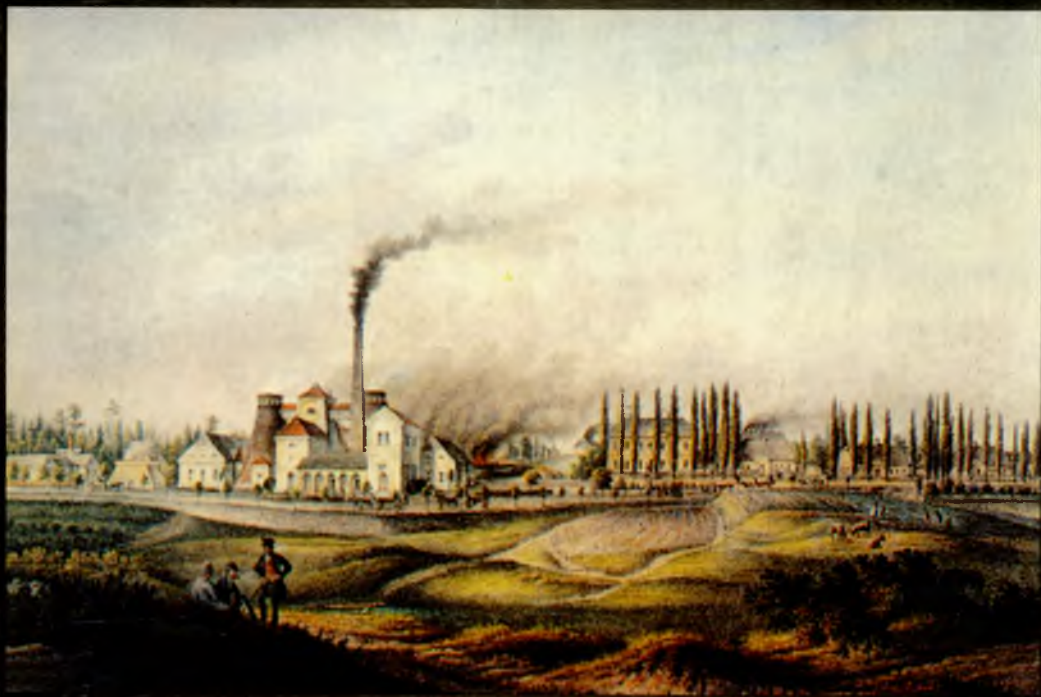


# Regional Identity — Regional Consciousness

## The Upper Silesian Experience





**Regional Identity**  
— **Regional Consciousness**

**The Upper Silesian Experience**

**Prace Naukowe  
Uniwersytetu Śląskiego  
w Katowicach  
nr 1478**

# Regional Identity — Regional Consciousness

## The Upper Silesian Experience

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## **From the Editor**

The revival of regional consciousness and identity claims of the ethnic-regional communities connected with it are in the uniting Europe one of the most surprising and still unidentified phenomena. In the post-communist countries, including also Poland, identity claims entangled in the dramatic heritage of the past epoch bring as many hopes as fears. The first ones are based on the expressed, especially by the advocates of the liberal vision of economic relationships belief, that the developmental potential of the ethnic-regional communities, freed from the corset of central planning and the domination of the ideological centre, will speed up democratic changes and facilitate transition to the market economy. Fears expressed by many political groups from the right wing to the left one concern the threats connected with politicizing the question of regional identity and deformation of the idea of regionalism by the radical separatist movements. Such threats appear especially where the identity claims of the ethnic-regional communities have neither support nor counterbalance in the constitutionally guaranteed democratic institutions.

In Poland, apart from Upper Silesia, there are no clearly articulated identity claims. Nowhere, apart from Upper Silesia, do they cause such strong tensions and fears.

The authors of the studies comprising the present volume attempt to answer the questions key for the future of Upper Silesia: whether and in what direction will the regional identity of the inhabitants of Upper Silesia develop, how will the articulation of identity claims of local communities influence the mutual relationships between the natives and the newcomers, what role will regional political élites play in shaping these relationships, to what extent the postulates of "revitalization of Silesian culture" can be the constructive element in building the efficient programmes of the regional and local

development? Probably the answers to the above questions formulated by the authors of particular studies may seem incomplete or controversial — if, however, the problems undertaken by them are reflected in the public debate over the future of Upper Silesia — then this publication will fulfil its task.

The majority of the texts in this volume has been based on the authors' own research experience who, apart from common place of work (at the Institute of Sociology of the University of Silesia), share interests in the problems of local and regional identity in Upper Silesia and the socio-cultural conditionings of the economic transformation of the industrial part of this region. The research referred to by K. Łęcki, M. Szczepański, W. Świątkiewicz, K. Wódz, J. Wódz, P. Wróblewski have been carried out in Katowice Province, but it does not mean that the problems touched upon by the authors can't be referred to the remaining parts of Upper Silesia<sup>1</sup> or — as is the case with the text by J. Wódz opening the volume — the whole Poland. Of general value is for sure the text by S. Nurek who attempts to sketch the theoretical frameworks of considerations on the socio-cultural identity from the perspective of the sociology of communication. The aim of the authors was to bring closer to as many readers as possible the research problems they have been working on for several years. The penetrating reader will notice for sure that particular studies differ stylistically to a large extent. Preserving the original form of the particular texts, we wanted to stress the individual contribution of the authors and their separateness expressing itself not only in the dissimilarity of style but also treatment of the examined phenomenon.

*Kazimiera Wódz*

## Notes

- 1 The reader unfamiliar with the geographico-historical complexities of Upper Silesia is referred to the earlier publications of the Institute of Sociology of the University of Silesia in English, particularly *Dilemmas of Regionalism and the Region of Dilemmas*, ed. M. Szczepański, Katowice 1993. See also N. Davis, *Heart of Europe, A Short History of Poland*, Oxford 1986.

*Jacek Wódz*

## **To Understand the Polish Attempts at Regionalization: Sociological Remarks**

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The discussion on regionalization has been going on in Poland for many years, although it has become particularly intensive in the last three years. It is understandable since the change of the political system, changes of social structure, and finally, looking for the right form of the state cause the frequent occurrence of one of the basic questions about the relationships between the centre of authority and local units, no matter whether these are to be regions, provinces or finally other organizational units of authority in the locality. This type of sociological statement, although obvious for the observer of events in Poland, causes asking several sociological and politological questions. The answer or answers to these questions will enable to understand better the social sense of the discussion and the future visions of Polish regionalization. These several comments make an attempt to show the possibility of explaining some problems connected with the Polish regionalization attempts.

