Polish Parliament in June 1998 (*Official Journal*, 5 June, 1998, No. 91).

social, and political revindications be happy about such a new formula of national identity? Those are the essential questions to be answered in the years to come.

Using our research done in Upper Silesia we may attempt to indicate, even today, some predictable consequences of that reform. It was conceived in such a way as to give all regions the same level of empowerment and independence from the "centre", in the decentralisation process. Because of the fact that in Polish reality the regional revindications are voiced in various parts of the country in a varied manner (in a few regions they are totally absent, while in Upper Silesia they appear most serious), then one can predict the appearance of such revindications in regions of strong identity. Hence the idea, formulated in early 1998, to allow for a "changeable geometry" of the decentralisation process, thus allowing for various levels of independence from the "centre" in various regions, depending upon the degree in which regional identity developed there (J. Wódz, 1998a). The idea received a cold welcome in Warsaw, yet nobody familiar with Polish reality may deny that regions with regional identity already revived will produce ever new and fresh political revindications.

It should also be noted that in Upper Silesia, since 1990, there has been a lot of noise about granting autonomy to the regions (such demands are officially expressed by the association, being it in fact a proto-party, called the Movement for Silesian Autonomy), while 1997 saw an attempt of establishing the Silesian nation in the form of the association of citizens of Silesian nationality. The attempt may have attracted a comparatively small group of supporters and was officially criticised by regional elite, also court proceedings resulted in refusing the legalisation of such an association, yet it may be a signal indicating the presence of such tendencies in Upper Silesia.

The above imply that changes in the national identity are a very rapid process in Poland, and that a direct influence upon constructing the new formula of national identity will result from the effects of decentralising the state and revindications of regions in which regional identity will revive the soonest.

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Cultural identity of Upper Silesians
The difficult relationship between national and regional culture[1]

1. Why Upper Silesians could be considered a cultural minority?

One of major consequences of the Yalta accords was the displacement of the mass of people from the pre-war East Poland territory to the newly attributed to Poland Western lands. Soon after war, especially in the years 1945–1946 in Upper Silesia, the border region located in the south-west of Poland, firstly the Soviet military authorities and consequently the Polish-Communist administration carried out a policy of "nationalistic verification", which has finished by arrests and deportations of thousands of people admitting ties with German nationality, but also many Silesians being considered the Germans against their own feeling (very often it was a matter of insult and revenge of recent victims of the Nazi terror or simply ordinary corrupt practices of Soviet military authorities or Polish Communist Security and Milice officers) got to the camps of forced labour in the Soviet Union or were forced to leave their homeland.

After the World War II there were three big waves of departures of the native population to Germany: between 1947–1949, after 1956 and in early 70s (action of uniting families). This process associated with the mass influx of the culturally mixed population from all over the Poland, recruited to the work in industry, especially in the 50s and 70s has dramatically changed ethnic structure of the region, resulting in cultural clash, stressing and sensitising of objectively existing cultural differences between the native population and the newcomers – starting from the problems of the language, through the

[1] First published in: J. Mucha (ed.): *Dominant Culture as a Foreign Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press 1999, pp. 45–62.

patterns of family life, neighbourhood relationship, attitudes to work, religiosity. Upper Silesian communities, separated by their historical experience, traditions, dialect, everyday culture from newcomers have found themselves symbolically dominated by Polish official (literary) culture, transmitted by mass media, educational or cultural institutions.

Cultural inadequacy, associated with feeling of inferiority and humiliation, were the most typical experience for many children with Silesian backgrounds, entering schools and obliged to learn the "good Polish" when their native dialect was ridiculed and stigmatised. Linguistic-cultural inadequacy was the major factor of learning difficulties for many young Silesians especially in the subjects requiring use of literary version of Polish language or distant from the cultural tradition of their own regional group leading in consequence to educational failure. Traditionally low level of educational aspirations among the Silesian youth could be at least partially understood as an avoidance of anticipated failure but it must be also said, that there were other barriers for educational promotion of Silesian children, such as transmitted from one generation to another tradition of inheriting by sons the father's profession, generally low-qualified but relatively well paid and socially recognised work in coal-mining or metallurgy industry or at least – similar professional status.

This tendency observed until very recently among young people coming from Silesian families has been reinforced by the process of spatial and social segregation of local communities from – first the German and then – Polish (non-Silesian) environment.

To understand this phenomenon it is necessary to remind the history of this region.

2. Historical background of the relations between regional and national (German and Polish) culture in Upper Silesia

Upper Silesia is a typical example of the borderland, where different ethnic groups and different cultural traditions are mixed up. In the Silesian melting pot for centuries Polish, Czech-Moravian and German influences were clashing and their influence was always connected with the affiliation of this region to the wider politico-state structures. However it would be impossible to understand Silesian culture without reference to long-lasting (in Braudel's sense) history of this region – the crucial importance for the shaping of

cultural face of Upper Silesia had the 19th century. It was under Prussian and then German domination when the process of industrialisation started in the middle of the last century, favouring the influx of people from Germany to Upper Silesia. First of all, they were medium and higher office staff, administrators, engineers, technicians, supervisors etc. Those people formed the dynamically developing middle class, whereas the growing working class came mainly from the local rural communities. It was quite usual that the landlords became also the owners of new factories or coal-mines – monopolising in one hand the land and industry.

The existed before Upper Silesian variant of the Polish folk culture has been exposed to the influence of German industrial and bourgeois culture. The specific entanglement of the ethnic-linguistic divisions with socio-economic ones (German population = middle and higher classes, Silesian autochthons = lower, plebeian classes) for many decades defined the specificity of the ethnic relationship in Upper Silesia. The social and cultural barriers between these two ethnic groups had also their social-ecological face – workers communities concentrated around factories or coal mines were spatially segregated from the central part of the growing centres or residential part of the cities, inhabited by German owners or administrators. The modernisation process linked to industrialisation, obligatory from 1872 German elementary school reinforced by the Bismarck politics of *Kulturkampf*, facilitated the assimilation of these groups of autochthonous population who joined the general trend of these civilizational-cultural changes, very often at the price of eradication in one's own ethno-linguistic group.

But the other side effect of this confrontation was the strengthening of the feeling of linguistic-ethnic separateness of native Silesians, closing this community within its own culture, language habits, religion (J. Chlebowczyk, 1975). Connected with this was the "sacralization" of "homeliness" and deep distrust toward the supralocal institutions, political, administrative, cultural and so on. Born at the period of *Kulturkampf*, a specific union between the fight for preserving the Polishness and the Catholic confession (although there were also many German Catholics) led to the formation of the stereotype connecting Catholicism with the Polish character (W. Lesiuk, 1990: 9). The feeling of ethnic separateness of Upper Silesians from German population favoured the development of the Polish national awareness, empowered by the activities of Catholic priests, cultural associations, Polish libraries, lectures rooms, theatres, choirs, sport-clubs, Polish press but also labour unions (M.W. Wanatowicz, 1994: 11). The culminating point of the activities of the pro-Polish movements falls for the period of the end of the World War I, the defeat of Germany, the renaissance of the Polish State after 150 years of non-existence, the Plebiscite and the Silesian Uprisings in 1919, 1920, 1921 (N. Davies, 1986: 116).

Without going into wider characteristics of the complicated political situation in which the peace treaty between the *Entente* and Germany was signed and the conditions preceding the final decisions of the League of Nations admitting the small part of Upper Silesia to Poland were determined, it should be stressed that these important political facts did not change the mixed ethnic composition of this area. However in this part of Upper Silesia which after 1922 has found itself within the borders of reborn Polish state soon after the partition of Upper Silesia there was a big wave of massive emigration of German population. German minority although not numerically strong (following the different statistics the populations of Germans inhabiting the Polish Upper Silesia after 1922 were estimated between several to a dozen or so percent of the whole population) has preserved quite strong position in the economy (in 1922 75% of the heavy industry capital and 85% of lands were in German hands, after 17 years of Polish statehood in 1938 Germans possessed still 55% of the capital and nearly the same as before lands (M.W. Wanatowicz, 1994: 43). German minority, protected by the Geneva Convention laws (1922–1937) which regulated legal, economic and nationality problems caused by the partition of Upper Silesia had at its disposal well organised political structures, schools, cultural associations, press.

In the interwar period in Polish Upper Silesia the German question has been a matter of numerous conflicts between Polish authorities, interested in the efficient integration of this region into the whole organism of Polish state and representing German interests industrial corporations and associations. The Polish-German relationships were of course influenced by the international situation, especially the official relations between Germany and Poland. But there were also other important factors influencing the attitudes of central government towards the activities of German minority in Polish Upper Silesia and more generally – towards the specific ethnic problems of this region.

First of all, there were the solutions imposed by Geneva Convention which extended for the next 15 years the validity of German law regulations in industry and commerce, labour relations etc. The fact that these regulations were valid only for the Polish Upper Silesia affected negatively the unificatory efforts undertaken by Polish administration. Second important factor which decided upon the unique position of Silesian Province, covering the part of Upper Silesia and of Cieszyn Silesia (belonging before the World War I to Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy), in comparison with other regions within the reborn Polish state, was the special Organic Status voted by the Polish Parliament in 1920. Following this regulation, Silesian Province enjoyed a large autonomy in the administration, education, social policy, health care, jurisdiction, economy. All these matters were under the competence of the independent Silesian Parliament. Silesian

Province as the only region in inter-war Poland had its own budget, based on local taxes, only the small part of which has been paid to the Central Treasury. The autonomy gave to the Voievode (nominated by the President of the Polish Republic) and to the regional administration real power, not comparable with any other regional administration at that time in Poland. In practice the real scope of the autonomy was very much depending on the general political situation in Poland.

As it has been said the political situation created in Upper Silesia after 1922 did not suppress the mixed composition in both divided into Germany and Poland parts of this area. As Czesław Robotycki writes: "None of the sides resigned from the measure which in the future would lead to the changes of situation [...]". The Polish programme provided the activities in three main directions: supporting the beliefs of the Silesian population that the border solution is temporary and it will change for the benefit of Poland, strengthening the Polish national awareness among people remaining on the other side of the border, supporting these economic, cultural activities, demographic trends which connected Silesia with the rest of Poland (Cz. Robotycki, 1990: 29)[2].

The first years after the inclusion of the part of Upper Silesia to Poland the Polish authorities were preoccupied by the mission of repolonisation of public services: administration, courts, police and post offices, railway etc. Silesian Province became one of the most absorptive labour market for Polish intelligentsia from other parts of Poland – mainly from the former Polish Galicia (up to 1918 under Austrian domination) but also from ex-Russian territory of formerly partitioned Poland. Very soon in the Polish Upper Silesia appeared specific confrontation of the regional Silesian culture and the introduced here by Polish intelligentsia "romantic-nobleman" Polish national culture (E. Kopeć, 1986: 37).

There were many factors stimulating this confrontation. One of them was Silesians' dissatisfaction with the promises of social promotion given to them by Polish Plebiscite propaganda. In fact, these promises have not been fulfilled. The expected promotion was obstructed by the lack of appropriate education and not sufficient acquisition by the autochthons of the literary form of Polish which made difficult the upward mobility of this population. Only small groups of Silesians were able to obtain higher posts in the state government administration, the majority has been put down by

[2] There is no place here for the detailed historical analysis. We will thus limit our discussion the situation of the Polish Upper Silesia as a factor of fundamental importance for the understanding of sources of mistrust between the Polish administration and the autochthonous population. For the rest of Upper Silesia which remained under the German control the inter-war period brought intensification of germanisation practices, especially after 1933, leading to the far going erosion of the pro-Polish options. Wider see: W. Wrzesiński, 1970.

better educated newcomers. This situation, together with the essential incompatibility of cultural patterns, customs, mentality and language between these two populations were the most important source of misunderstanding and tensions.

The situation was worsened by economic recession of the late twenties which led to the mass unemployment and social unrest. All this favoured the development of the separatist movement, based on frustrations of those Silesians who felt menaced by the growing, especially after 1926, influence of the Polish nationalistic parties and organisations. It should be mentioned here that, contrary to other parts of Poland, the Upper Silesian pro-Polish ethnic option has not necessary achieved the "ideological level of national consciousness", but rather was a set of habits and attitudes having their roots in local dialect, regional tradition, and attachment to the neighbourhood, a kind of "**private homeland**" (S. Ossowski, 1967). The strong regional ties, covering both Poles and Germans living for generations next to each other, often in friendship and connected by the kinship, have been instrumentally used by separatists' movement, supported by both the German minority and the political opponents of the governing from 1926 authoritarian system called *sanacja* (N. Davies, 1986: 123).

Representing *sanacja* Silesian Voievode Michał Grażyński openly supported actions directed against the German presence in public life including the forced changes of German names, the prohibition of using German in public institutions and so on. These actions were disapproved not only by German Minority representatives but also Polish Catholic bishops who were aware of the complexity of the ethnic situation in Upper Silesia (M.W. Wanatowicz, 1994). Grażyński himself, trying to neutralise the influences of his opponents, undertook an attempt to promote the Silesian regional dialect and culture, considering them as an element of great Polish cultural tradition.

All these activities were dramatically stopped by the outbreak of the World War II. The Hitler's occupation, including the whole of Upper Silesia together with the part of Kielce Province (the districts of Sosnowiec and Będzin) and Cieszyn Silesia to the Reich brought a complete break of open ties with Polish tradition. Persecutions of the Polish language and carried out on an unparalleled in other regions scale the action of enrolment on the German *Volksliste* which covered the whole Silesian population, favoured the regermanization. However, according to the Nazi's settlements, far more than half of the Silesian population was categorized as III nationalistic group, which meant lack of crystallised German awareness. For anybody who understands the complexity of ethnic and national identifications of Silesians it is evident that the formal access to the *Volksliste* was in Upper

Silesia of decisively smaller subjective importance than in other parts of Poland occupied by the Nazis (N. Davies, 1986: 69).

However, many Poles going through the gehenna of occupation without even these substitutes of "normality" which were given to the people enrolled on the *Volksliste* considered the attitudes and behaviour of some Silesians during these tragic times as the evidence of opportunism or national betray. The oversimplified and unjust stereotype of the "Silesian-renegade" was strengthened by the fact of mass participation of the Silesians in German military formation (Wehrmacht). These and other similar facts have infected the relations between Poles and Silesians and heavily stigmatised the post-war situation of Silesians.

After painful occupational experience the Silesians lived the drama of nationalistic verification carried out in a shameful way, without taking into consideration the complicated history of this region. Soon after the war, especially in the years 1945–1946 there were mass arrests and deportations of the German population (or identified as Germans by entering Upper Silesia Soviet military authorities and communist Security Office or milicja), thousands of Silesians got to the camps of forced labour in Soviet Union, less than half of them returned home in the late forties or even later ruined physically and mentally. Many of them were suffering humiliation and torment of "nationalistic rehabilitation" and restoration of civil rights (Z. Łempiński, 1979; J. Misztal, 1984; W. Błasiak, 1990; D. Berlińska, 1993).

Without any doubts, this harmful experience left in minds of many Silesians a feeling of distrust and aversion to "newcomers", named disdainfully the "*gorols*". Coming from the Eastern and Central Poland, they found themselves in an unfamiliar environment and reacted with oversimplified, equally negative stereotype of the "*hanys*", the man of the unshaped national affiliation. Lack of confidence to the Silesians as an "untrustworthy, nationally doubtful element" was, at least for the decades after the end of the World War II, a significant factor limiting the access of representatives of this ethnic group to higher posts of state administration, education or culture[3].

But, of course, the post-war social situation of Upper Silesia was seriously influenced by general political situation of Poland. In the "socialist planned economy" the heavy industry of Upper Silesia had to fulfil the role

[3] The following comments refer mainly to the area of the Katowice Province, the most industrialised part of Poland and Upper Silesia, however the sociological research carried out in the rural area of the Opole Province showed up many similarities, especially when we look for the relationship between the autochthons and the large groups of repatriates from the former eastern part of Poland and the participation of the Silesians in official structures of larger society (see: D. Berlińska, 1989, 1990).

of the source of raw materials and energy. The imposed by the Communist Party model of extensive industrialisation forced the specific structure of the regional job market. First of all, the unqualified labour force was needed, it was not by accident, then, that in the structure of secondary education of the Upper Silesian Industrial Basin vocational schools have dominated until very recently.

In practice, this policy meant the limiting of developmental possibilities of the region, strengthening its monocultural character with all the negative consequences in economy, social structures, culture, ecology. Thousands of people, recruited from all over Poland, came to Upper Silesia in the 50ties and 70ties attracted by the promises of "social promotion". They were making use of preferential allowances of flats in gigantic housing estates growing on the outskirts of Silesian towns. This housing policy, subordinated to the needs of industrial production, has to a large extent deepened the social-ecological distance between the native population, concentrated first of all in old workers' communities, and the newcomers, settled in new blocs. The fate of these old workers' districts of the industrial part of Upper Silesia is one of the most striking expressions of the marginalisation of considerable proportion of Upper Silesian regional communities in the period of real socialism (K. Wódz, 1995).

3. Institutional aspects of cultural domination in Upper Silesia

One of the most astonishing phenomena which, without any doubt, is a consequence of the processes described above is that for the last century the autochthonic population of Upper Silesia has been culturally dominated by two big national cultures, first German and then Polish, without being adopted and assimilated by them. What is even more astonishing, this is a far going similarity of the position of autochthonous groups in comparison with the socio-economic position of Germans until their departure in 1945 and Poles (for a small part of Upper Silesia attributed to Poland between 1922–1939 and then after 1945). It was mostly a result of the active policy of the states to which this region belonged. The examples of this policy were given above.

As we tried to show, also after 1945 when all the Upper Silesia became an integral part of the Polish State, the cultural idiosyncrasy of this region did not disappear. Furthermore, it would be difficult to find another

region in Poland where the symbolic content transmitted by official institutions – mass media, educational and cultural institutions – swerved so much from the symbols and values functioning within primary groups, local communities, informal communication network and so on. These divergences were observed for example in the attitudes of native Silesians towards the formal education, the lack of which has often been compensated with the higher than average culture of work and practical experience. The Silesian communities as a whole to a limited extent use the possibilities of social promotion through education. As a matter of fact, the regional system of education for the last fifty years favoured the reproduction of traditional models of educating Silesian children limited to the vocational training or technical professional high schools. But, at the same time, educational aspirations of young children coming from Silesian families were comparatively lower than their colleagues' of the same age (W. Mrozek, 1987).

We have already tried to sketch in the introduction the possible explanations of this situation. The first one stresses the relative closeness of the Silesian communities, favoured by endogamy (mixed marriages are still rare, see: Z. Rykiel, 1989), strong kinship ties and spatial segregation from newcomers which facilitate the transmission of traditional models of careers from parents and neighbours to the children. The second explanation of socio-linguistic character stresses the importance of the fact that socialisation in traditional Silesian family, in the relatively homogenous local community means acquiring together with the dialect of the specific level of linguistic-cultural competence and thus – forming specific for these communities primary *habitus* which often occurred to be dysfunctional towards the requirements of the official educational system.

Referring thus, on the one hand, to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* and, on the other, to Basil Bernstein's theory of linguistic codes, we can explain not only the educational failure of Silesian children but a larger phenomenon of the **cultural inadequacy** experienced by members of this regional group in the contact with all the institutions which, like education and propaganda system and mass media, were controlled by the political and cultural Centre. The symbolic domination of the Centre so much easier in the centralised political system of communism meant after all the domination of unitarian and homogenous vision of Polish national identity, manipulated ideologically according to the needs of the official propaganda. Without neglecting the political aspect of this domination, it should be stressed that the core of this unitary vision of Polish identity has been shaped by the traditions of Polish romanticism, which, behind the period of the Stalinist terror, has never been rejected by Polish cultural and political elites.

In Upper Silesia, due to historical, political and cultural reasons described briefly above, the reception of these traditions was very weak, the romantic heroes of Polish history and literature were never integrated with the history and cultural traditions of this region, transmitted first of all by the family and local community. The institutionalised symbolic culture, transmitted by official institutions was often felt as a form of "symbolic violence", disturbing or even contradictory to the loyalties to someone's own family or regional group. Of course, the most threatening conflicts were between the "official" and "private" version of the recent history, the value attributed to the Polish State or patriotism.

To avoid or diminish a feeling of discomfort caused by constant discrepancies between these two "symbolic universes", the Silesians look carefully for their "privacy" and kept distance to the world of official institutions. This, in consequence, contributed to the preservation of the marginal position of Silesians, their feeling of injustice and discrimination.

4. The process of institutionalisation of regional consciousness and its impact on inter-ethnic relations in contemporary Upper Silesia

Democratic changes taking place in Poland after 1989 opened the possibility of expression and articulation of the interests of regional and ethnic groups. In Upper Silesia this process, due to historical, cultural and psycho-social reasons, was much more intense than in any other region in Poland and led to the establishment of many organisations representing the interests of the regional community as a whole and the interests of particular ethnic groups. It is not surprising that one of the most dynamic and visible groups growing up very quickly after 1989 was the organisation of German minority[4].

What was surprising, it was the number of people who manifested their interest to join these organisations, especially in Opole Silesia where more than 100 000 people in 1989 signed the declaration of membership for the Social-Cultural Association of German Minority, recognised officially by the Polish authorities in the beginning of 1990. Similar associations, although not so important when considering the number of members, emerged in Katowice. The leading figures of the most influential organisation of Ger-

[4] In fact, there were many efforts towards the legalisation of German minority organisations before that date but they were not successful (see: T. Urban, 1994).

man minority from the Opole Silesia – Johann Kroll and his son Henryk and in Gliwice – Gerhard Bartodziej – presented themselves as the representatives of the interests of all Germans living in Upper Silesia, interested in the preservation of cultural heritage, language and traditions of this group.

Soon, these cultural ambitions became insufficient and the organisation proclaimed the postulates of purely political character, with the demands of special law regulations for Germans living in Poland and a closer relationship of this group with their compatriots from *Fatherland*, the activists of the most revisionist organisation – the Association of Exiled (BdV), openly supporting the idea of reunification of Upper Silesia with Germany. The latter issue was a matter of serious controversies between different groups of German minority, for example the Social-Cultural Association of Germans in Opole Silesia and the Working Group "Reconciliation and Future", created by Diethmar Brehmer in Katowice. Contrary to the activists of the first group Brehmer's main efforts from the very beginning were directed towards the building of the Polish-German mutual agreement and overcoming the mutual prejudices.

The controversies between these organisations were of fundamental character, however in 1990 they joined the same umbrella organisation – Central Council of German Associations in Poland. Brehmer left this organisation soon after their visit in Bonn where the 16-point programme with very categorical claims towards the Polish authorities was presented to Mr. Dietrich Genscher, Minister for Foreign Affairs at that time. It was the period of official negotiations between Poland and Germany on the Treaty of the confirmation of the existing borders. The signature of a Treaty on good neighbourhood and friendly co-operation between Germany and Poland in June 1991 has, despite many contests from a part of the representatives of BdV or the Central Council of Germans in Poland, opened the way to normalisation.

Important steps towards the normalisation were the results of the local elections in 1990. In the eastern part of this region, in 21 communes inhabited mainly by the autochthons, German minority representatives gained from 65 to 90% of votes. Consequently, in many villages the leading posts in local government and administration were taken by the members of German minority. In 1990 the first official journal addressed to the members of German minority – *Oberschlesische Zeitung* (Gazeta Górnośląska) started. In 1991 the regional radio station in Katowice started the first emission in German, several hours a week, soon the similar programme started in Opole. It was also a year of great political success of German minority candidates for the parliamentary elections – they got seven places in the Diet and one in the Senate.

One could say that these were milestones on the way to the incorporation of German minority in Poland into the public life, however it does not mean that the situation has become ideal. The growing importance of German minority organisations in Opole Silesia caused many fears on the side of the Poles, living here from a half of a century. These fears resulted in part from the penetration of Upper Silesia by German nationalistic groups, especially just before and shortly after the confirmation of the Polish-German borders (Treaty of 14 November 1990) and one year later – of the Treaty on good neighbourhood. Several actions of these groups like, for example, construction of the monuments of Wehrmacht soldiers in some villages, substitution of Polish names of the villages by German ones, very often changed in the thirties by Nazis who strived to eliminate every trace of Slavonic heritage. A good example of this kind of practices was the action of Mr. Helmut Wieschollek, the head of the village of Dziewkowice, who removed the boards with the name of his village and installed new ones, with the name *Frauenfeld* although the historic name of this place, from before the Nazi period was *Schewkowitz*.

Similar examples could be found in other villages of Opole Silesia. Extreme nationalistic groups gained some popularity especially among the oldest generation of autochthons who have never experienced the denazification process. For them, the real tragedy started after 1945, when the Soviet Army entered their villages and the arrests and deportations began. But the official representations of German minority after 1991 declared their loyalty to the Polish state and took their distance from the activities of neoNazi formations (see: T. Urban, 1994).

Not surprisingly, Polish nationalist parties manifested their deepest interest in development of the situation in Upper Silesia. The arguments of threats for the national interest, the danger of being bought by Germans were of common use in the political discourse of nationally oriented political parties or organisations like Związek Zachodni (the Association of West), Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe (the Christian-National Union).

There were examples of physical aggression and devastation of the offices of the German minorities organised by the groups of Polish skinheads supported by extreme nationalistic movements. Of course, there are also many examples of very good cooperation and mutual understanding between the groups of Germans and Poles living together in the same communities in Opole Silesia. The tensions and distrust, although still present, tend to decrease as soon as the legacy of the Polish-German Treaty from 1991 is fulfilled on the profit of both groups.

The situation in Katowice part of Upper Silesia differs in many aspects from the Opole Silesia. Here, only a small part of native Silesians decided to join German minority organisations, although many of them will not be

unfriendly towards theirs links with German culture or civilisation. The first regional organisations which appeared here after 1989 like the Silesian Association (supported by the Catholic Church) or the Movement for the Silesian Autonomy formulated a different project of revitalisation of Silesian culture and in reference to inter-war period, built their political programme on the basis of habitual ties, treated as a substitute the ideological national consciousness (S. Ossowski, 1967: 251).

Developed by some regional organisations, **regional ideology** (containing strong ethnocentric, exclusivistic component, associated with xenophobia and hostility toward newcomers) was based on the assumption that Silesian culture is still (despite passing of time and irreversible, to a large extent, demographic processes), an indivisible, compact whole, in many respects exceptional and attractive for all the inhabitants of Upper Silesia, no matter who they are and where they come from. Stressing the cultural distinctiveness of Upper Silesia and overestimating the cultural distances between the Silesians and the non-Silesians bring the contemporary Silesian regionalism to the small or "peripheral nationalism" (P.A. Gourevitch, 1979). In the programmes of some regional groups there appeared unfriendly, even hostile accents towards everything which is "not-Silesian", one's own traditions, customs, dialect obtained an universal status, a "stranger", i.e. a newcomer embodied the whole evil of the world (compare the *Information Bulletin*, No. 1 of the Movement of Silesian Autonomy, 1990). It was in this way that aiming at respecting cultural separateness of the native population and cultivating one's own identity changed into discriminatory attempts towards the newcomers who felt threatened in their **civil rights** (J. Wódz & K. Wódz, 1994; Wódz, 1996).

What is more, the more identity claims of the groups of natives are articulated as political projects put forward by various regional movements (regionalisation and autonomy or separation) the greater the resonance among newcomers of the mottoes, declared by nationalist-populist groups on the threats of the territorial integrity of the state and erosion of the Polish national consciousness in Upper Silesia (W. Błasiak, 1993; T. Nawrocki, 1993). The situation became so much complicated the population of newcomers is now in Upper Silesia in majority. For them Upper Silesia has become for the necessity or by choice "the small motherland", to which as the citizens of the same country they have the same rights as the autochthons, even if they do not feel any links with the Silesian culture. Aggressive ethnoregionalism antagonises the regional community, diverts public attention from dramatic civilisation challenges which the traditional industrial area of Upper Silesia is facing now, discredits in the eyes of many groups the idea of regionalisation. Fortunately, as the time passed the emotions decreased and institutional forms

of dialogues between different interest groups emerged. But the process of defining the regional identity is unfinished and the cultural-ethnic arguments in political projects, developed by the advocates of regionalisation in Upper Silesia, are still of bigger importance than more fundamental questions of democracy, built on the constitutional rules of civil rights and equalities.

5. Between "open" and "closed" vision of regional culture. Unsolved dilemmas?

The question of crucial importance for future development of Upper Silesian regionalism is how to avoid the danger of ethnic antagonism between the different groups living today in this region and, at the same time, preserve its specific regional values and traditions. It is a question of a choice between the closed ethnoregionalism, based on sharp distinction between "one's countrymen" and "foreigners" or open regionalism, based on universal, civil rights, guaranteeing the freedom of expression and representation to all ethnic groups living here side by side.

If the first tendency prevailsed, the possible scenario for the future would be rather pessimistic, with potential conflicts and tensions inside the regional community and deepening the ethnic-cultural marginalisation of the region within the wider structure of the Polish society. If the second tendency won, this region would get an exceptional chance to overcome the prejudices and stereotypes accumulated for the decades and open the ways of participation in the process of constructing a new regional identity to the wide spectrum of ethnic groups and organisations.

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The dynamics of reproduction of regional consciousness in Poland versus the idea of unitarian state[1]

1. Introduction

The revitalisation of regional identity which takes place in those regions of Poland which have a distinct cultural character is a fact that has been described in literature since the early 1990s (e.g. J. Wódz, 1993: 80–97; K. Wódz, 1994: 365–378; K. Wódz, 1995). Let us then consider the very fact as undisputed in sociology. This would not, however, imply that the process itself has been reasonably well recognised in Polish sociology, sadly the reverse is true. When the revitalisation of identity in traditional regions (Upper Silesia for example) has been reasonably well studied, then for other regions the research process has not gone far enough. It should also be pointed out that the processes of establishing elements of regional identity in northern and western parts of Poland have hardly been recognised, and the territories in question are inhabited by a generation of grandchildren of the emigrants from pre-war eastern borderland of Poland, thus a generation that was born in the "new" territories and that has treated them as "their own land". There, we deal with processes that imply moving away from identity which is typical for territorial communities and toward identity that is typical for culture-oriented communities (cf. A.-P. Frognier, 1995: 11–21).

From the initial remarks above, one can already state that when discussing the dynamics of regeneration of regional consciousness in Poland in the light of the idea of unitarian state, one discusses processes which differ in various parts of the country, moreover our sociological knowledge

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of the subject is generally poor. Defining the subject matter of our future considerations, it should also be stressed that in Poland analyses of those problems from the political science point of view are a rarity indeed, and if such analyses exist, they apply to those regions where identity is well developed[2]. It thus may be stated, not risking any major error, that very important social processes related to regaining or establishing new (sometimes only seeds of) elements of regional identity are poorly recognised in Poland. This fact cannot, however, prevent considerations, as those social processes are superimposed upon the ongoing reform of the state, which ought to take them into account.

Talking about the reform of the state, and having the knowledge available in the first months of implementing that reform, the decisive character of it needs to be appreciated, even if many elements of that reform appear to be inconsiderate and, first of all, poorly translated into political science and sociological analysis. Discussions preceding the implementation of the reform of state lacked almost entirely analyses regarding consequences of the reform for future regional identity (be it within 12 or even 17 new provinces). Among authors of the reform, the dominating idea was that regions should be comparable in terms of territory, as is in other countries in Europe, which is untrue of course (it suffices to ponder upon the differences between regions – *Lands* – in the Federal Republic of Germany, that is a neighbouring country to the structures of which we sometimes refer).

The sociological perspective assumed in this study shall allow to ask numerous questions, along with some tentative hypotheses regarding possible continuation of processes described.

Will it be possible in Poland in future to reconcile decentralisation aiming at satisfying regional identity revindications (regardless what definition of the very notion of region will be applied), that is decentralisation aiming at regionalization, with maintaining a unitarian form of the state and, what is more important for sociologists, with maintaining a unitarian form of Polish national identity? This is indeed a crucial issue, and the answer to the above question will, in future, determine the types of motivation to public behaviour, as well as the structure of the future political representation, both at regional and nation-wide level.

Obviously, searching an answer to such a question must be based upon the existing knowledge, upon solutions from other countries and societies and, finally, upon taking into consideration certain suppositions derived

[2] Of course, the easiest for us is to use the example of Upper Silesia, where those problems have surely been studied and recognized most thoroughly. Cf. D.L. Seiler, K. Wódz, J. Wódz, 1997; J. Wódz, 1998: 8–27.

rather from the research experiences of the authors than from documented sociological knowledge.

To conclude this introduction, yet another issue needs to be stressed, namely that the problem considered here requires certain generalisations concerning the present content and model of national identity. The idea is well known that at present Polish national identity undergoes rapid transformations, and that its traditional model undergoes decomposition (K. Krzysztofek, 1995: 167–180). Also, the fact should be taken into consideration that the present territory of the state comprises at least four different areas the substance of which influences that process of decomposing the traditional unitarian national identity: namely, the traditions of the three sectors of partitioned Poland, as well as traditions (sometimes very fresh) of the so-called Regained Territories (western and northern Poland). What has been stated above unmistakably indicates a highly complicated character of this analysis, thus in advance justifies the generalisations applied by authors.

Is there, however, necessarily contradiction between a process which through decentralisation may lead to regionalisation of the country, understood sociologically (that is taking regional identity into consideration) and the idea of maintaining a unitarian form of state (and national identity) proclaimed oftentimes (mainly by some politicians)? Let us try to provide an answer to this question, in a hypothetical manner.

2. Dynamics of regional identity in Poland in the late 1990s

Poland is a country which is not abundant with traditional regions. The period when it had been divided and partitioned throughout the 19th century, when in European states the modern sense of belonging to a region got formed, witnessed numerous border corrections, migrations, different levels of economic development in various parts of the country, which had all been factors that resulted in establishing three distinct kinds of large regional communities in Poland: regions that have had rich and long lasting traditions of separate cultural character, proto-regions (that is territory-oriented communities in which the processes of shaping a region started, yet the process has just begun), and communities which show no features specific for regions understood sociologically. It is a somehow distinctive feature of Poland that such territory-bound communities sometimes have institutional identity. Such quasi-regions with institutional identity come to mind when certain regions of the European Union are taken into

consideration (F. Massart-Pierard, 1998: 35–53). Such an identity may be recalled when discussing the communities in certain provinces established in the 1970s at the territory of the so-called Regained Territories (western and northern Poland).

All that has been said before makes us state that it is impossible to discuss, in Polish conditions, the general regularities related to the dynamics of regeneration or establishing of regional identity in Poland. It is possible to provide specific examples, it is also possible to point out certain consequences, common for the entire country, of the democratisation processes linked with social life. Invariably, this will only lead to indicating certain elements of that dynamics, never to an overall analysis.

Let us begin with the most crucial issue, related to all the territory-bound communities in the country, be they traditional regions, proto-regions, or only communities at certain territories which have the dimension of regional communities. This issue is about freedom to manifest the relations with social space that constitutes "one's own" place to live. Sociologists oftentimes indicated the importance of space, especially the so-called meaningful space for formation of social behaviour (B. Jałowiecki, 1989: 26–46). For emigrants, especially those emigrants who were forced to change the place of residence, yet another notion is of importance, namely that of reference space, which may be defined for those big groups that were forced to abandon their former territories and settle in entirely new space (J. Wódz, 1989: 263–280). That reference space was of utmost importance for the generation of emigrants, it became important as a symbol for the children of those emigrants. Yet, for both generations it had been, for many years a forbidden topic. It may be thus stated that for any communities at certain territories which have the dimension of regional communities that fact of having the possibility to express freely the attitude to social space has been an important factor triggering the dynamics discussed here. It is of import, yet often overlooked, that the formation of the first elements of identity related to space took place within the administrative division of the country valid in the early 1990s (J. Wódz, 1990). For our analysis the most crucial was the division of the country into provinces (voivodships) although, as we shall prove later on, also the division into municipalities was of value for the dynamics in question.

Let us then consider the most vital elements of the "provincial dynamics". Regardless the fact whether we had to do with traditional regions, proto-regions, or just bigger territory-related communities, the provincial (voivodship) structure invariably implied a structure involving authorities. Apart from that, it also implied concentrating around a certain urban centre (with its educational, cultural, medical etc. infrastructure) that determined the attractiveness of such province (voivodship). To sum up, in the period

when the actuation of expressing freely people's belonging to a territory, provinces were those territorial units which in a natural way structured the manner in which the attachment to a territory was expressed. One can assume in advance that the structuring role of provinces was less important in old traditional regions (as initial structuring was not necessary there, having been replaced with obvious cultural differences, making such a region stand out from the rest of the country, and being the basis for establishing association-like structures), although even there the capital of the province as centre of power was an attractive focal point for regional elite.

The structuring of territorial (or regional) identity usually happened through establishing numerous associations: cultural, economic, social, or other ones. This was a vital stage of the dynamics in question as it allowed, through associations, to develop social activities unknown in Polish reality so far, which entailed developing civil attitudes. It was in those associations that ideas emerged about developing various spheres of life, it was there that the self-governments were shaped, especially in towns being capitals of provinces, where the local identity was supplemented also with regional, proto-regional, or provincial identity. It is of value that the sense of belonging was shaped not only through the system of power (democracy, self-governments in communities), but also through civil life understood actively. At the moment of transformation from planned economy to free market, which for many provinces entailed the emergence of numerous economic problems, the association movement became a natural partner of provincial authorities (compare for example the role of regional chambers of commerce or various economy-related initiatives at provincial level) which obviously authenticated associations socially, provided them with social legitimisation to represent the interests of territorially-related communities (sometimes regional ones as well).

In those regions which had a regional identity, that stage of development came into prominence not only through associations as such, but also through a wide social movement expressing the rebirth of regional culture. There is no need to multiply the examples from Upper Silesia or the Wielkopolska region here, these things are generally known and their influence upon enhancing regional identity is obvious.

In this context, an important issue is the dynamics of local identity and belonging. Here, not the local level as such is of importance, but rather town municipalities in which local elections imparted dynamism (both the local elections of 1990 and, in particular, the ones of 1994). As early as towards the end of 1980s, sociologists paid attention to the important role of local communities in democracy building (B. Jałowiecki, K.Z. Sowa, P. Dutkiewicz, 1989). Focusing upon social self-organising on local level had, at the time of local elections, at least three functions: firstly it allowed

to define social problems of those communities through their own activities, secondly it constituted an important factor imparting dynamism in election structures, thus allowing to establish first shell of local representation and, thirdly, it constituted a crucial factor for developing the relations between identification with "one's own" land/territory and the manner in which a given community is managed. Here, one should perceive also the influence of those elections upon establishing trans-local, regional, proto-regional or provincial (that is territorial) consciousness. Obviously, it would be easiest for us to indicate the role of those processes on the example of Upper Silesia, where we have been conducting systematic studies for years, yet this does not imply that we want to concentrate merely on that example. As another example, one can indicate the processes of proto-regional consciousness in the region of Galicja (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1995: 49–61). Let us, however, proceed to present a few examples from Silesia, as it may be assumed that certain elements of the dynamics concerning establishment of structures expressing regional identity may be repeated in other territory-related communities. We mean here, of course, merely the forms of specific processes, not their content, as the latter always depends upon hard facts resulting from tradition, culture, specific economy, conditions concerning population, characteristics of space, etc.

Social mobilisation related to the local elections of 1990 became a substantial element of structuring regional identity. Despite the fact that civil committees constituted the major structure then (or rather a proto-structure, which was subsequently replaced by more efficient structures of local representation) which proposed candidates whose names appeared later on ballot papers, a significant influence here was executed by associations of Silesians which later defined themselves within Związek Górnośląski (Upper Silesian Union) and Ruch Autonomii Śląska (Movement for the Autonomy of Silesia). It is obvious that all those efforts to revitalise Silesian regional identity started from reaching for tradition, which at times resulted in provoking conflicts with the group of population that settled in Upper Silesia (sometimes a long time ago) but which was not of Silesian origin (K. Wódz, 1993; 1995a). Local elections were thus an important factor in actuating the revitalisation of Silesian identity.

A certain problem in Upper Silesia resulted from the fact that regional elite focused for too long upon purely retrospective vision of the region, which made them lose the chances for mobilising the entire population of the region. Those who postulated the need to proceed to a prospective vision of the region, which by pointing out future problems and challenges could be the basis for establishing civil society (as the population of the region would not be divided) found no understanding among regional elite in the early 1990s (J. Wódz, 1995: 74–84). This phenomenon may be explained

by the necessity of mobilising "our folk", resulting from the approaching elections (let us remind that the second local elections took place in 1994, and only after them a characteristic "broadening of perspective" of regional elite took place), the need for mobilisation in turn gave birth to the phenomenon of regional ideology (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1991: 33–101). We do not claim here that everywhere the transformation from concentrating on the past as a way for organising "our folk" into a regional community must involve a stage of constructing regional ideology (alternatively: proto-regional one or only related to territory-related communities), yet we point out that such a stage in the process described is possible.

Let us now focus upon the next stage, that of consolidating specific (sometimes similar to those existing in other parts of the country, sometimes completely different) forms of local and regional political representation. The "rhythm" of local elections compelled the formation of that representation. This may take the form of associations, of urban proto-parties (J. Wódz, 1998a: 198–207), or proto-parties of regional character (J. Wódz, 1998a: 16–21). In both the latter instances, these are structures of association type which, in moments politically crucial for the area (town, region, or province if it constitutes a social space perceived as a whole by the local community) switch their public discourse from typical for associations to typical for politics, "producing" political visions for "their" area or even proposing their own candidates to run in the elections. The experience of Silesia teaches that where proto-parties are established and function actively, "classic" political parties functioning nation-wide lose their importance (D.L. Seiler, K. Wódz, J. Wódz, 1997: 85–127)[3]. Of course, a legitimate question arises whether that experience, related directly to the dynamics of regeneration and establishing of regional identity in an old region will be applicable to proto-regions or territory-related communities. This can be assumed at least as a hypothesis. There are three serious arguments for such a proposal:

- Firstly, the general weakness of Polish party structures, which makes it possible for any possible proto-parties to emerge in a peculiar vacuum, not having to "regain territory" from any existing structures of political representation.
- Secondly, none of the political parties existing in Poland is involved in any distinct regional policy (perhaps not understanding the sense of such activities at all).

[3] The results of empirical studies presented there indicate a vital difference in political representation between the Zagłębie Dąbrowskie area which has no urban or regional proto-parties and where nationwide political parties play a substantial role, and the Upper Silesia area, where urban and regional proto-parties are active and where the nationwide parties are definitely less clearly and more shallowly represented than in the Zagłębie Dąbrowskie area.

– Thirdly, in the first months of 1998 in several provinces social movements were established, finding growing political expression, which movements could constitute a sort of natural basis for establishing such forms of political representation.

These movements seem worth commenting in a few sentences, as they establish a social reality which stands all the chances for further restructuring. If we consider the manner in which, for example, the social movement for defending the Opole province [from being liquidated] was organised, then it would be hard not to notice, first of all, certain sound sociological background for regional identity (it is a typical example where the resistance to a certain idea led to completing the process of moving from proto-regional to regional identity), second, sober analyses meant to substantiate the continuing existence of the province and, third, a sound structuring which can hardly be expected to vanish by itself in a democratic society (what is more, a society with such a poor structuring of political representation as in Poland) the moment the Parliament takes the final decisions regarding the borders of future provinces (voivodship). It may be assumed that, although to a different degree, all those movements and organisations that today protest and contest the number of provinces, shall in future constitute a basis for certain forms of regional or maybe only urban proto-parties. It should therefore be assumed in advance that the provinces surely, at least within the first several years of their existence, will not become regions, not even regions understood merely institutionally[4], as in the Polish reality political representation may get established stronger perhaps on the basis of earlier social movements, associations, or proto-parties, and these shall be the natural transmission channel between provincial authorities and social interest of citizens.

In such a situation, it should be assumed that the dynamics of reproduction or establishing of regional consciousness in Poland is still substantial and that we have to deal with a process which occurs in various ways in different parts of the country, which entails that the influence of administrative structures (the new ones – big provinces) in the several initial years after the reform does not necessarily have to be decisive for that process. That will surely be an important factor, but it is equally certain that there will be social, cultural, political, and economic factors exceeding by far in importance the administrative division of the country as such.

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[4] In the sense which F. Massart-Pierard applied towards regions of the European Union. Compare F. Massart-Pierard: *L'identite institutionnelle des regions au sein de l'Union Europeenne...*, pp. 35 and the following, where he considers only that one aspect of regional identity which results from institutional prerogatives of power and specific behaviour of citizens which such prerogatives enforce.

3. A few remarks upon transformations of national identity

Our considerations apply mainly to the dynamics of reproduction or establishing of regional consciousness in Poland. If, however, we are to address the problems of unitarian state, then we have to ponder upon transformations of national identity as well. It so happened in Poland that the 20-century old traditions of Polish state have been built upon a certain canon of national identity which had unitarian features and was of romantic character (consequently, those features were such that the cultural canon proved to be of more importance than the social reality, as that reality was often considered "not ours"). It is also not of no importance that in Poland, for much longer than in other European states, the intelligentsia served as the guarantor of that cultural canon, that is the class of society which was very specific for Poland and which was deprived of any pragmatism in its ethos.

We shall not ponder any longer upon the content of Polish national identity. It should suffice to state here, as has been already stated by numerous authors, that this unitarian, romantic, anti-pragmatic identity undergoes deep transformations at present. Antonina Kłoskowska, in her statement published in the bi-monthly *Europa*, indicates clearly that the intensifying everyday contacts of Poles with representatives/citizens of other nations, mainly those contacts which have to do with economy and trade, will promptly set aside the romantic elements in our identity and, equally quickly, we will learn to appreciate pragmatism (A. Kłoskowska, 1998: 4–5). In the same issue of that bi-monthly, we can also find a significant statement by Bronisław Łagowski who draws the readers' attention to the fact that our national identity got shaped under constant threat and in continuous confrontation with enemies. If those external factors are removed, it must change, which change could come swiftly indeed (B. Łagowski, 1998: 6–7). Of course, our membership in the European Union will not automatically mean that we shall all give up the unitarian and romantic canon of national identity, becoming open to new, pragmatic solutions. We will probably have to do with processes of gradual acceptance of pragmatic content, which acceptance will take different course and tempo in different parts of the country. It appears highly probable that the territories of western and central Poland shall take over that pragmatism relatively quickly, whereas in Eastern Poland that process will be much more lengthy, or tendencies to stress the unitarian and romantic elements of Polish national identity will increase. Such a supposition seems to stem from analyses of social attitudes regarding Polish access to the European Union, the state of Polish economy, type of political preferences expressed

so far or, finally, the type of religiousness, also a crucial factor for Polish national identity. Simplifying grossly, we shall state that river Wisła is such a dividing line between Western Poland, inclined to change the identity for a more pragmatic one relatively quickly, and Eastern Poland, where pragmatism takes root slowly if it does at all.

Let this general opinion suffice here. What is of importance is that, not contesting the unitarian form of the state, we do notice at present a rapid process of changing the traditional form of national identity, and that Poland is quite clearly divided into parts which differ in the tempo of those changes, while in Eastern Poland a strong political structure gets established which opposes the pragmatic changes, often defined as typical for the left bank of the Wisła river (we mean here in particular the political structures established by Radio Maryja). In such a situation, it will be difficult to find a single coherent model of national identity transformation, and the level of hypotheses will have to do.

4. Between acceptance of regional identities and unitarian form of state

There is a conviction, substantiated by historic experiences, that the processes of political revindications resulting from strong regional identity may lead to decomposition of unitarian states[5]. Such anxieties are often also expressed by part of Polish political elite, which in this way object to possible threats for the unitarian form of state, that may come from the developing regional identity. Should we, however, assume that the form of state (as long as we talk about a democratic free state, the form of which expresses the will of its citizens) is a peculiar reflection of political identity, then it would be hard not to notice (that is to ignore) in Poland the process of dynamic regeneration or even establishing regional identity, that we have described above. All these are processes the final outcome of which cannot be known at present, but can be at least hypothetically predicted. Should they, then, necessarily lead to destruction of the unitarian form of state? We do not think so.

Let us quote here the opinion voiced by a renown and venerable Belgian political scientist (*nota bene* of Hungarian origin, who knows well not

[5] An example of such processes may be provided from the last two or three decades of the history of Belgium, a state which under the stress of political revindications stemming from its big regions, transformed itself from a unitary to federal one (cf. A.-P. Frognier, J. Wódz, 1996: 68–79).

only Western Europe, but Central Europe too), Mr Rudolf Rezsohazy. He suggests to "control" the decomposition processes of traditional, unitarian national indentity at the moment when the strengthening of regional identity intensifies, by respecting the principle of being loyal to the state, which in turn should be a firm guarantor of providing individuals with universal political rights (R. Rezsohazy, 1993: 9–21). To fulfil that role, the state requires three elements: a good constitutional system, high political culture, and a system of political representation which, with no reservations from the society, reflects the political interests of various large communities composing the entire citizen population of that state. That is why we have so frequently stressed the importance of that element of the dynamics of regeneration or even establishing regional identity which constitutes of establishing in those communities (regional, proto-regional, or territory related) types of political representation that are specific for them. In fact, establishing such regional or territorial political representations results in creating a partner for the whole political system of unitarian state, a partner with whom it is possible to define limits of acceptance for regional revindications in a responsible manner, strengthening guarantees for citizens at the same time.

In the Polish process of a peculiar "outburst" of regional or quasi-regional revindications, often such revindications appeared that were against unitarian state, that challenged common civil rights, which in turn resulted in concentration of those political forces which wanted to defend traditional unitarian formula of the state, and its traditional romantic canon of national identity "as if defending sovereignty". In the early 1990s, both regions and mainly the authorities in Warsaw lacked wise political elite that would be able to direct the dispute towards respecting common civil rights. That is why the processes which have been discussed were of clearly conflict-provoking nature in the early 1990s, providing both parties to them with political arguments (J. Wódz, 1997: 95–107). However, towards the end of 1990s the Polish reality is different, the country has a new constitution and the administration has been reformed. In such conditions, the question about the place for regions in a unitarian state should be asked anew.

Let us presuppose, then, something that political sciences would not object to, namely that a modern democratic state must reflect in its form the vital elements of identity of its citizens. Let us also assume that the dynamics of regeneration and establishing regional identity in Poland (provided that the conditions of a democratic state and civil society are met) cannot be stopped by any decisions or political activities taken up at the central level. Those processes have their dynamics resulting from social, cultural, economic, and even spatial features of various territory-related communities, so attempts of taking decisions at the central level but

strengthen the motivation and structures of identity processes, which has been best proven by movements organised to defend the territory-related communities (compare the case of Opole province). Thus, such a formula of unitarian state needs to be found which, while not burying the very essence of unitarianism, would fit both the evolution of Polish national identity (acquiring pragmatic features) and also regional revindications, which are already substantial at present, and which (should the dynamics described be maintained) express the need to stress regional distinct features. A few conditions must be fulfilled when making this possible: first, the constitutional system must be respected, which guarantees fully not only common civil rights to each citizen, but also an efficient system of claiming those rights, should they be threatened or denied; second, the political culture and civil consciousness for all citizens need to be enhanced.

A specific condition has to be added here: supporting the establishment of modern types of political representation (be it in the form of nation-wide parties which could do what they cannot at the moment: develop specific regional versions of their political discourse and programmes, or be it in the form of regional parties or proto-parties), as such territorial representations, understood politically or sociologically (but not in legal terms, as legal institutions provided with competence yet empty as having no social support) would be natural partners of the central political system of the country when establishing the scope of rights and competence for individual regions. Here, the only concept possible in the Polish situation could be applied, namely "decentralisation with variable geometry"[6]. So far, the idea has not been approved by Polish sociologists, which can be explained by absence of approval for political thinking in the Polish sociology tradition. Experiences of several European states indicate clearly that such a direction of changes provides promising results. What should that "decentralisation with variable geometry" consist of? Namely, of respecting the civil rights of any community to express its revindications resulting from regional identity and discussing (later: negotiating) in each specific case the solutions which would be region-specific. It would never be a principle of regional autonomy (thus the "dogma" of unitarian state would be left untouched), it would rather be a form of prerogatives for self-governments, which would provide certain rights to each region, resulting from that region's revindications. Such a formula would be a dynamic one (as the content of political identity would change, new types of rights and guarantees would be negotiated), the state would maintain its fundamental

[6] In relation to Upper Silesia, though indicating the possibilities of its nationwide application, the concept has been presented in J. Wódz: *Czy potrzeba nam autonomii na Górnym Śląsku* (J. Wódz, 1998b: 16–17).

function of a guarantor for territorial wholeness and, on the other hand the development of regional identity would provide something that could have never been achieved in the concept of restricting regional rights, namely solid systems motivating the development of regional communities. A way in which each region would have its distinct character approved would be a referendum ratified by the Parliament. This would express the respect for rights of communities that have a clearly distinct culture (which in democratic societies, sooner or later, leads to certain political revindications) and at the same time, by the requirement of ratification by Parliament, would confirm the unitarian form of the state.

The proposal put forward here results from analyses and (which needs to be strongly emphasised) hypotheses resulting from the dynamics of regeneration and establishing regional identity in Poland. It breaks down the stiff formalism (characteristic for lawyers with no political background or preparation) of perceiving the political structure of a country as a construction where all the elements at a certain level of authority have equal rights. It also breaks through the traditional sociological way of thinking, as sociologists study the regional differences and are inclined to admit that a differentiation of regions exists, yet are unable to draw political conclusions from that fact. It is but a proposal to be discussed, although it may be assumed that reality, much faster than many think now, may force the approval for such a solution.

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Regional revindications in Upper Silesia and their influence upon the processes of decomposition of traditional national identity of the Poles[1]

1. Initial remarks

The cultural phenomenon of Upper Silesia has been fascinating sociologists, ethnologists, and historians for years. The notion of multiculture appears most apt to characterize that unique entanglement of various traditions, myths, value systems, mentalities, morals, ethnic and national identities. The Silesian culture, historically shaped and distinct, considered by ethnologists to be a regional variant of Polish folk culture, had been developing for centuries in separation from the national culture, yet in close relations with the German, Czech, and Moravian culture. Those close connections resulted in, characteristic for regions of cultural borderland, ambivalence as regards national identity, which comprised a spectrum ranging from unequivocal identification with Poland or Germany, through various intermediate variants (Silesian-Polish, Silesian-German, Silesian), which would be unthinkable in central regions of Poland. The cultural phenomenon of Upper Silesia, so fascinating for researchers of culture, caused enormous trouble to the Silesians themselves, especially when the whirlings of history and politics made them take dramatic choices as to uneqivocally defined national identity.

Silesians were made to pay dearly more than once for their voluntary or forced connections with Germany. The dramas of post-war verifications regarding nationality, expulsions, transitory camps, transportations to Soviet camps: these were the experiences shared by thousands of Silesian families, which experiences left profound trauma and left their impress on

[1] First published in: K. Struve, P. Ther (eds.): *Die Grenzen der Nationen. Identitatenwandel in Oberschlesien in der Neuzeit.* Marburg 2002, pp. 309–323.

the relations between the native people and those who arrived to those territories after the war, from the former eastern borderland of the 2nd Republic of Poland or, somewhat later, from the central and south-eastern regions of Poland. For quite a few years those issues were concealed shamefacedly, leaving Upper Silesians alone with fulfilling the difficult duty of remembering their complicated, not always heroic, vicissitudes. The Silesian historical and cultural allergies did not find their room in the official circulation of social communication, having been replaced with myths, stereotypes, and prejudice which had their source in ignorance about the specificity of the region. The other side (i.e. Silesians) reacted with profound distrust and suspicion towards the "immigrants", with tendency to isolationism, with getting locked in the circles of their families and neighbours, with endogamy (K. Wódz, 1993).

For many years Upper Silesia was that region of Poland, where symbolic content propagated by schools, media, or cultural institutions was in complete disaccord with the cultural content or codes (primarily language) handed down within the framework of primary socialization in Silesian families, local communities, informal communication networks. Children brought up in a traditional Silesian family, using the Silesian dialect on everyday basis, felt inferior to the children of the same age at school, where literary Polish was spoken, they also often faced difficulties in humanist subjects, being indifferent to the cultural content belonging to the canon of great national traditions, which those subjects brought. The linguistic competence restricted to the dialect, and the feeling of cultural inadequacy were the main factors that contributed to failures at school, suffered by Silesian children, thus contributing to inheriting the professional and social position of their parents and, further still, to fixing the low level of educational ambitions of Silesians, in comparison with the ambitions shared by those who "immigrated" to Silesia. The most gifted and persistent ones who decided, in spite of difficulties, to continue their education at secondary school or university level, bitterly recalled the frustrations and humiliations they suffered when climbing laboriously the steps of professional career. The common manifestations of disrespect or lack of understanding for Silesian culture among Polish society were particularly harmful and painful for those Silesians who, despite having the sense of wrong, identified with Polish national culture. For those who considered themselves Silesians in the first place it did not matter so much, as the proper group of reference for them constituted of their family, neighbours, **their folk**, living both in Poland and in Germany.

1989, with the processes of democratization and liberalization of contacts with Western Europe, established completely new possibilities of expressing and articulating the interests of ethnic and regional groups. For understandable reasons, in Upper Silesia those processes took a much more

intense and dramatic course than in other regions of Poland, from the very beginning. The lamentations, resentiments, complexes, or plain fear, subdued for years, exploded through the radical accusations of Poland and Poles, through demands to restore the pre-war systemic solutions (regional autonomy), generalized assaults on "immigrants" who were blamed for all the misfortunes which Upper Silesia suffered after World War II. One of the most surprising, striking and inexplicable phenomena for an external observer, who would not know the reality of Silesia, was the emergence of a large number of people who declared being members of German minority in Upper Silesia, in particular in its Opole part (nearly 200 thousands signed the declaration of membership for the Social Cultural Association of German Minority in 1989) (Z. Kurcz, 1997). Similar associations although not so important in number emerged in Katowice (and also many other regions in Poland). The controversial pronouncements of some German minority leaders from Opole Silesia, during the first period of their activity (until the signing of the Treaty confirming the existing borders between Germany and Poland of November 14, 1990, and the Treaty on good-neighbourly relations between Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany of 1991), and particularly their links with the Bund der Vertriebenen, resulted in substantial tension and social unrest. After 1991 there were ever increasing signs that the inhabitants of Upper Silesia as well as other regions of the country got accustomed with the existence of a substantial group of people that identified itself as German minority in Poland, while the organizations of German minority have been undertaking mainly constructive activities aiming at normalizing and improving their image in the Polish society, using the legal possibilities of promoting German culture and participating in the political life at the local and national level. Important steps toward the normalization were the results of the local elections in 1990. In the eastern part of Opole region in 21 communes inhabited mainly by the autochthons German minority representatives gained from 65 to 90% of votes.

Consequently, in many villages the leading posts in local government and administration have been taken by the members of German minority. In 1990 the first official journal addressed to the members of German minority – *Oberschlesische Zeitung* (Gazeta Górnośląska) has started. In 1991 regional radio station in Katowice started the first emission in German, soon the similar programme started in Opole. These were the real milestones on the way to the participation of the German minority in the public life in Poland after the collapse of the former system (Z. Kurcz, 1997; 1995). Few years later, where the national debate on regionalisation was on the agenda – the German minority of Opole region did not support the idea of the creation of the new Silesian Voivodship on the historical Upper Silesian territory, opt-

ing firmly for the preservation of the Opole district as the separate administrative region. By this German minority proved its very realistic and pragmatic attitude towards the regional question in Poland. The very small German minority from Katowice region – was not active in this discourse.

The observations and considerations gathered during the many years of research devoted to the ethnic and cultural identity of inhabitants of the industrial part of Upper Silesia, adjacent to the Zagłębie (Basin) Dąbrowskie area allow to state that we encounter here a particular concentration of activities aiming at rebirth and attachment of proper value to the Silesian regional bonds and traditional Silesian culture.

In this article, we aim at dealing with the socio-political aspect of the above phenomenon, to be more exact with the influence of regional revindications upon the de-composing of traditional national identity. In our opinion, the observations of ongoing institutionalization processes of cultural identity of the native inhabitants of Upper Silesia are best illustrated by the points we would like to present here. They are as follows:

a) due to the absence, in the traditional Polish model of identity having social existence in the 1980s and later, of patterns which would take into consideration regional identity and in particular the cultural revindications of regions, the decomposition of that model of national identity by necessity takes on an inevitably socially-conflicting form;

b) Polish social practice is short of patterns which take into consideration different types of representation of social and political interests at regional level (let us remind here that in the post-war era such patterns did appear only in a pathological manner in the so-called "Gierek period" and then concerned exclusively the interests of the Katowice Province) which boosts today the conflicting character in processes of constructing a new model of national identity;

c) so far no modern models of social communication have appeared at regional level in the Polish social and political practice, which brings about a threat of intensifying the intra-regional conflicts, which in turn will only add to the conflict-bringing character of de-composition of Polish traditional national identity in the first years of the next century.

We shall try to develop on the three points presented above, pointing out while doing so to some statements of sociologists and politicians, which originated mainly during the debate on the new administrative division of Poland.

Let us begin by stating an obvious fact that in a democratic country, open to other cultures and nations, which Poland is slowly becoming, the traditional model of Polish national identity becomes ever more obsolete, we mean here the model inherited from the past yet which existed (and perhaps still exists) in our consciousness in the early 1990s. A lot has been written about it: we had a romantic identity (built on the widespread

cultural symbols and, at the same time, on disrespect towards social reality) and extremely centralized one, too, which was explained by the necessity to unify the nation after 1918.

That centralized model (what a paradox of history!) got repeated after World War II although, logically speaking, it should have belonged with the "times past". Despite the change of borders, huge translocations of inhabitants, despite the altered demographic composition of the population, that traditional centralized model of identity served equally well the communist regime and the Catholic church, being the stronghold of opposition. The authorities turned Warsaw into "all of Poland" while the Catholic church made the Częstochowa sanctuary a symbol expression of Polish character. It is not incidentally pointed out today that the actual social puzzle which the post-war Polish society was, had been as if "covered" with a common ideological image (A. Krzemiński, 1998: 19–23). Our first references to the European Union (or to Europe in general) indicated the incongruousness of that model with the society, rapidly changing in the 1990s (A. Kłoskowska, 1998: 4–5). It needs to be pointed out that anthropologists noticed the multiple of cultures of which Polish society is composed relatively quickly (K. Wódz, J. Wódz, K. Łęcki, 1997). It does not have to be substantiated, then, that the democratic conditions revealed cultural differences which destroyed the image of a culturally uniform nation. However, it had more grave social consequences, which our next reflection will ponder upon.

2. Silesian regionalism – a specific case or European norm?

This reflection concerns the processes initiating regional revindications in the entire Central and Eastern Europe. In democratic environment it took the shape of "repeating history". The states which after 1945 found themselves in the sphere of Soviet influence, to use an expression coined in the West and often repeated in Western literature, started to get out of the Yalta-logic arrangement in the years 1989/1990, thanks to regaining full sovereignty. In the entire Central and Eastern Europe the processes of regaining regional identity commenced (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1995: 505–518), problems of border and trans-border regions appeared (J. Wódz, 1994: 379–385), along with national minorities, finally the so-called new nationalisms emerged, being quite willing to use regional associations (C. Lutard, 1996: 133–166). That process, consisting of emerging cultural revindications, which were followed by typically regional revindications also developed in

Poland (K. Wódz, 1994: 365–378) and became part and parcel of the social discourse (later also political discourse) in the first half of the 1990s.

We recall those issues, pretty obvious today, in order to point out to the fact that Poland, having its specificity of course, became subject of the processes of decomposition of traditional identities, which appeared in principle in all European states belonging to the former Eastern block. On the one hand, it is a specific reference to more general processes, on the other hand, it leads to a conclusion that in international comparisons one can also search for specific internal inspirations. Such inspirations may be recognized, on the one hand, in the strife of most post-Soviet states of Central Europe for integration with Western Europe, on the other hand, in the inspirations deriving in fact from Western Europe to develop inter-regional cooperation (R. Balm, 1996). Anyway, the idea of such cooperation emerged both in Poland and its neighbouring states, bringing some definite results in mid-1990s which, on one hand, stimulated for its implementation (J. Wódz, 1996), on the other hand, resulted in constructing new organizational structures of local and regional life (J. Petaux, J. Wódz, 1996).

The grassroots regional revidincations, formulated as if within the framework of democratization of the country, appeared in Poland already in the early 1990s. As we assume that the example of Silesia has been most profoundly studied, we shall devote most attention to it, yet we would like to indicate that such revindications also appeared in Wielkopolska region (the Poznań province), in Kaszuby or in Białystok province, not to mention the so-called Galician revindications in Rzeszów. Anyhow, the problem of the so-called Galician identity is a specific one, yet should not be omitted in the general discourse dealing with de-composing the traditional Polish national identity (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1995a: 49–60).

We shall now concentrate upon the example of Upper Silesia, as it illustrates well the dynamics involved in the process of moving from cultural to political revindications. Already in the early 1990s the consciousness of Silesian identity had its clear rebirth, having been suppressed for a long time after World War II. There were two forms of that rebirth, on the one hand, the educated people descending from Upper Silesia, having the possibility to speak up in public, began to ponder upon the problem of cultural specificity of the region. This found expression in a number of publications, including those stimulated by media and local research institutions (J. Wódz, 1990).

On the other hand, some opinions were formulated, at times expressed by individuals at times being organized as a movement or association, which stressed not only the cultural specificity of the region, but which also built particular "regional ideology", thus an ideological image of the region, which image was to serve the purpose of demonstrating the cultural superiority of Silesians in comparison with the rest of the country, their merits and

sometimes even (as it has been formulated) the suffering inflicted upon them by inhabitants of the rest of the country (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1991: 93–101). That was clearly an ideological image, it aimed not at studying the culture of the region but at mobilizing the native inhabitants to express their culturally distinct character. That initial phase referred mainly to elités, that is a relatively small group of people, having clear goals in making a career at regional level (which partly came true in the Katowice Province) and a specific mission in mind, that of stimulating the awareness of distinct regional character.

Things were somehow different as regards the awakening of awareness about regional distinct character in case of people who had no political ambitions. In those cases, one could see the dynamics of spontaneous identity revival, being most often the result of deepening the conviction among native people that freedom is becoming ever wider. It is possible to say today that this awareness of distinct character had first gone through the phase of cultural stimulation and only later, after a few years, entered the phase of formulating regional revindications, which concluded in the late 1990s by a clear expression of distinct type of political representation in Upper Silesia. As any such process, that one also had to first go through the phase of indicating the distinction between "our folk" and "strangers" (K. Wódz, 1995). In the realm of culture this did not prove difficult, as the distinct language, customs, lifestyle, etc. clearly allowed to point out to the differences between native inhabitants and those who arrived from other parts of the country and who are so numerous in Upper Silesia at present.

The issue of referring to one's own past proved somehow more difficult, and cultural identity would be hard to rebuild without reference to the past, as we know. In the micro-social scale, in interpersonal relations we had to do, on the one hand, with peculiar concealment of those elements of the past which could spoil the good self-image, on the other hand, there were instances of very honest revaluations of people's private history, including the period of war. Judging retrospectively after some time today one can say that, on the one hand, there were elements of family memory, which would not be demonstrated in wider social contacts, having been considered a specific family-related value (K. Wódz, 1993), on the other hand, there were those honest analyses of one's own life, including the difficult questions that referred to the time of war and one's own attitudes to it (P. Rakocz, J. Wódz, 1996).

At more or less the same time, ideas of regionalization of Poland came about. They were vivid in particular in the mid-1990s, when the discussion concerning that issue was quite well developed already. That discussion in Upper Silesia brought about distinct attitudes. At one end, there were ideas

aiming at using that trend for establishing a totally unique position for Upper Silesia, including the idea of making it an autonomous region (J. Wódz, 1998: 16–17), at the other end was the idea of revaluating the definition of the region so as to establish a so-called "prospective definition of the Upper Silesia region", which would acknowledge that challenges for the future are as important as the elements of identity that have their origin in the past, being thus common for all the inhabitants of the region, regardless their ethnic roots (J. Wódz, 1995).

In that discussion one could see that local elités would shut off from any attempts of modernizing the definition of the region. One could get the impression that updating the definition of the region could deprive the local elités of the exclusive right to represent the region (thus the basis for their social advancement) which confirms in practice the partly ideological approach to their own region which occurred among those local elités. Such a situation led to numerous conflicts, minor as they were. Thus, the revitalization of Silesian identity had been, from the beginning, a conflict-inciting process both at the intra-regional level, and at the level of relations between the region and the rest of the country (K. Wódz, 1995a: 30–58). We will try to describe the main lines of these conflicts in the following sections of the paper, making reference to the recent studies carried by the authors themselves in the Katowice district (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1999).

3. Formation of the regional political scene – building the political representation at local level

All elections, starting with those in June 1989 and ending with the regional and local elections in the autumn of 1998 were an extremely crucial factor for the formation of regional identity in Upper Silesia. We do not want to get involved here in the analysis of results of those elections, although it is especially interesting due to the appearance, precisely in the Katowice Province (within its old borders from before the reform of administration, that is the small province of yore), of vital political divisions, almost identical with those delineated by the late 19th century borders, which are referred to as those of partition of Poland (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1999a). Judging from the point of view of anthropology of politics, a hypothesis can be formulated that a few generations later, the borders of political culture which got established in the late 19th and early 20th century are reborn in the region. Let us leave that hypothesis aside, though, even if it also indi-

cates to what degree the revival of regional identity is a conflict-instigating process.

We would like to point out here to an issue of more general character. Namely, in Upper Silesia every successive elections were, understandably, an element of social mobilization. That mobilization became in that region an element which co-created the dynamics of formulation of regional revindications. Of course, this mostly applies to local or regional elections, but is also important for parliamentary or presidential elections. In the two latter cases, this found expression in establishing political background for specific candidates for the post of president or specific political parties which would, more or less, take into consideration the distinct and specific character of Upper Silesia. Our studies (D.L. Seiler, K. Wódz, J. Wódz, 1997) indicate that, as a result of that mobilization, at the local and regional level in Upper Silesia there is a predominance of political representation made up of political proto-parties, which eliminates to a certain extent the influence of political parties functioning nationwide. In consequence of that process, the influence of national parties in Upper Silesia is diminished, thereby reducing the influence of political mobilization of those forces that have in their ethos more national than regional elements. Those regional proto-parties are, first of all, the Upper Silesian Union (Związek Górnośląski), but also local associations (active mainly in big Silesian towns, cf. the example of Rybnik, with some 200 thousand inhabitants).

The essence of those regional proto-parties is the duality of their political status. During the absence of political mobilization, they act mainly as cultural or social associations, often being clearly focused upon reaching local or regional goals. During the period of political mobilization (that is chiefly around the elections), they change their discourse from social to political one, oftentimes having their own lists of candidates or officially supporting other lists and preaching political visions of the future. Their activity is then strictly political, so important for the dynamics of creation of regional political revindications. Usually after the elections that political activity of proto-parties wanes markedly, and is replaced by social or cultural activities, as before the elections. The existence of such proto-parties in Upper Silesia resulted in developing regional mythology (the conviction that Silesians are "better", the feeling of being more civilized than the rest of Poland, originating from the relatively early industrialization of the region, the feeling that certainly their moral code is superior as regards labour, etc.), at the same time producing structures which later promoted their own people in social and political field, searching for ways to make the entire region exist in Poland in such a manner which would take into consideration the specificity of Silesia.

That process was and still is of social, cultural, and political character. The latter was often concealed, for fear of being accused by certain parties,

particularly those from the right wing, of dissenting activities or even doing harm to the reasons of State. Sociological analysis would make us see in the Silesian proto-parties the expression of political conflict with the implementation of social practice stemming from a centralized and romantic model of traditional Polish national identity (J. Wódz, 1998a: 8–26). In such a situation, the open discussions held in the late 1990s and concerning the change of administrative structure of the country had to make Upper Silesia want to assume its own attitude (which can be seen in the project of establishing a separate Silesian nationality, albeit pronounced by a small group of people) and in stressing the politically distinct character of the region.

4. The reform of state administration versus the dynamics of change in national identity. Neglected area of reflection

Discussions regarding the new administrative division of the country often referred to the example of regionalization which had become the basis for inter-regional cooperation within the states making up the European Union. On the other hand, however, Polish sociology which definitely lacks deeper reflections in the field of sociology of politics (especially as regards politics at levels below the national one), rarely posed the question about the degree to which the reform of administrative division of the country will become the driving element for changes in Polish traditional national identity. Looking from the Upper Silesian perspective, one thing can be said surely: the reform was discussed from a centralistic perspective, no question was raised regarding the degree the administrative reform should render the type of state in which social dynamics of changes in national identity will take place. On the other hand, it is well known, for instance using Belgium as an example, that regionalization tendencies force such changes in the national identity, which in turn will have to find an equivalent in systemic regulations.

In our country, addressing the issue in an extremely schematic manner it was decided that the unitary form of state is a value in itself (this may serve as the best example of the point that old centralist tendencies, despite the appearances of regionalization, in fact serve the interests of the centre, not only the centre of power understood *tout court* but also social power, extremely centralized media, scientific or cultural life in our country, etc.), thus the political rights of regions (provinces) are to be equal in every region, regardless the condition of identity revindications. Perceiving that process from the sociological point of view, the following can be

said: the sociological fact that was ignored was that in Poland, in various parts of the country, in different new provinces and regions, the consciousness of regional identity differs sharply, and that consciousness is a specific driving force for the development of regions.

Risking no mistake, it can be stated that the Polish administrative reform, through its extremely schematic character, reduced the chances of development for regions having their own internal driving forces in the form of their own regional identity, their own structures of social organizations, or their own forms of political representation (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1998: 183–198). The objections raised, pointing out to the outdated concept of Polish reform, were sometimes rejoined (especially from the Warsaw circles of sociologists, close to the founders of the reform) by stating that in Polish conditions no other systemic solution exists. This is utterly not true, if we are to cite the European examples it would suffice to look at the evolution of the system in Belgium (A.-P. Frognier, J. Wódz, 1996: 127–141), at the Spanish system or even the recent solutions introduced in the United Kingdom, where Scots were given much different rights as result of devolution than the Welsh received, indeed due to taking into consideration the degree of regional identity and regional revindications.

For Poland, a solution postulated by the authors of this paper (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1998: 197–198) would be decentralization with variable geometry, giving more rights to those regions (e.g. Upper Silesia or Wielkopolska) which have social energy stemming from their regional identity, while leaving for other regions an open door for obtaining more rights if they meet the clearly defined systemic criteria regarding their abilities to develop regional self-governing. In this way, when constructing the new national identity of Poles, the regions' own dynamics of development could be put to use. Unfortunately, a different solution was chosen, which brings about the threat that at least some regions will slow down their pace in development, and social energy will be wasted.

The solution implemented undoubtedly serves the centre well, and pushes Poland among those countries (e.g. France) where the true level of social implementation of regional interests will be reached after many years only, while the actual control of social activities in the country will still be exercised by the centre. Only that the centre will have to use more subtle methods than those applied so far, in its policy of domination over regions. The result will be the inevitable conflicts in the region-centre relations which, having in mind the deeply pathologic methods of practising politics by the centre (unfortunately, such is the practice of Polish politics, no wonder taking into consideration how young our democracy is), postpones for a long time the chance of utilizing the regional sources of development.

5. The new Silesian Province – new challenges and chances for regionalization

Our last reflection stems from observations of the political life during the first months after the new administrative division of the country had been introduced, and the 16 new provinces-regions got established. This reflection will be based mainly on observations concerning the province of Silesia. It should be assumed beforehand that in other new provinces similar problems may appear, yet other problems may pop up as well, being sharply different from those mentioned here.

Still, let us concentrate on the example of Silesia, which we know so well. It is known that this province, having one of the biggest demographic potentials (some 5 million inhabitants) as well as economic potentials in Poland has been formed by joining the former Katowice Province with large parts of the former Częstochowa and Bielsko-Biała provinces. The new entity has a specific logic of development, based on cultural differentiation of its inhabitants, yet also on the much varied economies of the former Upper Silesian, Bielsko-Biała, and Częstochowa parts forming it. The additional development factors are, on the one hand, that the province is adjoining to the state border, on the other hand, it has direct contact with the regions of central Poland, located north of it. The trouble is, however, that the social debates held imperfectly before 1998, and concerning the new province, clearly polarized public opinion and revealed strong opposition against the present shape of the Silesian province.

Such reactions occurred in the former Częstochowa province, yet it was the former Bielsko-Biała province that dominated in them, and the "defence of the Podbeskidzie region" resulted in establishing its own structures of social or even political representation (cf. the statements by Grażyna Staniszewska, MP from the Union of Freedom party). It is clear today how much energy will be required to result in social integration of the new Silesian province. It appears difficult to prophesize today how those processes will influence the place of new big Silesian region in the composition of new Polish identity. One thing is sure, that the processes of integration may equally well concentrate upon the search for intra-regional solutions or search for support from the centre to gain a better position for a given sub-region within its own region. Thus we have an outward sign and proof of conflict-inciting character of that process, and possible pathologies entailed in the quasi-regionalist solutions, which in fact strengthen the role of the centre.

Another danger, evident already after but a few months in the social reality of the Silesian province, lies in re-defining of the role of the region capital, Katowice, which has for some 50 years now been undisputably the

centre of the Śląsk and Zagłębie agglomeration. The changes introduced in mid-1970s strengthened the role of Katowice even more, which did not disturb the development of Bielsko-Biała and Częstochowa as capitals of provinces, with central functions. The two latter provinces owed much of their dynamics to their capitals. The situation for today is such that the functions of Katowice need to be redefined in such a manner that, while remaining the capital of a big region (population-wise at least), the dynamics of Częstochowa and Bielsko-Biała will be taken into consideration. The observations made so far indicate that this may prove difficult and conflict-instigating, which will be not without influence upon the role which the new province of Silesia will play in the renewed composition of national identity of Poles. The composition which will need to consider cultural, economic, and also political specificity of regions.

Finally, the last issue: the necessity of establishing new networks of social communication within the region. This is absolutely indispensable, should democracy at the regional level become a social fact. A few dangers and threats are evident here. First, in the new province of Silesia there are many associations which got established in the three former provinces (Katowice, Częstochowa, and Bielsko-Biała provinces), and should the independent life of associations be respected, much time will be required to turn that mosaic into a network of associations common for the entire new province.

If we add here that all NGOs are in a similar situation, the situation appears to be even more complicated. In the province of Silesia itself, there are a few dioceses of the Roman Catholic church, not to mention the structures of Protestant church, strong there, or other religions, with less representation. One conclusion can be drawn from that, namely the structures of intra-religious communication cannot be the basis for the new social communication for inhabitants of the province. The concentration of media in Katowice results in the fact that, despite being second only to Warsaw as regards media concentration, the role of media in establishing social communication in the new province will be very difficult. It appears terrible to think about the role of media in other new provinces where, bearing in mind the pathological concentration of Polish media in Warsaw, the news about developments in a town located some 50 kilometres away from the capital of the province will be available only via Warsaw television.

Let us come back to the example of Silesia, though. The most dangerous here will be the establishment of a new political representation in the entire new region. Let us remind here that without good internal social communication no modern regional democracy can exist, while without developing a new type of political representation at regional level all issues concerning regional policy will be dealt with by exerting influence by/via the centre. All the above are just observations made during the first months

of the new administrative division, yet even they indicate how many conflict situations will still come, and how much time it will take to construct the modern Polish national identity.

6. Summary

Summarizing, it is worth pointing out to a few important issues, stimulating for discussion. In sociology of politics nobody questions the relatively simple truth that the political system (politics understood broadly) should match the processes that create or modify the national identity of a nation (nations) that make up a state. The decomposition of the traditional, romantic, and centralistic model of Polish national identity is a sociological fact (regardless the protests arising in the so-called conservative circles) and aims at recognizing the differentiation of society. Among the many types of differentiation (let us remind here that religious differentiation is of utmost importance here), also the existence of strong political revindications from national minorities after 1989 (which we did not deal with in this paper) needs to be pronounced; regional differentiation is a fact and must find its place in the future model of Polish national identity.

In the process of establishing that new form of national identity, the role and position of regions will depend on their internal social strength but also (here the conservative aspect of Polish regionalization reform emerges) on taking into consideration, in providing systemic solutions, the actual dynamics of regional revindications in respective regions. All those processes are conflict-inciting, as they always breach certain group interests, often interests related to the centre, yet also interests of intra-regional groups. Also, the conflict-inciting character of those processes is undisputable. Our presentation was based on the example of Upper Silesia, as it is surely one of the best studied regions in Poland, our own research provided materials confirming our own hypotheses, pronounced above. Obviously, in case of other regions certain conflicts that we noticed in Upper Silesia will get repeated, also entirely different may appear, such as we did not observe. That is exactly what the specificity of differentiation in dynamics of establishing the regional identity in each region is about. Thus, the practice of studying regions from the perspective of the centre, using the same schemes and identical models for explanations, is erroneous.

Polish sociology faces a grave challenge, consisting of following and explaining all the processes that actuate the establishment of regional identity, as those regional specific characters will be considered when a new model of Polish national identity gets established after some time. What will remain common

in it, what will be regionally specific? What will be the attitude to the minimal common ethos in particular regions? How will the very notion of regional belonging in the regions influence the freedom of international cooperation of regions (this is what awaits us in near future, after joining the European Union)? Such questions need to be answered by Polish sociology.

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Upper Silesians or the dilemma *Ślązak – Gorol* or simply a citizen

1.

The period after 1989 in Poland has been characterised by a revival of regional identity. That phenomenon appeared to be the strongest in Upper Silesia. For many Poles from the rest of the country it was surprising. We still remember the, often nervous, reactions that appeared in Poland soon after 1990, when the so-called identity revindications began to appear in Upper Silesia. The "separatist character of Upper Silesia" or "German influences" were mentioned, while some political circles (e.g. the then relatively strong Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN) and the Western Union (Związek Zachodni), inspired by it) outright mentioned the alleged policy in Upper Silesia endangering the security of the Polish state. Matters were confused then, as no difference was made between the problem in Opole Silesia related to the revindications of the German minority, and the revival of the ethnic identity of Upper Silesians. All this shows how complicated the problem is. And much water will have to flow in the Rawa river (a strange river, allegedly its sources have dried, very seriously polluted, flowing through Katowice which – paradoxically – became one of the symbols of a group of Upper Silesians in public discourse) before the issues of Upper Silesia become clear not only for all Poles, but also for Upper Silesians themselves. Nothing is simple and obvious in Upper Silesia, although it could have been so if not for the history of that area.

The distinct cultural character of Upper Silesia is beyond any doubt, but is it a distinct character regarding only culture? Is it not followed also by certain expectations that a distinct character in politics will be recognised? Those issues are still live and we do not think they could be explained unmistakably in a short time, as in the social consciousness there is the

feeling of injustice (it is not of importance whether the injustice is real or imaginary, what is of importance is that the feeling of injustice exists in the consciousness of that group) as well as the feeling of not being valued fairly. And of those two factors ill-will towards others is easily born, sometimes leading to ideas that would go far beyond the actual situation in which those people find themselves in Poland, beyond the actual perspectives for development. In January, 2000 Mr. Marek Kempski, the governor of the Province of Silesia at that time, invited several ambassadors accredited in Warsaw to the province to make "promotion of Silesia" as the event was called. Welcoming the guests, he made a mistake in his speech saying that he welcomes them in the "state of Silesia". In *Gazeta Wyborcza* (local supplement *Gazeta w Katowicach* dated January 7, 2000) there was published a reader's opinion that we take the liberty to quote here, as it would illustrate that atmosphere. Here is the quotation: "(...) You wrote that the governor was tactless, welcoming the ambassadors in the state of Silesia. I would like to thank the governor for doing so, though. I have already discussed that with friends. We are proud of what he said, because Silesians are offended in our country, and on that occasion the Governor made us worthy of what we really are. For people from Warsaw or other places in Poland a Silesian is just a citizen of the People's Republic of Poland from the times when Mr. Gierek was the first secretary of the party. I know about it from experience, as I myself work for a branch of a Warsaw-based company. If they keep treating us like that, they may get a surprise in a few years' time, when we really welcome them in the state of Silesia". End of quotation. It may seem just an opinion of a reader, yet it contains so many entangled reminiscences from the past, so much mixed pride and complexes. A question arises why it is so. Perhaps in fact nobody can understand Upper Silesians in Poland?

Let us explain some terminology first. Two notions interchange here – "Silesian" and "Upper Silesian". In the very title there is the name Upper Silesian, as it defines the community that we write about more exactly. Today, both notions appear in the consciousness of native people inhabiting the region of Upper Silesia. Still, the Province of Silesia also includes the Cieszyn Silesia, where the name Upper Silesian is not valid. Sometimes in the social analyses, despite significant differences regarding the Upper Silesians inhabiting the former territory of Germany (to remind: the Cieszyn area was part of Austro-Hungary in the 19th century) Cieszyn Silesians are put togehter with Upper Silesians, to distinguish them from Opole Silesians. We also face two other problems. The first of those is of historic nature. In the past the name Upper Silesian was valid for the region of Upper Silesia (as was the case e.g. during the Silesian uprisings in Upper Silesian press and publications), which in the inter-war period began to be

replaced with the name Silesian, as the province had the name Silesia, neither Lower Silesia nor Opole Silesia belonged to the Republic of Poland at that time. After World War II both names returned to public discourse.

The second problem relates to the German onomatology which, obviously, taking into account the historic division of Silesia, used the word *Oberschlesier* (Upper Silesian) more often than *Schlesier* (Silesian), as it defined better the community of today's Upper Silesia and that part of Upper Silesian former inhabitants who live in Germany now. There is still another reason for sociologists to use the notion of Upper Silesians when describing that community. Namely, there is a strong association between the name Upper Silesian and the reality of the industrial region, with tradition of employment in industry (coal mines, steelworks, metallurgical plants, etc.), whereas the name Opole Silesian is associated with rural areas and the relations between Opole Silesians and the German minority inhabiting mainly the Opole region, not Upper Silesia itself (although there is some German minority in the latter region, to be discussed later).

Although Upper Silesians themselves use both names interchangeably, we are convinced that the name Upper Silesian suits the existing reality better. Thus, being fully aware of the blurred terminology, we decided, having considered our doubts, to use that name in our studies, and we will consequently try to do so. One could still reach for detailed historical analyses, yet they would provide sociologists with little explanation, as sociologists ascertain today's problems stemming from the use of both names in Upper Silesia in social practice. Let us, then, stay with the name Upper Silesian. Anyway, most of the problems we will be discussing refer to that group, which itself approves of that name, and should we sometimes refer also to Cieszyn Silesia, we will clearly indicate that. The latter is a group that historically (and sometimes also as regards the religion, because there are also Protestants in Cieszyn Silesia) is distinct from Upper Silesians.

The most important question arises – how big is the community that we write about? That question is only apparently a simple question about numbers. It is very hard, if not even impossible, to answer that question. Let us begin with the first difficulty: it is scarcely possible to answer the question who is an Upper Silesian? Does one have to have both parents Upper Silesians to be considered an Upper Silesian? Is it enough that both parents have Upper Silesian origin, or should we go further and look at the origin of the grandparents? It may seem obvious that it is not the case, but let us not forget that in Upper Silesia where there are quite a lot of people who were German citizens themselves or whose parents were German citizens (where, let us remind, there is the tradition of defining national identity on the basis of *ius sanguinis*), the ethnic origin of parents is of importance.

On the other hand, one should remember that it is a region of big migrations. Just during World War II and the post-war period there were several waves of emigration to FRG, there were two waves of immigration from former eastern territories of Poland, of which the first wave was very substantial in numbers. Also, for many years there have been immigrations to Upper Silesia from other regions of Poland, these people often settled here, married here, established their families, they more or less assimilated with the local culture. It is thus not possible to establish any objective criterion. Should we assume a subjective criterion: who feels an Upper Silesian, again we face numerous difficulties, as the feeling of belonging can be graduated. It is of particular importance in the region, where on everyday basis in various situations various options are articulated: Polish-Silesian, German-Silesian, Polish only, German only, or to quote "I consider myself a Silesian" and that is it.

Again, there are no lasting criteria, and if there are no criteria then counting is not possible. Let us remind that nobody officially collects such data, so there are no independent sources that would provide such numbers in a manner that would exclude any doubt. Even the question from the census does not explain much, as it provides the unclear notion of nationality, while one may feel a Silesian yet not in the sense of nationality. Should we in connection with that, give up the attempts to define the size of the community that we write about? Rather not. One should assume, though, that any estimates in that respect are unascertainable. These are not really estimates but rather opinions and ideas of people who may be considered experts or conversant with the subject. Trying to get out of trouble somehow, we asked several Upper Silesian actively involved persons about their opinions.

The most often quoted amounts ranged between 800 thousand to 1 million (most frequent estimate), and up to 1200 or even 1500 thousand. The last estimate has been provided by Mr. Tadeusz Kijonka, a renown Upper Silesian writer and poet, editor-in-chief of the quarterly *Śląsk*. Tadeusz Kijonka is of the opinion that anyone who considers himself an Upper Silesian and who is accepted in that role by other Upper Silesians may be legitimately treated as Upper Silesian. The relatively large number that he quotes is, in his opinion, due to the fact that for several generations traditional Silesian families have been numerous. That justification is credible, yet it applies only to those families which preserved their traditional character for a long time.

On the other hand, the families that "modernised" had less children. Another explanation of the estimate made by Tadeusz Kijonka is that he also included the Cieszyn Silesians in the group of Upper Silesians. It is a doubtful opinion, yet it may be understood. On the other hand, the dif-

ferences between Upper Silesians from the traditional industrial Upper Silesia, which belonged to Germany in the 19th century, and the Cieszyn Silesians, often Protestants and brought up in the Habsburg tradition of state, are so substantial that many Upper Silesian activists are of the opinion that Cieszyn Silesians should be treated separately. So, how many Upper Silesians are there? It is not possible to provide an explicit answer to this question.

Let us now try to perceive that group of the population in comparison with the inhabitants of the new Province of Silesia. That new province, established in January 1999, after the reform of administration, is much larger than the former Province of Katowice, and has almost 5 million inhabitants. It can be clearly seen, then, that even if we allow for the most optimistic estimates, the Upper Silesians would clearly be a minority in the province. Let us point out here that also in the former Province of Katowice Upper Silesians were clearly a minority. We stress here that the minority is understood not as social minority in the sociological sense of that word, but is due to numbers.

However, stating that we have to do with minority regarding numbers still does not explain the many phenomena encountered in the Province of Silesia. It is possible to point out a few towns in the province where Upper Silesians are quite concentrated (e.g. Ruda Śląska, Chorzów, Świętochłowice, Rybnik and vicinity), where these people are represented so strongly that they clearly impose certain cultural features upon those towns.

It is a specific feature of the Silesian agglomeration that in old industrial towns there are separate working class districts where the concentration of Upper Silesians is so high sometimes that they dominate culturally in the social life of such district. These are invariably certain separate areas, in no single town in the province do we encounter a situation where Upper Silesians would be a majority in number. It is worth stressing, so, that on the one hand, Upper Silesians live in a regional concentration, on the other hand, the urban areas where they would be majority in number are rare and apply mainly to the old working class districts mentioned. The above fact would be of substantial importance for the ways of inter-generation cultural transmission and can explain why certain traditional cultural patterns are preserved among Upper Silesians.

There are several ways in which that community is organised. Undoubtedly, associations are the most important ones here, yet one should not overlook two other specific ways of concentrating: around the parish on the one hand, and around specific social or cultural undertakings on the other hand. It should be indicated in general that because Upper Silesians have been living for a long time in industrial civilisation and in urban conditions (despite the fact that those towns have a very special character), they

manifest so many forms of organising their social life. It can be even stated that the tradition of social life organisation is on the one hand old, and on the other hand, still vivid in that region. No doubt, Związek Górnośląski (Upper Silesian Union) is the biggest and most important organisation having the character of association. The Union sometimes plays a major political role, to a degree that would justify considering it a proto-party. That function of the Union will be mentioned later on here.

Another form of concentration is the social movement that made a clear impact on the social history of the region – Ruch Autonomii Śląska (Movement for the Autonomy of Silesia). The Movement had a clearly political character in the early 1990s, enjoyed some political successes (among others had its MPs in the Polish Parliament). From the same movement, in an indirect way, derived another movement which tried (without success) to get the "Silesian nationality" legally recognised. The latter issue awoke numerous comments in the recent years. We cannot omit an association of people who consider themselves a German minority in Upper Silesia, the association called "Pojednanie i Przyszłość" (Reconciliation and Future), which is visibly present in the social life of the region. It should not be mistaken for the associations of German minority in Opole Silesia.

We mentioned the considerable traditions of associative life in Upper Silesia. In many towns of the region there are numerous local associations; some of them stress their Upper Silesian character, others do not officially mention that, taking care to maintain an open character, yet often in their activities, especially the cultural ones, pay atention to the development of culture of the native people.

Of equal importance (sometimes of more importance in everyday life of Upper Silesians) is the concentration around the local parishes or certain social or cultural initiatives. Catholic parishes have always played a very vital role in organising the life of Upper Silesians. Also today, besides performing the purely religious functions, they play the role of organizers of local life, sometimes they react in emergency situations, sometimes they are specifc structures of support. It is not accidental that in the early 1990s in many smaller towns and villages co-operation between the parishes and the newly-established structures of the Upper Silesian Union could be clearly noticed. One should mention, though, also the traditions of singing in choirs, as well as brass bands (each colliery had its own brass band), as well as other forms of local cultural life. That local movement makes up a particular support structure to support the Upper Silesian culture and is of vital importance for that culture to last.

One should also indicate the organising function of cultural periodicals. This is not the proper place to mention all such initiatives, yet the quarterly *Śląsk* deserves to be mentioned. The periodical aptly joins pure liter-

ature with social journalism and in several years of its existence (the 50th issue was out in December 1999) earned the opinion of a periodical that seriously deals with the issues of Upper Silesia. It is of importance that the periodical publishes articles by authors who consider themselves Upper Silesians, as well as the Poles of non-Upper-Silesian origin living in there, for whom the problems of the Upper Silesian community are close. It is not a task of sociologists to discuss history, still one must mention that regional cultural periodicals existed in Upper Silesia for long years, and the quarterly *Śląsk* somehow continues those traditions.

It should be finally mentioned that Upper Silesia is the centre of mass media second only to Warsaw, with regional TV stations, regional public radio (with long and rich pre-war tradition), as well as important press titles. All the mass media often deal with the issues of Upper Silesian culture, on which they concentrate the native population. Mass media also frequently initiate various cultural events that promote the culture of native inhabitants. All in all, one can state that the concentration of mass media is a factor that, on the one hand, allows for the "revival" of culture and tradition of native people, and a chance to show the problems of those people to a wider audience, on the other hand.

The existence of centres concentrating various strata and groups of Upper Silesians allows to define the ways of cultural transmission. On the other hand, one should bear in mind that we deal with native population being a minority by number. In such a situation, social life always has certain specific features, related to pride on one hand and worries not to lose that specificity, on the other hand. That last statement leads us to the next sphere of our ponderings, sociological ponderings upon what type of minority the Upper Silesians are?

2.

That Upper Silesians are a minority in the sociological sense is beyond any doubt. Let us remind here that in sociology a minority is not a community that simply is smaller in numbers, but a community which is deprived of full citizen's rights or possibilities to take advantage of all available chances of development. Obviously, it is a problem for discussion which rights or possibilities a community considered a minority is deprived of. As can be seen here, the very size of the community considered a minority is not a problem here. That is why in the case of Upper Silesians is not a matter of life or death to develop a precise definition of who an Upper Silesian is or to count accurately all Upper Silesians.