The first problem which is, as one could think, the key to understand the frameworks within which the discussion is run about regions and regionalization in Poland, is the question about the role of traditional thinking in our country about the state as an expression of national identity, the one which was shaped under the influence of the 19th-century ideas and the history of gaining independence. The idea of this state was shaped in the social consciousness as the idea of the centralized state, based on the common

feeling of patriotism basing on the romantic tradition typical, first of all, for the area of the old Russian sector. It is enough to even superficially analyse the contents of the school textbooks on history or history of literature to notice that, first of all, the history of land under the Russian annexation is presented there, as the 19th-century history, much less is said about the land under the Prussian or Austrian annexation. This type of the idea of state as the realization of this patriotic idea of the union of all Poles finds its understanding in contemporary opinions coming, first of all, from these circles of the society which treat the romantic tradition as the obligatory canon of thinking of Poles. In this way one eliminates from the very discussion the ones who, because of their past, do not share this romantic tradition or it is even strange to them. It applies, for example, to the society of Upper Silesia but also, although to a much smaller extent, Wielkopolska or the territory of former Galicja. It happens so that this romantic idea in its practical dimension was (and still is) associated with the centralistic practices of the authority in Warsaw, it was, thus, easy to evoke two simple associations functioning for a while in social consciousness. The first consisted in that in these parts of the country where does not function this idea of the state based on the romantic tradition, the regional identity was built (and often still is) on the opposition against not so much centralism in general (because such an idea is too general to exist in common consciousness) but in the opposition to specific expressions of centralism coming from the political practice of the authority in Warsaw. The second association, often met in the journalistic discussions over regionalization, is the association of all the ideas of regionalization as acting against this tradition of patriotic unity, ergo against the interest of the state (some also add — and also of the nation). These both associations are of course the expression of enormous simplifications, but it is the sociologist who should analyse them coldly as an expression of certain states of consciousness.

The paradox of the Polish history is that the period after the Second World War, thus, the period of the so-called real socialism, has introduced in its idea of the state this centralist tradition. It of course resulted from the very systemic assumptions of this type of the state but, which cannot be forgotten, also from the specific social needs resulting from the post-war reality. Poland came then into being as the state in the borders considerably different from the pre-war borders. The consequences were great migrations together with many negative effects, human harm but, first of all, separation from any connections with one's own locality, one's own land, one's region. Thus, then, it was more important for people themselves to identify them in a more generalized way as Poles than in any moment would come their pre-war local connections. For everybody who is well-informed in the complicated associations of this time connected with regional and local elements of the feeling of identity, this

tendency is easy to understand. People from the east preferred to avoid associations with the areas where they lived together, for example, with the Ukrainians, people from Upper Silesia preferred not to come back to their connections with the German population and, the more, to their complicated fate during the occupation.

All these processes occurred when the norm was strong pressure of the authority bordering terror, fear, uncertainty of tomorrow. If, thus, the authorities appealed them for national unity, by which it understood dismissing any regional differences to the background, if it promoted the motto "the whole nation is rebuilding its capital", if it organized populating the so-called Regained Territories, these mottos were widely socially supported.

The practice of governing in the period until 1989, despite many differences which characterized particular periods and governing groups, strengthened in the social consciousness the role of centralized state. It was known that "all the matters are dealt with in Warsaw", that this is where people from even small towns would go to obtain decisions in even minor matters but important for them. One should add to it certain ideological justification which was declared in the 1970s under the motto of "the moral-political unity of the nation", and also another fact — the common belief that such a system of centralized authority was convenient for the contemporary "people of authority" where the whole system of promotions was often based or referring to acquaintances, support, appreciation in this legendary Warsaw. No matter how did the actual powers of the centre and local organs in particular periods since the end of war until 1989 spread (and here even important changes took place), in the social consciousness has been fixed the picture of the authority which is in Warsaw, and on which everything depends. It is obvious that state of affairs did not favour the development of any forms of local or regional identity, it did not favour the public discussion about regionalization. At the same time, the differences between different parts of the country have always existed, although their importance has diminished as a result of large waves of inner migrations and mixing of population.

At the end of the 1980s, during one of the sociological conferences devoted to the problems of local identity it was admitted that Poland was already a country with a relatively small number of regions having clear identification features, thus, clear social separateness. It was surely a true statement, but it did not take into account certain states of social consciousness which allow people not having their own regional past join the processes of recreating regional identity where this identity is built on clear features of cultural separateness.

Changes which occurred in Poland after 1989 have from the beginning had influence on the renaissance of the regional problems in the discussions about the future shape of the state. It is obvious that the processes of live "democratization", suppression of censorship and freedom of word have led to the disclosure of the existing regional differences, to the public appearance of various social groups, groups of interest, associations, and even political parties calling themselves regional. The disclosure of these groups was the natural consequence of the freedom of expression, since these groups have existed earlier often hiding their regional or local separateness. It turned out, however, that the basic problem connected with the return of the discussion on regionalization was the sole clear weakening of the state which in its form from before 1989 turned out to be inefficient in relation to social expectations. If, thus, we want to understand the present state of discussion on Polish regionalization, we must not forget that in the first period after 1989 we had to do with overlapping of both above-mentioned phenomena: that is, the freedom of disclosing one's regional or local identity and clear socially felt crisis of the state in its form established before 1989. The necessity to negate many elements of this "old" form of the state has led to the specific fashion to criticize centralism as the essential part of the state considered as a specific relic of the past epoch. One can put a thesis that in social consciousness centralism has become one of the important elements explaining the deficiencies of the authorities of the past period and its suppression seemed to have open the way to better future. It has soon turned out, however, that the fight for power is taking place in the very centre, it started to concentrate new political élites and give a chance for importance also in the area. It did not stop, however, the processes of revival of local or regional identity, although it moved the accents of political activities of groups or regional organizations from the simple negation of the strong role of the centre to developing and deepening regional, identity aspects, supposed to prove the rights of particular regional communities to wider self-government.

One should stress here a very important thing which essentially differs the Polish attempts at regionalization articulated in the two first years after 1989 from the discussions taking place in Western Europe. In Poland rare were the attempts at regionalization based on the pragmatic arguments of the authorities, thus, easier taking up of accurate decisions in the area, easier social mobilization, closeness of authority and citizen, etc. The Polish attempts of these years stressed almost exclusively the identity aspects, sometimes leading even to the revival of uncomfortable social divisions (especially where the region having its identity has for many years been the place of settling of people coming from other parts of the country). It has led to a specific "perverse effect" which could be observed most clearly during the election campaign to the Parliament in 1991. As a result of the propaganda

campaign carried out by the groups using the identity (and not pragmatic vision of regionalization), political concepts have appeared opposing excessive regionalization which was supposed to weaken the unity of the state and be contradictory to the Polish *raison d'être*. If one more precisely analyses the results of the Parliamentary election in these districts in which earlier these appeared groups propagating the identity version of regionalization, and where there is high percentage of immigrant population (not connected with the cultural tradition of this region), it will turn out that significant success in these regions was gained by the parties clearly opposing such an identity vision of regionalization.