What is of importance, though, is whether that community is being deprived of certain rights in social life practice, whether it may develop within its culture, whether it can freely draw upon its tradition, whether it can freely express its social arguments, use all the instruments of democratic politics, etc. etc. Our sociological studies, conducted for over 20 years now in Upper Silesia, clearly indicate that this community is deprived of certain elements related to its own development and possibilities of expressing its distinct character in a crucial way and in social life practice, not only in a formal way. Surely, that phenomenon can be graded, but because it has been in existence for a long time, it elicits numerous reactions from the Upper Silesian community.

Hence the mutual accusations often noticed in various "debates between Upper Silesia and the rest of Poland", hence the feeling of harm and injury often present in the statements made by Upper Silesians, hence, on the other hand, the rest of Poland seeing the revindications of that community as expression of a certain complex, a complex not substantiated. All those issues are difficult yet, trying to be objective in assessing and feeling attracted to that community that managed to maintain its culturally distinct character in definitely unfavourable conditions, they make us undertake an attempt to understand the distinct character of Upper Silesians as a minority in the sociological sense.

Let us begin by acknowledging that Upper Silesians are a cultural minority. What is more, it is a cultural minority living under the conditions of domination of Polish culture. Those two facts allow to understand quite a lot of the specific features of that community. The culturally distinct character of Upper Silesians is due to history. The fact that, bearing in mind the historically complicated fate of that region, for quite long and definitely since mid-19th century when intense industrialization of Upper Silesia took place, it was a multi-cultural region, often lying on a border or divided by borders. The Polish character has been preserved in quite an archaic form, mainly in rural areas. The analyses of the dialect, which is a Polish dialect (in fact there are various dialects in various parts of Upper Silesia, although for an outside observer they may appear to be a single dialect) clearly indicate that at least two main roots are present there.

On the one hand, it is the old Polish, preserved mainly in the spheres of private life, where no public sphere or the sphere of labour would interfere; on the other hand, there are borrowings from the German language, sometimes very deformed, mainly in the spheres of public life and work. It is here that it becomes necessary to understand the organisation of social life in Upper Silesia, beginning with the period of intense industrialization. Let us browse just the political facts.

At that time, the region had already belonged to Germany for quite some time, while the border between Germany (first Prussia then Germany in

fact) and Austro-Hungary delineated such divisions as that into Upper Silesians and Cieszyn Silesians. It was in Upper Silesia that the industrialization, related mainly to the mining for hard coal (and later the development of steel industry and heavy industry related to metallurgy), was also related to the establishment of the German state of law and later introduction of obligatory education only in the German language. In connection with the development of industry, as well as the organisation of state administration, many Germans came to Upper Silesia. The labour force, however, was native. That is how the industrial agglomeration got established (it is in fact a conurbation, as there is no single centre, but several towns in one big cluster, while the smaller towns gravitate towards either Katowice or Gliwice, whereas the smaller towns located in the south of the region often gravitate to Rybnik), in which typically industrial towns were developed in such a way which clearly distinguished the zones inhabited by various groups of citizens.

Anyone who even superficially studied the spatial development plans of those towns will easily notice that they have down-town areas, with mainly administrative functions, "burgher" district, residential up-town quarters (meant most often for the managers and professionals from industry) and numerous working class districts, located separately. The paternalistic approach to managing of big industrial plants (mainly collieries) resulted in many working class districts being attractive, at that time, and being equipped with the most essential utilities and elements of urban infrastructure, allowing to live in such a settlement without having the need to pay frequent visits to other parts of the town. The consequences of that, on the one hand, comprised internal organisation of life, with preservation of Polish character, Polish language (in dialect), organisation of social life, which explains the present condition of Upper Silesian culture.

On the other hand, however, there was the long-lasting feeling of isolation from other parts of the town, from urban life in which German language dominated, often being exclusive. It has to be understood that in such conditions the elements of culture related to everyday life conditions have been established. That aspect of vital influence of everyday life conditions upon the culture of the minority group (thus also of little influence of the so-called "high culture", practically not present in everyday life of working-class districts) is one of the keys to the understanding of today's distinct cultural character of Upper Silesians. Another crucial element there was the industrial character of work and access to utilities provided by civilisation.

In consequence, there is a community which in a sense preserved the folk culture derived from rural conditions, on the other hand that community had access, in everyday life, to facilities provided by civilisation, some-

times unaccessible even for inhabitants of centres of major Polish towns (in particular the towns located in the parts annexed by Russia or Austro-Hungary). This explains also the phenomenon observed in that community, consisting of simultaneous inferiority complex, being aware of some backwardness of its own culture, and of the feeling of being superior in civilisational development.

Let us ponder for a moment on what took place in the late 19th and early 20th century. The fact that the Germany was a lawful state brought about several consequences for Upper Silesians. First of all, which is of crucial importance for a community living in the time of modernization, was the coercion to respect written procedures. That issue is rarely discussed in Poland, and here in Silesia was of extreme importance. In a lawful state, where written procedures were commonly observed, it was assumed that all citizens have equal opportunities to use that procedure. In Upper Silesia only educated people and clergy were fluent in writing enough to avail themselves of that possibility.

Hence it became a rule that priests were natural guides for the communities from working-class districts, as only they were in the position, as we stated earlier, to enable communities of Upper Silesians living in the districts described above to function properly in the industrial region. Of course, there were two possibilities: the priests could either opt for improved education in German or could preserve the dialect and serve as a "conveyor belt". No doubt, the other solution was common, as a result of which now the culture of that community exists enclaves of the past times, at the same time the position of Catholic clergy in entire Upper Silesia is very high.

What we have described above allows to understand why the culturally distinct character of that community is still so vivid. The results of post-war politics should be added to that as well. It is not enough to rest on the assumption that we have to do with a cultural minority. It turned out, as was strongly proven during the war, that we have to do not only with a community that is a cultural minority, but also with one that has important social features that indicate ethnic minority. Do we have to do with an ethnic minority? Much would indicate that indeed so. Although the culturally separate character of that community is obvoius, certain elements of separate social character are less obvious and can be graded. Still, they are distinctly present, which we shall indicate in the following part, discussing the problems of Upper Silesians with self-definition. What makes us discuss ethnic minority at present?

First of all, the fact that many (again, the exact number would be hard to specify, and different sociological studies mention different quantities) Upper Silesians either have difficulties with defining themselves as Poles, Silesians-Poles, or much less frequently as Silesians-Germans (we have to

bear in mind that this refers to Upper Silesians living in Poland), or they simply choose the label of Silesian or Upper Silesian, trying not to make references to Poland or Germany. It is an evident proof that the community is aware of its distinct social character, and this awareness results in a way from the historical entanglement of the fate of these people.

It is no coincidence that the problem somehow "erupted" after 1990, as only in the conditions of freedom of speech the possibilities to declare ethnic origin were established. It should be remembered, though, that we have to do with a social process. In the first place Upper Silesians had to react to what they had been through since the end of the war to the 1989/90 breakthrough. They had to react to the fact that they could not oppose their fates, complicated as they were (starting with the times of German occupation, the issue of Volksliste, often the active service in the German army, to the period just after the war and the so-called verification, when it was administratively decided who is a Pole in Upper Silesia, to emigration to FRG and action of joining families, etc.), to the moral and political unity of the nation, a doctrine of the Secretary General Edward Gierek which in Upper Silesia meant the following advice: if you work well and forget about the past, about being different, we will treat you as "good Poles", as the country needs your work.

Today the process, which started with very violent revindications concerning identity in the early 1990s clearly lost its dynamics. It was replaced with a relatively strong and vivid life of associations and the ongoing discussions about heritage, tradition, and future of that community. We will come back to those issues further on. Thus, we have a community which clearly undergoes a transformation from indicating its culturally separate character to the outside world, to self-organizing and establishing its own structures of social organization. This, in fact, makes us recognize certain elements of ethnic minority being ever stronger.

Finally, let us at least shortly indicate yet another issue. From time to time there are opinions pronounced in Upper Silesia that the minority there contains separate elements of political identity. This political aspect of revindication processes in Upper Silesia remains virtually unknown in other parts of Poland, and if it is recognised it is understood erroneously. Again, a trip to the past is required, and not to a distant past this time. During the inter-war period the Province of Silesia had a special status, it had autonomy. That autonomy in political practice was, in fact, of lesser importance as time went by, nevertheless the special status enjoyed by the province reappeared as an argument in identity revindications by some Upper Silesians.

We have already mentioned that the Movement for the Autonomy of Silesia (Ruch Autonomii Śląska) was represented in Polish Parliament in the early 1990s. Through numerous official campaigns, in which the spe-

cial, autonomous status of Upper Silesia was postulated, a situation was created that strengthened in the community the sense of being different from the rest of the country. Although the tendencies to have autonomy are not strong, their existence strengthens the perception of Upper Silesian community as an ethnic minority. It should be remembered, though, that we have to do with a process, far from reaching a predictable end. Much will depend upon the attitude that the "rest of Poland" will assume towards the problems that this region faces, as well as any deeper understanding of the problems of that community that would develop throughout Poland.

3.

Let us deal with the issues related to the self-definition of that community. How do Upper Silesians perceive themselves in private lives? Which elements from the past are summoned up in this definition? All those things make up the self-picture, which in turn is decisive for the manner in which (we will deal with that later) the community presents itself outside. Is the community able to define itself in such a way as to assume later the civil principles of life organisation in the country, or will it be doomed to remain in purely ethnic way of thinking? First, one has to look for the important elements of self-definition.

In our sociological studies, carried out applying quality-oriented methods, we tried to analyse the "stories of life" provided by Upper Silesians. It will be of help for us to point out what were the people representing that community, who replied to the competition organised in 1990 by the, already non-existent, Silesian Scientific Institute (Śląski Instytut Naukowy) in Katowice and the popular newspaper *Dziennik Zachodni*. Let us recall the lengthy interview, which was a sociologically directed story about living conditions of Upper Silesians from the inter-war period to 1990s. Thus, we have the possibility to look at various sources, all of quality type, as only those sources can allow us to understand the very complex issues related to the past, to which Upper Silesians refer.

Let us begin with two phenomena that may appear jointly as well as separately. Studying the "social world of Upper Silesians", that is the kind of everyday relations and the references necessary to understand that social world, we found two elements that throw light upon the self-reception. These are the "burden of the past" on the one hand, and the "family memory" on the other hand. Both phenomena are rooted in the social consciousness of Upper Silesians, and for many post-war years they both

have been individual or collective secrets, which people reluctantly shared with "their own folk" and in principle never discussed with "strangers". Why? It was feared, justifiably as can be assumed, that making any reference to those two elements of consciousness may aggravate the social position of anyone discussing them. On the other hand, those two elements were decisive for the distinct fate of those people, and without making reference to them it is not possible to understand numerous social problems of those people. The burden of the past appears mainly with elderly people or those aged around 40 or 50 who in the post-war period themselves, or via close family, suffered much harm in relation to lack of explanation for complicated fate of Upper Silesians, both during World War II and in the post-war period. It is not necessary to go as far back in time as the war period, it is enough to recall to people who are about 40 now the period when all Polish propaganda was based upon, sometimes primitive, anti-German approach. How could then people feel, those who had their close families, even the closest sometimes, in Germany? Their feelings must have been exposed to very negative experiences. On the other hand, they knew that they had to keep to themselves everything that they had been through in the difficult war and post-war times, as well as all they experienced listening to that anti-German propaganda. Any attempt to make reference to one's own feelings and experiences brought about the threat to be recognised as "enemy" and could make life and career difficult indeed, could deprive those people of the chance to get a passport, as at that time Polish authorities treated giving a passport as particular expression of trusting the citizen. Let us bear in mind that many Upper Silesians have families in Germany, and refusing a passport would entail for the being cut off from the family. Thus, the "burden of the past" is a particular feature, influencing the self-definition of members of that community.

The other phenomenon, "family memory", is the awareness of the complicated fates of family members, coupled with fear, manifested among young people in particular, that this memory,when revealed too openly, may complicate their careers. Thus, both those phenomena are usually manifested together in the older generation, whereas "family memory" itself is more frequently encountered in the younger generation. Let us find out what happened to those elements of social world of Upper Silesians after 1990? In democratic conditions, those elements of the past slowly began to reveal, the fear slowly diminished. On the other hand, the conviction, quite substantiated, grew that those elements of Upper Silesian fate are hardly understood for the so-called rest of Poland. Again, there were reasons not to deal with that burden of the past in public, to refrain from revealing the family memory. This is one of the reasons for the lack of faith that anyone in Poland is able to understand the socially distinct character of Upper

Silesians. Sometimes it is just a small portion of the self-definition, sometimes a reason for distrust, for complexes, even for aggression.

Let us consider that characteristic testimony concerning the development of self-image, which can be derived from the above-mentioned long interview on the life of an Upper Silesian in Upper Silesia. The interviewed person, a Silesian born before World War II, using a dialect, unable to communicate in correct German (hoch Deutsch) had been drafted to the German army, then was taken POW by Russians, as a Pole returned to Upper Silesia where he was not considered trustworthy by those then in power. He withdrew into himself, worked in a coal-mine and kept rabbits. When, as an elderly man, he agreed to give that interview he came to the conclusion that for people like himself, who do not care about politics, who are playthings in the hands of history, the most sane attitude to take is to work, not getting involved in anything, and cultivating the Silesian character. Although he always considered himself a Pole, when asked who he thought he was in the first place, he answered that a Silesian. Of course, this is just an illustration yet so significant.

Among the important constituents of self-definition, presently that is some 10 years after regaining freedom and possibilities to discuss openly the distinct character of Upper Silesians, is the attitude of Upper Silesians to Zagłębie and the "rest of Poland". A few words of explanation to those not familiar with the problems of Upper Silesia and Zagłębie Dąbrowskie. The big Silesia-Zagłębie agglomeration is historically composed of two parts, often not distinguished elsewhere in Poland. The north-eastern part, the Zagłębie Dąbrowskie region, containing such towns as Sosnowiec, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Będzin, Czeladź is, geographically speaking, an integral part of the agglomeration, yet socially speaking it was under Russian occupation throughout the 19th c. when Poland was partitioned, and during the inter-war period most of it belonged to the Province of Kielce.

Thus, neither during the time when Poland was partitioned, nor during inter-war Poland, was that region part of Silesia, only when Germans occupied the territories during World War II did they make them into one administrative body, assuming among other things that the entire agglomeration was uniform in terms of economy. That symbolic border between Upper Silesia and Zagłębie became, in the early 1990s, an important element in the reviving self-definition of Upper Silesians. Even before 1918, there were certain differences between the Upper Silesian and Zagłębie parts, as regards architecture and spatial organisation of towns. Generally speaking, one may say that the Upper Silesian part has a bit better organised space. During the time of industrialization in the late 19th and early 20th century, people who moved to the newly-established towns in Upper Silesia were Upper Silesians from nearby villages. The

towns in Zagłębie got their inhabitants from villages of Małopolska or the Kielce Province.

All this leads to a certain picture, developed on purpose in the early 1990s in the discussions on Upper Silesia, which boiled down to the need to demonstrate the superiority of Upper Silesians over the people from Zagłębie. At a certain point this grew into regional ideology, creating unnecessary conflicts. There is no mention of that at present, yet the situation continues where the self-definion of Upper Silesians sometimes consists rather of proving that people from Zagłębie are "worse", rather than proving the Upper Silesians are "better". This need not be forgotten as the fact that self-images of Upper Silesians are often developed on the basis of everyday life conditions (instead of high culture), often entails their forming exclusive circles, which is coupled with superiority complex towards people from Zagłębie.

A few more words about the role played in the self-image by the relation to the "rest of the country". Also in the 1990s the idea was developed in Upper Silesia that it was an internal colony of Poland, exploited economically and receiving little in return. This was also an element of public discussions, encountered in the life of associations (we have already pointed out that associations, especially the major ones, actually influence the self-definition of Upper Silesians), being present in local journalism. Again, it should be noted that it is history today, but history not forgotten and influencing the private self-definitions of Upper Silesians.

4.

Let us concentrate now upon the following issue: how the image is produced that is meant for external use. Shortly: how do Upper Silesians introduce themselves outside? How would they like to be perceived by others? This is an important issue, although not easy to define. In fact, the only elements that functioned in the awareness of an average Pole for years, being associated clearly with Upper Silesians were: folklore (especially presented by the ensemble "Śląsk") and the hard work in collieries, described in the books by Gustaw Morcinek. It is obvious that although that folklore somehow got connected with that image, today the Upper Silesian community does not want to be perceived that way. Journalists repeatedly indicated the need to get out of that image.

Let us quote here the opinion of one of the most persistent advocates speaking for change of that image, Mr. Michał Smolorz. In the Katowice

supplement to *Gazeta Wyborcza* of January 11, 2000 he wrote: "It may sound iconoclastic, yet I think that in the last ten years we did much harm to the Silesian idea, by the way of popularizing it, teaching it, developing the views, and properly arranging the knowledge. We were amazingly efficient in that, we managed to persuade millions of people in Upper Silesia and all over Poland that our image consists of a "familok" block, "krupniok" black pudding and extremely colourful costumes. That our identity consists of a characteristic dialect, brass bands, and RAK cabaret. That our needs consist of economic reform of the mining sector and teaching dialect at schools. That all Silesia is about a peripheral Podunk located near Katowice. That the magnificent millenium heritage of civilisation and history of Silesia never existed, and we stubbornly reduce it to a small episode from the late 19th and early 20th century, which happened somewhere in its borderland". That is Michał Smolorz.

It should be noted that he tries to depart from the folkloristic image, postulating to refer to the past which produced so many magnificent personages in Upper Silesia (although usually connected with culture and the German language), to refer to elements of high culture. This is one of the dilemmas in building of the image of Upper Silesians – they are still rooted in the everyday perspective and are not really suited to build in elements of high culture into their image. The author quoted above suggests that this image, to be presented outside, should contain among other things the Gliwice tetralogy by Horst Bienek, written in German and known only to local elites in Polish translation. It is hard to believe that such proposals could actually make the image of the community for external use.

Thus, on the one hand, when criticizing the purely folkloristic image of Upper Silesians one may expect that in the coming years a generalized image/picture will be developed, that will account for important cultural features of that community, yet on the other hand, it would be difficult to believe that a proposal to compose such image of elements of high culture, distant in time, often derived from the German achievements could actually render the culture of Upper Silesians presently living in the region. Still, it is the film director Kazimierz Kutz who in his films sketches important elements of Upper Silesian culture, who seems to have developed an image being the closest unquestionable features of tradition and culture of that community. It needs to be pointed out that even this picture is impaired in today's journalism, while Mr. Kutz himself is sometimes suspected of trying to create myths about Upper Silesia.

It is beyond doubt, then, that for at least a few dozen years the need has existed to create a new and adequate picture of that community to serve external purposes, and that on the other hand, it would be difficult to point out such elements which, while rendering the present state of awareness

and culture of Upper Silesians, would also establish a non-simplified picture of that community for external use. Most probably, only as a result of changes taking place at present in that community, can such a picture be created after some time.

5.

We began our sketch from indicating the processes of regional revindications, which in the early 1990s visibly developed in Upper Silesia. At the same time, when giving it a title we also gave it a sub-title. We would like to refer to that sub-title now. To make things clear, we want to stress that we consider the community of Upper Silesians an important one, and such vital element of Polish identity that it is impossible to stop at just indicating the culturally distinct character of that minority. Will the future of that minority consist of deepening the purely ethnic vision of itself, which will lead to going deeply into community logic, or will the community assume an open attitude, in public spirit, and will produce its image for external use, will it undertake a dialogue of culture, will it join in the building of a new cultural mosaic in Poland?

Finally, will it go towards social seclusion or will it in the public spirit try to use all the advantages of democratic state which allow to seek equal rights for its culture? This is what we had in mind when coining up the sub-title: "(...) the dilemma Silesian – *Gorol* or simply a citizen". In the local dialect the word *"gorol"* stands for non-Silesian. It would be difficult to indicate precisely whether in everyday contacts it has a pejorative tinge, still often in the context of community discussions those negative connotations are quite visible. When in the early 1990s in the heat of regional revindications certain Upper Silesian cricles used that word sometimes to delineate the impassable difference between "our folk" and "strangers", at present the word is rather used in a joking manner.

That evolution appears to slowly level the sharp divisions that were present in the early 1990s. Still, the tendency to differentiate between "our folk" and "strangers" has not disappeared but rather assumed a milder form. The question that arises at present is whether in future in democratic state and open society that community will find its place in the whole set of culturally (and in many cases ethnically) differentiated communities that will make up the new formula of future Polish society. Will a principle be assumed that first one is a citizen of the Republic of Poland, and second to it, using democratic rights and wisely conducted policy of the state in

open society, one can develop the culture, cultivate the identity that may be somehow different from the identity of the majority? To implement that goal, evolution of Upper Silesian elites is required, as well as change of approach of the state and Polish society to the problems of minority groups/ communities.

There is the question why this issue is raised in connection with the community of Upper Silesians. Because it is surely one of the biggest and most important minority groups in Poland. On the other hand, that community inhabits a region which for years played the role of the driving engine for Polish economic development, also the region which will also be important in future after restructuring the economy. The location of Upper Silesia in the borderland, and the fact that its society is well organized will in the nearest future make it an important element of our international social and economic relations. As a result, the role of Upper Silesia will be even bigger than at present. On the other hand, the vitality of Upper Silesian culture and identity makes the so-called "rest of Poland" seriously consider the evolution indicated above, towards strengthening the "public spirit" in thinking, as well as in social and political practice in relation to all minorities. Perhaps the case of Upper Silesians will contribute to modernizing of the entire Polish society?

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Major political parties and groups functioning in the province of Silesia in relation to problems facing the country, the region and Europe[1]

1. Introduction

The political life in Poland is characterised by the phenomenon that is typical for young democracies: the unstability of organised forms of activities, fluctuations of the forms of political representation and, finally, the movability of actors of political life, who oftentimes change their political orientation or parties in which they are active. It is a situation which does not allow to explain politics in Poland without an in-depth, purely qualitative sociological research, as standard quantitative studies (first of all, standard soundings concerning political parties) do not explain much in the situation where the very subjects of political game are difficult to define. The attempt, undertaken in this study, to look at important issues related to the life of the country or integration with the European Union from the perspective of the very politicians, representing various orientations, is meant by the authors as a contribution to deeper understanding of Polish politics.

An additional element, of high importance for the entire research presented here, has been the attempt of indicating regional social and political aims within the sphere of functioning of political parties studied.

This, roughly, is the first purpose of our studies. Locating them in the province of Silesia has a variety of justifications, as this is an important province of Poland, having significant economic functions. Yet, it is also a province that contains the sociologically understood Upper Silesian regional community, which is reflected in the programmes of political parties

[1] Paper based on the empirical results of the study realized for the project: *Legitimisation Conflicts in the Societies in Transition*. Dir. Helmut Fehr, Humboldt University. Berlin 2001–2003.

functioning at the provincial level. Expanding on this, one faces a grave issue, or rather a question, concerning the attitude of Polish political parties to regionalisation and political independence of regions. A lot of attention has been devoted to these matters in the research reported below.

For the sake of clarity of further analyses, it is worth underlining that the research was carried out before and during the election campaign preceding the parliamentary elections in 2001, the results of which, to a large extent, re-defined the political scene in Poland. Thus, the material collected exhibits the dynamics of changes taking place within political elites, caught at the moment of their happening.

The proper discussion of results of our research shall be preceded by a few introductory remarks, indispensable to understand the content of interviews with politicians, and the final reflection. When reading this material, one should pay attention to the dual nature of political discourse displayed by the politicians studied, as on the one hand, they refer to programme assumptions of their parties, perceived as nation-wide political forces, on the other hand, they also clearly refer to the local or regional conditions, as well. This is also an important feature of the Polish political scene.

2. Social specificity of the community in the province of Silesia

As mentioned before, the studies concerned representatives of the political elites of the province of Silesia which, like the remaining 15 provinces of Poland (in Poland there are 16 provinces in total), has been established thanks to the reform of the administrative division of the country, implemented by the Parliament of the Republic of Poland in 1998.

Before that – and since mid-1970s – Poland was divided into 49 small provinces. The process of establishing new administrative structure in the years 1998–1999 encountered tensions and social conflicts. If we look today at the new province of Silesia, we will find that it contains, almost entirely, three former smaller provinces: katowickie, bielskie, and częstochowskie (named after the three towns that were their capitals: Katowice, Bielsko-Biała, and Częstochowa). Today, a grave social and political problem appears that of integrating these three into one new administrative and self-governing unit. The former provinces of Bielsko-Biała and Częstochowa developed, during their 20-plus years of existence, numerous specific political practices, career paths proper for those provinces (we have in mind here both careers that commenced before 1989, thus in the pre-

vious political system, and those which started after that date, thus in fully democratic conditions), distinct mechanisms of internal development got shaped. It is not by accident that one refers, for example, to high dynamics of social development in Podbeskidzie, the southern part of the province of Silesia, which before 1998 was the province of Bielsko-Biała.

Such haphazard information indicates the degree of complexity of the social picture of today's province of Silesia. First of all, however, let us point out some data that describe this province. As far as the area goes, the province is small (12 294 square km, which is 3.9% of the total area of Poland), whereas population-wise it is big (4 894 thousand people, representing 12.6% of the population of Poland). The province of Silesia is the most urbanized in Poland, with urban population constituting as many as 79.8% of the entire population in the province. The province contains 69 towns, of which 13 have over 100 thousand inhabitants. The population density indicator is the highest in Poland, amounting to 398 people per square km. All the above figures provide but a superficial knowledge of real social problems of the province. Speaking most generally, the entire province is associated with the model of old industrial region (which model, in its purest form, appeared in the former province of Katowice, today the central area of the province of Silesia), and with restructuring of traditional branches of heavy industry, mainly coal mining and metallurgy, engineering, chemical industry, implemented since the early 1990s. One of the most crucial consequences of the restructuring of industry in the region is the violently increasing unemployment, which gives rise to many negative social consequences. This issue finds expression in the political discourse of politicians from this province.

One should also point out the relatively stable (since the beginning of 1990s) political division. As has already been mentioned, three parts can be distinguished within the province of Silesia, which *grosso modo* would correspond to the previous smaller provinces, yet even the former province of Katowice is not politically homogeneous. Let us look at these divisions, in succession.

In the Bielsko-Biała part, since the beginning of 1990s, there have been strong tendencies to vote for right wing parties, the left (SdRP in the beginning, SLD later on) never enjoyed there a position that would allow it to have absolute majority, which can be indicated by the fact that various right wing parties, in coalitions, ruled in the major towns of this subregion (Bielsko-Biała, Cieszyn, Żywiec) while the representation of the former province of Bielsko-Biała in the Senate, according to the electoral law in force until the latest elections, that is until 2001 (provinces in the Senate were represented by 2 senators each, with the exception of two provinces with largest population, those of Warszawa and Katowice) con-

sisted of representatives of AWS (Solidarity Election Action) and UW (Union of Freedom).

The northern part of the province of Silesia, the former province of Częstochowa, is the area where the influence of left and right wing parties had a more or less even distribution, although as time went by, the left began to gain there, especially in the city of Częstochowa itself, where the Left is in power at present[2].

Let us now move on to discuss the fairly complicated situation within the former province of Katowice. Three parts may be distinguished there, two latter are characterized deep cultural differences and differences in political tradition, besides the difference in political colouring (J. Wódz, 1999). The western part, concentrated around the town of Gliwice and bordering on the province of Opole, consists of towns where emigrants from former eastern part of the 2nd Republic of Poland settled after 1945, in addition these towns show the distinct presence of **intelligentsia**. The people in these areas, generally speaking, vote the right, yet an important position in these towns belonged to liberally-minded groups (first Democratic Union (UD), then Union of Freedom (UW), later still the Citizen Platform (PO)). The left has never gained a substantial support there, still its role increased towards the end of 1990s, as the de-composition of liberal and right-wing Catholic parties progressed. However, the most crucial political division is that into Upper Silesia and Zagłębie Dąbrowskie (Dąbrowskie coal basin) (K. Wódz, 1995; K. Wódz, J. Wódz, 2001). This division is solid, which can be proven by the results of all elections that took place after 1989. In the Upper Silesian part right wing tendencies clearly dominated, being often related to the support of the Catholic church while in the Zagłębie part of the region, the left has invariably dominated ever since the first democratic elections. This division, dating back to the 19th century, can be explained by history (the Upper Silesian part belonged to the German state, where Christian Democrats held a strong position, while the Zagłębie part belonged to Russia until the end of partition of Poland in 1918, thus the influence of leftist ideologies was much stronger there), which resulted in sharply different political conditions. The divisions between Silesians and Zagłębiacy (inhabitants of the Zagłębie coal basin) have been strengthened by the dramatic experience of World War II and the post-war years, when a substantial portion of Silesians became subject to persecutions and repressive measures applied by communist authorities (more: K. Wódz, 1995). Not going into political analyses, we would like to stress that the differences between the Upper Silesian and Zagłębie part of the former province of Katowice apply both to the results of elections and organisation of

[2] Up to 2001 (authors' note).

political life or political career patterns (D.L. Seiler, J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1997). An additional element, which clearly points out the content of political life in the Upper Silesian part, comprises the cultural, social, and political revindications that ethnic Upper Silesians aim at, being often referred to the pre-war autonomy this province enjoyed in the 2nd Republic of Poland (K. Wódz, 1994). All this resulted in a situation where, as political debate takes place, not only at the level of province, the issues of regionalisation have been discussed, revindication efforts of Upper Silesians have achieved the status of a political problem, being a challenge to the unitarian character of the state (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1998). The divisions sketched above are still vivid, and find clear reflection in the content of statements made by politicians. Failure to understand them would make certain associations or even direct references appearing in research materials that follow illegible.

3. Research method

Deepened free interviews with leaders of political life in the province of Silesia, selected on purpose, were the basic research method. The interviews lasted from some 45 minutes up to 2 hours, even, all taken personally by Jacek Wódz. An interview was an exchange following the specific scenario prepared before, each time the scenario has been modified and supplemented according to the course of the interview, position of the interviewed person, and even references to recent political events. Of importance was the division into part one, consisting of political identification of the person interviewed, his/her political self-determination, which was followed by part two that made references to previous 12 years, in particular to major political conflicts that took place in that period. In turn, the interviewed persons were asked about their attitude towards such crucial issues as decentralization, privatisation, re-privatisation, etc. The next set of questions referred to the opinion on expanding the European Union and the future place of Poland in the Union. Finally, there was a set of questions concerning the region, its specificity, and its chances for the future, especially after Poland joins the European Union. The interviews were tape-recorded, their full recording exists, being the source material for this study.

The studies were made in late spring and early summer of 2001. That was the time of election campaign before the parliamentary elections held in September 2001. Many of the people interviewed were, at that time,

running for seats in the lower or upper chamber of the Polish Parliament which, obviously modified their political standpoint and influenced the content of their statements. On the other hand, election time made them undertake certain political considerations, which made the interwievs taken then much richer with the political content.

Selection of people to be interviewed depended upon the authors of this study. What we took into consideration was that we needed representation of leaders of major parties and political groups active in the region, in proportion equal, roughly, to the results they achieve in elections (parliamentary or local ones). Very often, these leaders have been people known personally to the authors of the study, which substantially simplified contacts with them, and allowed to add extra comments to their statements, especially when they related to the events or opinions known to the authors earlier. One could even admit that thanks to the personal contacts of Jacek Wódz with the interviewed leaders it was possible to deepen the interviews with inofficial content, impossible to obtain otherwise.

During the preparation of the interviews, the major thing was to concentrate upon the main items in its description, which on the one hand allowed to prepare a relatively compact study, on the other hand, however, a lot of detailed information was left out of the body of text, to be used in another analysis.

4. Organisation and present political situation of political parties and groups

Polish political scene on the eve of paliamentary elections in the autumn of 2001 looked somehow peculiar. Opinion polls allocated 40 to 50 percent of votes to the best organised party, which has been and still is SLD (Democratic Left Alliance), other parties and groups lagged far behind, enjoying much less trust and having much worse internal organisation. The forecast was confirmed in the elections, yet the minimum scenario worked, as SLD decisively won the elections getting slightly over 40% of votes, which did not influence its leading position in Polish political scene, however.

We shall commence our analysis with the presentation of that party in the province of Silesia. As for today, SLD is a political party with quite a complicated history. After the self-dissolution of PZPR (Polish United Workers' Party), a party was established to take over most of the cadre (especially the young one) of that party. It was SdRP (Social Democratic

Party of the Republic of Poland). At the same time, attempts were made, although without much success, to establish a second left wing party deriving from PZPR, which explicitly detached itself from the totalitarian past – the Polish Social Democratic Union (PUS – Polska Unia Socjaldemokratyczna). It is worth noticing, and we mention it as it is repeated in the statements of people we interviewed, that about one year before the self-dissolution of PZPR, the so-called 8th of July Movement got formed within that party, which attempted to prepare PZPR for evolving towards a modern leftist party. Among those who established both SdRP and PUS, young people dominated, who had been engaged in the 8th of July Movement before, the movement that proved very strong in the province of Katowice then (mainly in Katowice itself). At the same time, one should not forget that in Katowice another structure of PZPR functioned, the one labelled Katowice Party Forum, which assembled people of extremely totalitarian views, and that was the direct support for the older generation of *aparatchiks*. No wonder, then, that when recalling the beginnings of SLD our interlocutors point out as the main problem the struggle between old political functionaries of PZPR with the young people who wanted to build a new left-wing party.

To make the picture complete, one more reference to the past has to be made. In the years 1989–1991, when SdRP already existed and PUS was under liquidation in fact and did not count as a political force, a very strong attack of right wing forces on former members of PZPR took place. Let us recall here the so-called de-communist programmes depriving former members of PZPR of political rights, a propagandist marginalisation of people who had any connections to the leftists (even if they have never been members of PZPR), attempts to deprive people of the so-called "party nomenclature" of pensions or pension supplements, etc. History proved it to be a peculiar revolutionary reaction, of which not much survived until the present day, but at the time when transformations began, this created the atmosphere of fear and threat among former PZPR members and their families. SdRP then assumed the role of a buffer – a party which, evolving towards modern social democracy, at the same time attempted to defend certain elements of the past of Polish People's Republic (PRL) and biographies of people who identified with that past, even if that seemed against the new programme of the party. Such an attitude had much influence upon the cadres and organisation of SLD.

Let us move on to the analysis of the study material. Kazimierz Zarzycki, the deputy chairman of the Silesian Provincial Council of SLD says in his interview that the present divisions within SLD should be traced back to the late 1980s. He recalls people who at that time were activists of the 8th of July Movement, pointing to the fact that today they are almost evenly distributed in SLD and Unia Pracy (Labour Union), which explains why

it has been so easy for those two parties to agree upon forming a coalition for elections, and later a coalition in the parliament. Ireneusz Łęczek in turn, the present editor-in-chief of the regional mutation of *Trybuna* (a daily paper directly connected with the Left) says that during the first months of SdRP's existence, these people were subject to incessant attacks, which influenced their integration as a social group. To quote him, he refers to the assembly of people "(...) threatened, terrified with all that, somehow assembling within their circle to escape all this spitting (...)". Today, those times are a distinguishing mark for the "old" SLD activists treating those who joined the party later on as people who in difficult times lacked courage to manifest their views, yielding to the pressure of commonly expressed aversion or even hatred for previous political regime. Bogusław Kabała, the vice-chairman of the Sosnowiec City Council, a town that has a decisive advantage of leftist electorate, when wondering where the present cadre of SLD comes from, would quote three sources: the original core of SdRP (those connected partly to the 8th of July Movement, as if stamped with what happened in the early years of SdRP), from the ever more numerous group of 1990s youths (being 30 to 40 years old at present) that began to associate with SdRP in the years 1993–1997, when that party was in power. The group can be characterised as being highly pragmatic, yet also quite well educated.

Finally, there is the so-called "concrete", people who, before 1989, were related to the PZPR *aparatchiks* and who began to join SLD recently, as the party already recognised and with a high social position. A statement by the youngest person we interviewed, Agnieszka Pasternak, MP, under thirty years of age, is also worth quoting. She says: "It seems to me that it is becoming an ever greater problem for me, as when I ran for the seat in the parliament 4 years ago (she used to be an MP in the years 1997–2001 and was re-elected in 2001 for her second term of office, note by K., J. W.), perhaps I did not fully realize how party structures functioned, I came from a student organisation, which had much leeway, and all of a sudden I ended up being part of a machine that had its rules of functioning and, what is even more painful for me, looking at it from a perspective, it seems to me that SdRP, which was perceived more as "concrete", was more guilt-expiation oriented, more open to the new things than SLD now, as suddenly these people who once stopped their political activity, suddenly resume their connections with this political option and think they are monopolists in wisdom and generally should mean a lot in the party". This is quite a typical statement, as through its honesty it indicates the concern of a substantial percentage of SLD activists that strive towards keeping the image of SLD as a party which is entirely new, and which has the unquestionably social-democratic countenance.

Of interest is also the statement of the person heading the branch of SLD in the city of Katowice, dr Tomasz Czakon, a philosopher lecturing at the University of Silesia. He points out the purely organisational operation of establishing SLD as a new party, on the basis of the former SdRP. At the level of the city, to maintain the previously established social-democratic character of the party, it has been decided to base upon the circle of SdRP city councillors, as they had already proven politically correct.

A question arises, then, how the people studied perceive the present organisation of SLD as a new, yet well internally organised (in comparison with other Polish parties) political force. The course of the election campaign confirms, in their opinion, the organisational efficiency of the party, as well as the clearly delineated ideology, which make SLD a party that obviously stands out from other political forces, especially those that consider themselves right wing ones.

Now, let us focus our attention on the statements of people we interviewed who are connected with various right wing groups or tendencies. Before we proceed to the analysis proper, there is a need for making certain stipulations concerning the degree of "right wing orientation" of the people we interviewed. At the Polish political scene, it is hard to find a coherent definition, by politicians, concerning the notion of the Right. Generally speaking, one encounters both the tendencies to indentify right wing orientation with Anglo-Saxon type of conservatism, and definitions of right orientation using nationalist-Catholic categories, exposing the role of Catholic church in Poland, or more European tendencies that define the Rights through liberalism, economic, social, and political.

This leads to situations in which various parties or political movements, defining themselves as right wing ones, perceive their enemies primarily at the right wing itself, not on the left side of the scene (e.g. nationalist-Catholic parties perceive their main enemy in liberal parties), which disturbs divisions into left and right wing of the political scene, usually applied in political science analyses. In the province of Silesia additional complications stem from the fact that, especially in Upper Silesia proper, one can encounter three specific right wing tendencies, having a distinctly regional character. The first of these refers to the idea of autonomy of the province of Silesia, existing in the inter-war period, which today, albeit having a lesser political range at present, resounds in various types of right wing regional political discourse. The second tendency stems out of the, short-lived yet already important for political awareness, activities of the regional proto-party, the Upper Silesian Association (Związek Górnośląski) in the early 1990s. That regional association became active when regionally important political events took place, such as local (or later regional) elections, or filling crucial vacancies and taking positions in the Provincial

Office (Urząd Wojewódzki) in Katowice (many members of the Association hold responsible positions in the state and local administration, at various levels) switching in such situations from the discourse typical for association to political one, and becoming an important player in the political game (J. Petaux, J. Wódz, 1996). In numerous Upper Silesian towns such a style of right wing political activity is still of much importance in defining the Rights.

Finally, the third tendency results from the existence (in large urban municipalities in the Upper Silesian part of the province) of urban movements which, as a result of filling the vacuum at the local political scene in the early 1990s and acting as associations, managed to introduce their representatives to city or town councils, for long or good as it turns out at present. Usually, those associations have enjoyed the favour of local parishes, focusing upon building social programmes deeply rooted in the tradition of specific Upper Silesian Catholicism.

Thus, presenting the level of organisation of political parties and movements that consider themselves part of the right wing, it is hard to consider them equal. At the time of our studies, two political parties of right wing character: AWS (Solidarity Election Action) and UW (Union of Freedom) were clearly losing ground, whereas the Citizen Platform (Platforma Obywatelska – PO) kept on gaining it, the latter formally speaking was not a political party but a movement with many features of a proto-party. On the other hand, one needs to stress that the apparent chaos and torpor at the right wing of Polish political scene resulted in the fact that the Platform was joined by known politicians, with quite some achievements, who did not feel like losing the elections because of running under the banner of the Union of Freedom (UW) or the Solidarity Election Action (AWS).

Such was the reasoning of local politicians from Silesia, who wanted to perceive their right wing character not in the nationalist context (this is specific for the Upper Silesian part of the province of Silesia, where nationalist mutations of the Right never found much recognition), and who also got lured by election rhetoric of PO leaders. Krystyna Rawska, a local politician with much experience and success (former Mayor of Świętochłowice, at present the Chairwoman of the Świętochłowice Town Council), running for Parliament in the 2001 elections (yet failing to get a seat, which can be mentioned today, but which was not obvious when our studies were conducted) said it straightforward in the interview: "I think that the Platform, for me, was a niche for people who were unable to proclaim themselves in favour of very fundamental right wing views, which invalidate the output of educated and wise people, who happened to have PZPR membership card, many a friend of mine, whatever the beliefs, despite the fact that I am believing Christian, I am counted among people who have something

to say on the political scene and I do believe that with those people we shall create the *Platform*, a platform of thinking people, intelligent people with experience, who are able to transfer the experience, as early as possible, to the young people and establish a reasonable contact with them". That statement demonstrates, indirectly, that right wing structures, existing so far, lost the confidence of their more intelligent members, as well as the possibility to gain new young members.

Somehow differently, as from the perspective of his own experience connected with AWS, the issue has been presented by Janusz Frąckowiak, an activist of Solidarity, later of Citizen Committees (Komitety Obywatelskie), during the previous term of office the Speaker of the local parliament of the province of Katowice (that is before the administrative reform, when local parliaments had less authority than at present), very closely associated with the leadership of AWS, a candidate to the Senate from the election block "Senate 2001", placed on the list of PO related to that block, says quite openly: "It was here that it (the Platform – K., J. Wódz) appeared, as the torpor was so strong, I watched it with aversion, from a distance, as if I stopped being active altogether. PO appeared, as something that just begins to get shaped, and I decided to kind of start anew, as I say, it is the last time in my life, I will not change again. (...) I decided to do something, anyway, and I joined in the activities of the *Platform* when the idea of the 'Senate 2001' Block appeared, I got pretty interested in it (...)". This is a statement by a man who is experienced in politics, who has always been involved in right wing political tendencies, moreover, he has a stable social position (he is a professor of the University of Silesia) and does not have to "look for his place in life". Thus, this confirms the supposition that in the province of Silesia the Citizen Platform (Platforma Obywatelska) has become a political movement that nourished the hopes of people with moderately rightist orientation.

Still, that political group has also been joined, and in quite a number too, by people who had been connected with the Union of Freedom (Unia Wolności) before, a party that in previous parliamentary elections managed to have quite a few eminent personalities elected to both the lower and upper chamber of the Polish Parliament (Sejm and Senate), for example Leszek Balcerowicz was an MP and Kazimierz Kutz the film director a senator, both from the Union of Freedom, naturally. This party nominated its representatives for the posts of the Vice-Governor and Vice-Marshall of the province of Silesia. The Citizen Platform was established, these two people joined it, discontinuing their membership in the Union of Freedom.

We shall quote here a statement by doctor Jan Rzymełka, recently an MP of the Union of Freedom, who resigned his membership in that party and opted to be on the Platform list, running to the parliament as a Platform

man in the 2001 elections, and becoming an MP who represents the Citizen Platform. J. Rzymełka says: "It so happened, due to some internal conviction, that the support for the Union of Freedom finished, the same way as once the support Lech Wałęsa enjoyed ended. I appreciate both Lech and the Union, as those who contributed the most at a certain time to history, that cannot be prolonged though, that is one of the reasons. Another reason, that I used to be the head of the Liberal-Democratic Congress (Kongres Liberalno-Demokratyczny) in Katowice, and this is somehow my natural political basis, which was also the basis for Mr. Tusk, in the games played within the Union, it supported the new structure that got established. Naturally, I had to leave the Union, to be with my electorate, I would call it that way. And the third reason is a certain political novelty (of the Platform – K., J. Wódz) and a novelty that meets specific expectations that provided for the needs that remained unmet before. That is, it is about the party that is to get formed, this will be a centrist party, with no connections to trade unions, not supported upon religious symbols, holy medals, thus a party that will be something European. All the large political conglomerations so far, SLD and AWS have contained both trade unions and ideological elements, whereas the Platform tries to do something outside of that, this is somehow a certain historic orientation towards modern, European parties, perhaps in a few years' time the political scene will contain a modern Left and that something that will evolve from the Platform".

This, somewhat lengthy, statement indicates on the one hand the perplexity in the Union of Freedom (which got formed, to remind you, by joining the forces of the two parties existing previously – Democratic Union (Unia Demokratyczna) and the Liberal-Democratic Congress (Kongres Liberalno-Demokratyczny), on the other hand the distinctive feature of the Platform, which is its dislike to trade unions. The latter aspect is even more important, as among people with political experience who at the time of our studies moved to join the Platform, from the Union of Freedom or AWS, there were quite a few former activists of Solidarity (Solidarność). Thus, when analysing the formation of the Citizen Platform, one can notice the important development of people that started their political careers within the framework of Solidarity social movement, yet later continued with staying away from active role of trade unions at the political scene.

Citizen Platform (Platforma Obywatelska) was, at the time of our studies, a political movement on the one hand, and a proto-party on the other (especially as it already started to construct its election lists, and to draw up a small political problem to be used during the election campaign) and also an election committee, formally speaking. In such a situation, it would be hard to talk about any advanced phase of organisation of that group.

It has been decided that placing on election lists of candidates will be decided by means of primaries (although at that time the number of people who joined Platform was not known), which *de facto* started the process of gaining supporters, construction of support groups, internal influence exertion groups, etc.

The situation in the Union of Freedom (Unia Wolności), after the split connected with the establishment of the Citizen Platform, can be best characterised by the opinion expressed by one of the people we interviewed, the chairman of Silesian region of the Union of Freedom. The person in mind is Ryszard Ostrowski, at that time still an MP, and the Speaker of the Silesian Local Parliament until his term of office expires (in mid-2002). R. Ostrowski stresses that internal organisation of the Union of Freedom is, to some extent, related to its history, in the first place to the fact that the party is a cluster of two parties that had existed independently before – Democratic Union (UD) and Liberal-Democratic Congress, but also to generation gaps. Ostrowski says: "If we take into consideration the age of leaders of the Union, be it UD or UW at present, and I have in mind the direct chiefs, so to say, I mean here Tadeusz Mazowiecki or Bronisław Geremek (...) they are persons with much experience, with substantial achievements but also, let's face it, persons advanced in age. (...) Besides Geremek we have Władek Frasyniuk as vice-chairman, Mirek Czech, we have Rysiek Petru, former adviser of Balcerowicz, these are young people (...) and I hope they will perfectly continue the work of their predecessors and, in a natural way, take over the leadership of UW in future". That statement, dating from the time of election campaign, proved to be prophetic, in a way.

After disastrous results of Union of Freedom in the elections held in September, 2001, resulting in removal of that party from the parliament, a reshuffle took place, indeed, and the generation of older, meritorious politicians left, the leadership was taken over by Władysław Frasyniuk, counted among the young generation. The question remains whether he will have enough support within the party to lead it out of crisis. In the Polish election system, where the threshold of 5% of votes is in force, a party enjoying 2–3% of support must have extraordinary internal organisation to survive for 4 years outside the Parliament. Our direct contacts with Władysław Frasyniuk in late November 2001 indicate that he believes in renewing UW by complete rejuvenation and assuming the position of social liberal party, underlying clearly its purely secular character, by taking interest in liberal attitude towards moral issues, and a fairly critical approach to public and political enunciations of Catholic Church leaders. In this way, in Mr. Frasyniuk's opinion, the renewed UW may get clearly distinct from Citizen Platform (Platforma Obywatelska), which assumed a centrist approach, and tends to abstain from discussing moral issues. The pending question

concerning the future UW in the province of Silesia remains. It appears hard to grasp, at least on the basis of our interviews, but also on the basis of discussions with people connected with UW, whether there will be any distinct internal mobilization, or merely a copying of steps taken by the national leadership. The issue is of utmost importance for that party as the next local elections, to be held in late spring, most probably on May 30, to local and regional self-governments (at the level of municipality, district, and province) may prove not only to be a test for internal organisation of that party, but may also be decisive for its further existence at the municipal, district, or provincial level, indeed.

Let us now concentrate upon the shape AWS existed in the province of Silesia at the time of our studies, that is during the election campaign. That political formation, still in power at that time, was undergoing a grave internal crisis, which needs to be stressed, and chances were slim for AWS to provide any future-oriented solutions concerning the organisation of the right side of political scene. We shall provide the opinions expressed by two mayors of big towns, who until the 2001 elections presented themselves as politicians of AWS – Bogdan Traczyk, the Mayor of Bielsko Biała and Adam Fudali, the Mayor of Rybnik. Before we proceed to make this presentation, it should be reminded that AWS, nation-wide, was established as an agreement of various political groups, very diverse in terms of internal organisation of political representation, under the umbrella of Solidarity trade unions (Solidarność).

Similar tendencies at the local level have been referred to by the Mayor of Rybnik, Adam Fudali: "In Rybnik, AWS consisted of 4 legs, or more later on, I was a member of one party since the beginning of my political activities, namely Porozumienie Centrum (Centre Alliance). It transformed, it turned into PChD (Partia Chrześcijańskich Demokratów: Party of Christian Democrats – K., J. Wódz), I do not recall exactly how it was, but later it joined forces with ChD (Chrześcijańscy Demokraci: Christian Democrats – K., J. Wódz.) and thus PPChD was formed (Polska Partia Chrześcijańskich Demokratów: Polish Party of Christian Democrats – K., J. Wódz). That PPChD was present here in Rybnik and here we had the present member of PPChD Board, Czesław Sobierajski MP. That was the main figure, around the MP and on the basis of this PPChD we later became members of AWS, automatically. This identification was a bit accidental, it resulted from strife to join together all those groups, even parties, even *settee* parties, that's the way it needs to be said, scattered on the right side, with the idea of establishing AWS as a homogeneous political party, which never came true".

A. Fudali indicates the specific fortuity of political identification with AWS. That opinion is often repeated by other people we interviewed, and seems to stick to the facts. In such a situation, it seems legitimate to

ask a question concerning the extent to which the members of AWS felt connected rather with the political groups they belonged to before AWS got established, than to AWS itself. Also: whether they believed in any political future for AWS?

At the time of our studies, that is when, despite the fact that almost all opinion polls indicated a decline in popularity of AWS, it could have been assumed that this formation would gain seats in the new parliament, which would be followed by establishing its own deputies' club that would be, as a matter of fact, supporting the political existence of AWS. Even extremely negative scenarios for AWS did not allow for the possibility, which came true, that this formation will fail to reach the threshold of 7%, of support, required for coalitions, which *de facto* entails the beginning of its end. It is beyond doubt that although AWS, when in power, enjoyed the logistic support of the government for election campaign, the formation was badly organised internally, and the feeling of decomposition was strengthened by the fact that quite a politicians were leaving AWS for Citizen Platform.

To add to the description of the right wing politics in the province of Silesia, it is worth quoting two major right-wing politicians who although in practice co-operated with AWS, never joined it. These are two relatively young (in their 40-ties) politicians, playing important roles at the local and regional scene: Piotr Uszok, the Mayor of Katowice and Marek Kopel, the Mayor of Chorzów. Both of them decided for a specific option of political independence, searching for their electorate on the right wing of the political scene, yet rooting their electoral activities in structures of election committees established every time specifically for a given election campaign. Marek Kopel says: "I define myself rather as a man of the right wing, but in a general sense. Not a man of AWS, though it needs to be said straight that we make up the ruling coalition with AWS (in the town – K., J. Wódz), I may tell you why for 10 years I have not been engaged in any political parties that exist, and the majority of people active in self-governments, do they have to be politically involved? I consciously avoid that choice, as none of the three parties, PO recently, but UW and AWS before, none of these three formations entirely fulfills my vision, or my value system, besides that politicians from these two groups (UW and AWS – K., J. Wódz) that appeared at the top were not people whom I would like to support with my name or my achievements".

The political attitude of the Mayor of the Katowice, Piotr Uszok, is very similar; he makes it clear that one can enter into close contacts with AWS as the occasion arises, in a tactical manner, as he underlines "surely not at the level of debate concerning ideology or outlook on life". Analysing the two above statements, it is possible to demonstrate clearly that these two

popular politicians of the younger generation not only stood outside the organised system of political parties, but also, demonstrating their independence, gave a public signal: AWS cannot be fully trusted. This was also an important element of the political campaign, especially for the younger electorate that had more rational than historic motives of decisions.

5. Important political events in the last ten years, in the opinion of people we interviewed

Polish political scene gets shaped through political debates, scarce as they are, caused by the inevitability of solving important political, economic, and social problems, rather typical for the period of transformation and transition from autoritarian system to democracy, and from planned economy to free market one.

We asked the people whom we interviewed both about the ideological debates, concerning e.g. the issue of social or historical justice (of particular importance at the time of leaving one system and entering another), and disputes that reverberated in the media and the world of politics in the last 10–12 years (among others those concerning de-communisation, privatisation, re-privatisation, abortion and, finally, the wording of the present constitution).

It has been assumed, hypothetically, that the debates concerning ideology as well as those concerning problems, having a specific topic, and related, for example, to a given event, on the one hand promoted the forming of political scene (even by forcing politicians to take a specific standpoint and being different from others), on the other hand aided in internal consolidation of specific political parties or groups.

It will be fairly easy to indicate the differences in approaching answers to the above questions, assuming two divisions: the first – having the leftists on one side and the right-wing rest (strongly differentiated) on the other, the second – assuming differences between generations. Thus, the older generation (at least 45–50 years of age) attaches importance to those discussions, whereas the younger generation clearly does not care about them any more, considering them of little importance for the future.

Still, the main dividing line is between the Right and the Left. Generally speaking, the Left assumed a position of pragmatic analysis of the existing reality, of building certain visions and perspectives for the future, without referring particularly to ideological debates and disputes concerning history. Let us provide a few examples. A young politician from the left

wing (between 35 and 40 years of age) Tomasz Czakon says that ideological debates are sometimes needed, but one does not discuss things considered obvious. In the opinion of Mr. Czakon, it is worth discussing, for example, the issues concerning Poland joining the EU, not the past, as – what he stresses – the political time in Poland is ticking very fast and discussions that are a few years old are hardly interesting.

Another, equally young, left wing politician, the Mayor of Dąbrowa Górnicza still makes his statement concerning the de-communisation debate. He says: "all this debate on de-communisation influenced, I think, the area where the elder, frustrated, stepped back somehow once, and that provided room for new ones, for young ones". Indeed, both the very debate on de-communisation and the atmosphere surrounding it, inclined older members of the former communist party PZPR to withdraw from active political life, as a result of which leading positions in the new leftist party have been taken by fresh and younger people. The same interlocutor thinks, though, that the debate on constitution, one of the most important political events in the last 10–12 years, did not make any grave impression upon the political life as, in his words, these issues have been of interest only for narrow circles of the society.

Another interlocutor, the former vice-Governor of the Katowice province, Mr. Zygmunt Machnik, about 50 years of age, has a bit different attitude to these things. For him, a crucial element of political debates held recently is the attitude towards the political reality of the People's Republic of Poland – PRL (that is, Poland from before 1989). When asked about the debate concerning the issue of historic justice, he answered as follows: "Yes, we here are in a situation where we somehow defend PRL, I think it is not so bad. Anyway, we very often stress that we do want to defend everything, but truly there was a certain tangible well being, certain social achievement of that Polish society in the PRL period, which should be cherished at present. Many elements of that society needn't have been destroyed, often thoughtlessly, without giving any profits".

As an example, he would point out today's negligence in Polish culture and education, deprived of support of the state. He would indirectly blame the Union of Freedom for that, which may be perceived rather as a consequence of identification of that party with its leader Leszek Balcerowicz often accused in Poland of causing the ruin of Polish rural areas. However, if we take the statement of this politician in its entirety, one can notice a certain overtone of grief that the debate on history did not allow to develop any more sober, in his opinion, perception of what was bad and what was good in the times of PRL.

To set this in contrast, let us quote the statement made by our youngest interlocutor, the nearly 30-year old Agnieszka Pasternak, MP, who

stressed the importance of two debates held: on constitution and re-privatisation. Here is what she said about the debate on constitution: "I always get irritated when everybody holds to a certain position, and is unable to let go in a few items, it seems to me that as regards such topics as constitution, such a fundamental thing, one should look for some agreement. Again, Mr. Mazowiecki (who co-chaired, together with Aleksander Kwaśniewski, the parliamentary commission working on the new constitution – K., J. Wódz) appeared to bring in the golden middle, I think that was an important thing".

Yet another quotation from her statement, concerning the debate on re-privatisation, where she said: "Re-privatisation decidedly set politicians at variance. I do not belong to the group that would expect getting anything back, thus I don't have any emotional attitude here, but I try to look through the eyes of someone who had some property and lost it, and now would like to retrieve all of it or a part of it, or get some compensation. Whichever way you look at it, it seems different, as one has to admit that we, the state, cannot afford it at all". These two statements can lead to at least two conclusions. First of all, we encounter an attitude that is concurrent with the official standpoint of SLD, yet also an attitude that is free of emotions and that treats both debates as important yet belonging to the past already. Second of all, and worth stressing, is the fact that the person who uttered these statements clearly represents a pragmatic attitude. This pragmatism is a typical attitude to politics represented by young leftist elites, not bearing personally the ballast of the past, from the period of PRL.

To finish off the presentation of attitudes of the left side of the political scene, let us quote a statement made by an elder gentleman, Mr. Bogusław Kabała, near 70 years of age, a vice-president of the Sosnowiec Town Council. Asked about the discussion over the issue of historic justice, he admitted: "It is a fact, that really the left side, the leftist party is only forced to face those problems, there is no desire to do it. This may be due to the fact that no one is willing to look at one's bad sides, but that is a good justification for an individual. In a group there should be a person who would say – OK, it may be not too nice for us, but let us settle the accounts once and for all". This is an opinion of a politician belonging to the intellectual elite of the town (former headmaster of a secondary school, for many years), with his own considerations concerning the past.

Still, noting the tendency to avoid discussions about the past in SLD circles, B. Kabała also stated that the more time elapsed after 1989, that is after the change of political system, the more outdated such debates would seem. The younger generation does not see any sense in them, nor does it need them for any purpose. Thus the general remark, often repeated in Poland, finds confirmation, namely that the time in politics is ticking fast

enough to leave only the purely symbolic layer of important debates concerning the past. And it is the attachment to symbols, as well as personal or family biography, more than even the truth about history that today divides Poles and the world of Polish politics.

Let us now proceed to the analysis of responses provided by politicians connected with various political groups or movements that describe themselves as rightist ones. Let us commence with a statement by Mr. Bogdan Traczyk, some 50-year-old Mayor of the city of Bielsko-Biała, who explicitly identifies himself with RS AWS (Social Movement – Solidarity Election Action). B. Traczyk has stated: "As regards de-communisation, it undoubtedly played a major role in formation of the elites related to AWS, but in fact, as time has told, it is both negative and positive. Positive in the sense that certain circles consolidated in AWS, but also negative in the sense that, as it turned out, a vast majority of our society is not interested in it, which in turn led to a situation that AWS, or at least those circles that urged that de-communisation, were removed to the margin, which *summa summarum* is not advantageous for the Right as the entire political formation (...) As regards the debate on constitution, it has been an issue of primary importance for me. Personally, I am not too happy about the final form of our constitution, for a few reasons of moral nature, in fact. I am practising Catholic, a member of the Catholic Action (Akcja Katolicka), for me moral considerations are of utmost importance, also in the constitution. Although this constitution contains references to the Christian value system, still I would prefer to have, in a few issues, a less liberal approach, for example concerning the attitude to the liberty of conscience of children". This opinion is quite characteristic for the right wing of AWS, where this interlocutor surely belongs, taking into consideration what he declared.

Let us now examine the opinions expressed by another representative of the Right, the Mayor of Rybnik, Mr. Adam Fudali, who used to be connected with PC (Centre Alliance), later with AWS and finally, as may be gathered from his statements, doubtful about the political success of this party in the 2001 parliamentary elections. Discussing the political debates and conflicts of the last 10–12 years, he stressed that they often resulted in divisions in the world of politics, but those divisions were also profound on the right side of the scene which, in his words, was represented by both more liberal politicians, as well as those representing more conservative-nationalist orientation. Thus, for example, he is of the opinion that: "(...) the dispute about the constitution divided AWS itself, surely it divided more than joined. The same applies to de-communisation and reprivatisation. On the issue of de-communisation, the opinions have been so spaced out, from extreme ones, represented by my first party, PC, to very restrained ones, which have been proclaimed by some of those politicians of AWS who, as

for today, make up the Citizen Platform (PO). As you can see, time heals the wounds, for sure it is so, my point of view used to be really radical, it would be hard to say it was extreme, yet I thought there should be a clean-up of the political scene. It should have happened when we regained independence, later it has already been impossible".

This statement stands in a clear contrast with the one quoted before, despite the fact that both interlocutors are more or less of the same age, thus no generation gap in political experience can exist. Even more restrained rightist views have been expressed by Mr. Janusz Frąckowiak, of the same age as the two previous persons, who used to be connected with the Citizen Committees (Komitety Obywatelskie), later to AWS and finally, with to the "Senate 2001" Election Committee, and running for a seat in that chamber (without success, as it turned out later).

Expressing his comprehensive opinion on the issue of reprivatisation, which he considered one of the most serious subjects of dispute in the recent years, he says: "This is a serious problem, indeed, and it is a pity that the reprivatisation has not been completed, as this is a tail that we will be dragging behind us. It could have been implemented in stages, that was my conviction, of course this cannot be done by force and once, as has been attempted (he refers to the draft of reprivatisation act, supported by extreme right fractions of AWS – K., J. Wódz), there should be a systemic solution instead. Something should have been a starting point, to be followed by consequent implementation, as large sums have been under consideration, I suspect this cannot be done once and for all. It is a pity that time has been wasted on political disputes, and the issue has not been taken up from the very beginning". From further statements by that politician it can be gathered that he blames everybody for not solving the problem, but puts the main blame upon the Left that, in his opinion, failed to take it up in a responsible manner.

Now let us present a statement of the chairman of regional structures of the Union of Freedom (Unia Wolności), Mr. Ryszard Ostrowski, who is junior to the previously quoted persons (being 40 years of age) and who represents a clearly different way of looking at the issues that are of interest for us here: "I think that UW definitely prefers to discuss topics connected to the development of the state, it surely prefers topics related to the future of Poland and I am of the opinion that the topics, being very emotional, so to say, the issues of de-communisation, "lustration", abortion, emotional as they may be, are somehow of secondary importance, as we feel it. For many people they are very important, especially for those people who suffered under the previous regime, but I think other topics are the priority for UW. Anyway, in those issues, as can be seen from the results of UW voting in the parliament, we never assumed a joint standpoint or

discipline when voting, as this depends upon individual estimation of every one of us, not the party. In UW we have people who differ in their philosophy of life, I gather this is an enormous strength of the party, and due to that there have never been, as regards those issues, any indications or hints, so to say, as was the case in other parties, where like on a string, everybody would vote the same way". Undoubtedly, this opinion is characteristic for the younger generation in that party.

To conclude, one more statement, of Ms. Krystyna Rawska, running to the parliament as representative of the Citizen Platform (Platforma Obywatelska), an experienced politician, with substantial achievements in self-governing in the town of Świętochłowice, who represents the middle generation of politicians at the regional political scene: "The issues of de-communisation, of dealing with history or all those disputes of recent years, are issues of utmost importance. Yet, speaking honestly, de-communisation for example has not been carried out in the way it should have been done, that is the possibility of legal, immediate regulation of the issue had been wasted, then followed the disgusting binder affair (she alludes to the so-called "night of binders", when the government of Jan Olszewski disclosed the binders of people who allegedly were to co-operate with the communist secret police, there were several prominent people from the anti-communist opposition among those people. After all, this was considered a political provocation, and after a night debate the parliament dismissed the entire government headed by Jan Olszewski – J., K. Wódz) all in all an extremely controversial manner of the supposed de-communisation, not true for me, as the genuine one was not possible, at the moment I do not feel like tracing any conspiracy or developing any would-be theory. I simply think that in Poland, in the Polish state, there are institutions that are authorised to find out about somebody's activities, to judge someone's past, let it happen according to the law. Never again will I opt for any specific solution, I am of the opinion that what we have developed so far has to remain".

The same person, when asked about the dispute concerning the constitution, said: "This was a crucial conflict, that should not have happened, I wondered myself that people could be dealing with such things, but it is perhaps symptomatic for our society, that we just keep on brandishing the sword and the fundamental things keep slipping away, the important things slip away". It seems that the above statement is a rendition of the way those issues are commonly perceived by the Citizen Platform (Platforma Obywatelska). What it includes is also a general statement of trust in the institutions of a democratic state and consideration of those debates as a thing of the past.

We shall quote here yet another opinion, expressed by a younger politician (in his fourties) with experience in self-governing and, in principle, not connected any specific right-wing political group, yet clearly focused upon the af-

fairs of the city of Katowice. Piotr Uszok, Major of Katowice, said: "I know that for reality these issues are unimportant, I think today they are also not important for people. For example, the whole problem of de-communisation, I do not want to judge, if any specific activities were to be taken up, it would have been in the early 1990s, now the society is really not interested, even if e.g. the economic reality of the 1970 or 1980s is assessed, people know about it but are not interested. People live today and that is what interests them".

We have presented a few statements uttered by the representatives of AWS, then of the Union of Freedom (Unia Wolności), the Citizen Platform (Platforma Obywatelska), and finally, by an important regional politician who openly subscribes to right-wing views but is not connected with any specific right-wing party. What is characteristic is the fact that only the representatives of AWS presently attach much importance to those debates or disputes held in the last 10–12 years, which relate to the past. What is also worth stressing, they indicate the importance of those disputes for internal formation of political parties and movements that made up AWS. It has also been noted that, as in the case of the leftist SLD, also here the age, and thus the content of political experience, affects their opinions concerning the sense of pondering over those debates and political conflicts.

To provide a shortest possible summary for this part of the research, we would like to stress that, regardless the shade of the political banner of a given politician, the younger the person, the less importance is attached to disputes and debates concerning the past, yet the greater is the interest in the future and the more pragmatic, politically speaking, is the approach to practising politics. Another obvious conclusion to be drawn is that the more right-wing oriented a politician is, the more importance s/he attaches to disputes, debates, or campaigns that include anti-communist content, squaring the accounts with the past, and behaviours related to the specifically Polish perception of Christian values. It can be assumed that, although the research concerned but one region of the country, the conclusions might be extrapolated, as a hypothesis, for the entire Polish political class.

6. Problems of regionalisation of the country in the opinions expressed by politicians interviewed

Let us now move on to discuss another crucial issue. This will be the attitude and opinions of the interlocutors concerning the problem of regionalisation of the country, the reform of administrative division that resulted

in the establishment of 16 new large provinces (voivodships) – regions, and against that background the perception of the specific role of the province of Silesia, meant as a large region within the framework of which the much smaller cultural subregion of Upper Silesia functions, being authentically different in terms of culture. We have already mentioned this specificity in the introduction to this study, it is worth noting, though, that among the important conditions for that reform of administrative division, establishing new and big provinces, was the adjustment of the administrative structure of Poland to similar solutions applied in the European Union countries. The thing that characterises the Union's approach to a region is its perspective character (J. Wódz, 2001).

It should be clearly stressed, at the same time, that in the approach to regions (that may be deduced from activities practised by the Council of Europe) an important role is played by the ethnic and cultural attitude, then in the approach of the European Union the predominant thing is to be pragmatic, to have a perspective, to perceive the region as a social entirety, looking for common solutions for the future. That is the essence of different approaches to the notion of region among the political elites of the province of Silesia. Some stress mainly the ethnic and cultural aspects, they refer to the "historical" Upper Silesia (a substantial part of which is located outside the borders of the province of Silesia), whereas others pay more attention to the pragmatic aspects, and they perceive the entire province of Silesia as a region culturally differentiated.

Let us show how respective politicians approach the issue of regionalisation, of the region's functioning after the reform of administration, and, mainly what their opinions are, concerning the specific situation of the province of Silesia, against the background of the entire country. It needs to be pointed out that many of the people we interviewed have been directly involved in regional politics, they are mayors of big towns, or representatives of the state administration at regional level, or councillors in the Provincial Parliament of the province of Silesia (Sejmik Województwa Śląskiego).

As before, let us begin with the opinions expressed by politicians of the Left. Dr Tomasz Czakon, a young politician, heading the Katowice city SLD branch, when asked about the decentralization in Poland, in the context of regional revindications that emerge in this province, said: "We have already gone through those discussions in the Katowice branch of SLD, paying attention to the ethnic issues, in fact. We have assumed a formula that states that for us this is a thing of secondary importance, more important are the problems of inhabitants, thus our approach to regionalisation is a kind of civic, pragmatic, but we assumed that it is a region of administrative and political character, all inhabitants of the region are equally

important for us, in such a region we are interested mainly in the social, economic, or educational problems. If, however, someone identifies with a definite ethnic group or any other group, or has certain historical sentiments, then it is to the credit of that person, if the political or social arrangement is not thus destroyed. We do not get engaged in this".

This is a standpoint typical of the Left in the province of Silesia, where a functional, realistic, and pragmatic perception of the region is of vital importance, treating the issues of ethnic identification as secondary. A similar opinion has been expressed by another SLD activist and editor-in-chief of the regional variation of the leftist newspaper *Trybuna*, who also pointed out that attempts at "ethnicizing" the regional issue in the province of Silesia may lead to antagonizing various social groups living in the area.

This suggestion is directly referred to by the oldest left-wing politician we interviewed, Mr. Bogusław Kabała, at present a vice-president of the Town Council (Rada Miejska) in Sosnowiec (thus in the Zagłębie Dąbrowskie area, perceived by part of Silesian elites as "foreign" and unfriendly for Silesians). He said: "The issues of regionalisation are especially delicate in this province of Silesia, as here in Zagłębie one feels that we are constantly provoked by Kazimierz Kutz (a senator with roots in Upper Silesia, who is a film and theatre director, also a publicist who, especially in his press articles, oftentimes violently attacks the Zagłębie Dąbrowskie area, contributing to the rehashing of mutual dislike and prejudice – J., K. Wódz), who attacks us and it so happens, among the people in Zagłębie, that we have to produce evidence that we are also a region". The conflict-generating character of ethnic-based definitions of the region has been noted especially by more experienced politicians of the Left. Mr. Kazimierz Zarzycki, a vice-president of the Silesian Provincial Council of SLD has said it straight that the issues of regionalisation need to be perceived through the efficiency of self-governing, and even in this one has to avoid idealization, as it is not true that self-governments are always better at managing, that they are always free from wasting money or from corruption. One can notice that the statement contains a certain caution and doubt concerning the sense of fast regionalisation.

The youngest of leftist politicians we interviewed, in turn, Ms. Agnieszka Pasternak, MP, said: "It seems to me that in the debate on regions pragmatism should prevail, if we can afford that, if it contributes to better living of people, then it is fine, but if the results were to give birth to conflicts and were to give little positive effects, then no. We are a poor country, and we cannot afford mere ideological experiments". A similar opinion has been expressed by a young, 40-year-old, Mayor of Dąbrowa Górnicza, one of the biggest towns in the Zagłębie part of the province, Mr. Marek Lipczyk. When asked about his appraisal of regionalisation in

Poland, performed within the framework of the so-called administrative reform (establishment of the new administrative division into 16 provinces), he said: "I think that was a mistake, this is a disastrous division, as if one wanted to establish regions, one should have established in Poland, which is a poor country, big regions, maximum 7 or 8 and then they would have been economically strong and able to try out their own regional policy". Similar opinions have been expressed also during the political debate concerning regionalisation. One has to admit, however, that in such a situation those big regions would have been purely administrative ones, and defined pragmatically, without any reference to ethnic-cultural criteria.

As has been mentioned above, in the statements made by leftist politicians, a pragmatic approach to regionalisation clearly dominates, being closer to the standpoint of the European Union and, to some extent, rejecting the more ethnic approach practised by the Council of Europe. One should add to that a certain caution in popularizing the idea of territorial self-governments as a remedy for all social problems, and noticing also the disadvantages of regionalisation.

Let us now have a look at the opinions of politicians who define themselves as representing the Right. We shall commence our presentation with the opinion proclaimed by the Mayor of Chorzów, Mr. Marek Kopel. He said: "In relation to regionalisation of the country, the issue of unity of the state has been raised. Fears concerning that unity belong to the past already, the threats for that unity are not real, this matter no longer comes into consideration, still I would like to stress that, personally, I am for regionalisation, I always supported the idea of regionalisation, but regionalisation understood as autonomy defined by laws, that is self-governing of regional community groups. Such an approach makes regions compete, while in internal organisation, people elected to the management of region would care about their region. Shortly, this would be very advantageous for regional self-governing. Self-governing brings about many grassroots initiatives". What is of importance is the fact that this politician refers to the anxieties accompanying regionalisation in Poland, anxieties whether the country shall maintain its unity. On the other hand, M. Kopel speaks in favour of regionalisation with an autonomous character, which is a reference to the ambitions, expressed by some Upper Silesian political groups, to obtain more independence from the rest of the country. Finally, the specific idealization of territorial self-governing needs to be stressed, in this case having the form of regional self-government. This will reappear in almost all statements of right-wing politicians, which concern the issue of regionalisation.

Krystyna Rawska, now a member of PO, who used to be the Mayor of Świętochłowice, and presently the head of the town council there, is generally for regionalisation, yet indicates the need to implement it in stages,

thus indirectly criticizing the reform made by the government headed by Jerzy Buzek as something implemented too hasty, without recognising properly the good and bad experience with regionalisation in other countries. Also her statement contains elements of idealising territorial self-governing, as "by nature" better than any other systemic solutions at a level below the national one.

Another right-wing politician, the Mayor of Katowice Mr. Piotr Uszok, while speaking in positive terms about regionalisation and territorial self-governing as such, points out to the fact that Polish regions should be built in such a way as to become partners in the future trans-regional exchange within the framework of the European Union. In his opinion, it was a mistake to establish districts (*powiats*). The vision of the region that emerges from the statements of Mr. Piotr Uszok is a conglomerate of cultural and pragmatic elements.

The Mayor of Rybnik, Mr. Adam Fudali, recognizes the fact that territorial self-governing provides substantial possibilities for the development of towns and regions, yet wonders whether it will not lead to deepening the differences between regions, to the division of Poland into A, B, and C categories, and whether, in consequence, we shall not encounter new social conflicts in future.

An activist of UW and the speaker of the Provincial (Self-governing) Parliament in Silesia, Ryszard Ostrowski, approaches the idea of self-governing with great enthusiasm, stressing its importance for mobilizing the regional community and creation of regional elites. However, he also said: "This self-governing, as is usually the case in such discussions, depends mainly on the financial wealth. If the process of decentralising the state works out, first of all the process of decentralising public finances, as is assumed in the reform, then I think a certain independence in the activities of regions will be created. This may be achieved through increasing the participation of regions in the share of personal income tax, but also in corporate income taxes, at the same time the scope of tasks faced by the province must be increased". Ryszard Ostrowski, like other activists of UW, has a very positive attitude to regionalisation and to self-governing in general, still he notices what other representatives of right-wing options fail to perceive sometimes, that so much depends upon the financial independence of provinces. Further in his statement he also claims that, in fact, the provinces-regions do not have this self-dependence at present, thus regionalisation is more an idea than a reality in Poland. It should be stressed that Ryszard Ostrowski is still optimistic and believes that in future it will be possible to increase the generation of own revenue in provinces.

Recapitulating that part of our research, we have to stress that all our interlocutors have been for the regionalisation of Poland, they have also

all noticed the chances for social and economic development created by establishing of provincial-regional self-governments. However, if on the right wing there is a domination of a peculiar idealization of self-governing, then on the left wing elements of a pragmatic approach seem to dominate, coupled with not infrequent doubts whether solutions based on self-governing at the provincial level will not cause new problems and pathologies (e.g. increased bureaucracy, nepotism, corruption) and whether this excessive pro self-governing optimism, presented by some representatives of the right wing groups, is not related to their lack of realism. It can also be seen that on the left side of the political scene there is a certain apprehension of accepting certain elements of the ethnic notion of region, especially when taking into account some examples of specific actions taken by the right wing politicians from Upper Silesia that can prove the conflicting nature of such an approach.

7. Attitude to the Polish membership in the European Union

The process of Polish accession to the European Union has been mobilizing the Polish public opinion for a few years now. In the election period, when we carried out the research that is the basis of this analysis, the issue became an important factor for self-determination of political parties. Among the people we interviewed, there were no people from political groups that are openly anti-European. As it turned out later, in the autumn 2001 parliamentary elections two political forces that represented a clearly anti-European approach, won seats in the parliament. These are: Samoobrona (Self-Defence) and Liga Polskich Rodzin (the League of Polish Families).

The former builds its anti-European character upon fears concerning loss of competitive power of part of Polish farmers and small businesses. The latter, established by the Catholic Radio Maryja (that spreads extremely anti-European views, built on folk Catholicism and Polish nationalism, allegedly threatened by the secular Europe), represents mainly people with very straightforward nationalist-Catholic views, and is based upon evoking social fears. It needs to be stressed that although it is a Catholic radiostation, it is openly criticised by the majority of Polish bishops.

It is worth pointing out that such political groups have not enjoyed any substantial support in the province of Silesia, and their representatives do not count on the regional political scene. Perhaps this is due to the hidden fact that in Upper Silesia until today certain Christian Democratic traditions have prevailed and have not been forgotten (Upper Silesia is the only

region in Poland with Christian Democratic traditions), whereas the folk-type Catholicism connected with clear anxieties to maintain traditional Polish identity (thus what is the essence of the activity of that Catholic Radio Maryja) does not find recognition in the eyes of bishops or masses of believers there.

So, contrary to other regions of the country, in the province of Silesia the election campaign did not contain clashes between pro- and anti-European parties. That may also be the reason why the viewpoints of politicians that we examined were so congruent in that respect.

To begin with, let us quote the opinions of two representatives of the Left who, due to their age, may base on the decades of accumulated memory when appraising the Polish accession to the European Union. Thus, Kazimierz Zarzycki said: "I will speak here about my own attitude towards Europe, not only about the official attitude of the Left. I am absolutely for, I may say I dreamt about it long ago, only that I did not perceive any real chances in that system to make such a turn-round. The traces of my being absolutely "for" can be found in my work as a journalist, when in the 1970s I described the crossing of the border between Slovenia and Austria and envied those people the possibility to travel so freely. Another time, I wrote about meeting Willi Brandt, a great social democrat, I discovered how freely he spoke about Europe when we still thought in the cold war categories". That statement is explicitly positive (and even supported with some personal memories). What is of interest is that the older activists of the Left try to indicate today that it was the system that did not allow for opening more decisively towards Europe, while they were always "for". This could be accounted for by the fact that the regional experience might have included a more profound, in comparison with the rest of the country, influence of the more open thinking, exemplified in the 1970s by the party leader Edward Gierek who used to be a regional activist before, and who always presented himself as a politician more open to Europe than others.

Bogusław Kabała, while being clearly "for", tries to understand those who have doubts. He said: "I think that a decisive majority has a positive approach here (towards entering the unified Europe – J., K. Wódz), if there are any negative attitudes or groups that would contest such a decision of ours, the reason is the lack of knowledge, as often information about Europe is of very poor quality. My mother lives in Niwka (a district of Sosnowiec – J., K. Wódz), I was born there as well and whenever I appear there, people who know me often ask me about Europe, about chances, and I may find out how little is known. And what about the issues that disseminate doubts? There are many doubts, that is what they often hear sermons about in church, and that is why they ask me later". The poor level of knowledge represented in the society concerning integration is what gets repeated in

many statements, it appears easy to disseminate doubts in those groups that know little about the European Union.

Now, for the sake of contrast, a statement by the youngest interlocutor, member of SLD and an MP, Agnieszka Pasternak: "I think that Poland must join the European Union. First of all, it seems to me that if Poland remained alone, while all the countries surrounding it, that is our neighbours from the south and west had already joined the Union, that would entail our complete marginalisation and would be very dangerous". It is a statement that is quite characteristic for the middle and younger generation of left-wing politicians, often as an undisputable argument for joining the European Union the threat of marginalisation in the future is indicated.

That also appears in the statement by Tomasz Czakon, who said: "The party is for Poland's membership in the European Union, members and sympathizers of SLD also approve it, mainly, although there are people who would not hide their doubts. In the province of Silesia, we even have established our party's European information centre, where the colleague that deals with it provides us with various materials about the EU, we have also organised a meeting, sort of political discussion concerning that topic, and the conclusion has been that we need to join the Union, trying of course to obtain the best conditions possible. It has also been stated that the Polish presence in the Union is a precondition for our further civilization development, whereas failure to join the EU would leave Poland with a peripheral position in the continent". Thus, we have both a univocal support and also pondering on possible consequences of not joining the Union.

Let us look now at the statements made by right-wing politicians. Janusz Frąckowiak, deeply engaged in regional politics and running, when our research was conducted, for a seat in the Senate as a candidate of the right-wing election committee "Senat 2001", perceives Poland's presence in the EU mainly through the chances for regions, including of course the province-region of Silesia. He said: "I think that Poland's accession to the EU is an essential thing. It is proclaimed, not without reason, that the European Union is a union of regions, there regions are of great importance. In Brussels, where I paid a few visits, there are numerous regional offices, they are a specific representation of their regions. Anyway, there are lots of issues related to regions, and if we look at the budget of the Union, as far as I remember, some 2 years ago perhaps almost 40% of this budget has been designed for regions". Many regional self-government activists think likewise.

The Mayor of Rybnik, Adam Fudali, connected with AWS, said: "I would define myself as a Euro-realist. I am of the opinion that there is no other way for our country, yet sometimes people perceive me as a Euro-enthusiast, as I often share the information about the Union in our town paper.

I realize that as a country we don't stand any chances outside the EU, that is definitely beyond any doubt, yet I also think that we need to negotiate everything possible. We need to win a worthy place for our country. But, of course, I will publicly persuade to join the Union, as this is the only chance for our country".

Also Marek Kopel, the Mayor of Chorzów, considers himself a Euro-realist: "Potentially Silesia is a strong region, with ever better transport connections with other European regions, there will be a motorway, and soon we will have a very good connections through Germany. There are many educated people here, there are universities, so we should be one of the strongest regions in Poland. If it is so, we shall be a region that will quickly establish a co-operation with other regions of Europe, we will have fairly equal relations with European regions, besides that we can be that region which will drag other regions of the country into the European co-operation, in this I perceive the role of Polish accession to the EU, in this I also see a chance for us".

This outlook, interesting because formulated from the point of view of regional interest, allows us to understand some of the pro-European reasoning typical of the right side of the political scene in the Upper Silesian subregion (if we are to perceive this phenomenon from the point of view of the entire province of Silesia). In their pro-European orientation, the politicians who represent the Upper Silesian part perceive also the interest of Upper Silesia, and even a way for enhancing its role and importance within Poland.

Lastly, a statement by Ryszard Ostrowski, a politician of the Union of Freedom (UW), a party of minor importance at present (to remind – through defeat in elections in the autumn of 2001 and elimination from the parliament (Sejm) that party found itself somehow on the margin of Polish political life, and its future fate is unsure), nevertheless a party that from the very beginning of Polish efforts to enter the United Europe played the role of engine of that process. Mr. Ostrowski said: "I think that if we made an analysis which party had an electorate with most supporters of Polish accession to the EU, for sure the electorate of our party would surely come first. Our electorate and we all in the Union of Freedom identify with European integration. I think that such an attitude towards the future of our country (...) indicates that we think the following way – the faster we join the Union the better. Of course, there are negotiations, various reasons clash, there are difficult issues, otherwise such discussions would not be called negotiations, yet for our country it will always be advantageous to join the Union as soon as possible, and according to the best conditions possible. I realize that our society is a bit out of patience that it has been taking so long. After 10 years of efforts we have the right to be also tired of our internal reforms, of all the pre-accession adjustment process, yet

I think the end is already near. It is a big chance for Poland". This statement is characteristic for the attitude of the Union of Freedom, the only problem is that, as the party loses its importance, this Euro-enthusiasm has less social significance.

As can be seen, all the people we interviewed declare pro-European attitudes, which is for sure a specific feature of the province of Silesia, where the opponents of Poland's accession to the EU are but a margin of the political scene. Some elements of the programme of one of KPN (Confederation for Independent Poland) fractions were of anti-European character, that party still had a few representatives from the territory of the province of Silesia in the previous parliament (they ran in the 1997 elections under the joint "label" of AWS), yet in the 2001 elections they sufered an overwhelming defeat and there is no indication for such tendencies to stand any major chance in the region.

What needs to be stressed, however, is the differentiation of pro-European argumentation, more region-oriented on the right side (although that pro-regional character applies in principle only to the Upper Silesian part of the province), and rather general and pragmatic on the left side. On the left side there are often arguments derived from a negative scenario: if not the EU, then Poland will be marginalized.

Still, there is agreement concerning the issue of Polish accession to the EU, which is definitely a good warrant for the political class of the entire province. Should we add to this the substantial realism in analysing the situation, one can suppose that the future pre-accession referendum, to be held in 2003, ought to result, in the province of Silesia, in a clear advantage of supporters of Polish membership in the Union[3].

8. A few words of conclusion

The analysis presented above allows drawing a few important conclusions. The first one is of methodological nature. It seems that the deepened free interviews provide much information inaccessible otherwise. This information concerns individual, often personal matters and opinions of politicians interviewed. Knowledge of such kind, important in politological analyses, cannot be obtained through standard sociological studies. A precondition for credibility of information obtained that way is to estab-

[3] In fact, the number of supporters of the accession to EU in Silesian Voivodship was very high – K., J. Wódz.

lish a proper communication relation between the researcher and subjects of the research. In our case, having been acquainted personally with the subjects was helpful, as it resulted in stripping the contacts of anonymity.

The second conclusion, also methodological in a sense, applies to the perspective assumed when interpreting the results of our research – it is a perspective that is a borderline case between sociology and anthropology of politics. Thus, cultural features of the entire province (its cultural differentiation) have been taken care of, and first of all, the features of the two sub-regions. The first of these is Upper Silesia, undoubtedly the largest authentic traditional region in Poland, with clear culturally distinct character and a consciousness of that distinct character, manifested also in politics. The second is Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, a subregion of the province of Silesia characterized, on the one hand, by certain cultural distinctions (decidedly less visible than in Upper Silesia), on the other hand, in a certain cultural sense, being a negative background for identity revindications of Upper Silesians.

Let us now move on to a few conclusions that are the subject matter of our studies. What cannot be a surprise, symptoms of fast tempo of changes concerning social time, and also political time got revealed. References to events dating several decades back seem to be the return to the "epoch past", one can clearly see the orientation for the future instead, not only on the left side of the political scene (which could be understood, taking into consideration the fact that the Polish Left is in a sense interested in minimising the importance of the past, when the people of the Left played a negative role) but also among the younger generation of politicians on the right side, who are becoming ever more pragmatic in their political discourse, looking to the future.

Another conclusion, in a sense a consequence of what has been said above, is that both on the left and right side of the political scene clear differences between generations become visible, and one can notice that, as the age of people interviewed got younger, the language of political analysis of the Left and Right became more similar. Taking into account that the type of political socialization determines the language of politics and the type of political discourse, it can be assumed that younger politicians, whose political socialization took place in the 1990s (with certain exceptions), use more objective arguments than those of the older generation.

It can be hypothetically assumed (as we do not have any possibilities of making comparisons in that respect) that it is at the regional level that this process progresses faster than nationwide, where it would be difficult to detect such a dependence, at least in such a clear manner. This could be explained by the fact that most of the politicians we interviewed are experienced in practising politics at the self-government level, close to

people and demanding such a political discourse that proves correct *hic et nunc* through direct social contacts.

Finally, the last essential conclusion: it results from the research that the specificity of the province of Silesia is clearly expressed in the attitudes and opinions of the people we studied, while their political discourse is a combination of general opinions (e.g. concerning the integration with the European Union, decentralization, or territorial self-government) with a distinct reference to the social and cultural reality of the region. This confirms the sense of studying the political scene exactly at the regional level, and of treating such studies as a vital and indispensable supplement to the quantitative studies (unfortunately, oftentimes only in the form of sounding) carried out in identical manner on national samples. It is only the combination of analyses of results of the two kinds of research that will allow understanding of the Polish society and Polish politics.

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Women as politicians at the local level in Poland Between Polish traditionalism and the new concept of social role of women in the Polish reality[1]

1. Introduction

Poland is the biggest country of Central and Eastern Europe. The transformations towards full implementation of democracy, which have been taking place in this country after 1989, that is after the peaceful passage from the totalitarian system to democracy (the "Round Table", Solidarity winning the parliamentary elections in 1989, the first non-communist government to be established in this part of the continent, etc.) pose a lot of vital questions concerning the future model of Polish society. Among those questions, there is a whole bunch of issues related to the role and rights of women in Polish democratic society. Among those issues, a vital position is taken by questions regarding the participation of Polish women in politics. This lies within the scope of the sociology of politics, as we are interested in both a certain future national model (thus the state of social consciousness), and in the social reality, namely the actual performance of political roles played by women.

Of special interest for us is the role of women in Polish local political life, as this is linked with the empirical studies we have been carrying out in Upper Silesia for a few years now. Upper Silesia is quite a special region in Poland, being an old industrial region (heavy industry, metallurgy, but mainly hard coal mining), and, at the same time, the biggest urban agglomeration in Poland. That urban agglomeration of Upper Silesia consists of over 20 towns (sociologically speaking, it is rather a conurbation than an agglomeration, as it consists of a few towns that function as centres for their close

[1] Paper presented at the European Consortium of Political Research. Copenhague, 14–19 April, 2000.

surroundings, not having one main town as agglomeration should have) inhabited by over 3 million people.

The region is of interest for two reasons. On the one hand, it represents many earnestly traditional features related to the role of women and family in old industrial regions with prevailing heavy industry, where women dealt with running the household, while men provided for the whole family working hard and earning decent wages.

On the other hand, due to the urban character of the region, many more modern approaches are represented there (e.g. women get educated, participate in urban life, etc.). The latter allow for contrast analysis of the situation of women in towns in comparison with that in the country. It should be remembered here, that those regions of Poland which are located east of the Wisła river are characterised by more rural than urban way of life. Thus, analysing Upper Silesia we can, on the one hand, point out to the role of traditional models, and, on the other hand, reveal the influence of urban lifestyle on the transformations of the social role of women.

We are interested in local political life. It seems to us that it is this local plane which is the scene of present transformations of social life. It is at the local level where involvement of women in politics is coupled with the widely noticed transformation of women's social roles. Women politicians at the local level are watched/observed by their electorate every day, and not only as politicians but as women just as well, women who in very specific social circumstances do not only perform their political roles, but also the roles specific to women, often the roles of mothers and wives.

It is there where it is clear how difficult it proves for women in the Polish, still substantially traditional, society to be successful in the competition with men, so natural in politics. And that is what we would like to make the subject of our analysis. We shall base it upon the qualitative studies of careers of women who engaged in politics at the local level in Upper Silesia. This should allow us to indicate both the transformations that Polish society goes through, and to draw some conclusions for the future. However, before we manage to do that, we need to present in a few words the most crucial elements connected to the traditionalism of Polish society.

2. The traditionalism of Polish society and the effects of forced modernization after World War II

It is not our aim here to analyse the complicated phenomenon of Polish traditionalism. We shall but point out the three elements which explain its origin. The first of those elements is the old-fashionedness existing through-

out the 19th century, related to absence of industrial development (industrial centres were few and far between, and weak too, although Upper Silesia is exceptional in this respect, being an industrial region already in the 19th century). The structure of Polish society, based upon peasantry, pauperized nobility and yeomanry, and weak towns, reproduced traditionalism in a natural manner. Despite the fact that between the two world wars western part of the country got modernized, central and eastern parts remained strongly traditional.

The second element is the traditionalism of Polish Catholicism. The Catholic church in Poland openly cherishes traditional values, which it considers to be precious as such. In the opinion of many people belonging to and functioning in that church, it is thanks to maintaining the traditional values that Polish national identity survived over one century of bondage. Today, although this element already relates to the past, such a way of thinking still dominates in Polish Catholicism and remains an extremely important ingredient of Polish social consciousness. Finally, the third element consists of poor effects of forced modernization implemented in the post-war years by communist authorities. Let us try to characterize those three elements in a few words.

The rural and agricultural character of Poland is a heritage of the 19th century partition of the country into three zones, occupied by Russia, Austro-Hungary and Germany (Prussia). Only the German zone saw, in the late 19th century, some substantial economic growth. The other two zones had feeble industrial centres, and were dominated by land ownership system deriving still from the feudal times (yeomanry owning a few villages per family, or, especially in the east, big latyfundia owned by lords). In such a situation, the pattern for life was the continuation of both the manner of farming or running the economy, and the social relations. This situation got inherited by the Republic of Poland (II Rzeczpospolita) which emerged after World War I and which, during the 20 years separating the two world wars, attempted to industrialize some areas of the country, yet during the time of which peasantry remained the dominating social class. The Polish democracy between the wars was frail indeed, unable to create the basis for civil society. We will not be discovering anything by stating that the role of women at that period consisted merely of that of mothers and wives, subordinated to men.

Although there had been examples of women getting involved in public life between the wars, yet the traditional model was dominating by far. It ought to be remembered as after the collapse of the communist regime, after 1989, many Poles cherished the model of the 2nd Republic of Poland (II Rzeczpospolita) of the inter-war periods as an ideal and point of reference, for which a substantial part of the Polish right wing in the political scene still reaches.

Also the importance of Polish Catholic church in the life of the country is widely known. The traditionalism of Polish Catholicism, though, appears to be less known. This can be explained giving at least a few reasons. First of all, this is the church which, starting in the 19th century, became the depositary of Polish national tradition. It is the standing by that tradition, not yielding to changes that was considered to be the mission of the Catholic church which opposed the occupants in that way (let us remind here that Russians were mainly Orthodox, while Germans often were Protestants, thus it proved easy enough to be against the occupation and, at the same time defend Catholicism as a distinctive feature of Polish identity). Taking into consideration the really low intellectual level of Polish people, the Catholic church employed methods which were typical for popular Catholicism (pilgrimages, cult of the Virgin Mary, maintaining the almost sacred position of church hierarchy in the society, etc.), which after some time put it in a dominating situation in the society. Yet, such a status quo also became part of the tradition, hence today's Polish Catholicism is ill at ease in any situation of public discussions. It is a church which never developed any model of social dialogue.

On the other hand, Polish Catholicism was traditionally based on the dominating role of family and belittling the role of individuals which, bearing in mind the Polish social structures, even more supported the conviction that a woman should function merely in the family, not in the public life. It should also be remembered that in the period after World War II the Polish Catholic church found itself in the position of being the only organized structure in opposition to the communist authorities. Being the only strong support for the opposition, it had no possibilities for internal modernization, thus it preserved the inherited tradition, even developing new forms of purely popular Catholicism (e.g. peregrinations of holy paintings from one village to another). Intellectual centres of Polish Catholicism, although interesting, were invariably of little importance for the functioning of the whole church.

Additionally, under communist censorship the Catholic press (such periodicals as e.g. *Znak*, *Więź* or the *Tygodnik Powszechny* weekly) had very limited possibilities and, in principle, besides in a few big towns (Kraków, Warszawa, Poznań, Gdańsk) people had access to little else than extremely traditional religious thought. We need also to mention, finally, an important sociological feature of the Polish clergy, namely, that the majority of priests descends from traditional rural families, which in an obvious manner entails that the socialization of the future priests took place in rural and traditional families. This is of substantial importance in accounting for today's reluctant approach of many priests to the public activity of women.