The sociological vision of the revival of the feeling of regional and local affiliation forces now to separate from the political elements of regionalization. In these regions where regional identity is clear (and it must be noticed that Poland is a country relatively poor in region with clearly outlined identity), despite the politicization of the discussion on the regionalization of the country, clear tendencies to manifest one's cultural separateness have developed all the time since 1989. If above, thus, we discussed "the perverse effect" boiling down to the political support of the parties which do not favour regionalization, one must not understand that the social tendencies to stress regionality (thus, develop the feeling of regional identity) have been stopped by this political process. Two factors influenced it. Firstly, in the Polish reality of 1991 the political parties still had very unstabilized electorate, it is, thus, difficult to assume that the very fact of voting for a party meant permanent support for specific policy, in this case policy not favouring regionalization. Secondly, in the situation of the weakness of the country, regional lobbies gained positions in their district or city relatively quickly which allowed them to support these groups which developed the following of regional or local identity.

With the time running local regional élites started to develop from this social system which in the way they could started to signal the necessity to build the new type of state, taking into account regional differentiation. Often these postulates of the change of type of state were formulated in a very immature way, what is important, however, is the passing from the stage of criticizing the centralized state to creative the concept of the state in which regions would have wider powers.

Occurring with great force after 1989, tendencies to the revival of local and regional identity cannot be treated as the only reason for starting the deeper discussion on regionalization in Poland. State theoreticians have pointed many times to the necessity of such an inner reform of the state which would consist in transferring greater powers to the lower levels of authority, including

also the levels intermediate between commune and the centre. Within the framework of this discussion many times have appeared projects of creating regions, although understood differently, once as big districts, once as specific unions of the already existing smaller regions. If we are mentioning it in this sociological sketch, it is done only to show that the discussions of theoreticians and works undertaken in the centre on the reform of the country's administration did not, unfortunately, have wider reflection in the social consciousness, where the problem of regionalization was associated first in the purely identity way (as an expression of recognition of regional separateness justified by cultural differences), and then if underwent systematic politicization.

In this process of politicization of discussion on regionalization it is worth pointing to three solutions which appeared in public discussions. Going from the least to the most radical ideas one should mention:

a) appeals to divide the country into the regions possessing equal rights towards each other and passing them part of the powers concentrated in the centre today, in Warsaw;

b) the ideas of division into regions but with simultaneous differentiation of their powers into different criteria (most often they had in mind the degree of coherence of regional identity, distinctness of this identity or finally creating by region specific cultural and economic identity;

c) the postulates of assigning autonomy to particular regions without dealing with the status of the rest of the country.

The first of the projects consists in not questioned by anybody (even by the opponents of regionalization) claim that the system of inner authority existing before 1989 was the radically centralized system, and that the direction of state transformations should define decentralization and its best form, is regionalization. In this concept, which took different forms in public discussions, it was assumed that the regions would have the same powers and the same attitude towards the centre. There was no agreement as to how to establish the borders of the regions, some wanted that these were districts in their currently existing shape, others, that these were great regions consisting of several contemporary districts, finally, others, that we should come to the traditional, historically existing regions. Each of these ideas was somehow justified but no agreement has even been reached as to one rule of creating these regions. It is important, however, that this new "Poland of regions" had, according to this concept, to be the state in which each of the regions would have the same legal status and the same competencies. Although, at the first sign, this concept seems to be very logical, it was not widely supported in the social forces of the regional and local communities. They were interested rather in building the position of their own region than propagating the global solution concerning the whole

country. The additional explanation of this lack of support may be the fact that such global solution allowed to a large extent the pragmatic approach to regionalization which, from its very nature, was in conflict with identity approach being the *spiritus movens* of the decisive majority of the group raising the problem of regionalization.

The second concept consisted in propagating regionalization but with the assumption that Poland is a country specific enough not to treat each region in the same way, but one should take into account the past, economic situation and, first of all, existence or non-existence of permanent social phenomenon of the feeling of regional affiliation. Before we briefly present the major contents of this concept, it is necessary to remind that in its present borders Poland actually has both regions with stable history and solid bases for the development of regional identity (then, in the sociological sense we can really talk about regions) as well as the areas where as a result of migration it is difficult to talk about long history, about cultural union — i.e. about the elements of identity. In such a situation are surely some areas in the northern and western parts of the country. Taking into account this fact, it must be pointed out that the supporters of this approach to regionalization treat it not as a means of reorganization the inner administration of the state, but as a means of obtaining (some say about regaining) the powers through their specific regions. It is not surprising, thus, that such concepts appear in the discussions which take place in the regions with longer identity tradition, where the groups, associations or political movements try first to show their own right to certain independence of decision, and only then do they look for the chances of realizing this independence in systemic solutions (hence, the more general concept of regionalization appears then).

The concepts of this type have never reached the more precise shape which could be the subject of the serious systemic analysis. From the sociological point of view they are very important, since they express certain state of social consciousness based on the already socially structured interest groups and find their expression in producing the so-called regional ideology which will be further discussed. It does not have to be reminded that always when such a concept serves as the basis of some more specific solutions, it causes social conflict, since questions appear on the scope of this separateness, on the scope of special rights, about the limits in which they are to be applied, about the scope of such understood regions with the greater powers, etc. The consciousness of these conflict threats is not always present in the discussions and the supporters of such solutions after use in public discussions of certain simple steps — they univocally consider those who express the opinions pointing to these threats simply as the open opponents of regionalization, and they eliminate them from discussion. Thus, it would be difficult to consider such discussions as representative but they should be,

very seriously, considered as the expression of the political process aiming at the construction of the new form of the state.

The third concept mentioned above is propagating one's own postulates of regional autonomy without asking oneself a question about the structures of administrative division of the whole state in which such a concept of regional autonomy could be realized. It must be admitted that such concepts appear relatively rarely, they obtained the politically structured shape only in Upper Silesia (which does not mean that such postulates do not appear in other regions). It must be also stressed that the supporters of these concepts dealing, as a matter of fact, only with the situation of one's own region, sometimes also talk about the division of the whole country into autonomous regions (the motto — "Poland the country of autonomous regions", sometimes presented as the so-called pol-lands), never justify such ideas differently but through proving the sense of assigning autonomy to their own region.