Let us now consider the effects of modernization which took place after 1945. One ought to state straight away that those effects are poor indeed.

Although the communist authorities, already in the 1940s, through campaigns of teaching to read and write, got rid of illiteracy, and through providing general access to cheap press and books developed the habit of reading, even in the country, the effects of those actions proved relatively shallow. Even the fact that development of schooling system contributed to a substantial enhancement of the level of education among young Poles, and the campaign of industrialization, held since the 1950s, made millions of people move from villages to towns, did not lead to a radical change in the Polish society. Huge urban developments, designed mainly for people who left their villages to live in towns, such as Tychy or Żory in Upper Silesia, or Nowa Huta near Kraków proved to be specific folk societies instead of modernized urban communities.

What was the model of woman promoted during that forced modernization like? In the early days (1950s and 1960s) there were campaigns promoting the access of young women to jobs and professions which were considered modern and associated with men. The propaganda at that time used e.g. a photograph of a young girl driving a tractor, as emblem of woman liberation. This somewhat primitive propaganda was rather mocked by the public. In the 1960s and 1970s women had easy access to education, which led to feminization of many professions (e.g. that of teacher, pharmacist, often also that of doctor or lawyer), at the same time, those professions had a very low status due to extremely modest salaries. The highest wages in Poland were still paid to the hard working miners (that is to men, as women could not be employed underground) or engine-drivers (also a profession exclusively for men) while a teacher or even doctor would not make even half as much as people in those professions would.

Thus, on the one hand, education of women received a blessing, yet on the other hand, the professions in which women took employment were handicapped as far as remuneration was concerned. In addition, there was a shortage of food in Polish shops throughout the communist era, which made it necessary to queue everyday to purchase sometimes even the basic groceries. With the traditional family model in place, it was the woman, running the household and having paid employment, at the same time, who would have to queue day by day to purchase food for the family. The woman, even highly educated (doctor or lawyer) received a low salary, while her social position was depreciated by the fact that instead of improving her professional qualifications, she wasted time for keeping the household in difficult conditions. No wonder then, that in the feminized professions the majority of people promoted to management positions consisted of men (they were the majority among schoolmasters, directors of hospitals, presidents of law courts). All that explains the fact confirmed today, that the modernization forced by the communist system did not give any lasting effects in the form of improving the social position of women.

Let us consider one more thing, the political roles of women during communist times. We ought to bear in mind, all the time, that it was not a democratic system and there were only three ways possible to make public careers in politics. Through getting promoted within the communist party, within the power system functioning according to the blessing given by the communist party (these two may be *en gros* labelled as nomenclature) and through taking part in political opposition. Within the communist party women never attained any important positions, despite the fact that officially the party declared that men and women are equal in politics. Within the nomenclature a certain pattern got fixed, in which the so-called social representation was to be attained.

Hence in the arranged parliamentary elections a few dozen women were always appointed, who should represent different professions and regions, subsequently the election system was manipulated in such a way as to get those women "elected" to the parliament. That system was such an obvious manipulation that nobody treated those positions for women even as a starting point for possible construction of women representation in politics. Finally, the percentage of women in the opposition was also relatively low, although it must be admitted that several women did play an important role in the activities of the opposition.

To sum up, we can state that during communist times one could not see any political representation of women, while the participation of women in the political life was low, clearly steered by the communist party, and usually not linked with any substantial prestige in the society. The last statement is of importance as it assured many men that even if it is required that women should be noticeable in politics, it is invariably "on consent of men" and as a rule everybody treats such activity as a peculiar camouflage of actual intentions of men playing main political roles. Thus, even in the political sphere during the communist times there existed a situation which in fact only increased the exclusion of women, maintaining at the same time numerous elements of a traditional non-democratic society.

3. 1989. Towards the model of civil society

After the democratic opposition took over, the process of building a new type of society began. All important actors on the social scene agreed then, that a society of free and equal citizens needs to be constructed, yet not all of them wanted to implement that idea. One can state, roughly speaking, that an important difference appeared to exist between the left and right

wing of the political scene, as regards defining the nature of civil society. The right wing, especially the traditionally oriented Catholic part of it, based to a large extent in the old structures of the Solidarity (Solidarność) trade unions wanted, when building a democratic society, base it upon national tradition and upon family as the basic social unit. On the other hand, the liberal circles (including those which, having been rooted in the Solidarność social movement of 1980–1981, entered into close contacts with Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the first non-communist prime minister, and the parties Unia Demokratyczna (Democratic Union) and Unia Wolności (Union for Freedom), which emerged in that order), as well as left wing circles believed that, while maintaining the importance of Polish tradition, the society of the future needs to be constructed on the basis of ideas of civil society, stressing in particular the rights of the individual.

Those two approaches only appear to be theoretical. It turned out in social practice that the 10 years of existence of the democratic Poland mark a continuous dispute about the decision which model should be implemented, as well as visible differences of opinions and political programs between different parties. We point out to this issue, as depending on the model of society which will be approved, the future role of women in the Polish political life will be shaped in one or another manner. It does not need to be explained that when the right wing model is approved (and we stress here again the specificity of the Polish right wing), the role of women shall be defined primarily against the background of family, whereas when the liberal-leftist model is approved, women shall be rather perceived as citizens in the first place, which entails that the difference between sexes shall be of secondary importance.

It is thus not accidental that in Polish reality the actual role of women in politics may be, in a sense, a gauge to determine the direction in which the society evolves. This model is, however, not a purely theoretical one. It comes true in the course of social practice and seems to illustrate aptly certain types of social careers of Polish women in politics. The publication entitled *Kobiety wobec przemian okresu transformacji* (Women in the Face of Transformation) (K. Faliszek, E. McLean Petras, K. Wódz, 1997), which was a result of the conference devoted to that topic, includes numerous thoughts regarding the public activity of women in Poland during transformation in the political system.

The conclusions which can be drawn from those thoughts may be generally summarized by stating that in Polish culture there are not, as yet, any patterns of public careers of women. Because of that, every case of public activity of women should be treated individually. The principle followed in public activity of women is that of copying, in a peculiar manner, the career patterns of men, as that functioning of women is socially accept-

ed, and does not evoke associations which would be against Polish traditionalism. At the same time, it was clearly indicated that careers of women within parties or right wing/nationalist movements require those women to point out in a demonstrative fashion that they are attached to the nationalist tradition and to church. On the other hand, some careers of women active in the liberal-left wing movement appear related to a demonstratively expressed anti-clericalism.

A question emerges, though, whether the phenomenon observed does not indicate that in Poland women, when being active (or making careers) in the public sphere have to care, much more than men, about their ideological affiliation, and because of that their careers are assessed by the public as "radical". If it was so, and numerous facts indicate that it is the case, we could say that in Poland a woman attempting to make a political career is doomed to present radical views or to have a radical viewpoint. If such a woman is not radical enough, she will not be noticed in society. This takes us to another issue, namely whether Polish women feel discriminated in their careers.

4. Studies concerning discrimination of women in Poland

The problem of discrimination has appeared in public discussions in Poland only recently. Nevertheless, we already have at our disposal some representative studies. The most recent of them was performed in June, 1999, and we would like to present the results of those studies briefly. Before we do that, however, it needs to be pointed out that the very fact that those studies have been carried out and their results subsequently discussed in public (the discussion was arranged by one of the leading Polish dailies – *Gazeta Wyborcza*) is in itself a major success and indicates that the social consciousness of Poles changes. The studies in question have been carried out by the CBOS agency, on a representative sample of 1007 adult Poles. The most important results are as follows: The studies indicate that men lead better lives in Poland than women. Such were the responses of 42% of women and 26% of men. One can see, then, that women notice the problem of being discriminated more often than men do.

On the other hand, the opinion that life quality of both sexes is equal was expressed by 66% of men and 53% of women. This confirms the above conclusion that women more often note that they are discriminated, whereas men seem not to notice the problem. Let us ponder now upon the social features of those women who stated that men lead better lives in Poland

than women. One can notice clearly that the higher the level of education of women, the more often they feel to be discriminated. The opinion that men lead better lives than women was expressed by a mere 33% of women with primary education and as much as 61% of women with university education. As regards the age of women who are of such an opinion, it is most often young (25–34 years of age), thus those women who are in the process of building their life careers. When asked straight whether they feel discriminated because of their sex, 37% of women answered positively, whereas only 10% of men provided such a positive answer. As many as 84% state they do not feel discriminated, while the percentage of women who felt likewise was only 56%.

It should be remembered, at the same time, that we have to do with a representative sample, which entails that among the questioned people there were representatives of all major groups of the society. If we take the education level of those women who feel discriminated into consideration, we can find, as in the case of the previous question, the higher the education of women, the higher the percentage of those who feel discriminated.

Let us move to another issue now, namely the spheres in which the discrimination appears most often. As many as 64% of examined women believe they are discriminated at work, then follow: discrimination in family, felt by 34% of women, and discrimination in public life, experienced by 29% of women. Commenting upon those results, one needs to point out to the clearly developing phenomenon – transfer of discrimination from the sphere of work to that of public activity. Having published those results, the *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily which initiated the discussion upon them, asked women who appear in public activities (not necessarily political ones) about their opinion, and they all admitted that it is the environment of work where the problem of discrimination starts, being later transferred to the sphere of public activity.

One could draw a conclusion, then, that the building of a civil society which provides women with equal opportunities of involvement in public activities should start with eliminating the discrimination of women in their workplaces. It is easier said than done in a society in which traditional family patterns are still so vivid.

5. Women in local public life

Polish local life has got less political character than is the case in Western Europe. This is due to the fact that political parties in Poland have been, so far, too weak to have possibilities of organizing effective election

campaigns at local level. Hence at the local level elections are usually preceded by making up lists of candidates by various social committees or non-political organizations. The fact that in Poland the local public life is not associated directly with politics allowed new patterns of public activity of women to develop.

Let us, however, commence with some quantitative statement. Namely, taking into consideration the fact that local authorities in Poland have their third term of office already, in the new system (the first being in 1990–1994, the second in 1994–1998, at present the third is on, which started in 1998) a general remark can be made that the participation of women in various local authorities still increases, although it is estimated for some 10% at present. No exact figures can be quoted, as the reform of the administrative division (the new division which was implemented starting from 1999 has introduced three levels of local administration, whereas the previous system consisted of two levels only)[2]. A certain comparison may be used instead. In the western part of Poland, clearly more modern and urbanized, the participation of women in elective local authorities and higher levels of state administration (such as district or province) is higher than in the eastern part, which is definitely more rural in character and not so urbanized. It is of interest, at the same time, that the western part of Poland votes mainly for liberal and left wing parties, whereas the eastern part of the country votes mainly for nationalist and right wing parties.

Let us point out to some results of the two studies we have undertaken. The first was of quantitative character and concentrated on the young people. The International School of Political Sciences of the University of Silesia in Katowice carried out, in 1997, investigations involving some 600 graduate students of secondary schools (in Poland they are 18–19 years of age, thus belong to citizens entitled to cast votes during elections) and freshmen at universities. The studies thus concentrated upon the young people who voted for the first time in the forthcoming local elections in 1998. It turned out that both men and women stated that the main reason for taking part in the elections for them was the interest in the issues concerning their home town (municipality), while the willingness to express any political opinion came only second.

This confirms the point raised earlier, that local political life in Poland is rather based on the willingness to participate in creating the future of the local town/municipality than on expressing one's political opinions. Of interest was the response to the questions asked to those young people,

[2] The latest research showed that the percentage of women in local authorities increased slightly (up to 18%). See M. Fuszara, 2006: 143–149.

whether they consider running for being members of local authorities themselves. The difference in answers given by women and men was slight in that case: a clearly negative answer was provided by 51,9% of men and 53,7% of women. This entails that others did not exclude the possibility of being candidates in local elections. The fact that such a substantial percentage of women did not provide a negative answer is, of course, related to their young age, energy and vigour, and concentrating our research upon people whose education level was higher than average.

On the other hand, though, it indicates that young people, especially young women, do not exclude the possibility of engaging themselves in public activities. Still, the grounds for that possible public activity are the peculiar belief that positive changes at the local level are possible, not the expression of any consolidated political views (the results have been discussed in more detail in the book: J. Wódz, 1999).

The other research has been qualitative in character, and in principle has been going on continuously since 1991. The purpose of that research is to indicate career paths of women who are either chancellors in municipalities or at higher levels of local administration, or have public functions as mayors or presidents of towns. Several such careers have been identified within Upper Silesia. Systematic sociological observations led us to a conclusion that the most crucial element for such careers of women to be successful has been to concentrate on local life, with simultaneous withdrawing or separating from the so-called "great politics". In one specific case, a woman being the mayor of relatively big town (Świętochłowice), a symptomatic thing was noted. When at a certain time that woman revealed she wanted to run in the parliamentary elections, representing a political party (Polish law allows to pluralize the local position and that of a member of the parliament), her popularity in her home town waned substantially. We attempted to find out the reasons why this happened and it appeared that many people, even those who wished her well, thought she should rather limit her career to the town itself, as in town a woman could still do a lot, while any career on the national level "is not meant for women".

Thus a phenomenon similar to that described before became apparent. There is a conviction, popular in Poland, that the activity of women in local political life is, by culture, more allowed than the activity on the nationwide level. The opinions associated with that are indicative of interesting reasoning, typical for conservative circles. It is said that "great politics" is immoral by nature "and it is not proper for women to be active in that field". This is yet another proof of the permanence of the conservative cultural model in Polish society (more about it in J. Petaux, J. Wódz, 1996).

6. A few words of conclusion

It appears difficult to draw any clear conclusions. Polish political life has been changing very rapidly and the period of 10 years is still not long enough to be able to discuss any consolidated attitudes or political views of Poles. One thing is for certain, though, the shallow modernization of the communist times did not result in development of citizen attitudes in Poland, and the participation of women in public life is still treated as something exceptional. Also, no permanent public career paths for women have developed.

On the other hand, the activity of women in local political life, and in particular the fact that young women do not exclude the possibility of getting involved in politics at the local level, entail a certain hypothesis for the future. One may assume that it will be through the participation in local political life that Polish women will slowly form a model of public careers of women and then they will be able, more successfully than at present, to expand that model towards activity at the national level.

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Regional media as an actor in the Polish decentralisation reform. The case of Upper Silesia[1]

1. Introduction

The research concerning the role of media in political transformation in Poland concerned so far, to a larger extent, national media more than regional ones. However, the administrative reform of 1998, being an extremely important constituent of the whole political transformation process in Poland, made regions (that is the new provinces, as in the course of the reform the number of provinces got reduced from 49 to 16) vital areas for political life. This presentation constitutes a part of our more extensive studies concerning new forms of political communication in regions (compare: J. Wódz: "Komunikacja społeczna wewnątrz polskich regionów jako element nowej tożsamości Polaków. Kilka refleksji z dziedziny socjologii polityki" [Social communication within Polish regions as an element of new identity of Poles. Some thoughts on sociology of politics], in: M. Szczepański (ed.): *Jaki region? Jaka Polska? Jaka Europa?* [What region? What Poland? What Europe?]. Katowice 2001, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, pp. 36–46) in which we take into consideration also the distinctive features of Upper Silesia, a region specific for its multi-cultural character and the long industrial traditions in mining and metallurgy, both undergoing a rapid transformation.

Using the opportunity created by the fact that Jacek Wódz is a member of Rada Programowa Radia Publicznego (Programme Committee of Polish Public Radio), which gives access to much information, research is carried out that consists of targeting the journalists, both in television and radio,

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as well as those for the press. We give a summary presentation of the main problems encountered during building in the region a media system that would serve the process of decentralisation of Poland.

2. The role of regional media in explaining the essence of decentralisation of Poland

All the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which in the years 1989/1990 parted with the post-soviet system, shared a common problem. The political system that was in force in the years 1945–1989/1990 was extremely centralised, which in Poland was noticeable not only in the form of the system of administration or in the practices of wielding power, but also in the form of a specific ideology, translated into activities of media, controlled 100% by the authorities. In the 1970s, they came about in Poland with the thesis about "moral and political unity (to be interpreted also as ethnic and cultural unity) of Poles", which was translated into a uniform model of functioning of the media, concentrated mainly in Warsaw.

Despite the fact that regional media centres were also developed (in Katowice, the capital of Upper Silesia, there was a substantial centre of press, radio, and television), the regional centres had very little freedom to freely shape their programmes, which resulted in the fact that until 1990s they did not perform any creative role in building regional identity, and played even a lesser role in building political communication within regions. In the second half of the 1990s a reform got implemented, aimed at a relative decentralisation of Poland, which resulted in transforming the 49 former provinces, that had no capacity to have their own policy, into 16 new large provinces-regions, provided with some competence for having their own policy within regions, still far too reduced as they are.

That process resulted in the fact that within those 16 regions political life began to flourish, whereas regional media in the beginning were unable to participate in that process. Often, the role of media was restricted merely to communicating information related to the region. It was urgently needed to develop new forms of activity in the new reality. In Upper Silesia it was even more difficult to accomplish, due to the multi-cultural character of the region (the natives of Upper Silesia share clearly distinctive cultural features, then there are the uplanders from the south of the province, with different cultural features, also the inhabitants of the former Russian sector of Poland, partitioned throughout the 19th century also share their own distinctive features as regards culture) and cultural conflicts, oftentimes manifested there.

3. Changes within regional media related to transformations in the economy in the 1990s and the formation of large regions in the late 1990s

The structure of the media in regions was a simple consequence of the structure of authorities which, as they evolved in the 1990s, also brought about changes within the media. After 1990 privatisation became a fact, that process concerned mainly the industry, but also much of the service sector and, obviously, applied also to media. The privatisation of media initially concerned mainly the press. The two main newspapers coming out in the province (region) got privatised, which quite substantially changed their approach to the "social mission".

There were no attempts to privatise the regional television, also regional radio remained in public domain, being part of the national public radio network. Yet, several new private broadcasting stations emerged, which led to a situation that the regional public radio is one of the broadcasters in the region, and not the most popular one. We need to note here that although no private regional TV station was established, at least two private nationwide TV channels found a number of viewers in the region, and that in a natural way created competition for the regional public TV station.

Relatively quickly, the need for public debate emerged, concerning the differences in social aims that public and private media should reach for. This need can be summarised as the need for a debate over the "public mission" of media. While it is obvious (and secured in the law regulating the functions of public media in Poland), that public media should work for the establishment of civil and democratic society of the future, no such duty to perform public mission has become a standard imposed purely legally upon private.

On the other hand, there is substantial public expectation for private media to join in the process of building social consciousness of Poles, both at national and regional level. That phenomenon, present since the early 1990s, became particularly apparent in the late 1990s when, due to the reform of administrative division of the country and making the provinces (regions) the actual subjects of political life, there was a common demand that media should be taking active part in building the social consciousness, aimed at acceptance for changes.

In such a situation, the issue was to establish new staffs of journalists; the many media operating in the region, be they regional or nationwide but operating also in the region, called for recruitment of many, mainly young, people to the profession of journalist. On the one hand, this created an important opportunity to develop a new type of journalism, on the other

hand, it impaired the professional level of that journalism. Those young people lacked the sufficient professional experience which resulted in numerous complaints (pronounced until today) about the lack of professionalism of young journalists, and sometimes about their failing to observe even the basic professional ethics. We shall come back to that issue further on.

Regional media organised in such manner began to develop substantially after the change of the administrative system in Poland and after establishing the large province (region) of Silesia. The very process, being the mark of decentralisation, brought about a new situation in the realm of social communication. On the one hand, a new large market for media got established (the new province of Silesia has some 5 million inhabitants), on the other hand, the social role of media changed substantially. A substantial need was created to hold a public debate over the shaping of social and political life in new large provinces (regions) and the role to be played by media in such an exchange. We touch here upon the issue of establishing new political elites at regional level (and also at the local level in big towns/cities, which is of extreme importance in Upper Silesia, where big towns making up a huge agglomeration constitute separate entities for political activities) and their manner of social functioning. Both those elites and media had to learn how to function in society.

4. Establishing new regional political elites and their vision of the role of regional media in political communication

Decentralisation and regionalisation of the country turned regions (provinces) into relatively strong units, having substantial political competence in the sphere of social policy and provided with internal (regional) elected authorities. This entailed democratic legitimism for regional authorities, yet it also entailed that new political elites were to develop relatively quickly at the regional level. The previous model of authorities in Poland, valid in the period between 1990 and 1998, consisted of relatively powerful municipalities (*gminas*), where political elites of local democracy already consolidated, and powerful central government. Thus, in the period between 1990 and 1998 the development of two types of political elites was observed.

First of all, those which concentrated upon local policy and assumed their political careers, at least initially, to be focused on the town level; second of all, those that aimed beforehand at making a political career at the national level. It was commonly practised in Polish politics that in order to develop a political career at the national level it is necessary to be able

to co-operate with the media, whereas in case of local careers (with the exception of careers in some biggest towns) the crucial thing is to be able to establish direct contacts and use the intermediation of specific individuals, social groups, or institutions. Contacts with media were, for those politicians, rare and often difficult.

As a result of decentralisation, a new area for political activities emerged, which were the provinces (regions) after 1998, and that resulted in a completely new situation for Polish political elites. First of all, before the first democratic regional elections held in 1998, the issue was to select proper candidates for the positions of councillors in the so-called provincial parliaments (the democratically elected councils as the legislative bodies in provinces), as it turned out that – except for two or three biggest political parties – others do not have enough people for political activities at the regional level.

Yet it soon turned out that almost all the newly elected members of regional parliament, that is the political elites that began to practice politics at that level, lack the abilities to use media, and often have failed to understand the principles of social communication. Thus the media, not too much prepared to actively shape the regional identity, faced another problem: how to teach new regional political elites to use contacts with press, radio, and TV in order to build lasting channels of communication between new regional authorities and citizens.

The issue was so grave that some editors organised special meetings and information sessions for politicians, in order to explain to them what is the function of media in the region, and how those politicians may take advantage of contacts with media. An example can be provided of a big town in the region of Silesia, Bielsko-Biała, where the editors of a big private radio-station broadcasting for the entire province organised several one-day training sessions for politicians, covering all expenses as well, teaching them about radio work and demonstrating how to shape ideas, how to speak to the microphone, how to make a radio interview, etc. That was to no extent fulfilling directly the information mission of media, it was rather providing some training assistance for new regional elites to shake off the anxiety of media and to teach them how to co-operate.

Much changed during the four-year term of office of regional authorities, as regards the work style of new political elites. The years, 2000 and 2001, were the years when one could clearly perceive the growing understanding, followed by active interest of regional political elites in contacts with media. In the province of Silesia, which has a relatively advantageous situation as far as the presence of regional media is concerned, for two years we have been noting a distinct interest of politicians to contact media: first the regional TV, then radio and regional press. At the same time, a new

generation of journalists developed, thus the political communication at regional level spreads simultaneously, by new forms of activity of young journalists and by development of new political elites that learned how to deal with media.

5. Establishment of new forms and methods of journalism at regional level

The process of mutual education of journalists and political elites, that took place in the last years, resulted in a few novel (in Poland) forms of media participation in establishing political life in the region. Within regional media, groups of journalists got formed that specialize in regional issues and report on everyday basis about political life in the region. In turn, regional politicians try to initiate media campaigns to enhance the interest of society in regional democracy. Thus, regional press (mainly *Dziennik Zachodni*, the biggest regional newspaper in the province of Silesia) quite often organizes debates concerning important issues related to the future of the region.

Also, frequently specific regional politicians write discussion articles, encouraging readers to write letters to the editors. The regional TV station has a cycle of everyday 15-minute evening discussions held in the evening, to comment upon important events in the region. Very frequently regional politicians are invited to participate. The public radio-station (Radio Katowice), in turn, has a two-hour morning news-from-the-region block, inviting politicians to comment upon events related to political life.

When important social, cultural, or political events take place, media together with politicians take up numerous genuine initiatives (e.g. stimulation of regional culture) which, all in all, builds a general conviction of the inhabitants of the region that media are present in the political life of the region. On top of that, the journalist speciality of Radio Katowice has been the running commentary, also of political events, while several journalists from that radio obtained top prizes in Poland for their achievements in that form of radio journalism.

Such animation of the co-operation between media and regional political elites has recently met with some criticism (especially after the parliamentary elections held in the year 2001, which resulted in a spectacular nation-wide defeat of the Right, in power before, with the biggest right wing party AWS not gaining any seats in the parliament), not always without reasons. Namely, in the process of building co-operation between media and

political elites functioning at the regional level, personal relations get established, which result in media liking specific politicians, not so much because of their political views or membership in specific political parties, but rather because of their efficient and smooth appearance in the media.

Simply, it is easier for journalists to ask an instant comment for radio or TV from a politician who can efficiently function in media, than from somebody who is more familiar with the issue but appears a difficult partner for the media. This may bring about a situation in which the new forms of co-operation between media and the circles of regional politics may create problems in implementing the principle of equal, fair and professional presentation in the media of all actors of regional politics.

6. New type of journalist personality (from the "young and aggressive" model cherished in the early 1990s to the model of "specialist in a specific field") and the role played in those model changes by engagement of media in the new reality of regional politics

During the more 10 years of local democracy in Poland, especially after 1998, when decentralisation and regionalisation got implemented turning provinces (regions) into separate subjects of politics, a new type of journalism also got formed.

The early 1990s saw, in Polish media, a search for a new model of journalism. It turned out that after political system changed, after the social role of media changed, many journalists did not want or were unable to adjust to the new reality. At the same time, private media got established relatively quickly (mainly in Warsaw, but not always active nation-wide, also those that focused only upon Warsaw and its surroundings), and they established new tasks for journalists, tasks not known to the older generation of journalists. All this substantiated the fairly violent process of rejuvenation of the journalist staffs in the years 1990–1995. That process led, incidentally, to development of a new type of journalism of that time, labelled today the journalism of "young and aggressive ones". Quite often, unfortunately, those journalists reduced their entire professional mission to having an aggressive approach, to merciless and often ethically doubtful activities consisting of breaching people's privacy, easily formed accussations, etc. On the one hand, it resulted in some social resentment, on the other hand, it reduced the social confidence in media.

Such type of journalism, although to a lesser extent than in Warsaw, appeared also in regional media. In the region (province) of Silesia, where media are quite "densely" concentrated, there was a clear division of journalists by generations, with middle-aged people trying to oppose that "young and aggressive" style and the representatives of twenty-something generation that restricted their professional abilities merely to being aggressive and, sometimes misunderstood, courage of "asking difficult questions". Towards the end of 1990s that style of journalism slowly got less and less recognition, as people found out that this "young and aggressive" style is not supported by any knowledge or more profound professionalism. Instead, journalists observing the principles of professional ethics and attempting to specialise in different areas (politics, culture, economy, youngsters, women, etc.) got recognised ever more often.

This process of departing from the fashionable "young and aggressive" journalism, taking place in the late 1990s, took an interesting course in regional media. Since 1997 there were many discussions concerning the administrative reform of the country and future regionalisation. That is when many journalists in the region of Silesia, also young ones (including also those who practised the "young and aggressive" style) noticed their chance for specialising in getting interested in regionalisation and building regional identity.

It can be added here that a similar process applied also to specialising in the issues of the European Union, which for some young journalists was a "chance of a lifetime", as from the late 1990s onwards Poland saw a substantially growing demand for journalists specialising in EU issues and it was much easier for young journalists to learn what the EU is.

In the province (region) of Silesia we could see how a relatively large group of journalists working in regional media participated in the debate over administrative reform of the country and, later, after the regional elections of 1998, in the building of the media image of the new, large province of Silesia. That process is still in progress, we describe here the issues which started some years ago and which will continue for a few years more, especially that the process of Polish regionalisation will, most probably, deepen in the nearest future. This shall create a need for new forms of media participation in the processes of democratic citizen participation in the life of regions.

Above we have reported the overall results of our studies and observations carried out so far. The aim of our studies, scheduled to last a few years, is to build the picture of new forms of political communication in new, large regions and to point out the integral role of regional media in building the awareness of belonging to a region. The methods applied are gathering both

the entire quantitative data available in such type of analyses and widely applied qualitative methods. These qualitative methods concern both the analysis of the content presented by the media and studies (by means of deepened interviews) concerning journalists and regional politicians. We assume that in the course of the next election campaigns new elements of the relations between regional media and regional actors in politics will emerge, and that during that campaign it will be possible to check the efficiency of certain forms of media impact upon the regional identity of the region we study: the province of Silesia.

Social consequences of the restructuring of the mining sector in the Silesian Voivodship (Region)

1. Initial remarks

The year 1989 entailed for Poland not only the breakdown of the previous political system, but it also marked Poland's entering global economic (as well as cultural and social) processes of the modern (Western) capitalism (M. Ziółkowski, 1997).

The world capitalism, the centre of which lies in rich Western countries, has been undergoing substantial transformations since the late 1960s, related to the exhaustion of the model of economic growth based upon mass industrial production, energy-consuming technologies, and simple physical labour.

The energy crisis of the early 1970s steepened economic problems and raised discussions over the limits and social costs of economic growth (good examples here would be the reports for the Rome Club by D.H. Meadows, D.L. Meadows dated 1973, as well as those of M. Mesarovic and E. Pestel dated 1977). The disputes and controversies of that period left a durable trace in alternative concepts of social and economic development (E. Schumacher, 1973).

In the early 1970s, Daniel Bell was the first to use the term "post-industrial society", when describing changes in employment, characteristic of highly developed Western societies (the prototype of which was Northern America of the late 1960s) and their socio-cultural consequences (D. Bell, 1973). Bell assumed, correctly to a large extent, that in the near future the key role in economic development, of replacing industry as the driving force of capitalist economy, would be taken over by widely understood professional and technical services, related to the transfer of knowledge and information. The process of establishing post-industrial societies was somewhat

slower in Western Europe than in the USA, despite the fact that since the 1950s there has been the phenomenon of decreasing employment in traditional branches of industry – extractive, textile, shipbuilding, steel, or automotive one. In the countries of Western Europe with longest industrial tradition employment in heavy industry dropped by a few (France, Germany, Italy) or several percentage points (United Kingdom) (G. Therborn, 1998: 114).

The economic transformations, defined as passage from industrialism to post-industrial economy, in which big factories, steelworks or coal-mines employing large numbers of low and rather narrowly qualified workers give way to smaller production plants or services, offering jobs for a small number of people with high qualifications, entail not only a drastic reduction of jobs in traditional branches of industry, such as extractive industry, metallurgy, or textile industry, but also the collapse of entire regions, towns, or districts for working class, for whom industry was the main driver for economic and civilisation development (Detroit in the USA, Newcastle in north-western England, Wallony in Belgium, Nord-Pas-de-Calais in France, Ruhrgebiet in Germany) (H. Silver, 1993: 339; S.D. Lash, J. Urry, 1994: 159–160).

The processes of de-industrialisation are to a large extent a result of growing globalisation, although it would be an exaggeration to claim that it is the only driving factor for structural transformations of capitalist economies (R. Reich, 1991; P. Krugman, 1996). It is a fact, though, that the most developed capitalist countries have been for several years undergoing significant changes in the structure of employment and income, related to the processes of global economic restructuring: employment in widely understood services is increasing, the number of employees with high qualifications is growing, the labour market is becoming less stable, the gap between developing and collapsing regions is widening, unemployment rate is increasing (in particular the long-term unemployment), social inequalities become more profound, and the scale of poverty is widening (H. Silver, 1993: 339).

The differentiating effect of global restructuring is conspicuous in particular in old industrial regions where, on the one hand, we have to do with far-reaching polarity of urban space, with establishing highly specialised centres for services (financial ones, related to the use and processing of specialised knowledge, scientific research, culture-related industry), on the other hand, we face the appearance of degraded areas, inhabited by the poor from big towns: long-term unemployed people, immigrants locked in ethnic ghettos, deprived of the possibility of participating fully in social life, social care users, rejected by the rest of the society and unproductive ballast living off the taxpayer, etc. (P. Marcuse, 1993: 355–356; Z. Bauman, 1998). In many countries it is not only the number of long-term unemployed that is on the increase, but also the number of young people having poor

qualifications, who have never had a job and do not stand a chance of finding any stable, full employment.

The unfavourable trends described above make many researchers come up with the supposition that a new category of excluded people has emerged, labelled by the highly controversial notion of "underclass" (G. Myrdal, 1962: 10; H.J. Gans, 1990; 1993; F. Field, 1989). A unique understanding of the notion of underclass has been suggested by the American researcher W.J. Wilson. Based on his own research conducted in Black ghettos of the North-Eastern and Mid-Eastern States, in which the restructuring of traditional industries led to reduced demand for low-qualified (mainly male) labour force, he described the mechanism of establishing the communities of urban inhabitants having the following characteristics: a domination of long-term unemployed and unemployable persons, because of specific requirements of the post-industrial labour market, ethnic and cultural homogeneity, restricted access to values and institutions of global society, and relative social isolation due to the effect of concentration (increased number of people with low social status due to the migration of people who joined the **middle class**) (W.J. Wilson, 1991: 9).

Underclass is thus the effect of cumulating the structural (economic) restrictions, as well as environmental-cultural restrictions and psycho-social ones, the latter understood first of all as dispositions and habits fixed and transferred in the processes of socialising young generations. The **underclass** is a product of joint effects of all the above-mentioned elements, yet the structural factors, namely the changes in the labour market related to economic restructuring and recession of all industrial regions, in the opinion of Wilson play a role of catalyst for the processes of degradation and marginalisation of urban inhabitants. The supposition of Wilson is deeply rooted in American reality, despite of the fact that numerous European sociologists refer to that concept in analysing the processes of marginalisation of workers communities in former industrial regions (W.G. Runciman, 1990; D. Byrne, 1999). There are numerous reasons that justify the opinion that the restructuring of industry in the Silesian Voivodship, situated in the south of Poland, would entail social phenomena similar to those described above.

2. Silesian Voivodship – a declining industrial area

The Silesian Voivodship (region) is the most urbanised region of Poland (4.7 million people, 12.3% of the whole population of Poland, population density three times higher than in the country, 79% of population living

in 71 towns, four with more than 200 thousand and 8 – between 100 and 200 thousand). The administrative reform of 1998 decided about the current territorial shape of the region – as of 1 January 1999 the Silesian Voivodship included four agglomerations. The first one – the Upper Silesian agglomeration (over 2 million inhabitants, nearly 45% of the whole population) with the biggest city of Katowice, capital of the Region and 14 big cities (Bytom, Chorzów, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Jaworzno, Gliwice, Katowice, Mysłowice, Piekary Śląskie, Siemianowice Śląskie, Sosnowiec, Świętochłowice, Tychy, Zabrze). The second one – the Rybnik agglomeration (with 405.4 thousand inhabitants, three big cities – Rybnik, Jastrzębie-Zdrój, Żory and smaller Wodzisław Śląski). Located at the centre of the Silesian Voivodship the Upper Silesian agglomeration forms, together with the Rybnik agglomeration, the largest industrialized area in Poland. The northern part of the Voivodship – the Częstochowa agglomeration – with the city of Częstochowa (well known for the Jasna Góra Monastery, the destination of pilgrimages to the famous Black Madonna, population of 249.5 thousand inhabitants) – and the southern part of the Region – with the Bielsko-Biała agglomeration, 177.4 thousand inhabitants and – close to the Czech border – Cieszyn were included to the newly created Silesian Voivodship by way of the reform of 1998. Both of them had existed before as separate regions – the 1998 reform reduced the number of regions from 49 small ones to 16 bigger voivodships. In contrast to the central part of the Voivodship, the two last subregions are relatively less industrialised (with some exceptions such as Częstochowa, Lubliniec and Myszków in the northern part and Bielsko-Biała and Żywiec in the southern part (source: *Strategia Rozwoju Województwa Śląskiego na lata 2000–2020...*, p. 12).

The Silesian Voivodship is one of the most prosperous but also problematic regions of Poland. Although the national statistics give the Silesian Region the second position after Warsaw with the 13.7% of GDP and GDP per capita higher than the country's average (GDP of PLN 22.627 comparing to PLN 20.431 (*Rocznik statystyczny województw...*, 2004), if we look closer at the regional data we could observe the growing disparities between the subregions (with the dominant position of the central subregion) and between localities. We will come back to this issue later on.

The Silesian Voivodship (more precisely its central area) is one of the most industrialised regions of Poland – the industrial production sale index per capita in PLN is here nearly 30% higher than for the rest of the country (PLN 20.601 for PLN 14.784). Despite the ongoing process of industrial decline – started at the end of the 20th century – this is the region where the traditional branch of heavy industry – the coal mining sector (91.4% of the national production), iron and steel industry (68.8% of the national production of raw steel and 63% of the national production of cold and hot

rolled products) as well as machine engineering or energy production still play an important role.

Of course, there are other more recently developed branches such as automobile or electronic industries and the growing service sector, but still heavy industry together with construction is the biggest employer in the region (38.2% of the active (working) population of the region – accounting for 28.3% of the whole country) (quoted after: *Strategia Rozwoju Województwa Śląskiego...*, p. 9).

The industrial history of the region goes back to the first half of 19th century when – under the German rule – the first coal mines and steel plants were founded in Katowice and other communities. The major economic and urban development of the area was for nearly two centuries closely linked to the growth and the implementation of heavy industry – mainly coal mining and metallurgy but also machine and energy production and chemistry and was very similar to other industrial areas in Europe such as Ruhr Basin in Northern Renania-Westfalia, Nord-Pas-de-Calais in France, Wallony in Belgium or North-East England (for the comparison between the North-East England and Upper Silesia see D. Byrne, K. Wódz, 1997; 2001). As D. Byrne pointed out, in Upper Silesia the industrialization has produced a special type of local communities organized around coalmines or factories, so accurately described by N. Dennis, F. Henriques and C. Slaughter in their classical work *Coal is Our Life* (1969).

Contrary to Western Europe (and USA) where the process of deindustrialisation and transition to the post-industrial economy started at the end of the sixties, the Upper Silesian heavy industry sector had practically survived intact until the end of Communist Poland. For the reasons which have been largely discussed in the literature (see for example: M. Szczepański, 1994; G. Gorzelak, 2001), the Upper Silesian Industrial Area (including the neighbouring Zagłębie Dąbrowskie Basin) from 1945 – up to the collapse of Communism symbolized by the "Round Table" contract between the democratic opposition (Solidarity Movement) and the communists in 1989 – played a very special role within the Polish state-commanded economy. This was linked to the erroneous model of the so called "forced industrialisation" imposed by the ruling Communist Party – under the pressure of the Soviet Union – based on heavy industry (for details see: W. Morawski, 1980). The consequences of this kind of mono-functional economic development proved to be very negative for the whole country but for the region – it was a real catastrophe, starting from degradation of natural environment, through chaotic development of towns, to very narrow qualification potential of labour force (K. Wódz, 1993; 1997; G. Gorzelak, 1996).

At the beginning of the 1990s the industrial part of the region, concentrated mainly in the Upper Silesian Agglomeration (the former Katowice

Province), as well as other regions of Poland, faced dramatic challenges related to the necessity of modernising Polish economy and turning it into a market-oriented one. It was in Upper Silesia that the processes of structural adaptation to the global market economy and international competition came up against especially difficult conditions from the very beginning, first of all due to the scale of problems related to the concentration of negative consequences of the industrial heritage.

The most important consequences for the region, from the social point of view, are connected with the breakdown and gradual fall of the heavy industry, of course, especially the mining sector and the steel sector, as well as numerous technical enterprises related to them. The first redundancies in the extractive industry affected the former dwellers of lodging-houses for workers who returned to their hometowns and villages in central or north-eastern Poland, often increasing the unemployment ratio there or, if they decided to stay where they had worked before, joining the homeless, camping at railway stations or in shelters (K. Wódz, 1993).

In 1993, for the first time for a few dozen years, the Province of Katowice (existing before the administrative reform of 1998) showed a negative migration balance (2.428 people) (quoted after: *Rynek pracy w województwie katowickim*, 2004, p. 4). This tendency was confirmed in the following years – minus 2 for 1000 in 2003 (*Rocznik statystyczny województw...*, 2004).

From the very beginning of the transformation, women clearly dominated among those who were made redundant: 1990 – 76.08%, 1991 – 77.5%, 1992 – 77.6%, 1993 – 77.08% (quoted after: *Rynek pracy...*, p. 20, own calculations). Consequently, they formed a majority of registered unemployed persons: 1995 – 68.9% of the unemployed, 1996 – 71.6%, 1997 – 71.1%, 1998 – 63.4% of the unemployed (quoted after: *Bezrobocie w województwie katowickim* and *Województwo śląskie w 1998*, p. 19).

This tendency to a lesser extent was observed in the next years (55.4% in 2004, 56.7% in 2005, quoted after: *Informacja o poziomie i strukturze bezrobocia w województwie śląskim...*). This apparently surprising fact can be understood when we take into consideration that the first consequences of the restructuring affected the non-productive environment of coal-mines, including social services, where the majority of employees were female. The over-representation of women among the unemployed expresses the peculiarity of the local labour market, unfavourable for women. The women who lose their jobs, regardless of their qualifications, face difficulties with getting employed again (in the male group that holds true mainly in the case of men without qualifications), that is why when ineligible for the unemployment benefit they become social aid beneficiaries (W. Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, J. Grotowska-Leder, 1996: 148 and the following). We will come back to this issue later on.

In the late 1980s, at the time when the restructuring of regional economy began, it became obvious that elementary technical (vocational) schools "produced" unemployed youths in great numbers. In 1990 first steps were taken to change the structure of education in the region. In the years 1990–1995 the number of students in elementary technical (vocational) schools in the former Province of Katowice decreased by 20%, whereas the total number of secondary school students increased (from 47.6% to 63.0%; quoted after: *Województwo katowickie'96. Raport o rozwoju społecznym*, 1999: 107). In 1998 the number of students in elementary technical schools dropped to 7.8% of the young people being educated, still over one-fifth (20.1%) of the entire population learning in schools over the primary level were those learning in elementary technical schools (source: *Województwo śląskie...*, p. 30, own calculations). The National Census Data from 2002 showed that the education profile of the inhabitants of the region is still below the average for the whole country – with 26.8% of the graduate from the vocational schools (23.2% for the whole country) and 9.2% of the population with higher education (university or equivalent) diploma (9.9% for the country) (*Rocznik statystyczny województw...*, 2004).

The regular observation of the situation on the regional and local labour markets, led by the Regional (Voivodship) Employment Office in Katowice, proved that the people with vocational education (as well as primary education) clearly prevail among the unemployed registered in job centres of the Silesian Voivodship (65.9% in 2004, 55.9% – in May 2005). Almost a quarter of the unemployed in the region (24.2% in 2004, young people aged 18–24 who stand ever lesser chances to get a first job) (*Informacja o poziomie...*). The unemployment rate for the entire voivodship remained at a relatively low level in comparison with the national average for many years (e.g.: in 1998 – 10.2% (10.7% excluding farming, hunting, and forestry)) (*Województwo śląskie...*, p. 16), while the national average was 18.2% (see: *Rocznik statystyczny pracy*, quoted after: M. K a b a j, 2000: 23).

A few years later, at the end of March 2003 the unemployment rate for the voivodship was 17.2% – compared to 18.7% for the whole country, reaching the peak of 344.4 thousand unemployed people (10.4% of all the unemployed in Poland at that time) but at the end of this year the number of the unemployed decreased to 325.5 thousand. More than a year later, in December 2004 it was still more than 300 thousand unemployed in the whole region (309.7 thousand) with great majority of those who have become illegible for their unemployment benefits (88.6%). What is more striking, it is the demographic structure of the unemployed people where women are still dominant not only in the whole population of unemployed (55.4%) but also in the category of the long-term unemployed (for more than 12 months) – 55.3% compared to 43.7% of men. Over 50% of the registered

unemployed in the region were under the age of 35 (51.6%) but comparing to the earlier period – we could observe a growth in the number of the middle-aged unemployed (between 35 and 44 of age – 21.1%, between 45 – to 54 of age – 23.2%).

Still, the most vulnerable groups of unemployed are the less educated ones – nearly two thirds of them completed their education at the level of vocational or grammar school (65.9%), but comparing to the earlier data – we observe a rise in the unemployment of people with higher education (from 3.9% at the end of March in 2003 to 5.3% in December 2004). The unemployment rate in 2004 was in Silesia still lower than in the whole country (16% c. to 18.7%) (all the above data quoted after: *Informacja o poziomie...*). This tendency was confirmed in 2005 (unemployment rate in Silesia – 15.3%, whole country – 17.3%). However, should we give a closer look at the detailed aggregated data at the county (*powiat*) level, we will find out that there are dramatic differences in the unemployment rate even within the Katowice agglomeration itself – from a mere 7.0% in Katowice to 25.7% in Świętochłowice, 24.1% in Siemianowice Śląskie, 24.2% in Bytom (quoted after: *Informacja o poziomie...*). As one can easily guess, the differences observed are strictly correlated with the scope and rate of employment reduction in heavy industry, mainly in the mining sector.

3. Restructuring of the mining sector – the splendours and miseries

The process of adjusting the Polish mining sector to the requirements of market economy from the beginning came up against serious difficulties resulting from the fact that the Coal Sector played a strategic role in the national economy and was one of the most important employers in the region (the number of the people employed in the pits at the starting point of the reforms was over 300 thousand, not including one million people living "from the coal" in Upper Silesia) (A. Karbownik, J. Stachowicz, 1995: 219). These two elements combined with the incomparable with other sectors of industry strenghts of the trade unions – well-organised and not reluctant to change – marked the drama of the restructuring process started in the early nineties of the 20th century.

The first attempts to conduct the restructuring of the sector, which were made by the Polish Parliament in 1990 with the Act on Liquidation of the Coal Mine Community, Energetics and Brown Coal Community and mod-

ification of other Laws (*Official Journal*, No. 14, item 89, from 13.03.1990), ended with chaos and debt of the coal-mines[1]. In December 1992 the National Commission of Coal–mine Workers of the Solidarity Independent Trade Union organised a general strike (with 350 thousand participants from all coal-mines). The strike ended up after three weeks with the agreement signed on 4 January 1993 by the Government and the Regional Strike Committee (see W. Błasiak, 1994: 13–41). It was the first proof of the real strength of the miners trade unions after 1989.

In reaction to the deepening instability of the sector the Council of Ministers Economic Committee accepted the programme prepared by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce: "Restructuring of the Coal Mining Industry in Poland – the realisation of Stage One within the financial possibility of the state". The main guidelines of this programme were to achieve the profitability and competitiveness of the Polish coal-mine sector on global markets and to work out resources for investments in coal-mines (E. Morawski, 1995: 54). Unfortunately, this programme was not accompanied by necessary financial resources and the situation of the sector got even worse. To stop the catastrophe, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce proposed a set of new solutions. In June 1993 six coal mining companies (covering 49 coal-mines) and one Katowice Coal Holding (with 11 coal-mines) were created. Outside this structure there were four independent coal mines and five more were definitively closed. The two state agencies responsible until 1993 for selling coal on internal and external markets were transformed to joined stock companies (with the National Treasury as the single owner). For the groups of redundant pit workers the programme proposed social benefits. The Mining Employment Agency and groups for the Employment Restructuring in 20 districts were established. The works on the programme for the creation of new jobs for redundant miners started on (E. Morawski, 1995: 57–58). The first decisions concerning the liquidation of the unprofitable pits were taken (in Zagłębie Dąbrowskie – Czeladź, Sosnowiec, Dąbrowa Górnicza and to much lesser extent in Upper Silesia – Siemianowice, Żory) (M. Mitręga, 1996: 75–88).

At the end of 1993 – the Ministry of Industry and Commerce prepared another programme of the restructuring of the coal sector for the second stage of the reform (years 1994–1995). Accepted by the Council of Ministers on 29 March 1994 this programme assumed the Government's responsibility for the course of the restructuring process. It was expected that the state would take financial responsibility for the liquidation of unprofitable

[1] It is not our intention to go through a detailed history of the restructuring of the coal-mine sector, especially to evaluate the economic, technical, financial or organizational aspect of this process.

coal mines, including the technical and social costs of this process and would provide necessary legal support (A. Karbownik, J. Stachowicz, 1995: 221). The reforms of the sector undertaken in 1994 comprised important guarantees for pit workers – no group or compulsory redundancy, early retirement or retirement as the most appropriate form of job cuts, free choice of the form of social protection (workers leave or social benefit), job security in other collieries for reduced pit workers and the accession to training schemes for ground workers, assistance and credits for workers interested in starting a business, etc. (A. Karbownik, J. Stachowicz, 1995: 227). The number of workers employed in 70 coal mines in 1993 decreased from 330.150 at the end of 1992 to 305.208 at the end of 1993 (ibid., p. 224). Although at the end of 1994 there were some signs of improvement – the next more than twenty thousand wokers left their jobs – it didn't prevent the crash. In 1995 the economic situation of the sector became critical, with growing loss and debt to banks, contractors, state and local communities budgets (*Górnictwo węgla kamiennego. Polityka państwa i sektora na lata 1996–2000*, p. 26).

Envisaging the growing threats related to the deepening crisis of the mining sector, and lack of efficient policy for the restructuring of heavy industry – in 1995 the representatives of the state administration as well as regional and local self-governments, regional economic circles, social, cultural and trade-unionist organisations initiated the Regional Contract for the Province of Katowice (*Kontrakt Regionalny dla Województwa Katowickiego*, 1995). Not going into specific analyses of the content of the Contract, which from the time of its signing by signatories has been a subject of continuous negotiations and settlements (on September 10, 1997 the final version of the Regional Contract for the Province of Katowice was signed, in which the undertakings to be implemented in 1998, negotiated with the state authorities were included; compare further: M. Barański, 1999: 34) – it is worth stressing that the Contract was an unprecedented attempt in Poland to grasp in a comprehensive manner the issues of the restructuring of regional economy, it had substantial influence upon the attempts of reforming the extractive sector in the years that followed. In April 1996 the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland accepted a document prepared by a team led by Jerzy Markowski, the then Vice-Minister of Industry, entitled *Górnictwo węgla kamiennego. Polityka państwa i sektora na lata 1996–2000. Program dostosowania górnictwa węgla kamiennego do warunków gospodarki rynkowej i międzynarodowej konkurencyjności* (Hard Coal Mining. The State and Sector Policy for the years 1996–2000. The programme for the adaptation of the hard coal-mining sector to the conditions of market economy and international competition). Approved in December of that year by the Polish Parliament, the programme contained

a reliable assessment of the economic and financial situation of the sector, a detailed analysis of the reasons why the previous repair programmes failed, and a proposal for restructuring (*Górnictwo...*, pp. 39–41). The Markowski programme, despite many accurate guidelines, failed to get necessary legal and financial support and did not bring the expected economic results[2].

What is more, the programme met with crushing criticism from the Solidarity trade union (NSZZ "Solidarność") which, under the leadership of the President of its Silesian Region (Region Śląsko-Dąbrowski) Marek Kempski, prepared its own competitive programme for the mining sector, included in the programme of the Solidarity Election Action (AWS – Akcja Wyborcza "Solidarność") called "Reforma górnictwa węgla kamiennego – problem i obowiązek państwa, szansa dla regionów węglowych" (Reform of hard coal mining – a problem and duty of the state, a chance for coal mining regions). After winning the elections in 1997 the AWS-dominated Ministry of Economy put forward another proposal for reforming the mining sector, this time in close co-operation with trade unions (especially the Solidarity Independent Trade Union of the Śląsko-Dąbrowski Region) and enjoying wide political support of the majority of MPs. The state programme for the reform of hard coal mining in Poland in the years 1998–2002, approved by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland on 30 June 1998 (*Reforma górnictwa węgla kamiennego w Polsce w latach 1998–2002...*) contained severe criticism of the previous programmes and introduced new legal, financial, and organisational instruments which, in the opinion of the authors, should enable a radical acceleration of structural transformations in the sector, without undesired social tensions.

In July 1998 the Jerzy Buzek Government submitted to the parliament a bill on adjusting the hard coal mining sector to functioning under market economy conditions and on special powers and tasks of municipalities in which hard coal mining is located, later passed by the Polish Parliament

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[2] In 1997 over 16 thousand people left the sector, over 3 thousand used the social package, 2841 were transferred to economic units established on the non-productive assets of coal mines, 35 went to other units, 1500 jobs were created in coal mines, using preferential loans for establishing new jobs, some 1500 were retrained, the average number of active walls got reduced by 10.1%, nearly 700 kms of headings and workings were closed down, the act on financial restructuring of hard coal mining units and the introduction of coal mining fee was approved (*Official Journal*, No. 113, item 735, 25.09.1997) and the State Agency for Restructuring of Hard Coal Mining (Państwowa Agencja Restrukturyzacji Górnictwa Węgla Kamiennego S.A.) was established, more in: *Informacja o realizacji zapisów "Kontraktu regionalnego dla województwa katowickiego z uwzględnieniem przemian społeczno-gospodarczych w województwie katowickim w latach 1990–1996"*. Urząd Wojewódzki w Katowicach, Katowice, May 1997; here quoted after: M. Kuś (M. Kuś, M. Kuś, 1999: 91–92).

on 26 November 1998 (*Official Journal*, No. 162, item 1112, 26 Nov. 1998). In the programme identified with the name of Janusz Steinhoff, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy in the government headed by Jerzy Buzek, there were several guidelines which we do not intend to discuss in details here, concentrating mainly on the social aspects of that reform instead. Thus, to minimise the social consequences of closing down coal mines an obligation was imposed to prepare, in consultation with trade unions, a social package/programme for miners losing their jobs.

The basis for such programmes was to consist of solutions suggested in the Social Package for Miners (GPS – Górniczy Pakiet Socjalny), including social guarantees for miners leaving coal mines or made redundant (Act of November 26, 1998, art. 20–26). The Social Package for Miners (GPS) contained very detailed proposals of social protection as well as activities meant for activation, serving the implementation of the basic aim of restructuring of employment, namely prevention of unemployment growth in mining regions. As can be seen from the data quoted above, that aim has not been reached, unfortunately.

Nevertheless, the Social Package for Miners (GPS), due to the scope and level of the shielding proposed, was exceptional in comparison with the poor guarantees provided for other groups, suffering the consequences of restructuring of the economy (the Social Package for Steelworkers, HPS – Hutniczy Pakiet Socjalny, introduced on 7 January 1999 is by far less advantageous and contains many additional restrictions) (*Official Journal*, No. 36, item 341, Order of the Council of Ministers of 20 April 1999). The GPS provided a wide range of advisory and training activities, employment agencies, the functions of which were to be performed by Offices for Employment Aid of the Mining Job Agency, established at coal mines under liquidation or meant to be closed down in the following years.

The guidelines and aims of the Steinhoff programme strongly stressed the regional aspect of the reform, referring mainly to the stipulations of the Regional Contract for the Province of Katowice, and the role of municipalities with mining activities in the process of reforming of the coal mining sector. In the Act of 26 November 1998 there are no references to the Regional Contract (except for one in Chapter 4, art. 29), while the rights of municipalities with mining activities have been substantially reduced. It remains a fact, still, that the authors of the programme showed considerable sociological imagination, assuming rightly that without support from (and for) local self-governments it proves impossible to solve the social problems accompanying the restructuring of coal mining. The job cuts in the mining sector, presented as advantageous from the economic point of view, proved disastrous for numerous municipalities with mining activities, as the instruments for support provided in the Act of 26 November 1998, e.g.

the loans from Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego (National Economy Bank) for creation of new jobs, were not attractive enough for local self-governments, already indebted and charged with numerous tasks and responsibilities.

It should be remembered at the same time that the restructuring of the coal mining sector will directly or indirectly affect more than half of the population of the former Province of Katowice, both miners and their families, often connected to the trade for several generations, and manpower employed in enterprises and institutions working for the mining sector. In the case of some municipalities of the former Province of Katowice the employment in collieries recently accounted for between 30 and over 50 percentage points of the entire employment in the national economy (e.g. Jastrzębie Zdrój, Piekary Śląskie, Tychy, Wodzisław Śląski, Ruda Śląska, Czeladź, Zabrze) (K. Nowak et al., 1994: 4–6). Should we add to that the consequences of the restructuring of the metallurgical and steel sector, where more than one hundred thousand jobs (from 147 thousand in 1990 to 26.4 thousand in 2002 in the whole sector) were cut. The estimations for 2006 were only 15.6 thousand employed (source: *Polski przemysł stalowy*, 2003: 8). If we take into consideration the fact that the important part of the steel plants are located in the Silesian Voivodship, we would realize fully the scale of social problems to be tackled in the coming years by specific local communities belonging to the Katowice conurbation.

4. Reform after reform...

Starting in 1998 the reform of mining industry undertaken by the government headed by Jerzy Buzek, of over one hundred thousand employees who left the sector more than a half took advantage of the benefits provided in the Social Package for Miners (GPS). The huge reduction of employment was achieved without larger social disturbances, which was a real success. Yet, there have also been enormous costs paid directly by the state budget (assessed at several billion zlotys together with written-off debts) plus the unpaid liabilities amounting to over PLN 20 bn (E. Pawelczyk, 2000: 15). Perhaps those costs, as the authors of the reform claim, were still lower than the losses that would have been generated by coal mines if it had not been the implemented reform programme.

However, the evaluation of the economic outcomes of the reform at the end of 1999 showed that its realisation was far from being satisfactory. The sector didn't reach the expected profitability. The amendment to the Pro-

gramme accepted by the Council of Ministers in December 1999 assumed further reduction of the production capacity of the sector and of the number of employed workers (more than 40 thousand people) in 2002. The estimated deadline for achieving profitability was (once again) delayed from 2000 to 2002. There were also some new proposals concerning the reorganisation of the sector – creation of one or two restructuring companies and diminution of the number of existing coal companies (A. Karbownik, 2000: 65–86). These proposals were at the core of the amendments to the 1998 Act prepared by the Ministry of Economy in 2000.

In July 2000 the State Coal-Mines Restructuring Company was created, including four coal mines which have already stopped extraction of coal. The new act on the adjustment of the hard coal sector to functioning under market economy conditions, instituted in December 2000, specified the conditions of financial restructuring of the sector (E. Pawełczyk, A. Madejski, 2002). Evaluation of the 1998–2002 Programme undertaken by the Ministry of Economy, headed by Jacek Piechota (a few months after the Parliamentary elections 2002, won by the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)) proved that the most important economic goals of the Steinhoff Programme were not achieved.

However, over 100 thousand workers left the sector and the coal production was reduced by 34.5 million tons per year (*Polska 2003. Raport o stanie przemysłu...*, pp. 100–101). The debt of the sector was so threatening to the public finance and to the national and regional economy that the Government decided to accelerate the restructuring process by starting the privatisation of the sector. New rules of the financial restructuring were established, giving the coal mine companies the opportunity to remit partially their debts under the condition that they were to prepare a credible plan of the restructuring, leading to durable profitability of coal mines (Act of 30 August 2002, *Official Journal*, No. 155, item 1287, 23 September 2002). Two scenarios for the employment reduction for the years 2003–2006 were proposed – the more radical one – assumed the reduction of 27.5 thousand employees, the less radical one – of 19.5 thousand workers to the end of 2006. The Programme was rejected in the referendum organised by the leading miners' trade union in Poland, supported by five other trade unions in September 2002. It became clear that no radical programme of restructuring of the sector would gain miners' acceptance (K. Gadowska, 2002: 90).

However, in November 2002 the Council of Ministers accepted the new *Programme of the Restructuring of the Hard Coal Sector in Poland for the years 2003–2006 with the accompanying anti-crisis law regulations and the initiation of privatisation of selected coal mines (Program restrukturyzacji górnictwa węgla kamiennego w Polsce w latach 2003–2006)*. The programme

proposed important innovations in the organisational structure of the sector: the consolidation of the seven existing coal-mine companies into three, the newly created one was the Kompania Węglowa S.A. (Coal Company S.A.) comprising 23 (of 40 working) coal mines and several other establishments, the two others were Katowicki Holding Węglowy S.A. (Katowice Coal Holding S.A.) with 9 coal mines (in which one was an independent limited company) and Jastrzębska Spółka Węglowa (Jastrzębska Coal Company S.A.). with 5 coal mines[3].

Although the consolidation of the sector was considered by all the partners concerned a necessary step to effective restructuring of the sector, the solutions proposed by the programme: closure of seven unprofitable coal mines to 2004, dismissal of over 30 thousand people, partly with no additional social benefits (the possibility to participate in the World Bank funded outplacement programme was refused by the trade unions), caused a series of violent protests organised by miners' trade unions in Katowice and Warsaw. The conflict ended up with an agreement signed by Government representatives and trade unions. The miners obtained from the Government the guarantees for the preservation of the old collective arrangement favourable to the pit workers (the so called 14th pay, a special wage on the occasion of Miners' Patron Saint Barbara Day, coal allowance). The Government declared willingness to consult on a regular basis (through the institutions of the social dialogue) any further plans concerning the restructuring of the sector (K. Gadowska, 2002: 91). In January 2003 the modified version of the Programme was approved by the Council of Ministers (*Program restrukturyzacji górnictwa węgla kamiennego w latach 2003–2006*). The main goals of the Programme were now twofold – obviously to achieve economic profitability and to reduce the sector's financial debt – remained essential but alleviating the social consequences of the previous and planned employment restructuring were declared as equally important. It was decided that by 2006 seven coal mines would be closed, the number of employees would be reduced to 114.2 thousand people (of 141.4 thousand at the end of 2002), mostly taking retirement (21.2 thousand), for the others (some 8.1 thousand) who were expected to be laid off – several solutions were proposed – from pre-retirement benefits (for pit workers) to requalification grants and outplacement programmes (for ground workers).

Compared to the programme from 1998–2002, the new one put much more attention to the active forms of support for the coal-mine workers, with different training schemes, counselling provided by the specialised bodies like Mines Restructuring Company (Spółka Restrukturyzacji Kopalń S.A.), Mining Employment Agency (Górnicza Agencja Pracy), Regional or Local

[3] Katowice Coal Holding S.A. and Jastrzębska Spółka Węglowa S.A. were created in 1993.

Employment Offices and many other institutions. For the first time from the beginning of the transformation, the Government's proposal was not limited to the sector. At the same time, the Council of Ministers approved the Guidelines for the Programme of Mitigating the Effects of Employment Restructuring in Hard Coal Mining in the Silesian Voivodship (*Założenia programu łagodzenia w regionie śląskim skutków restrukturyzacji zatrudnienia w górnictwie węgla kamiennego...*). The solutions proposed by Government comprised three kind of actions. The first one, directed to the coal-mine workers, included allowances, pre-retirement benefits, retraining grants and also subsidies for the employers intending to engage the dismissed workers. The second part of the actions comprised the active labour market instruments such as the development of employment agencies, job shops, vocational counselling, training and retraining schemes, financial advising for former coal-mine workers who decide to start their own business, outplacement programmes, etc. The third category of the actions were those supporting the economic development of the whole region such as the small and medium enterprise support schemes, financed by PHARE – INITIATIVE II, PHARE – Social and Economic Cohesion Human Resource Development: for business services (information, expertise, promotion, banking etc.), subsidies for investments in new technologies, loans for public bodies and NGOs for community development projects, and last but not least – investments in infrastructure and environment (reducing pollution, recultivation of post-industrial land) and tourism (see: *Założenia programu łagodzenia...*, pp. 14–15).

The Guidelines prepared in early 2003 made reference to the actions planned after Poland's accession to the EU, with the help of the structural policy funds (European Regional Development Fund, Social Fund, Cohesion Fund). The Guidelines also proposed a set of new institutional solutions, legal regulations and an overview of the financial instruments necessary for the realisation of the programme (loans from the World Bank, the European Council Development Bank and other international and Polish financial institutions and subventions from the state budget). Following the Guidelines, the regional Programme of Mitigating the Effects of Employment Restructuring in Hard Coal Mining in the Silesian Voivodship (for three years) was approved by the regional parliament (Sejmik) in 2003 as the Operational Programme for the Strategy of Development of Silesian Voivodship for the years 2000–2015 (*Program łagodzenia w regionie śląskim skutków restrukturyzacji zatrudnienia w górnictwie węgla kamiennego...*, pp. 23–25).

The implementation of the Programme of the Restructuring of Hard Coal Sector for the years 2003–2006 and the Programme of Mitigating the Effects... started in the climate much less favourable than the former one. At the

beginning of 2003, the weekly *Polityka* informed the public opinion about irregularities committed in the estimations of the economic situation of the newly created Coal Company S.A. – it was a matter of some 4 billion zlotys of debts which were revealed by J. Klima, the president of the new Institution. This information appeared just a few weeks after the presentation of the report of the Supreme Chamber of Control (NIK) which contained the results of the evaluation of all restructuring programmes realised after 1991. The costs of the programmes were estimated at PLN 34 bn without including the debts to the National Treasury or to the Social Security Institution which exceeded PLN 20 bn (after J. Dziadul, 2003: 36). The questions of clarity and transparency of the economic transfers and other types of relationships between different structures of the sector (including the coal-mine companies, all kinds of managing or controlling bodies such as the Ministry of Economy, Higher Mining Office, groups of experts, concentrated in three institutions – the Central Mining Institute in Katowice, the Silesian Technical University in Gliwice/Zabrze and the University of Science and Technology (AGH) in Cracow and last but not least – the trade union head offices) were raised.

The relative autonomy of the sector and its reluctancy to any attempt to its penetration by unauthorised persons (both journalists and researchers) opened the way to suspicions and speculations about the structural-organisational and financial pathological practices which followed the restructuring process. K. Gadowska from Jagiellonian University, after a detailed study using a large spectrum of data, went so far as to describe these structures as a "network of economic and political clientelism" (K. Gadowska, 2002). Starting from the N. Luhman's neo-functional theory of autopoietic systems, from the studies on political clientelism and social networks analysis Gadowska argues that "the top managers, politicians involved in the network of reciprocal relations form a self-reproducing political and economic system which hinders the restructuring process and gives opportunity for corruption and fraud" (ibid., pp. 9–10). Although Gadowska is not particularly interested in the social consequences of the restructuring of the sector, she is aware of the threats which follow the restructuring process not only for miners (and representing them trade unions) but also for other occupational groups including directors of coal mines, top managers from the companies etc. All these groups have common interests to obtain from the Government the most favourable (for themselves, of course) conditions of the implementation of the restructuring programme and play a role of a corporate client in relations with changing political patrons. This corporate type of clientelism does not exclude other types of client–patron relationship. The other cases described by Gadowska are those with the workers and trade unions as the only clients to

their managers, boards of companies, representatives of administration or politicians (ibid., pp. 181–184). All three types of clientelism played an important role in the evolution of situation of the sector from the very beginning of the restructuring process. But in 2003 the relationships between the trade unions and the Government reached the level of open confrontation.

Many reasons are involved here. First, a slump on the coal market in the first six months of 2003 contributed to the deterioration of the state of the industry which was not much helped by a lot better financial results achieved in the second half of the year (*Polska 2004. Raport o stanie przemysłu...*, p. 203). Secondly, the analysis of the course of implementation of the government programme carried out in the middle of the year showed that it would be impossible to meet the objectives of the restructuring of the coal sector without a new legislative settlement of the issues connected with the remission of public obligations of coal-mining companies, closure of permanently unprofitable coal production units and introduction of active labour market services for employees who were dismissed from the collieries which were subject to closure. Such a bill was approved of by the Council of Ministers on 17 June 2003. Thirdly, on 25 June 2003 in Katowice there was held a meeting of the World Bank representatives with the representation of the boards of coal-mining companies, the Industrial Development Agency, the Mining Labour Agency and the Ministry of Economy and Labour on further financing of the restructuring programme of the coal sector. The World Bank offered another credit of USD 300 m for subsidising the government programme of restructuring of the coal sector including 200 m to the end of softening the social effects (active labour market services) as well as another 100 m for decreasing the production and reclamation of mined land. The tough conditions imposed by the World Bank have been known before and reflected in the programme prepared by the previous cabinet[4].

The delegation of trade unions not invited to the meeting in Katowice put into the hands of its participants a petition demanding the Government's departure from carrying out the requirements of the industry restructuring imposed by the World Bank, primarily the departure from the planned closure of coal mines and job cuts, and warning against an outbreak of social unrest in case the petitions and positions of the trade unionists were ignored by the Government and employers (P. Luberta, 2003: 2). Later developments showed that the unionists' warnings were not just rhetorical. On 7 July the new President of Kompania Węglowa S.A.

[4] The World Bank has actively supported the restructuring processes in the mining industry in Poland since 1999.

Maksymilian Klank publicly announced the plans of winding up unprofitable coal mines and the criteria the Board would consider while deciding whether to close down a particular coal mine. It is the very company, Kompania Węglowa, that found itself early in 2003 on the verge of bankruptcy due to soaring debts and charges by way of taking over loss-making coal production units. A dozen or so days later Vice Prime Minister Jerzy Hausner visiting the Silesian Voivodship acknowledged that unprofitable coal mines would be closed down. During a meeting of the Tripartite Group on 24 July, Minister Jacek Piechota presented the unionists a new bill of restructuring urging for fast presenting a stand by the trade unions. The tension among miners which had been rising for several weeks reached a peak later in August when the President of Kompania Węglowa M. Klank in another meeting of the Tripartite Commission in Warsaw announced his decision of closing down four coal mines: Bytom II, Centrum, "Polska – Wirek" and "Bolesław Śmiały". The closure of the mines was a condition of the Government's writing off further debts (PLN 18 bn) of the coal production units and contributing the capital of Kompania Węglowa with PLN 800 m so that it would be able to pay off its dues towards *gminas* and the Social Insurance Institution and independently tender for coal trade without having to use the services of intermediaries.

In response to the proposals, the unionists established the industrial action HQ and decided to intervene by starting an industrial dispute with the Company's Board. It was the beginning of a heated, tense and lasting over two months industrial action held by the workforce of coal mines subject to closure (including occupation of the building of Kompania Węglowa, strikes of pit workers and ground workers in Bytom, marches, pickets etc.) as well as trade union headquarters. The climax of the dissatisfaction connected with Kompania Węglowa's plans was the demonstration of a group of several thousand (according to the unionists' estimation) miners on 11 September 2003 in Warsaw. This biggest miners' mass protest for a dozen or so years ended up with a sheer battle which involved fighting with sharp tools, batteries on chains, bottles with oil, stones and flags. Injured miners, policemen, shattered windows and destroyed facades of government buildings – such was the result of this incident, unprecedented in democratic Poland (after 1989). The pictures of the manifestation showed in the media shocked the public opinion and brought about another wave of public debate on the state of the coal sector. Again, there were comments on the huge costs incurred by the state budget in respect of the reform. Also, some criticisms arose towards unions HQ, Minister Jerzy Hausner in a heated debate on the situation in the coal sector which was held in the Sejm a day after the miners' demonstration attacked the union leaders saying that they are part of a pathological arrangement which had

been made within many years in the coal sector – an extended union structure – charging the industry with annual costs at PLN 100 m, union partnerships making profits of millions, of which only a part is devoted to the statutory goals. Minister Hausner's statements made some of the MPs from Silesia furious, counter expert assessments were presented showing no economic justification for the decisions of closure as indicated by Kompania Węglowa and there were threats of escalation of miners' protests.

In the prevailing critical commentaries there were some new tones. For example, Janina Paradowska, a journalist of *Polityka* observed that for the first time in the public discourse on the situation in the mining industry they had been discussing so openly the ambiguous role of the union organisation in inciting tensions and undermining reforms as well as on the quasi-mafialike structures of the political, business and union kind making profits out of debt trading and agency in coal trade (J. Paradowska, 2003: 17). In the same commentary J. Paradowska, however, drew attention to another very important for the course of the miners' protests aspect of the issue – the increasing fatigue with lasting for a dozen or so years restructuring processes and the accumulation of some negative effects of the previous reforms, including the deteriorating situation on the regional labour market. This notion had been almost absent in the prevailing (media) discourse on the mining industry – reasons behind this situation should deserve a separate discussion.

A confrontation between the government dramatically losing its social support (among others due to the disclosed economic affairs which involved some prominent Democratic Left Alliance politicians) and the mining unionists lasted many weeks yet until the very last reading of the Bill in the meeting of the Sejm on 13 November 2003 during which Minister J. Hausner, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Poland, objected to the introduction of amendments allowing partial winding-up of coal mines and mergers of unprofitable mines with those which are profitable. The response of the union headquarters was the announcement a day later of striking emergency and 24-hour strike on 17 November. The announcement of the general strike proved to be an effective measure of pressurising the Senate, which accepted the Act on 28 November in the shape as favoured by mining force. The Act of restructuring of the coal mining industry during 2003–2006 (*Official Journal*, No. 210, item 2037, 28 Nov. 2003) signed by the President just before 4 December 2003, St Barbara Day, miners' traditional holiday, provided a comprehensive regulation of the rules of financial restructuring of mining companies, employment, winding up coal mines, organisational restructuring in the coal mining industry, and it also specified particular powers of mining *gminas* and indicated financial resources of the restructuring programme until 2006. From the point of view

of the interests of miners themselves, the most important were the provisions concerning the restructuring of employment. The Act of 28 November 2003 introduced two kinds of support instruments for empolyees not entitled to retirement pension or work disability pension:

- social protection services – a miners' benefit for underground employees, who in terms of age, total underground employment record lack no more than 3 years to become eligible for retirement pension before 1 January 2007 (section 9);
- activation and adaptation instruments for ground workers, including:
  - grants for the purpose of gaining new skills amounting to the equivalent of 100% remuneration given for up to six months during which an employee maintains all his or her employment entitlements, is obliged to participate in one free training course, is allowed to use vocational counsel and job agency run by Mining Labour Agency (section 10);
  - loans to the end of starting business activity amounting to PLN 20.000 which may be wholly or partially remitted on the condition of taking up such activity within six months after the termination of employment relationship with a mining company (section 12);
  - retraining contracts granted for three months by employers outside the mining industry to former ground workers, who have not used any other support forms (section 17).

The Act of 28 November 2003 introduced substantive incentives for non-mining employers who would employ former ground workers in the form of employment refunding (between 12 and 18 months depending on the number of years an employee lacks to be entitled to retirement as well as the possibility of costs remittance (up to PLN 20.000) to the end of creating a new job in respect of giving employment to such a person or refunding the costs of providing one training course to an employee (under retraining contract) (section 13, section14, section 16).

For pit workers or workers at coal processing plants, at coal production units being wholly or partially closed down, who will not use any of the social protection benefits – the Act of 28 Nov. 2003 guaranted the possibility of employment for unspecified period at working mines (section 19, para 1). By contrast to the Act of 26 November 1998, the new Act has put a much bigger stress on supporting any activities aiming at seeking employment outside the mining industry by workers leaving coal mines, including ground workers of which women account for a considerable part. This gender value of the new solutions is worth further discussion, we will return to it later on.

The balance of 2003 was for the mining communities undoubtedly positive – by the end of the year the number of coal production units had

not changed – none of the 40 working coal mines in the Silesian voivodship had been made subject to liquidation, employment as by end of 2003 amounted to 136.000 (as opposed to 140.700 by end of 2002) and thus it decreased merely by 4.300 employees of which more than a half retired (figures by Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy; *Informacja o przebiegu restrukturyzacji górnictwa węgla kamiennego w 2003 roku*).

The beginning of 2004 brought in some new favourable to the sector changes in the boom on the coal market. The increase in the price of coal sold on the external market (in January 2004 by a fifth as compared to January 2003) and the internal market (in January and February 2004 by 11.3% as compared to the analogous period of the previous year) considerably contributed to the improvement of the economic condition of the mining sector, all the three companies achieved as for the first three months of 2004 a positive financial net result. There was a distinct air of optimism, there were signs that the Government was planning to soften the restructuring scheme, abandon the previous plans of winding up several coal mines (eventually only two coal mines of Kompania Węglowa – Bytom II and "Polska Wirek" and one of Katowicki Holding Węglowy – "Katowice Kleofas" were to be closed) and others to be merged (Bytom III and Centrum in 2004, Brzeszcze and Silesia in 2005).

However, experts had warned the energy coal boom, and that is the very coal extracted at Kompania Węglowa S.A., may be over soon (c.f. the statement by Professor J. Macieja of the Polish Academy of Sciences quoted in: P. Purzyński, S. Starzyński, 2004: 30) but for the union leaders it was a moment of triumph and an endorsement of the recent protests against winding up coal mines. The euphoric moods were soon slightly dampened. The new version of the programme of restructing prepared by Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy, adopted by the Council of Ministers on 27 April 2004 under the title: *Restructuring of the Hard Coal Mining Sector during the period 2004–2006 and the Strategy for the period 2007–2010* (*Restrukturyzacja górnictwa węgla kamiennego w latach 2004–2006 oraz strategia na lata 2007–2010*) did, however, include adjustments of the 2004 programme providing for the demand and supply changes on the external market as well as the seasonal changes in the boom but, at the same time, introduced some new restrictive elements regarding the rules of granting public aid without which the implementation of the restructuring programme would not be possible (only the costs of active labour market services themselves as provided under the Act of 28 November 2003 were estimated at approximately PLN 5 bn, the costs of winding up the coal mines – at PLN 1.14 bn and the debt relief costs at PLN 18 bn). Not only do the rules as specified under the EU Council Regulation 1407/02 and the Commission Decision of 17 October 2002 limit the possibilities of granting

public aid to coal mines to the strictly specified cases (initial investments and covering current operation losses) but they also make the consent on granting it conditional on submitting by an EU member state plans of access to coal reserves and plans of winding up production units (*Restrukturyzacja górnictwa węgla kamiennego w latach 2004–2006 oraz strategia na lata 2007–2010...*, p. 20).

In the case of Poland, the key issue was to obtain EU's acceptance for the implementation of the provisions of the Act of 28 November 2003, the negotiations concerning this matter were run by government experts headed by Jan Bogolubow, Director for the Energy Security Department of the Ministry of Economy and Labour with the representatives of the EU Directorate-General for Energy and Transport from November 2003 and ended favourably for Poland. Another condition to be met was submitting by Poland plans of access to coal and winding up coal mines. Such a document was to be drafted on the basis of business plans of coal mining units in accordance with the guidelines of the amended programme of 27 April 2004 and the methodology of calculation of production costs as binding in the EU.

The task proved to be very difficult for all the companies but the most difficulty with preparing appropriate calculations had the Mining Company which, despite the 2003 contribution of almost PLN 1 bn and the amortization of part of its obligations and good results of its current operation, still reported payments deficit. That was a result of taking over by Kompania Węglowa as part of the organisational and financial restructuring of unamortizable liabilities to the end of which Kompania Węglowa was to receive another sum of PLN 400 m of the 2004 fund in the form of liquid assets and 500 m in the form of non-liquid assets. The Exchequer's support did not, however, exempted Kompania Węglowa from the necessity of seeking additional resources for the implementation of liabilities. The Kompania Węglowa authorities along with other coal mine companies were forced to take steps aiming to increasing the economic effectiveness of coal mines, including among others increasing the labour efficiency, decreasing employment and maintaining the pay discipline (ibid., p. 38). Following these actions, in May 2004 the Board of Kompania Węglowa proposed the mining staff a new Company Agreement which, as the authors of the proposals intended, would allow to uniform the payment system, eradicate the differences between collieries and also enhance the incentive role of remuneration. The proposed changes would result in abandoning some provisions of the Miners' Charter including providing coal allowances, payment of the so-called fourteenth salary which would be divided into 12 parts and combined with the basic pay, subsidizing holiday tickets, children's school education bonuses and food tokens but also – compensation for a miner's death. The latter did particularly disturb the mining community. On 1 July

2004 twelve union headquarters organised in Katowice a turbulent manifestation, eggs, firecrackers and stones were thrown onto the site of Kompania Węglowa. Not only did the demonstrators disapprove of encroaching on the present privileges but also they demanded pay rise – invoking the Kompania's good financial results as of the first six months of 2004 (net profit of PLN 127.5 m) on the one hand and, on the other hand, for example, the example of Jastrzębska Spółka Węglowa which had rather smoothly acceded to the union's pay rise demands (at 3%) and additional bonuses and profit rewards.

A few days later some further reaching demands were postulated by the unionists from the coal mines of Katowicki Holding Węglowy. In both cases, the pay rise negotiations dragged on for months and did not end until December 2005 with the government's agreement on one-time increasing the average pay rate at Kompania Węglowa S.A. and Katowicki Holding Węglowy S.A. to 1.8% above the then binding present level. The agreement of the government was necessary, otherwise both the entities would have been forced to reimburse the resources granted under public aid for the industry – such conditions were following the *Plan of access to coal resources during the period 2004–2006 and plan of closing down coal mines during the period 2004–2007* adopted by the Government on 7 September 2004 and submitted for approval by the EU Commission. We shall return to some provisions of the document below.

Now we shall have a look at the changes affecting the operation of the industry in 2004 brought about by the adjustments to the government programme. As we said, the crucial premise of the introduced adjustments of the government programme was changes of the economic situation on the external market (and to a lesser extent – on the internal market) as well as the necessity of adapting Poland's coal mining industry to the EU operation. The targeted restructuring plans were determined in several points which mainly refer to economic parameters of the industry operation (efficiency, adopting costs to revenues, level of employment to production capacity and the production capacity to sale possibilities, tasks in the scope of modernisation and investment needs to the amount of their own resources) but also to meeting the domestic demand for coal primarily and to not using the public aid deemed in the international documents ineligible and observing the norms of environmental protection and labour safety. The basic objectives of restructuring included were maintaining the country's energy security as well as contributing to increasing the EU energy security – maintenance by mining enterprises of sustainable profitability, economic effectiveness and competitive advantage on the uniform market of the EU:

"– securing a satisfactory level of financial liquidity and creditworthiness in order to ensure sustained operation and development of mining enterprises,
– balancing of funds so as to enable current payment of liabilities, in particular those to public sector creditors,
– adjustment of production capacity to the local market demand and economically viable exports to the uniform EU market and elsewhere,
– adjustment of employment to the actual production needs, along with ensuring a greater productivity and efficiency,
– actions towards a rational cost structure and
– privatisation of mining enterprises" (ibid., pp. 21–22).

The realization of these goals will demand: "cost reduction in all business segments, adequate marketing policy that will enable reduction of sale costs, direct customer contacts, an effective competition with imported coal along with blocking settlements by netting or other barter practices, which reduce revenues and cause pathology and irregularities,
– reduction of production capacity to approximately 88 million tons in 2006 (in target model),
– less drastic reduction of production capacity of mining enterprises as assumed in the alternative model to the level not higher than 94.8 mln tons by the end of 2006, providing the bullish market continues and mining enterprises retain sustainable profitability,
– reduction of employment using the social protection measures and active labour market services referred to in the Act on Restructuring of Hard Coal Mining Sector to the level matching the actual requirements, between 2004–2006,
– streamlining the organisational structure of mining,
– introduction of innovative management practices and optimisation of company organisation structures, along with pursuing of rational employment policy, and
– maintenance of supplies to the uniform EU market and export levels to third countries at between 20 million and 17.5 million tones, assuming break-even operation of the given production unit or group of production units" (ibid., p. 22).

The most important from the point of view of the social effects some parts of the adjusted government programme – reduction of production capacity and output level as well as connected with it plans of winding up coal mines and the reduction of manning level – were determined in terms of versions. In the target version by 2006 the output was to be reduced by 14 m tons while in the alternative version up to 7.8 m tons and the expected job cuts – in the target version by 25.500 employees and in the alternative version – by 19.500 employees. However, one should add

that the realisation of the alternative version meant as a back-up was made dependent on the mining companies meeting tough conditions: they must receive revenues allowing to cover operating costs, function in an economically effective way, generate sufficient resources for regular and current covering of liabilities, including in particular public liabilities (ibid., p. 27).

Failure to meet any of the conditions – thus there will be a loss during the three subsequent months (or six months not following subsequently in the financial year) – will result in the return to the target model including the starting of winding up unprofitable mines. As far as changes in employment are concerned, the target model assumed that about 7.500 people should use the active labour market services, about 12.000 – the mining benefits. In the alternative version the number of pit workers who would use the mining benefits were estimated at 8.000 and the number of ground workers who would benefit active labour market services at 4.000 people. The differences between the target version and the alternative version will concern mainly Kompania Węglowa S.A. The other redundancies will be connected with a considerable number of retirements (9.000 people), to work outside the mining industry (200 people) or for other so-called natural reasons (300 people) – the latter figures concern both versions. It is worth noting that the authors of the programme envisaging that the ground workers' interest in active labour market services will be limited – considered necessary taking by the mining companies and by the Mining Labour Agency themselves active steps towards obtaining job offers from employers outside the mining industry (ibid., p. 29). Unfortunately, according to the research carried out by the Mining Labour Agency among 611 employers of the Śląskie voivodship on the turn of 2003 and 2004, initially only few of them (merely 23%) were willing to offer employment to ground workers (*Pracownicy powierzchni restrukturyzowanych przedsiębiorstw górniczych na śląskim rynku pracy. Szanse i perspektywy zatrudnienia poza górnictwem w latach 2003–2006*...). Later on, the attitude of employers did change but it did not influence the increase of the interest of ground workers in such instruments (*Informacja dla Rady Ministrów o przebiegu restrukturyzacji górnictwa węgla kamiennego w I półroczu 2005 r.*, p. 41).

The programme of 27 April 2004 also provided for further organisational changes in the sector aiming at simplifying the organisational structure as well as contributing Kompania Węglowa S.A. which was in the most difficult economic situation. That was done through among others making a contribution of 70% stock of Węglozbyt S.A. to Kompania Węglowa S.A., in order to enable Kompania Węglowa to build its own network of coal sale for local and individual purchasers, and through starting to pursue the merger between Kompania Węglowa S.A. with five non-production mining

companies into one entity acting as a party in the restructuring procedure[5]. The assets of the incorporated companies thus acquired were to account for, beside the contribution to the capital, an important source of financing the liabilities taken over by Kompania Węglowa (ibid., p. 32). In the adjusted programme, there were determined initial rules and starting dates of the privatisation processes in this sector – until 31 December for Katowicki Holding Węglowy S.A., until 31 December for Jastrzębska Spółka Węglowa and for Kompania Węglowa – after the closing of the restructuring actions, not later than by the end of 2006.

On the basis of the guidelines as formulated in the adjusted Restructuring Programme, the Ministry of Economy and Labour designed *the Plan of Accessing Coal Reserves during 2004–2006 and the Plan of Closure of coal production units during 2004–2007 (Plan dostępu do zasobów węgla kamiennego w latach 2004–2006 oraz plan zamknięcia kopalń w latach 2004–2007).* The document accepted by the Council of Ministers on 7 September 2004 became the basis for the negotiations with the European Commission concerning the scope of state aid for the sector. For the Plan of Accessing coal reserves during 2004–2006, total of 37 coal mines were qualified, including 19 mines comprising Kompania Węglowa S.A., 8 mines comprising Katowicka Grupa Kapitałowa (which includes Katowicki Holding Węglowy S.A. and the mine KWK Kazimierz-Juliusz Spółka z o.o.), 5 mines comprising Jastrzębska Spółka Węglowa S.A. as well as five other entities operating separately (KWK Budryk S.A., Zakład Górniczo-Energetyczny "Sobieski-Jaworzno III" Spółka z o.o., Zakład Górniczo-Energetyczny "Janina" Spółka z o.o., a private coal production unit SILTECH Sp. z o.o. and, outside the Śląskie voivodship, L.W. Bogdanka S.A.). The plan of closure of coal production units during 2004–2007 ultimately provided for the closure of the two above mentioned units of Kompania Węglowa S.A. – ZG Bytom II – until 31 July 2004, KWK "Polska Wirek" – until 31 October 2005 and one mine of Katowicki Holding Węglowy – "Katowice Kleofas" – until 30 September 2004. Besides, the plan provided for a partial reduction of production capacity (in two versions – the target and alternative ones) and the merger of several mines as of 1 January 2005 – Bytom III and Centrum, as well as Brzeszcze and Silesia and as of 1 January 2006 – Halemba and Pokój (*Plan dostępu...*, pp. 27–29).

[5] The so-called non-production coal mining companies – Rudzka, Gliwicka, Nadwiślańska, Rybnicka and Bytomska – were included in Kompania Węglowa S.A. as of 29 November 2004. On 28 September 2004 the District Court in Katowice registered increasing the initial capital of Kompania Węglowa S.A. in connection with including in Kompania the shares of the Coal Trade Centre "Węglozbyt" S.A.

The quoted document also contains estimated calculations of the amount of state aid they will benefit (under the Council Regulation (EC) no. 1407/2002 of 23 July 2002), coal production units eligible for the plan of accessing coal reserves and included in the plan of closure of collieries as well as mining restructuring companies (Spółka Restrukturyzacji Kopalń S.A. and Bytomska Spółka Restrukturyzacji Kopalń, Sp. z o.o.). The aid estimated in billions of Polish zlotys (total of over PLN 6 bn during 2004–2007, of which the most part of over PLN 3 bn will go to Kompania Węglowa S.A.) is to be devoted to:

- the costs of paying social welfare benefits resulting from the pensioning-off workers before they reach statutory retirement age taking the so-called miners' leaves or benefiting miners' allowances – maintaining all miners' privileges – such as the supply of free coal or Miner's Day rewards, extra bonuses, jubilee rewards, as well as the costs of other benefits including residual costs resulting from the social welfare benefits shifted from the previous periods or from one-time severance pay and the costs of training, retraining grants etc.;
- the costs related to safety work resulting from the closure of production units and surrounding mines, repairing mining damage, the rehabilitation of former coal mining sites;
- costs resulting from administrative, legal or tax provisions, exceptional expenditure on workers who lose their jobs as a closure of coal production unit, residual effects resulting from a reduction in production capacity during 1998–2002, and related to a reduction in production capacity during 2004–2006, amortisation of public liabilities, deferment of the liabilities, subsidies from the Funds for Environmental Protection and Water Management and others (ibid., pp. 44–46).

The document sent to Brussels by the Government of the Republic of Poland was the basis of the notification by the European Commission of the consent to the Government of the Republic of Poland granting a state aid for the sector during 2004–2006.

The realization of the restructuring programme during the other six months 2004 was marked by the boom maintaining on the external markets. It helped the companies, especially Kompania Węglowa S.A., accept an alternative, softened version of the restructuring. In October 2004 the Minister of Economy and Labour accepted the annual plans of winding up the mines Zakład Górniczy Bytom II and "Katowice Kleofas". The processes of winding up the "Polska Wirek" mine (as well as many others) – on account of the mines' sound results – were stopped upon the decision of the Board of Kompania Węglowa S.A. The unionists exulted proving that they were right to have challenged in the previous year the accuracy of the economic calculations submitted by the government experts in justification

of the winding up of the four mines of Kompania Węglowa. Employment in the industry by the end of 2004 fell to 127.097 people (as compared to 128.219 by the end of 2003), that is by 9.359 people. Just as in the previous years, a considerable part of the leavings accounted for retirements (45%) and mining benefits (48.4%) and the number of ground workers who used the active labour market instruments (under the Act of 28 November 2003) was insignificant (0.3%) (*Informacja o przebiegu restrukturyzacji... za styczeń...*, p. 16). In the breakdown including the employee categories – the rate of redundancies in the group of pit workers (as compared to the overall number of employees in this category) amounted to 7.5% in 2004 and among the ground workers – 4.6% (own calculations based on: *Informacja o przebiegu restrukturyzacji... za listopad...*, p. 23 and *Informacja o przebiegu restrukturyzacji... za styczeń...*, p. 18).

Such a tendency maintaining since the beginning of the implementation of the Programme... (as of 28 January 2003) caused a slight shift in the proportion of pit workers to the number of ground workers – in 2004 the ground workers accounted for about 29.8% of the pit workers in 2004, respectively 30.7% (the author's calculations based on as above). An interesting completion of these figures is information on the changes in the level of employment in mining companies in 2004 as compared to 2003 with different sex taken into account. It turns out that at similar proportions – about 10% women to men (in 2003 – 10.6%, in 2004 – 10.7%) the percentage of women who left jobs is definitely lower than the analogous percentage of men (5.8% against 6.9%) (own calculations based on *Informacja... za styczeń...*, p. 16). The changes in the level of female employment in the mining industry during 1998–2003 are illustrated by the following table.

Tab. 1. The number of women employed in the coal mining industry in the years 1998–2003. As of 31 December.

No.	Year	Total	Employment group				
			Workers	Technical supervisors	Office workers	Non-production workers	Guards
1	2003	14 457	7 170	2 665	4 568	1	41
2	2002	15 247	7 691	2 539	4 940	10	67
3	2001	16 534	8 333	2 612	5 419	14	156
4	2000	17 268	8 739	2 661	5 634	43	191
5	1999	19 601	10 098	2 730	6 377	126	270
6	1998	23 308	12 950	2 837	6 980	259	282

Source: prepared by ARP S.A. Branch in Katowice on the basis of the data submitted by coal production units.

Since the majority of women employed in the mining industry are ground workers once again it turned out that the implementation of active labour market services intended for such workers is much harder than the implementation of protective measures which only pit workers could benefit. In June 2004 on the initiative of the Silesian Voivod Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men Dorota Stasikowska-Woźniak, with the support of the World Bank and the Silesian Entrepreneurship Development Foundation, there was held in Katowice a conference on the situation of women in the mining industry. It was – ever since the beginning of the restructuring processes – the first meeting devoted to the problems of women, both those currently employed in mining companies and those who used to be or are now connected with mining through their husbands-mineworkers.

The latter group are more and more often women who are forced by their husbands loss of jobs to start an occupational activity, sometimes after many years' break. Present at the meeting, the Mining Labour Agency's President Piotr Mielnicki, informed that out of the 10.000 people who have contacted the Agency in the recent years looking for a job – 2.7% accounted for women. Besides, there were 800 wives of mineworkers registered in the Mining Labour Agency of which 15% had no job experience. The figures acquire particular importance when compared to the information concerning the regional labour market in which there has been described an unfavourable for women situation. For years women have accounted for the majority of the registered unemployed – 55.6% in December 2001, 57.3% in November 2005 (after: *Śląski rynek pracy w latach 2001–2005*), they also outnumber the long-term unemployed (over 12 months) – in all *powiats* of the Silesian Voivodship the rate is higher than 50% and in some of them it is even considerably higher – from 67% in Dąbrowa Górnicza to 78.2% in Żory or 74.5% in Jastrzębie Zdrój (after: *Bezrobotni pozostający bez pracy powyżej 12 miesięcy w województwie śląskim...*, pp. 17–18).

Moreover, despite the recently decreasing unemployment rate in the voivodship (16.8% – 2004, nationwide – 19.1%, 15.4% in November 2005, nationwide – 17.3%), since December 2001 the number of registered unemployed women fell by 3.8% – in the case of men the respective rate was 9.3% (*Śląski rynek pracy...*, p. 4). An important effect of the conference of 8 June 2004 was to bring this previously neglected gender aspect of the mining transformation to the attention of public opinion, central and local government, employers, non-government organisations, labour offices. Just for the record it should be noted that in the *Programme of Mitigating the Effects of Employment Reduction in Hard Coal Mining in the Silesian Voivodship* (*Program łagodzenia w regionie śląskim skutków restrukturyzacji zatrudnienia w górnictwie węgla kamiennego*) of 2003 women – along with the dis-

abled, long-term social service users, homeless, alcohol or drug addicts, former prisoners, the youth reared with educational care facilities or foster families, of pathological background, refugees – were considered belonging to risk groups. Among the activity aiming at reducing the phenomenon of social marginalisation of such groups, they provided for supporting women on the labour market, developing a system of support for women that would enable to reconcile the occupational roles with the social ones (ibid.: Action 2.4. Social and professional integration of the special risk groups).

In 2004 there appeared first proposals of active labour market services, intended for women, such as the Academy of Women Leaders organised on the initiative of the Silesian Voivod Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men by the Silesian Centre of Equal Opportunities with the participation of the Silesian Labour Agency, Silesian Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development and the World Bank or the research into the fates of ground workers leaving their jobs as mineworkers including women in particular, carried out with the funds of the World Bank (the Japanese government's grant) by the Silesian Centre of Equal Opportunities in November and December 2005 (*Skutki restrukturyzacji zatrudnienia w kopalniach węgla kamiennego...*).