The above discussion is brief, we only want to point to some sociological premise to show the reasons and arguments of politicization of this discussion and finding oneself in this process of some already existing important social institutions, important social movements or, finally, only interest groups. It must be remembered that this discussion is taking place in certain special conditions — in a relative political vacuum (there is still lack of the univocally shaped system of political parties and, what is more important, the system of representation of political interests) and in the period of filling this vacuum through other institutions and social movements which extemporaneously fulfil political functions (we do not mean here the Roman Catholic Church as the regional organization covering the whole country but the churches of different denominations, including of course Catholic Church, fulfilling at the lowest, parish level, the function of organizing social life and in the case of revision with stronger feeling of local and regional affiliation — the organization function for cultural expression of this identity), local social associations, sometimes local or regional organizations of trade unions but also created after 1991 local economic organizations, chambers of commerce and even banks. It is obvious that the far reaching differentiations of these institutions and organizations causes the lack of coherence of this political expressions of the concept of regionalization, which does not surprise anybody, since it equals the general level of discussion about regionalization in which we find the expression of the opinions of different groups rather than looking for systemic solutions. It cannot be neglected that it is this form of the politicization of the discussion which allows to create the new local and regional élites which making use of the political support of the above-mentioned institutions or organizations often officially or unofficially influence the social life of particular districts or large urban communes. The new social fact appears, often perceived as the occurrence of new local and regional centres of real

social power. The above-mentioned new élites coming from these new centres or having only publicly demonstrated their support, have the obvious interest in meeting the political order of these institutions or organizations. In this way the circle closes at the level of social perception of an average citizen, he notices the discussion about regionalization as the expression of the interests of the local or district authority. As the research in Upper Silesia show, the perception of the important elements of regionalization is relatively small, and it must be remembered that the research was carried out in the region where the discussion was particularly lively.

Conscious of this fact, the local leaders of regional movements of the supporters of autonomous solutions (it is of course the extreme form of regionalistic aspirations) resort to creating the so-called regionalistic ideologies. Such ideologies are the means to verbalize the interests of regional groups, but they are also to be the element of social mobilization for such or other form of regionalization. It is not by accident, thus, that they developed particularly exuberantly before the Parliamentary elections of 1991 when particular movements wanted to obtain their own representation in the Parliament. One can expect the new wave of creating and proclaiming such regional ideologies in 1994 before the communal elections.

How can one characterize the most important elements of such ideologies? They are usually based on the important distinction between "one's countrymen" and "foreigners". They often define their homeliness through origin and through acceptance of the visible elements of cultural identity (e.g. coming from some specifically pointed areas, accent or dialect, knowledge of local or regional tradition, etc.). The next constructional step is usually creating a catalogue of the positive features typical for "one's countrymen" and assigning negative features to the "foreigners". Such catalogues are then entered in the social memory through their persistent repetition, through making them famous on every occasion and simultaneously no discussion is undertaken on their truthfulness. This step usually quickly gives sure results but they can be of two types, they can strengthen the feeling of affiliation among "one's countrymen", but they can also cause defensive reactions of the "foreigners" who are assigned the catalogue of negative features. The creators of such ideologies, however, always reach their aim, concentrate attention around the problem and often initiate social mobilization. The next element of this ideology is pointing out that when "we — countrymen" had the due rights to self-government "on our land", we felt all right, since all the evil comes from these "foreigners". Often at this stage one adds, as is the case of movements fighting for regional autonomy, treating autonomy as the panaceum for all problems. Of course, we have sketched here certain scheme, but one can find many of its elements in the regional ideologies occurring in the Polish attempts at regionalization. From the sociological point of view, one can interpret such

ideologies as the specific reaction to the complexes of groups which really for many years have not had the possibility to express their cultural separateness. There would be nothing dangerous in the occurrence of such regional ideologies if not the fact that they appear in the period of deep crisis of the state which, as in the case of Poland of the beginning of the 1990s, is completely helpless towards them and cannot pacify the possible social conflicts resulting from propagating regional ideologies. They really do not serve regionalization as such but hinder the rational systemic solutions and additionally through the opposition towards them they initiate political activities of the opponents of regionalization. They are, however, an important element of discussion on regionalization and, thus, should be analysed with great care.

Regionalization is the step concerning the structure of the state, thus, it cannot be based only on reacting to the postulates expressed in the so-called area. On the other hand, however, if regionalization is to really improve in the future the functioning of the state, it should satisfy the social ambitions, otherwise, it will only become the artificial product having no importance in social life. Thus, in the process of regionalization it is necessary to examine social consciousness, the elements of the concepts and ideologies arising from the ranks. It is not facilitated by the politicization of the whole public discussion about regionalization because it itself, as the specific feature of this discussion explaining some phenomena, has to become the subject of analysis. There is, however, a necessity to take up political reflection which would be a bridge between the sociological reflection and the systemic, legal reflection which tries to systematize specific concepts and include them in the totality of the state system. The separate element of such an analysis should be the so-called local and regional élites as the creators and carriers of regional ideologies. In this case it is also necessary to reach for the skills of the social psychologist who can explain the dynamics of creating of these regional or local élites. If, thus, we want to understand the Polish attempts at regionalization, we can make use of the generalized sociological reflections, but they will give only one of the elements of knowledge necessary to understand all this complicated problem.

Jacek Wódz

**Zrozumieć próby regionalizacji**  
(Refleksje socjologa)

**Streszczenie**

Dla zrozumienia sensu polskich prób regionalizacji, szczególnie dyskutowanych po 1989 roku, trzeba najpierw wskazać kilka cech polskiej tożsamości narodowej. Wizja polskiego nowoczesnego narodu została ukształtowana w wyniku tradycji romantycznej XIX wieku, właściwej przede wszystkim ziemiom dawnego zaboru rosyjskiego. W mniejszym stopniu dotyczy ona ziem zaborów pruskiego i austriackiego. Odzyskanie niepodległości w 1918 roku i uczynienie z Warszawy stolicy utrwaliło tę romantyczną wizję, która z socjologicznego punktu widzenia sprowadzała się do jednolitości cech narodowych (stąd dzisiaj lęki przed podkreśleniem odrębności kultur regionalnych) i do centralnego sposobu rządzenia krajem. Okres po II wojnie światowej nie sprzyjał dyskusjom o regionalizacji, władza czuła się pewniej, sprawując z centrum kontrolę nad całym narodem. Dzisiejsze próby to więc próby pierwsze (bez doświadczeń), obciążone błędem polegającym na tym, iż do walki z centrum przywiązuje się większą wagę niż do rozwijania aktywności oddolnej w regionach, są one poza tym wyraźnie manipulowane dla celów politycznych w okresach wyborów parlamentarnych. Dlatego usiłowania te na pewno nie zakończą się szybkim sukcesem, choć będą stanowić trwały wkład w przyszłe rozwiązania w zakresie decentralizacji (a więc niekoniecznie regionalizacji) kraju.