After 1 May 2004 there were opened new possibilities of pursuing projects intended for women (and other groups in danger of being excluded from the labour market and social marginalisation) within the structural programmes. Among others, within the Sectoral Operational Programme of Human Resources Development, Operation 1.6. Occupational Integration and Reintegration of Women, the Mining Labour Agency prepared the Silesian Occupational Consultancy Programme for Women, the realisation of which was scheduled on the second half of the following year (*Informacja dla Rady Ministrów o przebiegu restrukturyzacji...*, p. 43).

In general, the year 2004, as compared to 2003, had a positive result for the sector: the mining industry reduced employment, reported a considerable improvement of the financial activity results, paid off the current debt, paid a considerable part of liabilities (see more in *Informacja... za listopad...*, p. 56). In December 2004 the Council of Ministers adopted a programme of privatisation of the coal sector which was included to the Restructuring Programme approved by the Cabinet in April that year. In the document called *Strategy for Privatisation of the Coal Sector* (*Strategia prywatyzacji sektora górnictwa węgla kamiennego*), there were presented the goals of the programme, the basic guidelines and reasons for taking the privatising actions after the completion of the restructuring and consolidation, mainly the directions and possibilities of privatising coal mining entities, indicating the public offer as a preferable form of privatising coal mining companies as well as the specific directions of the planned trans-

formations. Its authors also pointed to some potential barriers to the privatisation process, primarily "the lack of consent to the privatisation on the part of the unions" and "the claim-oriented attitude of the trade unions operating within the privatised organisations" (*Strategia prywatyzacji...*, p. 10).

This time the diagnosis proved to be just accurate. Nearly a day after the announcement of the *Strategy for...* there appeared in the press unambiguously negative opinions of the heads of two main mining trade union headquarters – Solidarity, Dominik Kolorz and Trade Union of Polish Mineworkers – Wacław Czerkawski (*Dziennik Zachodni*, 22 December 2004). In the meeting of the Tripartite Commission (for Mineworkers' Social Security) on 21 March 2005, the representatives of the trade unions handed in Minister Jacek Piechota the results of the referendum carried out among the mineworkers – over 97% of the voting mineworkers were against the privatisation of the coal sector. However, in spite of the unionists' reluctance, in 2005 actions towards privatising particular entities of the sector were continued.

In midyear 2005 the European Commission made a decision ((K92005)1796) concerning the notification of the state aid for the Polish coal sector during 2004–2006, thus accepting the governmental restructuring programme. The analysis of the enonomic and financial results of the sector for the first six months of 2005 showed that, along with some positive phenomena such as the rise in general efficiency, the positive net financial result and positive result of the coal sale, maintaining a positive rate of profitability, reducing the level of liabilities and a decisive improvement of the rates of financial flow, there were also certain negative phenomena.

First, there was a considerable rise in the coal reserves which, according to some experts, was a result of the deteriorating economic situation on the external market. Secondly, there was a remarkable reduction in the dynamics of the fall in employment, especially in the case of ground workers. An analysis carried out in the midyear by monitoring the course of the mining reform Agency for Industry Development S.A. (Agencja Rozwoju Przemysłu S.A.) showed that, while in the case of social protection measures, i.e. miners' benefit, the degree of implementation of the scenario provided for in the alternative version of the leaving scenario amounted to 60.7% of the plan, in the case of active labour market services the situation looks dramatic – the retraining grants were used up in 1.6% of the plan and the retraining contracts in 1.1%.

According to the *Informacja dla Rady Ministrów o przebiegu restrukturyzacji górnictwa węgla kamiennego w I półroczu 2005 r.*, prepared by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour for the Council of Ministers, "the data indicates the failure to implement the guidelines of the government programme in the scope of the reduction of employment of ground workers"

(p. 35). The department in agreement with the presidents of the mining companies decided to conduct an analysis of the effectiveness of active labour market services. A part of the analyses was sociological study the results of which will be quoted further towards the closing section of the article.

Now, in turn, we shall deal with the third phenomenon, a negative one from the viewpoint of the reformers and not just those to whom it may concern. This is the phenomenon which came up in the second half of the year. In July 2005, three months before the presidential and parliamentary elections, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland deliberated over the bill on amendments to the Act on Pensions Paid from the Social Insurance Fund guaranteeing mineworkers maintaining the present, favourable pension system.

The pension system reform carried out in 1998 (Act of 17 December 1998, *Official Journal*, No. 1118 with subsequent changes) has left by the end of 2006 special regulations on miners' pensions, enabling mineworkers to take retirement as early as at the age of forty something on the condition of at least 25 years' experience as a pit worker. Miners' pensions higher than the average domestic pension (in 2004 the average pension paid from the Social Insurance Fund amounted PLN 1432.54 while the average miners' pension – PLN 2287.26 zł, http://www.zus.pl) are considered by the mining community not as a privilege but as a benefit due resulting from particularly hard working conditions. Regardless of age, 25 years' experience as a pit worker results in a serious harm to health which practically makes it impossible to carry on working even in lighter conditions. Among the retired mineworkers, there are middle-aged men of forty something who started work as very young people and have worked in hard conditions for 25 years (cf. Statements of D. Kolorz – Mining Solidarity leader and Andrzej Chwiluk – head of the Mineworkers Trade Union in Poland, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Katowice, 5 August 2005, p. 8).

The unionists' arguments, however, convinced neither the government representatives nor the representatives of employers. Later in July that year, mineworkers once more took to the "streetfighting" arguments – a strong representation of the unions organised in front of the Sejm building demonstrations that could be matched only to those of September 2003. Again up went the stones, bottles and firecrackers. On 27 July 2005 the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, upon the request of the Speaker, then one of the presidential candidates[6] passed the Act amending the Act on Pensions Paid from the Social Insurance Fund, which except few provisions (limiting the group of eligible mineworkers or workers in similar jobs excluding for example full-time unionists) contained favourable for mineworkers regulations enabling

[6] A few weeks later, due to false allegations of illegal stock exchange trades Speaker Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz withdrew his candidature.

them to take early retirement[7]. Signed by the Retiring President Aleksander Kwaśniewski as quickly as it was passed, the Act of 27 July 2005 was protested by the unions of employers as inconsistent with the Constitution of the Republic of Poland and extremely expensive. In the last days of office, Marek Belka's Cabinet submitted a motion to refer to the Constitutional Tribunal to check whether the Act did infringe the binding law.

Meanwhile, several weeks after seizing power the new right-wing government (Peace and Justice) withdrew the appeal from the Tribunal. In reply to this, a motion for rereferring the Act to the Constitutional Tribunal was submitted by the Polish Confederation of Private Employers "Lewiatan". The temperature and the heat of the public debate on miners' pensions showed that chances of reaching agreement between the employers and the unions are very small. The unionists, employers, representatives of the ministry (social policy), journalists, economists contended for discrepant assessments of the budget burden resulting from the implementation of the provisions of the Act of 27 July 2005 (cf. the interesting summary of the debate: "Górniczy kocioł", pp. 1–2).

There also appeared opinions indicating the fact that all the parties of the social dialogue neglected the problems of special "bridge" pensions, they have not been able to pass such an act for the last few years, some proposals in this matter submitted by the government in 2004 (it should be added, much less favourable for mineworkers) did not go on (because of the unionists objection) any further beyond the negotiations stage at the Tripartite Commission. Finally, many commentators stressed the dangerous precedence of maintaining special pension privileges for mineworkers, in subsequent years other groups of workers, who also benefit – although to a lesser extent – separate favourable legal regulations, might issue their claims. That may challenge the standardization of the pension system provided for in the pension reform of 1998 (A. Dryszel, 2005: 11–13).

On 21 December 2005 another sitting was held of the Tripartite Team for Miners Social Security during which the conditions of the realisation of the

[7] (Section 50 para. 1: To be eligible for a miners' pension a worker must meet all the requirements:

1. aged over 55;

2. employed as mine worker for at least 20 (men) and 25 (women) years including periods of equivalent employment as stipulated in article 50c para. 1;

3. retirement age required of employees: women with at least 20 and men – at least 25 years of mining or equivalent employment including at least 15 years mining employment amounts to 50 years.

Art. 50 e 1. Eligible for mining retirement pension regardless of age and position are workers who were employed as pit workers on a regular full time basis for the period of at least 25 years (including among others periods of work disability due to industrial accident or occupational disease and others (...)) (Art. 50 e, para 2).

postulates filed for a longer time by groups of mineworkers concerning the rise of average pay at Kompania Węglowa S.A. and Katowicki Holding Węglowy S.A. were agreed. In the adopted in 2004 *Plan of accessing coal reserves during 2004–2006 and plan of closure of coal production units during 2004–2007* (*Plan dostępu do zasobów węgla kamiennego w latach 2004–2006 oraz plan zamknięcia kopalń w latach 2004–2007*), there were adopted the guidelines limiting the rate of annual average pay in the mining industry to 4.5%. Finally, just before the end of the year, the Council of Ministers upon the request of the Minister of Economy Piotr Woźniak agreed on a one-off increase of the pay rise rate in both companies by 1.8%. In exchange for the agreement on the rise of remuneration, the unionists accepted the proposals concerning the introduction in 2006 in both companies of a uniform collective agreement which, 18 months before in July 2004, had been the cause for the stormy manifestations in front of the site of Kompania Węglowa S.A. in Katowice.

Whether and how long this compromise reached at the end of 2005 will ensure the social security in the mining industry is hard to envisage. Following the pre-election promises (Peace and Justice), concerning a diversion from the program of the sector privatisation and the decisions of Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz's Cabinet related to miners pensions and pay rises, one can get the impression that once more the scenario which serves the interests of all the partners of the present political arrangement worked, the scenario, described by K. Gadowska (2002), as a "corporate clientelism" system.

The future of the mining industry will depend, first of all, on the economic situation of the sector which, despite certain evidence of reverse of the economic situation, is still favourable. After some massive redundancies in the previous years, it turned out that in some collieries pit workforce is becoming scarce. Jastrzębska Spółka Węglowa S.A. announced at the beginning of 2006 that it would employ 1000 people to work in the pit. Uppersecondary schools started to open mining classes. It is likely that in the following months there will be new jobs in the mining industry, next generations of employees are approaching retirement age (T. Głogowski, 2006: 27). However, there is not any certainty that the situation will maintain in the following years.

5. Conclusions. Lessons for the future

So what will the long-term results of the sector reforms be? Leaving the assessment of the economic aspect of the reform to professionals, let us look at less tangible social consequences of the reform. The data concerning that

sphere are by far less clear. The studies on fates of miners who took advantage of the Social Package for Miners, carried out by the Chief Institute of Mining (GIG – Główny Instytut Górnictwa) in Katowice between the year 2000 and 2002 on the representative sample of miners (1476 interviews) showed that they have met many difficulties to find a durable job. However, the rate of people working among the mineworkers who left collieries between 1 October 1999 and 31 March 2000 rose within two years from 23.9% to 58.7% but the same rates for the subsequent groups of beneficiaries of the Social Package for Miners (GPS) were much lower (among the mineworkers who benefited from the GPS between 1 April and 30 September 2000 there were 38.4% working, in the group of those who left between 1 October 2000 and 31 March 2001 – 36.7%, between 1 April 2001 and 30 September 2001 –26.9%, between 1 October 2001 and 31 March 2002 – 50% (source: *Badania ankietowe górników, którzy skorzystali z oferty Górniczego Pakietu Socjalnego*, 2002).

It follows from the same research conducted on the turn of April and May 2002 that out of 1476 interviewees, a majority stayed outside of the labour market (67.1%), nearly every seventh person was unemployed and only 18.2% of the questioned had a job (source as above). The similar survey carried out by the Silesian Association for Equal Opportunities headed by Kazimiera Wódz in November and December 2005 proved that despite immense commitment on the part of the institutions responsible for the implementation of the employment restructuring programme, including the Mining Labour Agency failed to persuade a greater number of ground workers to benefit active labour market services (according to the Act of 28 November 2003). Those who had benefited such instruments (by November 2005 – only 64 people! Of which the majority accounted for men – 72%) normally managed to get a new job (*Skutki restrukturyzacji...*). Thus it is possible to say that on account of the small number of people in the group under study it is hard to issue far-reaching general conclusions – that the active labour market services (especially the retraining contracts related to a direct shift to a new job) proved to be effective.

In the quoted studies a series of deepened interviews were conducted with institutional experts representing all the relevant participants of the restructuring process ranging from employers (Kompania Węglowa S.A., Katowicki Holding Węglowy S.A., Spółka Restrukturyzacji Kopalń S.A.) through workers' representations (the "Przeróbka" Trade Union associating workers employed at coal mechanical processing plants, the "Sierpień 80" Independent Trade Unions, as well as the newly established the Trade Union of Women Employed in the Mining Industry) to the Mining Labour Agency, Industry Development Agency or Central Mining Institute. To comment it let us quote some statements. A respondent representing

Katowicki Holding Węglowy, referring to the lack of interest of ground workers in active labour market services, says among others: "the long-term process of restructuring (...) amounted to making workers redundant or having workers take early retirement, pre-retirement benefit and not taking on new staff. As a result (...) the average age of ground workers has risen and those who benefited from these instruments would be a group of workers made up of 90% women with secondary education and aged about 50".

According to the interviewee, this group is insufficiently mobile, besides "(...) traditionally in Silesia there has been this attachment to the place of work and fear of change (...) considering the situation on the labour market that we have seen so far and we can still see now". A trade union representative is sharing his experiences: "(...) when I meet with people they say to me: what for do I need these retraining courses for the fork lift one or the welder one? The offers for the new jobs were insufficient for the demands. The job was only for a short period of time and underpaid (...) everybody wanted to keep their jobs, for everyone being announced that they would need to retrain meant their having to leave mining. And he did not want it. (...) Some people took the courses on their own accord, they just thought they might take a chance but unfortunately having left collieries some of them could not cope with the situation. People knew about it and they just did not want to risk" (the "Przeróbka" Trade Union).

The same interlocutor, when comparing the settlements under the Act of 28 November 2003 with the social protection instruments provided by the Act of 26 November 1998 (i.e. the so-called GPS), says as follows: "the most accurate and proven solution was the miners' leave, actually miner's benefits. Very popular were lump-sum allowance payments, (...) their side effect is widely known, those who enjoyed a material stability in their families were able to make a good use of the resources and develop. However, people who were less enterprising would squander the money quickly. Well known were the dramatic cases of getting the allowance payment stolen, miners getting beaten and even murdered. (...) The money for activating should go not to the mining industry but to the communities outside mining" (the "Przeróbka" Trade Union).

According to the GAP representative (GAP stands for the Mining Labour Agency), "that Act (of 26 November 1998) left the people to their own devices. They only received cash (...) and had not been prepared and taught to realise that it was not just leaving a colliery but leaving a job and changing it for a different one". The new Act (of 28 November 2003) provided more care for the workers leaving their jobs: "(...), there is a meeting with the employer, then with an employee, talking about their qualifications and occupational needs" (GAP).

An interesting completion to the opinions is provided by a commentary of a representative of a trade union: "the 1998 Act was passed pressurized by some of trade unions (...) for example the Solidarity was the driving force in this case. They said OK, we will agree on voluntary redundancies in the mining sector if you give us severance payments. (...) What was going on in 2003 was just a result of the experience of the trade union who knew that such a policy makes no sense. That this is just trading one's own job for a mere pittance (...) many people who would never decide to take this in other circumstances did actually take these one-off allowance payments (...) and it turned out very quickly that those people had no chance on the labour market and their fates were hopeless (...)" (the "Sierpień 80" Independent Trade Union).

The same respondent pointed to a widely known relation between the mining restructuring processes and redundancies in the mining surroundings which largely contributed to a tremendous increase of unemployment during the implementation of the programme of the years 1998–2002. Admittedly, since 2003 the number of the unemployed in the Silesian Voivodship has been falling slowly and there has been a steady reduction in the employment rate (17.6% in 2001 to 15.3% at the end of 2005 but, simultaneously, the territorial differences are maintaining in the levels of unemployment from 25.7% in Świętochłowice to 7% in Katowice and the rate of people out of the job for over 12 months is rising (nearly 50% by the end of 2005) (source: *Informacja o poziomie i strukturze bezrobocia...*). Welfare centers receive miners or their families in ever greater numbers, while social workers inform that, despite optimistic assessments of the reform conducted by its authors, among those clients there are also those who took severance payments for unconditional leaving the industry, or participated in training programmes[8].

It seems, then, that the farther away from the centre and the closer to local communities, the more doubts and fears concerning the future. Is it possible to forecast today the situation of miners and their families that were the subject of our studies in the next ten or twenty years' time? It is risky to make forecasts in social sciences, yet it is always possible to make an analogy. In this case, the analogy will be one to the fate of similar mining communities in the countries where restructuring processes have already been completed – the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany. The example of British miners seems most interesting for a few reasons.

[8] This is based on the information obtained from social workers from welfare centres in the Silesian Voivodship, with whom we constantly co-operate in implementing an education programme within the framework of Social Work Unit of the Institute of Sociology of the Silesian University. The Social Work students prepared several social projects devoted to the problems of aid for former miners. All those projects are available in the Library of Social Work Unit (Instytut Socjologii, Uniwersytet Śląski).

First of all, the comparable scale and time scale of employment reduction processes in Poland and the UK are similar. Between 1998 and 2002 some 100 thousand employees (102.600) left the Polish mining sector, next 15.113 thousand were made redundant between 2002 and 2005. The increased rate of redundancy in the years 1998–2002 was undoubtedly due to the Social Package for Miners (GPS). In the UK the process of restructuring of coal mining took a much more dramatic course. Despite the violent protests of trade unions, the government headed by Margaret Thatcher achieved a total closedown of the extractive industry (and what follows – a mitigation of trade unions, themselves) in that country. Of the 211 collieries functioning in the UK in 1981 only one remained in 1994 (in Scotland), of the 218 thousand miners only 8.518 remained (K. Coates, M. Barratt-Brown, 1997, here quoted after E. Fieldhouse, E. Hollywood, 1999: 483).

Alike in Poland, also in the UK the mining industry was highly concentrated in certain places, thus the collapse of that industry negatively influenced the mining communities. Taking no account of the specific circumstances in which the processes of restructuring of the extractive sector took place in the UK, it is worth noting, though, that British miners had access to similar social protection instruments as their Polish counterparts did, including also the lump-sum severance payments to those who undertook to leave employment positions in the mining industry and not to seek re-employment in the industry (J. Dziadul, 2000). The sociological studies carried out after ten or more years among local communities of former mining regions revealed that there is hidden unemployment among laid-off miners, one third of people in working age receive work disability pensions, not undertaking any economic activities (N. Guy, 1994). Of particular interest are the results of longitudinal studies carried out in 1991 on a random sample of over one thousand miners. The miners that were the subject of the study were employed as pit workers in English and Welsh collieries in 1981. Only 42% of them worked full time in 1991, 12.4% were registered as unemployed, 25.4% were retired, while 14.3% received disability pensions (E. Fieldhouse, E. Hollywood, 1999: 487–488). The authors of the studies quoted here stress that almost half of the miners (47%) at working age who worked in collieries in 1981, in 1991 were without permanent employment (ibid., p. 490).

This is a very worrying picture, stimulating reflections. The more so that also in other countries, where the processes of restructuring of mining took a much slower pace, and were implemented with the engagement of the state's own funds and external funds (e.g. the structural funds of the European Union), the former mining regions have been facing grave social problems. In the Ruhrgebiet, where the processes of restructuring began in the 1960s already, the unemployment rate and poverty index are much

higher than in other (western) Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany (in July 1997 the unemployment rate in the Ruhrgebiet amounted to 14.6% and was 3% higher than the national average in FRG; T. Rommelspacher, 1998: 81). In some towns, e.g. Gelsenkirchen, Herne, Duisburg, that rate was even higher, amounting to some 18–20% (ibid.). The de-industrialization of the Ruhrgebiet entailed a drastic reduction of jobs (470 000 in the years 1961–1995), which was not compensated for by new investments. In the years 1978–1994 the number of jobs dropped in that region by 5.4%, at the same time in the Nord Rheinland-Westfalia there was an increase in the number of jobs by 12% and in all western Ländern by 13.3% (S. Bleck et al., 1995: 125–143; K. Brickau et al., 1996: 238–252, here quoted after: T. Rommelspacher, 1998).

The German researchers point out that old industrial regions, despite considerable efforts of local and regional authorities as well as external support, were in the recent years unable to regain the dynamics of development from the period of industrial prosperity, while attracting new investments especially in the so-called new, technologically advanced branches of industry often appeared unrealistic. Various programmes aimed at supporting entrepreneurship, establishing technological parks, enhancing the attractiveness of towns by promotion activities, cultural programmes, organising international fairs and activities of such kind, undoubtedly useful and bringing economic benefits, did not result in reducing unemployment and the scale of poverty. New jobs, meant mainly for better educated and highly qualified people, are rarely ever taken by former miners! In most towns a growing differentiation of household incomes and deeper spatial segregation of inhabitants have been observed (J. Friedrichs, R. Kuppers, 1998: 102).

Similar phenomena can be noted in other countries (D. Byrne, K. Wódz, 2001). There are numerous reasons to give a closer look at the fate of former miners in the North-Eastern England, the Ruhrgebiet or the Nord-Pas-de-Calais. No matter how "painlessly" it is possible to make thousands of miners redundant from the collieries of Upper Silesia and Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, winning social peace at the expense of severance payments, paid long holidays for miners, or early retirement schemes, those people and their families will live in their local communities for long years, not always able to find a worthy place there without the job which for many was the basis for collective and individual identity and dignity.

The studies carried out recently, involving several hundred miners employed in the collieries of the Upper Silesian agglomeration, indicate that they may face serious problems when trying to adjust to the demands of post-industrial economy, as their cultural and social capital does not guarantee them a lasting success on the post-industrial labour market (K. Faliszek,

K. Łęcki, K. Wódz, 2001). The majority of the studied coal mine workers were not ready to accept the social costs of economic transformation, manifesting strong attachment to their traditional occupational roles, their work place and community. The persistence of such attitudes, despite the relatively large number of workers who left the coal mine industry, is predominantly defensive. Thus, it can be supposed that in the nearest years we will have in the Silesian Voivodship to do with the processes of social marginalisation of these least mobile social groups which can constitute a serious threat for social coherence of the region. Particularly vulnerable to these processes will be former working class housing estates which go back to the times of early industrialisation. This issue will be dealt with in the next chapter.

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Economic restructuring of the Silesian Region (Voivodship) and the future of the old working class districts

1. Social and cultural phenomena of old working settlements in Upper Silesia

Anyone who has visited Upper Silesia, even once, is overcome by the charm of old houses for workers, built of red brick, with window embrasures painted red or green, while the windows themselves, against all the greyish landscape around, boast their snowy-white *Gardinen* hanging in them. The Silesian family houses (*familoki* in the local dialect), which gained the value of artistic symbol thanks to films directed by Kazimierz Kutz, graphics by Jan Szmatloch, or photographs by Joanna Helander, are not only an element of the industrial landscape of Silesian towns but also – and perhaps first of all – a part of the nostalgic picture of the past, of the mythical kingdom of childhood, which resides in the memory of people who were born in this place and were either forced to leave or chose to do so. This embellished, phantasmagoric picture of Upper Silesia, so delineated by Jerzy Illg in his introduction to the special issue of the magazine *NAGŁOS*, is in sharp contrast with the reality of everyday life in the old, neglected settlements (J. Illg, 1994).

The old settlements for workers, established back in late 19th and early 20th century, nowadays prove to be enclaves of accumulated poverty, which consists of both poor housing conditions (sanitary conditions, technological defects, degraded direct environment, lack of greens) and social ones (domination of people with low material status, poor education, high percentage of the elderly, various groups living on the margin of society which find lodging or place to hang-out in the derelict family houses which are to be pulled down). The condition of material and social degradation which can be encountered in the majority of old settlements for workers in the indus-

trial part of Upper Silesia clearly accounts for the discriminating social policy that was practised after World War II towards the native inhabitants, who had to give way to the needs of heavy industry. People from outside the region were attracted to take employment in mines or foundries by the perspective of high wages and obtaining flats in blocks of flats that were built on the outskirts of towns. The massive influx of people from the East and Central Poland, culturally heterogeneous, coupled with the emigration of natives to Germany, resulted in considerable destruction of the old local structures and disintegration of the former closed communities of workers, like those living in the "Bobrek" Steel Works settlement, in the Zgorzelec colony in Bytom, the settlement of Nowy Bytom in Ruda Śląska, or that of Nikiszowiec in Katowice (K. Wódz, 1992; N. Juzwa, M. Wenklar, 1996).

However, those processes did not necessarily bring about similar results. As can be proven by the systematic sociological studies, conducted in the towns of the Katowice agglomeration since the late 1970s, the old settlements for workers preserved much of the traditional "community", which found expression in the local dialect, specific customs, religious rituals, as well as strong feeling of being different from the non-Silesian neighbours (K. Wódz, 1992; 1993; 1995; K. Wódz, K. Łęcki, 1998). From the sociological point of view, the old settlements for workers in Silesian towns form a definite type of "social space", saturated with symbolic values, connected with the traditional industrial culture of the region. They were born due to industry, and industry defined – for many years – the specific rhythm of everyday life, and the rituals of professions in those communities.

The type of settlements, specific for those old districts, created chances for everyday contacts, exchange of information and services provided mutually among neighbours, thus promoting the establishment of local relations, which got strengthened by shared fate during and after the war. It is no accident that those communities offered particularly favourable conditions for transmitting between generations the Silesian ethos, peculiar understanding of the world, in which the behaviour is regulated by common sense and hard grip on reality, not by abstract ideas. The old settlements for workers in the industrial towns of Upper Silesia are, both literally and metaphorically, the seat of collective memory, the evidence of history that left its particular impression in the individual biographies, very similar to those described by N. Dennis, F. Henriques and C. Slaughter in their study of South Yorkshire mining community – *Coal is Our Life* (1956). The old settlements for workers constitute a part of the regional socio-spatial system that was shaped by the industrial past, including the work culture, social relations and production and reproduction of urban space (P. Cooke, 1985; D. Byrne, 2001).

The districts, organically linked with the traditional industry, face real threats today, which stem from inevitable restructuring processes and which are accompanied by dramas of mines and steelworks being closed down, of new investments escaping outside the ecologically degraded centres of towns to create new jobs there, which is followed by the escape of young, better educated and wealthier people to other, better districts or to the suburbs. Such a scenario proved true during the last thirty years in the towns of Northern France, the Ruhr Basin, North-East England or the USA, and its results: the collapse of town centres, seemed inevitable until recently.

However, during 1980s, certain symptoms appeared that marked the reversal of that tendency, under the slogans of "return to the cities" or "gentrification". Increased interest of private and public investors in the, often degraded, downtown areas can be explained in purely market-oriented terms, as the completely modified and improved town centres become attractive business, financial and trade centres, or places where luxury apartments got concentrated, thus attracting yuppies, artists, or intelligentsia. As a rule, such transformations entail a lot of former inhabitants moving away to peripheral districts, which arises justifiable doubts as regards the ethical aspects of such town planning operations (D. Byrne, 2001: 149–187). The term "renovation=deportation", popular among radical sociologists, applies to a situation where the revitalization of degraded quarters takes place neglecting the interests of their former inhabitants, or even in spite of them.

When starting a discussion on the future of old settlements for industrial workers in the Upper Silesia towns, two issues need to be decided. First, whether we aim at "revitalizing" whole complexes in their original shape, which got formed during the period of intense industrial development in the beginning of the 20th century, or rather a selective "revitalization", which would embrace some chosen areas of towns, most attractive in terms of history and town planning. The former type of revitalization, sometimes limited to the renewal of single buildings or blocks of buildings that considered a part of historical heritage of the community or country has been quite popular before 1989 in Poland. Founded by the state budget – they used to be a long-term, cost-consuming process, focused on the areas of particular architectural or town-planning values, historic monuments, and so on (K. Skalski, 2000: 33).

After 1990 (the beginning of the decentralization process in Poland and establishing self-government at a local level) some Polish cities, supported by Western experts (and money, offered within the pre-accession assistance to Poland) started several pilot projects of revitalization, for example, Załęże 2000 – a project of revitalization of the one of oldest parts of Katowice –

prepared in cooperation with urban-planners from Groningen (Holland), and Dublin (Ireland) (J. Chmielowski, Z.J. Kamiński, 1996: 31–36), a project of revitalization of Kolonia-Zgorzelec – an old workers' settlement in Bytom, in cooperation with IBA Emscher Park from Germany (G. Rendhen, 1996: 41), or the revitalization of one of the most degraded area of Sosnowiec – Pogoń Nowa – in cooperation with French experts from Nord-Pas-de-Calais (M. Zralek, S. Podkański, 1996: 51–56) and finally, the most successful project of the revitalizing of the old town of Bielsko-Biała (supported initially by American Organisation USAID/PADCO).

As Krzysztof Skalski[1] assumed, the outcomes of the cited above and many other projects that started in the early nineties in cities like Cracow, Lublin, Płock, Sopot, Szczecin were rather modest (K. Skalski, 2000: 37). The main reason of the failure of this early phase of the urban renewal in Poland were: "a lack of stable working cooperation between the state and self-government and of the financial and organizational support for the revitalization programmes on the part of central administration" (ibid)[2].

It is true that the implementation of whole complex projects in revitalizing proves to be very costly and, as could be seen in many examples of the revitalization of the central sites or waterfronts (like London Canary Wharf), investment risk-prone with limited benefit for the local population (D. Byrne, 2001: 156–162). The economic factors, which evidently cannot be overlooked, do not always tally with the social or cultural reasons that are postulated. For Jane Jacobs and many other architects who think similarly, revitalization of a town mainly means restoring to the town its lost functions of providing for the various human needs: from the economic to the recreation and aesthetic ones (J. Jacobs, 1961).

For others, it means rebuilding and strengthening the neighbourhoods, particularly if they preserve even just elements of local social relations, while others still stress the creation of economic basis for their functioning and the improvement of the life quality of the inhabitants (H. Gans, 1972). As can be seen from the above examples, "revitalizing" may be defined in

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[1] Architect, urban planner engaged in the implementation in Poland after 1989 of the French operating urban planning model, head of Association Forum of Revitalization, created in 1998, organization which realized between 2000–2004 the Polish-French *Program de Formation d'operateurs de renouvellement urbain*, see, K. Skalski, 2004.

[2] The first attempt to create a comprehensive legal base for the renovation and modernization of the urban areas, as well as the later project of the Act on revitalizing programmes, prepared for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (a governmental body) in 2000 were abandoned in 2002 as outdated. New assumptions for the Law on the Revitalization of Urban Areas have been proposed by the Department of Spatial Order of the Ministry of Infrastructure in 2004, but still are at the stage of consultancy (A. Muzioł-Węcławowicz, 2005).

many ways, while each definition brings about a different view on the aims of such activities and the criteria of their assessment.

The second of the necessary decisions to be made when debating the future of the historic housing and industrial districts of Katowice region is, thus, connected with providing answers for the following questions: what to revitalize for, and for whom? Not to enter into academic discussions, one may indicate that in the case of such socio-spatial structures as the old patronal settlements, the most adequate would be the activities focused exactly on the revitalization of neighbourhoods, preserving where possible their original social structure and cultural peculiarity. Of course, in each case one should, beforehand, carry out a simulation analysis of potential profits and costs of such a project (D.B. Rosenthal, 1980).

From the social point of view, such an analysis should consider possible losses that could be suffered by the existing inhabitants of those areas of the town, mainly: the projected cost of flats (rent, taxes, prices of flats, etc.), the financial costs connected with refurbishing and modernizing flats, the psychological costs connected with the necessity of changing jobs, the risk of losing the existing social relations and access to services, including also the unofficial network of social aid, intensification of tensions and conflicts between the existing and new groups of inhabitants. Throughout the town, the possible social costs may apply to the results of relocation of certain groups or categories of inhabitants, difficult to foresee (e.g. the elderly, the poor, deviants) from town centres to outskirts of town, or to another, as a rule "worse" part of the town, for example the increased demand for social aid, intensified social pathologies, social and economic degradation of those areas accelerated and deepened, etc.

People of lower socio-economic status who are moved from one part of the town to another, due to the implementation of the revitalization programme in their district or quarter, have legitimate reasons to fear that their situation may get worse instead of improving; no wonder, then, that often they are determined to defend themselves against such projects. At the cost side, one should also put the possible spending on education and social programmes (including also donations and allocations for rent that go to poorer inhabitants, trainings and courses for the unemployed, etc.).

As in assessment of any investment, the success of the revitalization programme of a given area may be considered when the advantages of the implementation of that project exceed its costs. As regards social advantages, the most important one should apply to the local community itself: improved living conditions and life quality (enhanced standard of flats, improved aesthetics of the surroundings, reduced or eliminated environmental threats, better access to social services), improved feeling of security among inhabitants, and – mainly – creation of new jobs for people made

redundant from mines or steelworks that are closed down, due to restructuring of the economy. Taking into consideration the socio-demographic structure of the communities inhabiting the old settlements for workers (in particular the level of education and professional qualifications) and their poor mobility, one could expect that the success of revitalization programmes in old housing and industrial districts of Upper Silesia would mainly depend on whether the latter condition could be made reality.

However, the sociological studies carried out recently among miners inhabiting the communities in question here indicate that they are not prepared for the changes awaiting them (K. Faliszek, K. Łęcki, K. Wódz, 2001). Of the 450 coal mines workers questioned in 1995, over 60% had not attended any course or training since 1990, 67.6% did not think recently of changing jobs, among the latter there are also workers employed by coal mines under liquidation, or destined to be closed down. This means that those communities will be rather against any fundamental changes in their existing lifestyles, including taking jobs which require higher qualifications or entrepreneurial initiative, and that will, consequently, gravely reduce the possible activities to be undertaken by private or public investors.

The problems quoted above do not exhaust the issues contained in the complex question of revitalizing historic housing and industrial quarters of the Katowice Region. Besides problems relating to technology and designing, town planning, architecture, there is the whole spectrum of financial, legal, organizational, and competence problems, which all equally decide upon the success of revitalization projects. Revitalization is a par excellence social process. First, because it applies to specific groups of people, their expectations, needs, fears and possibilities; secondly, because the implementation of projects in town planning on such a scale that is required when modernizing the old blocks of family houses or downtown areas demands firm support by local self-governments, state administration, as well as active cooperation of those who will be subject to such changes.

2. Europeanization of Regional Policy in Poland The new opportunities for the comprehensive revitalisation programmes for the old workers' districts in Upper Silesia. The untapped potential?

Coming back to the question of the near future of the old worker's districts of Upper Silesia, it should be said that it will to a large extent depend on how the process of restructuring of the regional economy will

run, whether it will be accompanied by the comprehensive revitalization programmes or not. Up to 1989 there were not such sensible programmes, neither at the governmental nor regional level. However, several sectoral programmes, covering some social consequences of the restructuring of the mining sector were launched by the Polish Government from the early nineties of the last century (see: "Social consequences..." in this volume). At the regional level, the interesting example of the more comprehensive approach to social regional planning was the *Regional Contract for the Province of Katowice* (*Kontrakt Regionalny dla Województwa Katowickiego*, 1995) signed in 1995 between state and regional administration, local self-governments, civil society representatives – trade unions, regional associations, the chamber of commerce, etc.

Born out of the corporate spirit, the Contract assumed a wide co-operation between the state and regional authorities on the one hand, and economic entities and trade unions (especially Solidarity) on the other hand in the process of restructuring in the Province of Katowice (compare further: *Kontrakt Regionalny...*, 1995). Following the settlements of the Contract, the Upper Silesian Fund (Fundusz Górnośląski S.A.) was established, as well as the so-called local segments, that is agreements concluded between municipal authorities and social and economic institutions, for joint preparation of local development programmes and plans. To achieve that, several local development agencies had been established, the activities of which were co-ordinated by the Upper Silesian Agency for Development and Promotion (Górnośląska Agencja Rozwoju i Promocji; after 1997 – Upper Silesian Agency for Regional Development – Górnośląska Agencja Rozwoju Regionalnego S.A.; more in: M. Kołczyński, 1999).

In accordance with the guidelines provided in the Contract, the institutions of local segments (communities) were to play a special role in solving social problems related to structural transformations in the Province of Katowice. Another equally important instrument to support the processes of restructuring of the regional economy was to be the Katowice Special Economic Zone (Katowicka Specjalna Strefa Ekonomiczna) established by virtue of the decision of the Council of Ministers of June 18, 1996 (*Official Journal*, No. 88, item 397, 1996). The content of the Contract was referred to both in the programmes for development of the Province of Katowice (compare: *Strategia Zintegrowanego Rozwoju Województwa Katowickiego 1998–2002*, Katowice 1997), prepared by self-governments and state administration in co-operation with the Upper Silesian Agency for Regional Development (Górnośląska Agencja Rozwoju Regionalnego S.A.) and other entities comprised in the organs and commissions of the Regional Contract, as well as the state projects of the reform of the mining sector, prepared in succession by the ruling coalition SLD (Social-Democratic Alliance) / PSL

(Polish Peasants Party) (1996), and then by the AWS (Electoral Action Solidarity) and UW (Liberty Union) government (1998).

In 1998 the Act on Voivodship's (and Poviat's) Self-Governments (*Official Journal*, 5 June 1998, No. 91, items 576, 578, No. 155, item 1014, No. 160, item 1060, No. 162, item 1126 with further amendments) was adopted by Polish Parliament. Created by this legislation big 16 regions (Voivodships) – equivalent of the NUTS II in the sense of European Union – were granted by substantial competence to maintain their own regional policies. In 2000 the Act on Principles for Support for Regional Development specified the rules of the coordination between central state and provincial self-governments as well as the institutions, goals and procedures of the policy of regional development in Poland. The new tool for the support of the regional policy – the regional contract, signed between the regional (voivodship) self-governments and the state was introduced. The creation of large regions (voivodships) as the new administrative and self-governing territorial units (although without legislative power) was functional to the conditions imposed to Poland by the EU pre-accession programs (up to 1999 – the assistance programs – Phare Struder, Phare Inred, Phare Rapid, Crossborder, Phare-Initiative or Special Program for Adaptation to Structural Funds).

From 2000 along with the deepening of the accession process and the implementation of the agreements of Agenda 2000, the new model of regional policy in Poland emerged. As a beneficiary of the pre-accession assistance, Poland was obliged to follow the programming principles of the structural funds. In the field of regional development, the special role was played by the Phare Social and Economic Cohesion Program, which was considered the main tool of the diminution of the backwardness and inequalities in the level of development of the regions by the promotion of the economic activity, solving the social problems, employment policy and development of the infrastructure necessary for the economic activity (compare: *Zintegrowany Program Operacyjny Rozwoju Regionalnego 2004–2006* (Integrated Regional Development Operational Programme) here and after quoted as IRDOP, p. 29). The Silesian Voivodship was one of the first (together with the regions of so called Eastern Wall) to benefit from this programme, mainly for the investments in the transport infrastructure and ecology, to a lesser extent to small and medium enterprise development and human resource development (ibid., p. 31).

At the end of 2000 the Council of Ministers accepted the National Strategy for Regional Development for the years 2001–2006 and the Support Program for the years 2001–2002. Between the five priorities of the National Strategy for Regional Development, the support for the areas needing activation and threatened by marginalization (Local development) was mentioned. The other four were: extension and modernization of the

infrastructure enhancing the competitivity of the regions, restructuring of the economic base of the regions and building the conditions for the diversification, human resource development and interregional cooperation (ibid, p. 42).

Together with the Act on the Principles of the support for regional development, these regulations created the legal and institutional basis for the regional policy. The first regional contracts – the main tool for regional policy – have been signed in June 2001. The regional self-governments received from the state budget subventions for the realization of their own tasks (indicated in the regional strategies and development programmes, in accordance with the strategic goals of the Provisional National Development Plan for 2000–2003). The contracts included integrated operational programmes and several sectoral programmes, focused on realization of the general goal of the regional development policy, defined as: "creation of the conditions for the enhancing competitiveness of the whole country and of the particular regions within Europe and between European Regions" (ibid., p. 32).

In 2003 the *Regional Programme of the Mitigation of the Consequences of the Employment Restructuring in the Hard Coal-Mines Sector* (*Program łagodzenia w regionie śląskim skutków restrukturyzacji zatrudnienia w górnictwie węgla kamiennego*) (for three years) was approved by the regional parliament (Sejmik) in 2003 as the Operational Program for the Strategy of Development of the Silesian Voivodship for the years 2000–2015. Although the title of this document could suggest that it is a narrow-minded sectoral programme, in fact it was the first comprehensive programme, dealing with the short and long-term consequences of the economic restructuring of the region. The main goals of this programme were defined as: "rising the competitiveness of the region by the restructuring of (regional, K., J. Wódz) economy and enhancing the investment attractiveness (of the region, K., J. Wódz) and the development of the adaptive capacity of the inhabitants on the regional labour market". The assumption was that these goals should be realised mainly by the acceleration of economic growth mechanisms joined to the structural changes in the economy (from the traditional industry to the new developmental industry and service economy), springing up new jobs. For workers directly concerned by the restructuring process, particularly those from the coal-mine sector, different forms of aid were provided for the years 2003–2006, aiming at better adaptation of the workers to the changing labour market (by re-qualification or self-employment) (more see "Social consequences..." in this volume).

The general goals of the Programme as well as its priorities (extension and modernisation of the infrastructure for the enhancement of competitiveness of the Silesian Voivodship, strengthening of the human resources

development and growth of the regional economy competitiveness) were related to the goals and priorities of the National Development Plan for 2004–2006 defining the social and economic strategy of Poland in the early years of functioning within the EU and to the priorities of other operational programmes (Integrated Regional Development Operational Programme (IRDOP), Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resource Development (SOP HRD)).

Conceived as the strategic and operational tools of the implementation of EU structural policies, not surprisingly, these documents echoed the EU programming principles (complexity, complementarity and coordination of the national, regional and local policies, concentration, additionality, subsidiarity, partnership) and the neoliberal rhetoric of the Lisbon Strategy. Without going to a detailed description of the Programme (more see: "Social consequences..." in this volume), one should recognise its positive role in the preparation of the whole Region to the absorption of the flux of money coming from the state budget, from the pre-accession funds through loans and credits of the European Council Bank for Development, European Investments Bank, World Bank, to (from 2004) structural funds. The growing importance of the regional level in the programming, managing and implementing of different kinds of the public aid, related to the process of adaptation of Polish administration and law to EU standards, gave more strength to the regional self-government and stimulated the development of the regional civil society organisations (such as the Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Upper Silesian Regional Development Agency, Local Development Agencies, Regional Innovation Strategy – Silesia, the Silesian Union of Mining Municipalities, the Silesian Union of Municipalities and Districts, Euroregion "Beskidy", the Olza Association for Cooperation and Regional Development, and many others)[3].

The accession of Poland to the EU in 2004 was a real turning point for the more comprehensive way of thinking about the fate of the old working class settlements in the post-industrial era. The new opportunities, linked to the structural policies, especially the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund (and the Cohesion Fund), were opened to the most problematic regions of Poland, including Upper Silesia. The strategic goal of the National Development Plan for the years 2004–2006 – development of a competitive knowledge based on entrepreneurship econ-

[3] The relationships between the regional administration, self-governments and the large spectrum of civil society representation in the regional policy in Upper Silesia after 1998 were a matter of the separate study, realised under the direction of K. Wódz within the 5 EU Framework Programme, Organised Civil Society and European Governance, co-ordinated by Prof. C. Ruzza, University of Trento (HSPE-CT-2002-00114).

omy, capable of long-term sustainable development, ensuring the employment and social, economic and spatial cohesion on the regional and national level (NDP 2004–2006).

According to these goals, the Integrated Regional Development Operational Programme for the years 2004–2006 as the most important instrument of the national regional policy was prepared. Its goals were defined as "creation of the conditions for the growth of economic competitiveness of the regions and counteracting the marginalization of some areas in the way that will promote the long-term economic development of the country, its economic, social and territorial cohesion and integration with the European Union" (IRDOP).

Within the IRDOP the Priority 3 (Local development) is addressed to the deteriorated urban quarters and postindustrial areas. The objective of this priority is to mobilize the social and economic activity of the communities, threatened by the marginalization process and to include them to the developmental process of the country and Europe (IRDOP, Supplement, 2005, p. 146). Among the measures proposed to achieve this objective, there are two which are of particular importance for the future of the old industrial areas in Upper Silesia: 3.2 (Areas undergoing restructuring) and 3.3 (Degraded urban, post-industrial and post-military sites). The aim of the Measure 3.2 is to counteract the social and economic marginalisation of the restructured areas (ibid., p. 159). This measure provides infrastructural projects, resulting from the local development plans or programmes on the communal, transcommunal or district level. What counts are projects which contribute to the public benefit and complement the regionwide measures taken as other priorities of the IRDOP (Priority 1 – Development and modernisation of infrastructure aiming at strengthening the competitiveness of regions, Priority 2 – Strengthening the regional economic basis and human resources). The Measure 3.3 aims at "encouraging development of new forms of economic activity that generate jobs by means of offering infrastructure for running business activity adapted to the needs of new enterprises along with care of the state of natural environment conditioning the sustainable economic and social development, and also – economic and social revival [and] (...) raising tourist and cultural potential, including giving the degraded sites and areas new social and economic functions by means of:

- revitalisation and renovation of degraded towns and urban quarters;
- revitalisation of postindustrial sites by means of changing their previous functions into such functions as economic, social, educational, health, leisure and tourist;
- revitalisation of post-military sites" (ibid., p. 168).

Under the Measure 3.3 two submeasures were separated: revitalisation of urban areas (3.3.1) and revitalisation of post-industrial and post-military

areas (3.3.2). The projects pursued under these measures are intended to be an element of comprehensive approach to the problems of degraded towns and post-industrial and post-military quarters as well as counteracting permanent marginalisation of inhabitants in these areas. "The infrastructural projects concerning revitalisation of urban and postindustrial (as well as post-military) areas should be implemented in relation to the projects in the range of economic revival and solving social problems and facilitating entrepreneurs' running their business activity (...) complementing at the same time measures taken under IRDOP Priority 2 (Strengthening local human resources and SOP "Development of Human Resources 2004–2006" and SOP "Rising Competitiveness of Enterprises between 2004 and 2006" as well as the Community Initiative EQUAL" (ibid., pp. 169–170).

Implementation of the projects of revitalisation of towns and quarters is also to be the basis for future implementation of the Community Initiative URBAN. According to the guidelines specified in the IRDOP Supplement 2004–2006, the projects of revitalisation of urban areas eligible for the structural fund support should result from several years Local Programmes of Revitalisation. Such programmes, prepared by *gminas* and poviats interested in EU support, should contain a detailed description of urban areas (post-industrial and post-military) which require revitalisation. What should be taken into account in the description of such areas is both the social criteria (inhabitants' level of education, level of poverty, unemployment rate, crime rate) and the economic ones (enterprise) and material (housing conditions, environment pollution, degradation of technical infrastructure and buildings (ibid., p. 171).

The catalogue of objectives within the scope of Measure 3.3. is very wide, it includes among others: clearing the old tissue of urban architecture by means of suitable development of empty spaces, repairs, reconstruction of facades, fronts, roofs, rooms in premises meant for business purposes (e.g. for the purposes of creating enterprise incubators), training or cultural (excluding construction and assembly work in individual flats), renovation of buildings of historic value (including monuments of industrial architecture), adaptation, conversion or renovation of buildings and public utility spaces including adjacent surroundings for the educational, social, service, tourist and healthcare purposes (e.g. nursery schools, schools, social aid centres, therapy centres, culture clubs), premises used for the purposes of development of business activity and employment, functional and aesthetic rehabilitation of public space (e.g. squares, market squares, carparks, playgrounds, leisure areas, parks etc.), repair and reconstruction of technical infrastructure, improvement of transport facilities (roads, pavements, pedestrian crossings, cycling paths), conversion of buildings and infrastructure used for tourist and cultural purposes etc. (ibid., p. 171).