Jacek Wódz

**Die Versuche der Regionalisierung verstehen**  
(Soziologische Reflexionen)

**Zusammenfassung**

Um den Sinn der polnischen Versuche der Regionalisierung, die vor allem nach 1989 diskutiert wurden, zu verstehen, sollte man als erstes auf einige Eigenschaften der polnischen Identität hinweisen. Das Bild der polnischen Nation wurde in Folge der romantischen Traditionen des 19. Jahrhunderts, die vor allem den Gebieten des ehemaligen russischen Teilungsgebietes eigen sind, herausgebildet. Im geringeren Maße betrifft dies die Gebiete des ehemaligen preußischen und österreichischen Teilungsgebietes. Die Wiedererlangung der Unabhängigkeit im Jahre 1918, das Kreieren Warschaws zur Hauptstadt festigte diese romantische Vision, die vom soziologischen Standpunkt her eine Einheit der Nationaleigenschaften (daher auch die Ängste vor dem Betonen der Verschiedenheit der regionalen Kultur) und der zentralistischen Landesverwaltung bedeutet. Die Zeit nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg war keine günstige Zeit für Diskussionen über die Regionalisierung — die Machthaber fühlten sich sicherer, wenn sie eine Zentralkontrolle über das ganze Volk hatten. Die heutigen Versuche sind daher die ersten (ohne Erfahrungen), sie sind daher mit einem Fehler behaftet, der darauf beruht, daß man den Kampf mit dem Zentrum höher als die Entwicklung der Aktivität von Unten her, in den einzelnen Regionen, schätzt; außerdem werden sie im Wahlkampf deutlich für politische Zwecke manipuliert. Deshalb auch werden die Versuche nicht schnell erfolgreich enden, obwohl sie einen bleibenden Anteil an zukünftigen Lösungen im Bereich der Dezentralisierung des Landes (also nicht unbedingt der Regionalisierung) bilden.

*Stanislaw Nurek*

## **Social Communication as a Condition of Socio-Cultural Identity**

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The problems of interhuman understanding and agreement, social communication have a fundamental meaning in the analysis of all the forms and ways of social existence of man. We could even say that it is impossible to define any kind of component parts of human society, its groups and institutions without referring to interhuman communication thanks to which the existence of those social wholes is possible. Particular components of every social whole, no matter if they are separate human individuals or family, professional, territorial groups, etc., they secure for themselves their inclusivism and exclusivism just thanks to preserving the complex system of mutual comprehension and communication by means of appropriate exchange of words, gestures, signs, symbols, indications, signals and meanings, i.e. by extraordinarily rich and complex repertoire of both linguistic (verbal) and extralinguistic (non-verbal) nature. We can generally accept that some defined form of interhuman communication constitute an indispensable and non-transferable component of every social system. The language that is used by individuals and groups constituting social systems has a superior position among all those forms (Cicourel, 1964:2).

The problem of the sociology of communication as a separate sociological subbranch, implies some questions of structures of social world among which the considerations of the processes of communication between people are placed. And therefore the major task of this investigative orientation would consist of introduction and giving the grounds for the thesis that communication competence and rules of the partners in communication acts

are a function of strictly defined dimensions or a given segment of social stratification, or a given type of social world (family, work environment, amusement, religious community, dwelling-place, etc.). Therefore the allocation of rules of communication that constitutes an autonomous subject of cultural consideration, in its application perspective is closely associated with social phenomena analysed and investigated in the ranges of individual problem branches and, in our case, of the regional sphere. And so the behaviours associated with the processes of communication would refer to phenomena that are functionally related to widely understood sphere of identity — the forms and ways of communication participation in the complex social world of the region would just be the point here. In this way the intercourse perspective of both the instrumental and autotelic, *stricte* linguistic character and that concerning the interpretation of reported texts (notes, documentation, etc.) points at the possibility of formulation of the process of communication as a constitutive association for all the shapes of sociations, integration engaged people in performance of activities in organized social structures. In other words, communication perspective constitutes theoretical and methodological axis and structure of all the phenomena that take place in the system of mutual interhuman relations during realization of activity and cultural doings (Piotrowski, 1979).

The mentioned cognitive perspective in the study of processes of understanding and communication of people with each other in social situations is essentially different from that what is understood in hitherto, let us say, traditionally understood, sociology of culture through the “system of communication”.

The characterization of the dominant trend of considerations, concerning communication in social systems, does not aim at pointing at imperfection or incorrectness of such a perspective of investigations and analyses, but showing its insufficiency and also the necessity of carrying out the investigations concerning the mentioned processes suggested by the said idea worked out, or rather being worked out, within the sociology of communication.

Anyway, similar postulates seem to be proposed by sociologists themselves, for example by French investigators Crozier and Friedberg, who while writing about methodology of action based on actor's skill and logic of “one best way”, declare for the acceptance of the attitude of “limited rationality”: “We accept that actors are provided with only limited degree of freedom and limited rationality. The rationality and freedom, their purposes and ‘needs’ and at last they themselves cease to be understood in abstract way and start to be treated as defined creatures, or social constructs. The problem of choosing the explanatory model is no longer the basic problem of the analysis and the matters of procedure, investigative behaviour become that problem. It let us discover material, structural and social conditions that limit and define the

degree of freedom and rationality of actors and, as a consequence, it also let us discover the meaning of the observed behaviours" (Crozier, Friedberg, 1982:57).

The mentioned authors call their new investigative suggestion the "strategic analysis" that "forces the investigator to search for rationality of actors in organizational context and to explain the organizational construction through actors' experiences" (Crozier, Friedberg, 1982:59). The starting point for understanding the essence of the notion and possibilities of its use in the studies of an actor who acts in regional systems is the enumeration of five, as ascertained, empirical assumptions. They are the following:

1. Purposes stated by an actor himself and his intentions are changing during activities, they are non-univocal, contradictory, often hidden; in other words, they are problematic.

2. An actor's behaviour is as usually active and therefore it is not determined *a priori*; so it is usually the result of choices that are made.

3. An actor's behaviour always have defined meaning or significance with reference to given situations chances, stated purposes, choices that are made and rules of interaction games and other actors.

4. An actor's behaviour is characterized by dialectic of aggressiveness that is based on using the chances of improving their own situation and defence that consists of retention and widening the margin of freedom and possibilities of action. Those aspects manifest different intensification in defined time sections.

5. "Strategic" behaviours of an actor have distinctly rational character, they seem to be completely accidental, "irrational" and as for the latter, they are generated by moods and emotional reactions. In their case, it is possible to show regularity and correctness in relation to defined strategy.

After the presentation of their assumptions, the authors rightly point that considerations about the actor themselves are not sufficient because the actor's behaviours become fully understandable only in context from which the rationality of an actor's activities comes. It is worth underlying that they also notice distinct relationship in their idea with "comprehending sociology", mentioning such names as M. Weber, A. Schultz, P. L. Berger and T. H. Luckman, H. Garfinkel and E. Goffman. But if we study the appendix presenting the theory and practice of investigative procedure carefully, we will easily ascertain that only "similarity" of theoretical-methodological attitudes or at most the programme and postulates, that would require reformulation and specifying in categories of cognitive perspective of humanistic sociology, are the points here. And the considerations concerning communication, as it is perceived in this text, are placed just in this investigative perspective. However, the sociologists' conclusion that actors' behaviours are important only in the context that generates a given shape of their rationality should be recognized as extremely important (Crozier,

Friedberg, 1982:58—59, 420—440). So generally speaking, the fact that realization of purposes assumed by all the organized social systems, determined by the ways of communication between people in the context of the whole of social interactions in which individual and collective existence takes place, is the point here (Cicourel, 1964).

We should notice that in contemporary considerations on the subject of social communication we have to do with plurality of formulations. So the necessity of proclaiming in favour of one of them and acceptance as the basis of defined superior criteria appears here. In our discussion, it is enough to remind Ch. Morris's differentiation between semantic and syntactic and pragmatic dimensions of phenomena of signs that reflect situations of a man in different contexts and worlds of his individual and social activities (Piotrowski, Ziółkowski, 1976:19—60). This differentiation is just classical now. Because, in Morris's concept, pragmatic aspects of the phenomena of signs are closely associated with sociological formulation of communication. It is namely shown here from the point of view of external, observative and interaction behaviours. We can say that pragmatic dimensions of communication consist of the use and exchange of meanings that serve the partners of interaction to plan and understand their behaviours that are defined by the rules of interpretation and are the result of activities of many mechanisms of interpretation associated with individual features of communicating individuals and cultural-context dimension (Hymes, 1974).

The notion of communicative competence is the basic notion that joins different branches that go in for pragmatic aspects of comprehending and communicating. Most generally, we can define this notion as the knowledge received in the process of socialization and social participation knowledge that is not always realized that let the participants of interaction choose the variant of speech and also extraverbal, conventionalized forms of communication, accepted with respect to requirements of social situation. Sociological formulations undoubtedly deserve attention if we talk about many different suggestions of "speech variants" or language that is used by participants of interaction in the world of its practical activity. We can use here extended attempt to use defined linguistic theory. We can enumerate the works of A. V. Cicourel based on N. Chomsky's linguistic concept, and the works of J. Habermas that take inspiration from linguistic concept of J. L. Austin in the discussed trend of reflection on the phenomena of communication (Cicourel, 1974; Habermas, 1979; Chomsky, 1982; Austin, 1962).

The enumerated investigators of the phenomena of communication regardless of differences of metatheoretical positions that differ them (we have no need to discuss them here more precisely), seem to share a common methodological conviction (or rather epistemological one) about the status of the world of everyday life as the point of departure for social investigations

independently of dissimilarity of further precise theoretical investigation. Here, we mean A. Schutz's settlements and M. Scheler's ideas that were still earlier formulated. While writing about different forms of knowledge, in the context of his epistemological considerations, A. Scheler recognizes common knowledge as one of the fundamental factors defining the way of seeing social reality. He defines his suggestion of "relatively natural philosophy of life" in the following way: "Everything that is taken as 'given' without any doubts, similarly to every subject and contents of opinions about structural forms of that which is 'given', recognized without any separate spontaneous activities, everything that is in a given group kept and felt as something that does not require justification and that which is difficult to justify belong to relatively natural philosophy of life of a group subject. And just those things can be radically unlike for different groups or even for the same group on different stages of its development" (Scheler, 1960:170). Schutz's contribution is paying attention of the representatives of social sciences to the world of everyday life and the so-called common awareness. "We can answer the question of how scientific interpretation of human activity is possible only if we first answer the question of how a man can understand other people at all within natural attitude of everyday life" (Schütz, 1962:20). The reality in which man acts takes different forms that are characterized by coherence appropriate to them. Therefore a man has to do with multiplicity of reality. Other people's experience is essentially different from experiencing oneself by a man and in the same way social world becomes a common world of many people and guarantees its intersubjectivity in the reality of everyday life. A man's awareness realizes different typification in relation to reality accessible to him (Schütz, 1962:207).

A. Cicourel declares himself in his etnomethodological sociology of social interaction for the perspective of comprehending the language and meaning through the use of the settlements from N. Chomsky's generative-transformational linguistics. The investigation of the phenomena of the necessity of the use of practical or everyday understanding in the processes of communication of an author with others means that speech, activity and, as a matter of fact, all the manifestations of everyday life can be seen only within a given context and situation to which they refer and the elements of which they are. Expressions and indexical activities, that is, real, occasional activities refer to that which is called competence and performance, the rules of attribution, reference, phrase structure, surface structure and deep structure on the level of social interaction (Cicourel, 1974; Chomsky, 1982). Cicourel quotes extensive pieces of Chomsky's work and shows application of enumerated expressions in the process of human understanding and communication and more precisely in the use of interpretational procedures and normative rules by actors in the process of negotiating the social status and role. Language competence,

that is the knowledge of language, is according to Chomsky “simply some system of rules, that relates structural descriptions to sentences in some explicit and strictly defined way [...]; it attempts to mark that what is really known to the user and not that what he can report about his knowledge [...] because it tries to characterize that knowledge of language in possibly most neutral categories. The knowledge gives the grounds for real making use of a language by his user [...]; it does not constitute itself a formula for the character or functioning of perception model or the model of speech production” (Chomsky, 1982:21). The essential methodological problems are reduced for Cicourel to the following: “Can we say that particular actors use this kind of term while defining social situations for themselves and towards others? In what way does an actor relate and attribute meanings to objects and events in his environment. [...]; when an investigator intends to analyse written documents, he has to decide about the problem of abstraction of materials [...]? the investigator has to reconstruct the context of interaction [...]; the investigator has to decide about the problem of accuracy of vocabulary which he uses when he asks questions and the language that is used by our actor when he answers the questions” (Cicourel, 1974:305).