All the measures, according to the guidelines of the priorities of EU structural policy, should favour the creation of new, permanent jobs and combat the processes of social exclusion of inhabitants of the areas undergoing revitalisation, with consideration of the principles of EU horizontal policies, i.e. equal opportunities, environmental protection and development of information society.

These objectives are to be pursued by means of ERDF funded infrastructural investments of the IRDOP on the one hand, and investments in human resources (mostly financed by the ESF under the SOP – Human Resources Development 2004–2006, especially Measure 1.5 "Promotion of active social policy by means of supporting special risk groups" and Measure 1.6 "Women's vocational integration and reintegration" as well as under the IRDOP (Measure 2.2 "Equalising educational opportunities through scholarship programmes", 2.4 "Vocational reorientation of workforce affected with restructuring processes" and the Community Initiative EQUAL) and measures to the end of supporting economic development, on the other hand (Measure 2.5 IRDOP "Entrepreneurship promotion" and Measure 3.4 "Micro-enterprises"). Supplementing the latter is to be SOP Improvement of Competitiveness of Enterprises, years 2004–2006).

In accordance with the principle of complementarity, local programmes of revitalisation of urban areas, post-industrial (and post-military) sites should be created so that they would enable a comprehensive approach to the problems of the areas, taking into account resources deriving from different measures and programmes as well as resources outside EU funds (Labour, ibid., p. 169).

A short period of time that has passed since the beginning of the process of implementation of operational programmes in Poland, co-financed from structural funds and relatively small number of projects (in 2004 – eight, in 2006 – six) approved by the Board of the Śląskie Voivodship to be subsidised under Measure 3.3 of the IRDOP does not allow to assess any possible effects of their implementation. However, in general the extent of interest in the projects in the Śląskie Voivodship is not very big. In the first admission, there were 20 projects entered, of which 17 complied with the formal criteria of eligibility, and of that number the Board of the Śląskie Voivodship shortlisted eight for the subvention.

Among the projects that qualified for the subvention, there were among others revitalisation of the old town in Bielsko-Biała (where designing and preparatory work had been run for many years), as well as revitalisation of the old town in Pszczyna (famous for the historic palace complex functioning as a museum), a project of revitalisation of a complex of industrial water reservoirs in Chorzów, a project of adaptation of a former colliery building for the purposes of the Silesian Technical University in Sosnowiec and of another one for the same purpose in Bytom and also three infrastructural projects.

To sum up the process of the first competition for projects entered within Measure 3.3 in the Śląskie Voivodship in 2004, Paweł Syrek pointed out that many projects did not meet the goals and objectives laid out in the IRDOP, they were either too narrow or too wide, they do not have any long-term visions of revitalisation, they focused on infrastructure, without referring to complementary social and economic projects (P. Syrek, 2004).

A year later, at the second competition there were over one hundred entries, of which 84 were assessed positively in terms of formality and 45 received positive assessments of experts. Unfortunately, because of the limited funds granted for realisation of projects under Measure 3.3 of the IRDOP (PLN 29.9 m – the sum that the complex projects submitted amounted to was ten times higher) only six qualified for the subvention by the Regional Steering Committee, including four submitted by units of territorial self-government (3 gminas and 1 poviat) and two by public institutions (a tertiary education institution and a museum) (zporr.silesia-region.pl).

Among the approved applications, the majority concern Measure 3.3.2 ("Revitalisation of post-industrial and post-military areas") and only one – Measure 3.3.1 ("Revitalisation of urban areas – revitalisation of the historic Piast's Castle in Gliwice, combined with the conversion of its function for social purposes"). Out of the remaining 37 projects (positively assessed by a team of experts), only two concerned Measure 3.3.2. From the information received in March 2006 in the IRDOP office it follows that selecting projects for the subvention (with limited resources) the Regional Steering Committee preferred those that were focused on creating new jobs and simultaneously were not too expensive. With such an approach the ambitious, comprehensive projects of revitalisation of urban areas were rather unlikely to have been subsidised[4].

3. Conclusions

Not prejudging the progress of the work connected with the implementation in the towns of the Silesian agglomeration of EU structural policies in the scope of supporting the programmes of revitalisation of degraded urban areas and post-industrial sites one can point to some annoying tendencies nowadays. First, in many towns there have been delays in work over local programmes of revitalisation without which using the support

[4] Information received on 13 March 2006 from Mr. Mateusz Niemiec of the Marshal Office of the Śląskie Voivodship (Department of Programming of Development and Structural Funds).

under the IRDOP Measure 3.3 is impossible. The delays largely result from the lack of suitable legal regulations, especially concerning land management (land register, mortgage, real estate register, expropriation procedures, etc.) and also – financial instruments enabling self-governments to run their active housing policy in their own area, co-financing the costs of renovation and modernisation work in houses, regardless of the proprietorial situation (K. Skalski, 2004: 115–125).

The housing situation in the Śląskie Voivodship is in many respects more complicated than in other regions of the country, there are more communal dwelling stocks (14.8%, in the whole of Poland – 11%), those of housing associations (33.9%, in the whole of Poland – 28.6%) and of companies (5.6%, in the whole of Poland 2.2%) (source: National Census 2002. Housing Śląskie Voivodship. Katowice, 2003). The comparison of the dynamics of the development of housing construction in the Śląskie Voivodship and the nationwide figures also looks unfavourable, after 1989 the pace of growth of dwelling stocks in the towns of the Śląskie Voivodship was twice slower than in the whole country (5.5% to 12.1%, source: as above).

Moreover, in spite of the high hopes that were raised in Poland by the development of the Social Housing Associations (the so-called TBS) – the share of flats provided by the TBS (intended for tenants on a rather low income) is marginal (0.3% in Poland, 0.2% – in the Śląskie Voivodship, source: as above). However, if there are no solutions to the housing problems the revitalisation programmes are unlikely to succeed.

Unfortunately, in Poland there does not seem to be any willingness to carry out suitable reforms just as the ones which function in EU countries in the context of the combat against social exclusion. Attempts to transfer the French experience of operational urbanisation onto Polish ground failed because the majority of Polish self-governments have not been prepared to run municipal policies just like the French Development Social des Quartiers, Development Social Urbain or Programmes d'Amenagement Concerte de Territoires Urbaines (J. Damon, 1997).

A weakness of the previously pursued in the Śląskie Voivodship revitalisation programmes is the citizens' social participation – their role is normally restricted to participation in survey studies or they appoint some social advisory organs the role of which is limited to participation in meetings of steering teams as well as meetings with councillors. Analysing Local Revitalisation Programmes as prepared by some of the Śląskie Voivodship self-governments one can get the impression that their authors do not really understand what social participation means.

For instance, in the Local Revitalisation Programme of the City of Katowice, adopted by the City Council in June 2005 in item 7.3 merely a few questions were devoted to "stimulating local community to getting engaged

in the revitalisation process". This is supposed to be served by "social communication" or "informing local community (...) which should explain benefits from the revitalisation activities in exchange of an interim disturbance of the normal rhythm of life and provide all the Programme partners with access to full information on the Programme:
– stimulating local community to express their own opinions,
– mutual agreement between partners participating in the revitalisation".

And the last paragraph: "In the process of social communication on the part of the Municipal Office there will be provided common access to information on possibilities of receiving structural fund support, criteria of assessment and selection of projects and the procedures which are binding in this respect to all concerned with the realisation of the projects on the territory of the City. Besides, there will be held meetings with local community" (*Lokalny Program Rewitalizacji Miasta Katowice*, p. 77).

These few sentences are insufficient as for the over eighty-page document drawn up in the style of technocratic and bureaucratic planning. It does not devote any space to overall look at the problems of communities inhabiting the areas which are undergoing revitalisation, the close cooperation of self government authorities, various institutions and government agencies, residents' association, communal and social services, physical and legal persons, public and private sector etc., active participation of residents in creation and realisation of programmes (J.M. Delarue, 1993).

In the quoted document there is a question of social tasks, the pursuit of which is the aim of Local Programme of Revitalisation of the City of Katowice covering among others:
„– improvement of the quality of inhabitants' living, including among others the scope of their housing conditions, public safety, health care and social aid,
– enhancement of inhabitants' identification with the city as well as **creation of conditions for the change of social structure in the revitalised areas**" (ibid., p. 4; emphasis K., J. Wódz).

The authors of the Programme do admit that they really care about "enabling cultural and economic elites to return to the city centre" (ibid., p. 37). The present inhabitants will be offered social flats located in other parts of the city off the centre, there they will be covered by a special programme of social integration and counteracting social pathologies (as above p. 38).

It is hard to regard this programme as consistent with the guidelines and goals of the IRDOP, Measure 3.3 as described above. The proposed "exchange" of inhabitants of the degraded central quarters of the city, carried out under the banner "elites' comeback", is not only ambiguous but it does contradict the very idea of revitalisation which aims at stimulating the activity of communities threatened by marginalisation and acting to-

wards their joining the life of local community and not exporting them to the periphery for the sake of gentrification of the centre.

The example of Katowice Programme is symptomatic of the pro-business attitude which prevails among the majority of self-government officials (regardless of changing terms), the attitude of putting the interests of potential investors above the interests of local communities. The authors of the quoted document do not mind the perspective of deepening of the processes of socio-spatial segregation of the city, their vision of revitalisation corresponds with the logic of post-industrial (globalised) capitalism where the only thing that counts is competitiveness and economic effectiveness and the needs of the poorest inhabitants fade into the background (S. Fainstein, 1994: 100). If such tendencies maintain in the future (and a lot indicates that it is likely to be so, despite rising interest of architects and the local press in the charm of old working class settlements in Upper Silesia (cf. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 14 March 2006), we can expect that shortly the centre of Katowice as well as other towns of the Upper Silesia agglomeration will change into flagships of post-industrial capitalism with impressive sites of banks, business corporations or administration. The peripheral districts, neglected and inattractive for investors, will continue to fall into further degradation turning into areas of economic and cultural discrimination[5].

If that was the case, we would have to do in the Śląskie Voivodship with deepening of the processes of socio-spatial polarisation as observed for many years in many industrial regions of Western Europe and the USA. By way of exemplifying, let us refer to the study of restructuring of social space and cultural forms in North Eastern England, precisely to the Tyneside conurbation, which is similar to the Katowice conurbation in many respects (D. Byrne, K. Wódz, 2001). The Tyneside conurbation, usually called by the name of its part – Newcastle, is considered within the typology of urban areas as part of the so-called rustbelt, i.e. towns which have failed to carry out the "transition to the post-industrial era" as opposed to those industrial

[5] There are, however, some exceptions like Nikiszowiec – an example of a garden-city style working class district of Katowice, founded at the beginning of 20th century by the German architects Emil and Georg Zillmann from Charlottenburg. The unique urban value of this area was recognized officially by municipality. Regeneration of Nikiszowiec was included to the Local Programme of Revitalisation of the City of Katowice (see: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Katowice, 20 March, 2006). We should add that except for IRDOP, several research projects in the field of regeneration of the old industrial areas were undertaken by different regional institutions within the EU research programmes, like project MASURIN with the participation of Bytom (the most problematic district Bobrek) or a project RESCUE, coordinated by the Main Minining Institute from Katowice within the 5th Framework Programme of EU, with participation of Bytom and Sosnowiec. For the details see: www.rescue-europe.com, www.masurin.org.

towns which have succeeded in effecting such a transition and gained a certain kind of global status (e.g. Manchester – the above mentioned typology by D.S. Lash and J. Urry, 1994: 151–152). Newcastle is considerably scattered and diverse and some of its inhabitants live in poverty both in terms of relative and real incomes while earnings of others are much higher than average.

Describing the socio-spatial consequences of de-industrialization in the area of Newcastle in the North-Eastern England, D. Byrne provides an example of the socio-spatial transformation of the Armstrong Business Park in Newcastle, which is a typical administrative-banking centre built on the site of former arms production plant of Armstrong Armaments. Just next to it there is the workers' district of West End, the inhabitants of which used to work for that plant, and now are often unemployed. Today, the only thing those neighbouring areas have in common is the fact that the inhabitants of the West End district sometimes walk their dogs in the park surrounding the offices. Another example is the transformation of the area located next to the river Tyne, which until recently looked like a stinking gutter, with the docks over it, and has been transformed into a place of luxurious consumption, unavailable for the former users of that area, the dockers, today without employment (D. Byrne, K. Wódz, 2001). For many of them, revitalisation of the quarter meant material and social "disinheritance" which entailed serious consequences in the psychological and social sphere (D. Byrne, 1995).

The European experience shows that the successful programmes of revitalisation of degraded town areas such as City Challenge in Great Britain, Contrat pour la Ville in France or Social Renewal Programme in Holland tend to be based on the philosophy of local partnership rather than the investment and market based model (J. Benington, M. Geddes, 2001). They are in principle long-term programmes using a wide-ranging methodology of organisation of local community (A. Twelvetrees, 2002: 164–180).

We hope that in subsequent programmes of revitalisation prepared by local self-governments in the Śląskie Voivodship there will be room beside measures supporting competition and active labour market for broadly understood programmes of combating social exclusion, built with rank and file efforts, with wide participation of social partners, yet supported by the state and its government and self-government agencies.

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Upper Silesia, the Śląskie Voivodship – the beginnings of the debate on its social and political future

1.

In Upper Silesia, especially in Katowice and later on in Rybnik and some other Silesian towns, the 1980s saw the beginning of the press debate on the identity of the region. It fitted the general tendency which emerged in the whole country of searching for our own cultural identification, the tendency noticeable both in regions and in smaller territories or even particular towns. However, there is no doubt that it was Upper Silesia where the debate was the strongest (K. Wódz, 1994). What was characteristic of the debate was its quite unambiguous focus on the past and the identity revindications were justified almost exclusively in terms of community with hardly any vision of a common future.

Hence, the relatively few attempts at pointing to the need to construct any visions of future did not arouse much interest of the polemists as they impeded the community-oriented discourse focused on appreciating "the natives" and humiliating "the strangers" who were either those who had migrated to Upper Silesia from other regions of the country or the inhabitants of the region of Zagłębie, Poles in general or not defined precisely the Polish state. Although the attempts at pointing to the need of a debate on the future did play a major role later on they did not, however, go unnoticed in political discussions of journalists as they appeared (K. Wódz, 1994a). Nor were the attempts to make references to the region within its administrative borders (first as the Katowickie voivodship and later, after the national administration reform, the Śląskie voivodship) concentrating exclusively on Upper Silesia not defined precisely in geographical terms.

A lot changed when there appeared a real opportunity of Poland's accession into the EU and when it occurred that within EU structures a region

became an administrative unit that can be a beneficiary of numerous funds which are so important for the development of the area. In the late 1990s without neglecting the debate on the cultural peculiarity of Upper Silesia (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1999), emphasis was shifted to the construction of the future of the region seen as a territorial unit of local government which in the EU terms permitted to equate a region and a voivodship. One should stress the role some initiatives of the monthly *Śląsk* played in the debate. However, the ethnic problems did not decline in its importance as there appeared some ideas of the official, legal recognition of Silesian nationality which brought about the return of the problem to the public debate. This time, however, due to fact that in the political discussions they promoted the autonomy of the region as the future vision, the debate took on the character of constructing a certain vision of the future (L. Nijakowski, 2004). One should also notice the public debate held at the Silesian Library in Katowice in 2003 initiated by the Ordynacka Association aiming at developing a certain vision of the future of the region (*Alternatywa dla Śląska...*, 2003).

Therefore, it can be concluded that after Poland's accession into the EU the debate on the social and political future of Upper Silesia and also the Śląskie voivodship became frequent in social and political discussions in the region.

2.

Our opinion is an attempt of a sociological look at the problem of the future of Upper Silesia. This is the view of sociologists but it has many features of a contribution to a discussion as both the state of the debate on this subject and the state of the research on the debate do not permit of any definitive conclusion yet.

We have already mentioned something about the state of the debate on Silesia and Silesians. Now we should explain what we mean. Today looking at the state of what can be named as a political debate on the separateness of Silesia and Silesians it is hard not to notice that it has been reduced to the two contrary ends: on the one hand, there are those who have eagerly committed themselves to the matter and lead the discussion in such a way that one cannot resist the impression that they had assumed to have set on a decisive battle for the "status of ever oppressed people" and on the other hand, there are the opponents of this idea who are equally eager to oppose it and say that it is untrue and draw for historical arguments.

Besides, both "parties" use history merely selectively, each one does it to prove that they are the only one who is right. Of course our observation must be a little exaggerated. Still worse is the fact that there are really few who think progressively, no one asks the question whether such a way of leading the debate really serves the cause. What conditions must be met to solve the problem of Silesian separateness in a consistent way to the advantage of this group?

We have said above that the debate is still in its "embryonic stage" and we still maintain this opinion. It is not surprising – one can say coolly that it is a certain regularity because we have to do with a situation where, firstly, there had never been such a debate, secondly, the knowledge of Silesian separateness in our country is extremely poor, thirdly, the debate is often led and animated by people who treat their Silesian origin in a profound way but with no grounds for any general social reflection, to say nothing of sociopolitical reflection. The point is that in the situation which is bound to happen in the following years, the problem will have to be solved taking into consideration the political rules which are applied in Europe. So without this sociopolitical "perspective" such a debate cannot be run seriously.

Let's begin with pointing to some kind of a starting point. We have a group characterised by a clear cultural separateness which at a certain stage of history is given the right to express all their revindications. This is what happened in the late 1980s when the democratization of public life in the country permitted an open debate (K. Wódz, 1994). But the group had been developing for a long time on the edge of at least three cultures, while two of the cultures, both German and Polish, were the dominating cultures in respect of Silesian culture (J. Wódz, K. Wódz, 1999). It is a well known regularity in sociology that dominating cultures are obvious and often unfortunately the only vehicle for personal careers as well as for the development of the elite.

Today it is impossible to "discover" the fact that leaders of the minority culture owe their position in a way to the adoption of the very code of the dominating culture. This makes the elites look somehow ambiguous in respect of the ordinary members of the minority group who have never aspired to belong to the elite and who take staying outside the dominating culture for granted. History has seen a lot of examples of the situation when elites fighting for the fate of such a minority begin to create for the external purpose its idealised image highlighting its positive cultural features in order to win the "right to talk" about their natives in the code of the dominating culture. This is when the need of mythologization and valorization of "natives" is actually created. So acted the Greek elites in the 19th century when, often on the exile in Paris or London, they created for

Europe the myth saying that the Greek nation is the heir of the great Hellenic culture represented by people speaking their own language, making their living by shepherding or fishing and being emotionally related to Orthodoxy.

The need of idealization, which is obvious, is often felt by people talented in arts, subtle people, this is so in the case of Silesia where a significant role in starting the debate on Silesia was played by a group of people connected with art, literature, journalism. To some extent the fact influenced the way the debate was run. The "truth of emotions" here was more important than the truth of matter-of-fact arguments and those who tried to discuss them were rejected or discredited.

Another effect of this "starting point" was, probably, not intended by Silesian elites, the focus on emotional mobilization of the "natives" which straightforwardly leads to the construction of Manichaean vision of the world – "the natives" naturally good, harmed, innocent and the "strangers" always reluctant, guilty of all our misfortunes, those "gentlemen who arrived here just to get us in grip" (quoted after one of the influential members of the Silesian elite). This mobilizes one to defend but in the condition of liberty and the broad right to discuss it makes these really important social issues absurd. It results in reducing the area of debate sometimes making it even impossible. There is created a language of insinuation by means of which one can mobilise "natives" but it cannot win affinity and what's more important understanding of their reasons by the "strangers".

We mention this starting point as it has been influencing the way Silesian separateness is expressed and it largely impedes finding a reasonable, European oriented, solution, a solution of an existing social problem.

In the debate there also appear two political proposals. The first one is a proposal to refer to the pre-war autonomous status of the voivodship and then there is the other political proposal of recognition of the culturally separate Silesian group as a nation. We will return to the matter further on but it should be stressed that both political proposals differentiated the Silesian elites only.

Finally, it should be noted that within years this quasi debate included another tendency – a tendency of remembering the time when Silesian identity developed mainly under the dominating German culture. Attempts at restoring the memory of German presence, dating back to the pre-war time as well as the 19th century were made by artists, writers or journalists, hardly ever by politicians. This very important problem which had been intensely obscured by Polish propaganda for many years caused another complication to the image of Silesian separateness which has existed in the awareness of an average Pole. This way the debate on Silesian separateness included an aspect which was difficult to grasp by many Polish peo-

ple brought up with the myth of universality of Polish romanticism (a myth which was valid in its simplest way in the area of former Russian partition – but it should be stressed that in Poland history was taught as if everything of any importance happened only in the area of the former Russian partition), an aspect of German Silesian identity in which Polish accents did not play any important role and never or hardly ever referred to the high culture.

At the beginning of the 1990s the Katowice voivodship and later the Śląskie voivodship saw the beginning of the industry restructuring process, mainly coalmining. The region once appreciated and much favoured by the authority became a source of trouble, social problems, often simply poverty. In the so-called Silesian debate soon there appeared this aspect but for ideological reasons the restructuring processes were associated only with Upper Silesia and Silesians while, in fact, the restructuring concerned and is concerning now the whole area of the voivodship and the social results of restructuring coalmining began to show faster more severely in the area of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie.

So what is there in the debate? Many emotional stands, certainly arousing thinking about Silesian separateness, certainly incentive acting towards those who consider themselves to be Silesians. There is also a lack of future perspective, making the debate complicated by means of referring to many different aspects of the past, some kind of bringing about conflicts (mainly through confrontational and reluctant to the "strangers" language used by some representatives of Silesian elites) of the Silesian cause, Silesia and Silesians with other inhabitants of the voivodship and also, to put it loftily with Polish tradition.

Then there is the lack of space and culture of the public debate – instead of an open discussion we have to do with ignoring or discrediting opinions which are different to those promoted by Silesian elites. Finally, what is important is the fact that there is no clear answer to the question of what really is the subject matter of the debate. Its politicisation which we will mention further on was perceived once as an attempt to define the subject matter of the debate, but this attempt was just too premature.

3.

At last officially the word "nation" has been used, although it was treated interchangeably with the term "nationality" which in common perception makes things a bit complicated as in Polish "nationality" is understood in a little more different way than the word "nation". The word "nation" coming

up incidentally in different opinions since the beginning of the 1990s was treated as an unimportant element of the debate. Those members of Silesian elites who have a bit longer memory seemed to avoid this term, surely remembering the troubled times of Nazi occupation with respect to another ethnic group (the highlanders) they used the technique of establishing a nation through a political declaration. It ended up with disgrace and now the group has been trying to eradicate that fact from their collective memory. So people aware of history seemed to act very carefully.

But the politicising of the debate had come from the circles who wanted to refer in a quite mechanical way to the conception of the voivodship's autonomy. The Movement for the Autonomy of Silesia is a social movement and at the same time a proto-party with some clear political goals and realising their goals through political actions including creating a political discourse. However, one should stress the fact that references to pre-war conceptions which proved politically attractive for some people as shown by certain successes the Movement has made, have been and still are with no future because in present circumstances a return to the conception of autonomous voivodship is impossible. The autonomy conception is of a territorial character (the term territory can have an autonomous status but not a group of people).

Besides, it is a stative conception and today, while solving the problems of similar communities, other more dynamic political solutions are used. In addition, autonomy emphasising its roots in divergence of the ethnic group accounting for slight percentage (3.1%) of the population of the whole voivodship, being scattered within the area, is a project which, existing though it is, must be considered completely unreal. This is the background in which the idea of establishing the so called Silesian nation appeared.

The appearance of the project of which the political authorship is attributed to Jerzy Gorzelik gave rise to the discussion which sets around three different matters. The first one concerns the sociological and anthropological reasons for or against the existence of Silesian nation. Although in both fields there is no full agreement as far as how the term "nation" can be defined so far in the debate it has been stressed that between the ethnic group and the nation the transition is usually quite long, that what influences it is not the leaders' declarations but the historical process in which the new nation wins recognition of others, those subjective declarations of the will to belong or the feeling of belonging do not determine the social reality permanently because, considering many examples, consequences of such declarations (including this pathetic Polish, so to say, case of the highlanders) tend to vary. However, we will not come back to the debate.

Another aspect is the legal part. In this respect after the first decision by a Katowice court which registered the association (of population of

Silesian nationality) the second instance rejected the motion. After the legal path had been used up in Poland the initiators of the action turned to the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg which decided in two instances and thus it closed the legal path definitely as it subscribed to the point of view of Polish government refusing to register the mentioned association.

Again, in this respect the discussion seemed to be closed although that obviously does not close the possibility of submitting a new modified project by the initiators of the previous project. Such a project was created in 2005 but so far it has been rejected by Polish courts. However, there is also the third problem, something which has been discussed relatively little and which in our opinion is highly important. This third matter is the political content of the project.

It should be assumed that the project of establishing a new political entity meaning that the new nation might be part of Europe, poses many questions which the authors of the project had never tried to answer. These are the questions of the status of the entity with respect to the existing political order in Europe. Would such a nation declare to give up its right of a separate state in the future? Would the initiative group be legitimate to make such obligations on behalf of the members of the nation? What would the relations be like with the neighbouring states, etc.?

Finally, they didn't try to refer to the situation of the national minorities in Poland, each of which has its own motherland group outside Poland, in other states and the status of such minorities is governed by international agreements. One can pose many more such questions and it is not worth quoting them all here.

The most significant of the political questions concerns the status of the territory inhabited by the nation and the future perspectives. Although, as it has been already said, a nation can exist without a state, it can exist being scattered but in the political project it has to determine its relation to the territory it regards as its "native". If we look this way at the project of establishing a new nation one should consider whether the authors of the project themselves did realise the political extent to which the idea was complicated. Even if we assume that some of the questions posed can be omitted through applying the political solutions existing in Europe today then it does not decrease the weight of the problem itself at all.

Discussing the fate of the initiative what should be stressed is the praiseworthy consequence of the authors of the project with respect to their observing legal procedures and applying measurements of the social and political pressure within a democratic state of rule of law and observing the rules of the civil society. Even if in the public debate beginning in the early 1990s the exclusivistic, anticivil approach prevailed, then in J. Gorzelik's project the proposition of civic equalities was respected. This aspect is

a definite distinctive mark of the discourse of the initiators of establishing a "nation" against the previous, emotional and community-oriented one of Silesian elites as mentioned above.

4.

Another issue is giving opinion on the results of the Census of 2002. Let us remind that in the Śląskie voivodship 148.500 people out of total population of 4.742.900 declared Silesian nationality (slightly over 170.000 nationwide). The figures require certain comments. First, they account for the fact that, what is obvious for specialists but often confused in many publications including scientific ones, the problem of Silesian nationality mainly concerns that voivodship and using the results of the sociological research carried out in the neighbouring Opolskie voivodship in debates on this so-called **nation** is a far-reaching simplification, if not an abuse (for the reasons of fundamental differences in the social, demographic and political structures of both voivodships). Drawing on the analogies of the Opolskie voivodship would be possible if the issue concerned only the cultural features. However, if we have to do with the political project (and we do in this particular case) one should hold on to the sociopolitical realities.

Another comment is of a completely different nature. Many Polish publicists (not all though) took the census results as a kind of sensation. Admittedly, as we have tried to stress on many occasions, the reaction of our media as well as some researchers to the results of the census sprang from ignorance and often hidden reluctance towards Silesia in other regions of the country. Not issuing any excuse for anyone, one may say that there are faults on both parts because of the fact that Silesian elites did not make anyone accustomed to treating the problem in a serious way and also for Polish part they did not want to perceive Silesian separateness as a certain permanent element of Polish cultural landscape.

As a consequence of such an emotional treatment of the census figures there was either a dramatic exaggeration of as many as 173 thousand people declared as Silesians or a disregard for the problem – as it is "just a slight percentage of citizens, it is not a big deal, isn't it?" Of course both frames of mind are signs of emotional attitudes and do not lead to any reasonable conclusion. In fact the figure of 173 thousand is not too big for a declaration of "nation" because, although the quantity test does not settle the existence of a nation, it does point to a potential social support of the political project that would lead to the recognition of that "nation".

However, the results of the census show that, although the problem of Silesian nationality option concerns a fairly small group of people, not making – except for rural areas around Rybnik – a considerable majority concentrated on a territory, the very existence of the group constitutes a sufficient reason for seeking a serious political solution, a solution which would respect the civil right to choose and would create real possibilities of expressing their separateness in the public life.

For those who tried to emphasise that the number of declarations itself poses a problem, it is completely useless to use these figures as it does not lead to any constructive conclusions in respect of any future solutions.

5.

The announcement of the results of the General Census has undoubtedly opened a new stage of the debate on Silesian separateness. Such a public debate organised by the authorities of the Voivodship Sejmik was held on 6 October 2003 at the Silesian Library in Katowice. It is hard to summarise this lengthy, sometimes stormy exchange of opinions. Admittedly, the presence of all the prominent representatives of the interested circles (present was among others Jerzy Gorzelik, PhD as well as the representatives of the Upper Silesia Union and German minority association and some researchers and a journalist who has been dealing with Silesian issues) allowed for the first time to create a true public forum in which participated both the supporters and adversaries of the project of establishing "Silesian nation".

The following conclusions of the debate are worth noticing, obviously according to one of the co-authors of this text as there was no official conclusion of the debate. It was shown unambiguously that the authors of the project of declaration of "nation" lack any concrete vision of the future, are unable to answer many fundamental questions connected with the consequences of their actions for the development of the situation in the Śląskie voivodship. Rather, they are satisfied with their media success and provoking the public debate on the matter.

On the other hand, despite these clear drawbacks of the political project presented by the group of Silesian activists gathered around J. Gorzelik they considered it very important to respect rules of law and accept the civil perspective (as mentioned above). From this point of view one can assume that the announcements of some "old" debaters defending the community perspective and using the language of aggression and insult are inconven-

ient to the initiators of establishing the "nation" as they keep decreasing the chance of this project being seriously considered as a basis for the future public debate. Essential also was the fact that both the representative of German minority and the representative of the Upper Silesia Union treated Mr. Gorzelik's initiative with much reserve considering it, to put it gently, premature.

6.

What should be done if we don't want to throw the baby out with the bathwater? In other words, how to lead to establish some serious rules of the debate on Silesian separateness, cultural and economic separateness or maybe some kind of political separateness. The very fact that today it would be hard to acknowledge that "Silesian nation" exists does not spoil the future evolution of the sense of belonging to that ethnic minority group even in the direction where all solutions will be possible. It seems that nowadays there are conditions permitting to return to certain projects previously announced but normally disregarded by the "older disputers" just to present projects including both social and political solutions and also by taking the civil perspective and departing the old complexes and phobias about community to come up with a dynamic solution winning favour for the cause of Silesian separateness not only in the Śląskie voivodship but also in the whole country and also further among our EU partners and neighbours.

Since we noted that the problem of Silesian separateness, the problem we would like to solve in a comprehensive way (both social and political) is a problem which in terms of territory is concentrated on the Śląskie voivodship, the solution ought to be sought first by "pinpointing" that problem to a particular region. In doing so, one should apply the functional definition of a region bearing in mind that in the EU such an approach has much importance. In the EU a region is regarded simply as a unit of territorial division, in our case its counterpart is a voivodship. Thus, the future solution combining social aspects (including cultural ones too) as well as political ones (as the problem concerns the political project of establishing "a nation") must be confined within the Śląskie voivodship. Another thing we should be aware of is the mosaic character of the voivodship in which the problem of Silesian separateness concerns only a part of the inhabitants and where also live groups of different cultural traditions and ethnic identifications.

The search of a good solution should be based on the consequent adoption of civil attitude accepting equality of all citizens regardless of a group they belong to or accepting their refusal to identify with any of the groups as national identification, Polish or other (like of German or Roma minority) is enough for them. It should be a common future perspective built upon civil cooperation of all and furthermost recognition of separateness of everyone. This is what is called prospective defining of a region and what has been known in the practice of western democracies for a long time (J. Wódz, 1995). Such an attitude really offers unlimited freedom of movement in order to draw on the past and the common tradition without making it conflicting with others in some respect. At the same time it stands for an agreement on constructing a possible political project of the future respecting the peculiarity of a given region.

In the case of the Śląskie voivodship it would simply imply creating possibilities for supporting all aspects of Silesia's cultural distinctiveness and seeking political solutions which would give this group a satisfying position in the whole region. But such a solution permits the recognition of other than Silesian ethnic and cultural varieties and demands seeking rules of cooperation for the realisation of the common perspective of the future. In the case of the Śląskie voivodship, particularly for the reason of its ethnic differentiation there is a possibility of creating a solution which would dynamize the development of each of the cultural groups including those within which the inner civil activity will lead to emphasize their own uniqueness. That is to say, the solution which would in fact deepen the realisation of the proposition of multiculturality.

Besides, one can consider some other kinds of differences, not just cultural ones, for example, a distinction between villages and towns or a distinction in terms of the tradition of political culture, so much important on the voivodship's scale and finally economic differences. All of them can become a basis for a social mobilization and it would depend on the civil activity of each of the groups to what extent a given group can mark their own uniqueness in this common project of the future of the region. Taking into consideration the present state of affairs it seems obvious that the group which is marking their separateness the most will be the Silesian group.

In the perspective of European thinking one can consider also the social and political pressure exerted on the region's authorities so that they indicate the chances of development resulting from the regional cooperation of not only whole regions but also their parts which have common interests in the future. In a word, such an approach would permit to leave the rhetoric currently used by "the old disputers" consisting in looking at the past only and to join the perspective based on the awareness of the common fate now and in future.

However, it does not solve the problem of political project yet. This political project may be implemented owing to the adoption of the model of the so called varied geometry decentralising (J. Wódz, 1998 and also J. Wódz, 2001). Such a model is assumed to be dynamic (as opposed to the static character of the model of autonomy) and meets the modern requirements of regional administration applied in different EU countries. It is based first of all on the adoption of the future guideline of deepening the process of decentralising of the country in order to make regional entity status an important factor of economic social and cultural development of regions. Secondly, it consists in the adoption of the guideline saying that particular regions are variously prepared to solve their problems on their own, to set directions of development on their own, to decide on supporting various elements of their independence, including cultural independence on their own.

From the latter follows that in this perspective, profound decentralization, one cannot use any schematic guidelines (and such schematic guidelines were used in Polish approach to the so called decentralization as implemented by Jerzy Buzek's government) but adapt them each time to the extent to which regional communities self-determine their own strengths and possibilities of development. In such circumstances, Silesian separateness and the high extent of organisation of different ethnic or cultural groups would be crucial advantages in demanding that this voivodship be given such broad authorities which might satisfy the political ambitions of the leaders of Silesian ethnic group. But the dynamic character of the solution consists in the fact that these authorities are not given once and for all, they may be withdrawn or restricted if the region in the new situation cannot cope with its problems or may be extended if the region can prove that its separateness gives it strength for its successes. Such a model of varied geometry decentralization has been used in several countries, in each applying slightly different normative solutions.

If we take Great Britain as an example, Scotland and Wales were each given different degree of independence which was justified by the fact that separateness of the Scottish group and the Welsh group should not be sanctified by a uniform schematic solution. In Belgium the country was divided into three regions and also three cultural communities and the regions are not always matched to the cultural communities (there is a bicultural region of Brussels and a German cultural community which is not a region). In the practice of Spanish decentralization the actual independence of particular provinces is dependent on the extent of identity revindication of particular groups and one must remember that there are involved very strong arguments, both cultural and political ones.

There arises a question whether instead of fighting for the recognition of "Silesian nation" or stressing the long standing objections to all, isn't it time to create an original solution, a solution for Poland and for the Śląskie voivodship, based on the model of varied geometry decentralization? In such an original solution the Silesian group would play an important role. Due to its separateness the group might negotiate political solutions which would be beneficial for them and simultaneously cooperate with other groups on the basis of civil principles in constructing a prospective vision of the region as a part which would unite the whole voivodship-region.

This solution would require a lot of intellectual work, political work on seeking a model of solving the existing political problem on the one hand and on the other hand, it would require constructing such relations with the rest of the country and also with other regions in Europe (at least the neighbouring regions in the Czech Republic and Slovakia) which would win understanding and support for such a modern project.

7.

Is it possible in the present state of affairs to trigger such future oriented frame of mind? It is hard to answer such a question because, as we said at the beginning, there has been no broad discussion forum allowing different strengths and intellectual possibilities of Silesian elites to emerge. However, looking at some changes that have taken place for recent years in the way Silesian distinctiveness is articulated and also the appearance of still newer elements in the way the cultural and political revindications are formulated, one may think that within a few following years it is possible to begin such a debate and start such intellectual work. This can be done by new Silesian elites, young, much better educated than the old generation and primarily the elites not marked with the complexes permeating the rhetoric of "the old disputers". These new elites will understand that the future solution will not consist in making declarations of the existence of "Silesian nation" but in winning support for the Silesian cause and in putting forward propositions of modern political model which will allow for emphasising what lies at the heart of Silesian revindications.

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Kazimiera Wódz, Jacek Wódz

Aspekty śląskiej tożsamości

Streszczenie

Książka stanowi świadectwo wieloletnich badań socjologicznych autorów nad Górnym Śląskiem, bardzo ważnym regionem Polski. Specyfika tego regionu – od dawna przyciągająca zainteresowanie socjologów (by wspomnieć badania ks. Emila Szramka czy późniejsze, w okresie międzywojennym, badania Józefa Chałasińskiego) – stała się bardzo aktualnym tematem po 1980 roku, kiedy to w warunkach demokracji i wolności wypowiedzi zaistniała możliwość wyrażania tożsamości przez zbiorowość regionalną.

Zamieszczone w tej książce teksty powstały w latach 1998–2006. Część z nich była wcześniej publikowana, jednak większość ukazuje się drukiem po raz pierwszy, choć materiał empiryczny, do którego opracowanie się odwołuje, był zebrany wcześniej, niekiedy nawet przed 1989 rokiem. Decydując się na włączenie do tomu tekstów, które powstawały w różnych okresach, autorzy chcieli pokazać, jak wraz z transformacją Górnego Śląska zmieniał się ich sposób podejścia i rozumienia badanych problemów. Zebrane w tomie teksty mają różny charakter – od swobodnej, eseistycznej wypowiedzi na dany temat do bardziej konwencjonalnej formy socjologicznego sprawozdania z badań empirycznych. Zawsze jednak są one świadectwem zaangażowania badawczego mającego na celu zrozumienie fenomenu społecznego tego szczególnego regionu.

Książka, z jednej strony, oddaje pewne następstwo projektów badawczych, pokazuje jak z jednego badania wynikały problemy do następnych badań, z drugiej jednak strony została tak ułożona, by skupiała teksty poświęcone problemom mało od siebie odległym.

Początkowe rozdziały zawierają próbę socjologicznego opisu procesu odradzania się, a później, już w nowych warunkach, tworzenia się treści tożsamości regionalnej – śląskiej. Proces ten był bardzo skomplikowany, tak jak skomplikowane były losy polityczne tego regionu oraz losy życiowe mieszkańców tej ziemi, wśród których byli zarówno rodowici Ślązacy, jak i przybysze z innych stron kraju. Autorzy wskazują nie tylko treści tożsamości, ale szczególnie związaną z ich pojawianiem się dynamikę społeczną. Proces tworzenia się nowoczesnej tożsamości regionalnej nie jest bowiem jeszcze na Górnym Śląsku zakończony. Przeprowadzano więc badania tych zjawisk *in statu nascendi*.

Kolejny rozdział poświęcony jest tworzeniu się reprezentacji politycznej w regionie. Przede wszystkim starano się wskazać, do jakiego stopnia uwarunkowania polityczne określały –

i nadal zresztą określają – relacje polityczne między polityczną tożsamością regionu a polityką całego kraju.

Następny tekst dotyczy roli mediów regionalnych, uczestniczących w tworzeniu tożsamości regionalnej. Ich rola w tym procesie nie tylko uzasadniona była specyfiką samego regionu, ale wynikała również z faktu, iż przez kilka dziesięcioleci XX wieku województwo śląskie (poprzednio katowickie), a faktycznie miasto Katowice było drugim po Warszawie ośrodkiem medialnym w kraju. Tutaj, biorąc pod uwagę liczbę odbiorców mediów w regionie, media stanowiły realną siłę społeczną. Bez analizy znaczenia mediów regionalnych trudno byłoby opisać dynamikę odtwarzania i tworzenia się pewnych elementów tożsamości regionalnej.

Autorzy zajęli się również rolą kobiet w polityce – nie tyle z ilościowego punktu widzenia, ile jako symbol i wskaźnik roli kobiet w przemianach prowadzących od tradycyjnego modelu rodziny śląskiej, zgodnie z którym kobieta nigdy nie pracowała zawodowo i w życiu publicznym odgrywała rolę znikomą, po nowe rozwiązania, uwzględniające aktywność publiczną kobiet.

Dwa kolejne teksty dotyczą sprawy kluczowej – restrukturyzacji gospodarki, w tym przede wszystkim górnictwa, najsilniejszej na Górnym Śląsku gałęzi przemysłu, będącego także czynnikiem w istotny sposób współtworzącym całą organizację życia społecznego regionu. Szybka restrukturyzacja tej branży, likwidacja kopalń, bezrobocie górników, wzrost biedy w dzielnicach czy miastach górniczych – to elementy niezwykle ważne w całym procesie tworzenia się współczesnej tożsamości regionu.

Książkę kończy rozdział inicjujący debatę – zarówno społeczną, jak i polityczną – nad przyszłością Górnego Śląska. Tekst ten – zawierający przegląd stanowisk i opinii niektórych elit politycznych w regionie – pozwala, przynajmniej w dużym przybliżeniu, spojrzeć na to, w jakim kierunku będzie zmierzał proces tworzenia się nowoczesnej tożsamości regionalnej.

Kazimiera Wódz, Jacek Wódz

Dimensionen der schlesischen Identität

Zusammenfassung

Das Buch ist das Ergebnis von langjährigen Forschungen der Verfasser über ein sehr wichtiges Gebiet Polens – Oberschlesien. Wegen seines spezifischen Charakters fand es schon immer Interesse bei Soziologen, um nur die Forschungen vom Priester Emil Szramek oder spätere Untersuchungen von Prof. Józef Chałasiński in der Zwischenkriegszeit zu nennen, und wurde zu einem aktuellen Thema nach 1989, als die regionalen Gemeinschaften dank der wieder geltenden demokratischen Verfassung und der Staatsfreiheit ihre Identität wieder ausdrücken durften. Die Kattowitzer Soziologen, und besonders die Hochschulsoziologen, haben die Forschungsherausforderung angenommen und führen (allein oder zusammen mit ihren jüngeren Kollegen) Untersuchungen durch, die zum Ziel haben, die Eigentümlichkeit der oberschlesischen Region aus soziologischer Sicht darzustellen.

Die im vorliegenden Buch enthaltenen Texte sind in den Jahren 1998–2006 entstanden worden; einige von ihnen waren schon früher veröffentlicht, doch die meisten Texte erscheinen hier zum ersten Mal gedruckt, obwohl der empirische Stoff auf den sie sich berufen, noch früher, oft vor 1989 gesammelt worden war. Mit unserer Entscheidung, in den Band die aus verschiedenen Zeiträumen stammenden Texte aufzunehmen, möchten wir begrifflich machen, wie sich samt der Transformation Oberschlesiens die soziologische Auffassung von den untersuchten Problemen änderte. Die im Band gedruckten Texte haben unterschiedlichen Charakter, von einer freien, essayistischen Äußerung zu einem bestimmten Thema, bis zu einer konventionelleren Form eines soziologischen Forschungsberichtes, doch sie sind immer Ausdruck eines großen Forschungsengagements ihrer Verfasser.

Das Buch ist einerseits Folge der aufeinander gehenden Forschungsprojekte, andererseits aber beinhaltet es Texte, die sehr verwandten Problemen gewidmet worden sind.

In fünf ersten Texten versuchen die Verfasser, die wiederbelebte und sich in den neuen Umständen aufs neue bildende regionale – schlesische- Identität soziologisch gesehen zu schildern. Der Prozess war aber sehr kompliziert, so wie kompliziert auch die politische Geschichte der Region und die damit verbundenen Schicksale von den geborenen Schlesiern und den aus verschiedenen Gegenden Polens stammenden Ankömmlingen waren. In den Texten kommt nicht nur das Wesen der Identität zum Vorschein, sondern es wird auch auf die mit dem Phänomen der Identität verbundene bestimmte Gesellschaftsdynamik hingewiesen.

Es muss hier zwar betont werden, dass die Bildung von der modernen regionalen Identität in Oberschlesien noch nicht zu Ende ist, so dass die Soziologen die beste Gelegenheit hatten, alle Erscheinungen dynamisch, im Betrieb, zu betrachten.

Der nächste Text handelt über politische Vertretung in der Region. Es wird hier gezeigt, inwieweit politische Bedingungen im Stande sind, die gegenseitigen Relationen zwischen der politischen regionalen Identität und der Staatspolitik zu beeinflussen.

Der siebte Text ist den regionalen Massenmedien gewidmet. Die Hervorhebung von der Rolle der Massenmedien als eines Mitschöpfers der regionalen Identität ist nicht nur mit der Spezifizität der Region selbst, sondern damit begründet, dass die schlesische Woiwodschaft (früher: Kattowitzer Woiwodschaft) und genau die Stadt Kattowitz, einige Jahrzehnte des 20.Jhs hindurch das zweitgrößte Medienzentrum Polens war. Hinsichtlich der Anzahl von Medienrezipienten in der Region sind die Massenmedien zu einer wirklichen Gesellschaftskraft geworden, es wäre also kaum möglich gewesen, die Dynamik der Identitätsvorgänge zu beschreiben, ohne die Rolle der Massenmedien zu berücksichtigen.

Im nächsten Text finden wir Informationen über die sich verändernde Rolle der Frauen in der Politik, von der traditionellen schlesischen Familie, wo eine Frau nie berufstätig war und im öffentlichen Leben nur geringe Rolle spielte, zur Situation, in der die öffentliche Aktivität von Frauen in Betracht gezogen wird.

Zwei weitere Texte betreffen eine Schlüsselsache – die Restrukturierung der Wirtschaft und besonders des Bergbaus. Der Steinkohlenbergbau war auf dem Gebiet schon immer nicht nur der wichtigste Industriezweig, sondern ein Faktor, der an der Erschaffung vom gesellschaftlichen Leben der ganzen Region, in des Wortes voller Bedeutung, teilhatte. Es wäre schwer, einen solchen Bereich des sozialen Lebens in Oberschlesien zu nennen, der vom Bergbau, sei es auch indirekt, nicht abhängig gewesen wäre. Schnelle Restrukturierung der Branche, Kohlengrubenauflösung, Arbeitslosigkeit von Bergleuten, allmähliche Verarmung von den ganzen Stadtvierteln und Bergbaustädten sind wichtige Elemente in dem Prozess der heutzutage geprägten regionalen Identität.

Und schließlich der letzte Text, der eine gesellschaftliche und politische Debatte über die Zukunft der oberschlesischen Region in Gang bringen sollte. In dem Text kommen zum Ausdruck die Ansichten von manchen politischen Eliten Schlesiens, und das macht uns möglich, mindestens nur annähernd die zukünftige Entwicklungsrichtung von der modernen regionalen Identität vorauszusehen.

Zum Schluss möchten wir uns bedanken bei allen unseren zahlreichen Mitarbeitern, Interviewern, Gesprächspartnern, mit einem Wort: bei denen, aus deren Kenntnissen wir direkt oder indirekt Nutzen gezogen haben. Die Tatsache, dass es uns trotz des häufigen Mangels an finanziellen Mitteln gelungen ist, ein paar wichtige Forschungen durchzuführen, zeugt nur von einem großen „Forschungsgeist" unserer Mitarbeiter. Ohne deren Hilfe wäre es uns nicht möglich gewesen, die Forschungen zu führen und das vorliegende Buch zu schreiben, doch die ganze Verantwortung für dessen Inhalt selbstverständlich nur auf uns, Verfasser, fällt.

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