According to the discussed suggestion, an actor’s model should precisely define: first, in what way general rules or norms of justification or evaluation of procedure of some activity are reminded and in what way new constructions transform general rules and norms in scenes associated with the context, creating the grounds for change in this way. The idea of interpretational procedures itself should precisely state the way in which an actor negotiates and constructs his potential activity and also the way in which he judges the products of finished activity. Methodological usefulness of Cicourel’s considerations can be reduced to the following ascertainties:

1. Participants of social interaction “understand” both expressed and not expressed elements of their communicative situation.

2. Because of the use of interpretational procedures actors attribute “reasonable” meanings to that which is subordinate to communication.

3. Actors take attitudes of “looking and waiting”, that is the ability of sharing a common scheme of interpretation in that what concerns “gaps” of communication.

4. Participants of interaction, as a matter of fact, do not doubt their mutual expressions as long as each of them assumes attainability of reaching detailed information.

5. Articulation of general normative rules within direct scenes of interaction is assumed thanks to the control of the stock of handbook knowledge.

6. We should take into consideration first of all the procedures that make it possible for an actor to recognize “proper” behaviours while explaining

the place and role of a given participant of interaction in the situation of his practical activity.

Another perspective of expressing the phenomena of communication is found in J. Habermas's theory of "universal pragmatics". The identification and reconstruction of universal conditions of possible understanding (*Verständigung*) is the proper task of that pragmatics (Habermas, 1979). In other words, all activities aiming at reaching understanding are treated here as basic, others are only derivatives. The theory of acts of speech formulated by J. Austin is the basis for communicative activities understood in this way (Austin, 1962).

According to Austin's idea, the speech that is used by human subjects has two major functions: ascertaining and performing functions. Ascertaining function or informational-reporting function is based on the fact that speech do not create reality but only gives report of it. The participants of interaction transmit one another their thoughts, informing one another, organize common activities and transformation of reality is their result. Performance function consists of the fact that speech creates new reality directly in the so-called spiritual sphere, that is, legitimate, customary, of promise, model of behaviour, etc. Distinctly performative contents are expressed by such verbs as: advise, promise, ask, demand, obey, remind, entitle, etc.; such contents are not expressed by such verbs as: enjoy, suffer, love, hate, think, consider, perceive, wonder, miss, desire, wish, etc. Every speech can be treated as locution act or as illocution act. A locution statement is such that is considered taking into consideration only the aspect of meaning and subjective reference. An illocution statement is discussed taking into consideration the intentions of the person who express the statement. Illocution power of expression is stated on the grounds of situational context, intonation, gestures, mimicry, etc. We can also speak about aptness, communication luck, dependent on reasonability and sincerity of a speech act (statements, advice, request, promise), or also about unlucky communication that is insincere expressions and internally inconsistent, making the receiver feel insulted (Austin, 1962). The relation between a word (expression, statement, information) and its receiver and not only between a sender and a receiver by means of words is essential in this expression. Here the act of speech itself, projection of a receiver by means of a word, projection of a receiver towards the word and its meaning, its past and its significance. According to Habermas, normative conditions of the possibility of communication (claims towards their importance) are the following (Habermas, 1979:58):

- expressing something in comprehensible way,
- giving a listener something to understand,
- making oneself plain in this way,
- reaching understanding with another person.

A communication activity constitutes a defined type of social activity and is directed to reaching understanding (agreement), or is a consensual activity that includes the act of activity itself and a discourse. We can distinguish the following communicative structures and elements of social reality that corresponds to them:

Ways of communication	Types of speech acts	Subject matter	Claims of importance
cognitive	ascertaining	suggesting contents	truth
interaction	regulations	interpersonal contents	suitability
expressive	confessions	speaker's intention	truthfulness

The presented ideas of the process of communication, in their suggesting way, are meant to show their theoretical and methodological usefulness to extend empirical studies of the social world of a region.

From sociological point of view, the presented considerations refer only to pragmatic aspects of comprehension and communication of acting subject in social regional relations. But in the case of taking into consideration socio-linguistic dimensions or carrying out the analysis from the sphere of the sociology of language, we should necessarily consider semantic and syntactic aspects of acts of communication in regional conditions. So it seems obvious that such a treatment of the problem would require remarkable extension of the text. But the presented article does not constitute a reconstruction of existing state of investigations concerning the phenomena of communication in regional relations. The studies are, we should add, only fragmentary and quite marginal at least in home sociology of culture; they are rather some suggestion of methodological instruction for future empirical investigations of pragmatic dimensions of acts of social communication and their meaning in the processes of shaping the socio-cultural identity.

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Stanisław Nurek

### Komunikowanie społeczne jako warunek społeczno-kulturalnej tożsamości

#### Streszczenie

Autor artykułu wychodzi z założenia, iż podstawowym warunkiem kształtowania się tożsamości tak jednostkowej jak i grupowej czy zbiorowej jest mechanizm komunikacji efektywnej. Rozważaniom zatem została poddana forma i treść języka, jakim posługują się uczestnicy interakcji społecznych. Koncepcje procesów komunikowania się w socjologii zostały tedy ujęte z punktu widzenia zasadniczych celów realizowanych w ludzkich działaniach. Z tego też punktu widzenia wyróżniono kilka zasadniczych założeń, na jakich — zdaniem autora — trzeba oprzeć rozumienie komunikacji międzyludzkiej. Analizie poddano koncepcje socjologiczne, które są znane jako „lingwistyczny zwrot” w badaniach nad komunikacją społeczną. Przywołane zostały podstawowe idee socjologii poznawczej A. V. Cicourela i J. Habermasa, które są oparte na teorii pragmatyki językowej N. Chomsky'ego i J. L. Austina.

Przeprowadzone rozważania nasuwają wniosek, iż aktywność komunikacyjna, nakierowana na realizację zawartego w niej potencjału porozumienia i rozumienia innych partnerów interakcji, prowadzi do ukonstytuowania się tożsamości kulturowej jednostki i grupy. Artykuł zdaje się wskazywać na pewną lukę w socjologii krajowej, która badaniom nad tożsamością kulturową w ich aspekcie komunikacyjnym nie poświęca należnej refleksji teoretycznej i metodologicznej; stanowi zatem skromną próbę zwrócenia uwagi na to zagadnienie.

Stanisław Nurek

### Gesellschaftliches Kommunizieren als Bedingung der gesellschaftlich-kulturellen Identität

#### Zusammenfassung

Der Autor des Artikels geht davon aus, daß die Grundbedingung für die Gestaltung der Identität — sowohl der des Individuums wie auch der Gruppe oder der Gemeinschaft, ein Mechanismus der effektiven Kommunikation ist. Daher wurde hier die Form und der Inhalt

der Sprache erörtert, derer sich die Teilnehmer der gesellschaftlichen Interaktionen bedienen. Die Konzeptionen der Kommunikationsprozesse wurden daher in der Soziologie vom Standpunkt der Hauptziele, die in menschlicher Tätigkeit realisiert werden, erfaßt. Aus dieser Perspektive wurden einige Hauptannahmen hervorgehoben, auf die man — der Meinung des Autors nach — das Verstehen der zwischenmenschlichen Kommunikation zurückführt. Es wurden soziologische Konzeptionen analysiert, die in den Untersuchungen der gesellschaftlichen Kommunikation als "linguistische Redewendung" bekannt sind. Man beruft sich auf die Grundideen der Erkenntnissoziologie von A. V. Cicourel und J. Habermas, die sich auf die Theorie der Sprachpragmatik von N. Chomski und J. L. Austin stützen.

Die Erwägungen führen zum Schluß, daß die Kommunikationsaktivität, die auf die Realisierung des in ihr beinhalteten Verständnispotentials und das Verstehen anderer Interaktionspartner gerichtet ist, zur Festigung der kulturellen Identität der Einheit und der Gruppe führt. Der Artikel scheint auf eine Lücke in der Soziologie Polens hinzuweisen, die den Untersuchungen der kulturellen Identität im kommunikativen Aspekt keine ihr gebührende theoretische und methodologische Reflexion widmet; sie bildet daher einen bescheidenen Versuch, diesem Problem Beachtung zu schenken.

Kazimiera Wódz

## Revitalization of the Silesian Identity — Chance and Threats

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### I

“The spectre wanders in Europe, the spectre of nationalism” — this is how slightly provocatively, considering the not scarred over in the social consciousness grudges the source of which were originating from the works of the classics attempts to put into practice the communist utopia, starts Czesław Miłosz’ essay *On Nationalism*, from the published in 1988, thus, still before the big with consequences events of 1989, book entitled *Beginning with My Streets*, reprinted in *Gazeta Wyborcza* of 2—3 Jan., 1993. This prophetic sketch contains many valuable for the sociologists thoughts devoted to the analysis of the phenomenon which after the tragedy of holocaust seemed to have been overcome for good and thrown out of the margin of the civilized world. And yet the ghosts have come back and we have to do today with the most barbarious signs of ethnonationalism in the shape of “ethnic purges” in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the eruption of mutual hatred between the neighbouring nations in many countries of the old Soviet empire with the intensification of the activities of the Neonazi movements in the countries of Western Europe, obsessed with hostility towards all the cultural, racial, linguistic dissimilarities.

The surprising and not understandable for many return of the tribal mentality carrying a large load of resentiments and xenophobia is particularly dangerous in the post-communist countries in which still fragile democratic

institutions are submitted to the pressures growing with market reform, tensions and social frustrations. Poland, although relatively ethnically homogeneous, is not free from these threats — since “Stranger” may, in case of need, become anybody who thinks and feels different, it is known not since today that the periods of violent social turning points favour the increase of ethnocentrism, irrational, magic thinking, referring to the most basic layers of human mentality.<sup>1</sup>

In the above-mentioned essay Czesław Miłosz warns us against the threats hidden in the close to the Polish tradition romantic nationalism, full of mysticism and almost religious exaltation. It does not mean, however, that the author sees in each form of nationalism threat for the democratic values and individual rights. Similarly to Ernest Gellner (1991) — Miłosz seems to believe that contemporary nationalism is the natural manifestation of the emancipation aims of these nations or ethnic groups which enter the road of modernization. Gellner believes that the requirements of modern individual production are the structural premises of the occurrence of nationalism as a specific conglomeration of politics (state) and culture (nation). “Nationalism — E. Gellner writes — is one of the theories of political legitimacy which requires that ethnic borders do not cross with the political borders” (Gellner, 1991:9). From the original thoughts of the author referred to by Miłosz, it is worth mentioning those which remain in obvious contradiction with the stereotypes binding in the circles of the advocates and sympathizers of the national thought. Gellner claims that the national state is not in any case “the final destiny” of ethnic groups. Nations are not “‘natural beings’, given by God ways of classifying people. There are only cultures — sometimes subtly segregated overlapping, crossed, interlaced” (Gellner, 1991:64). Nationalism transforms the existing cultures into nation but sometimes annihilates them (!) (Gellner, 1991). The culture which nationalism is to defend which it is to revive, is often the invention of the very nationalism [or rather — nationalists, K. W.]. The theory of nationalism suffers from “false consciousness” — defining the folk culture and the traditional order of value, continuity, variety “[...] it produces [...] the new higher culture [...], it helps [...] in building the anonymous, mass society, it owes its success to the unprecedented turning point which took place in the history of our species [i.e. industrial revolution, K. W.] [...] it introduces unification” (Gellner, 1991:150—151). “[...] nationalism as an ideology produces, thus, its own contradiction, it is an intellectual illusion which is shared by the recently appointed from among the man of their plebeian compatriots intellectual or cultural élites. The appearance of this type of ideology is usually preceded by the experience of humiliation connected with the discrimination of the culture of one’s own ethnic group and eradication of one’s own culture (with the assumption, having all the features

of probability that social promotion is connected with the acceptance of language and culture of the dominant ethnic group).”

The feeling of humiliation and wrong (one of the most powerful sources of resentment) is sometimes the leaven of many revindication aims directed at raising from the “lowlands” the culture of one’s own ethnic group and making a pattern out of it binding all inhabiting the given territory. It is this that, according to Gellner, national ideology is to serve and its aims are the same no matter whether we have to do with great nations or small ethnic-territorial communities who have no chance to become the independent politico-economic organisms (Gellner, 1991:63). One can doubt (the author himself does so) whether the presented by Ernest Gellner theoretical model is of the universal character, whether it allows to understand the source and form of such degenerated forms of nationalism as were carried by hitlerism or fascism. It is difficult to accept that the observed in Western Europe renaissance of national sentiments, taking sometimes the shape of the separatist movements (the Basques Country, Catalonia, Flanders, Scotland, Wales) have something to do with the ethnic conflicts of Armenians with Azers, Georgians with Abkhazs, Serbs with Croatians and Muslims and many other nationalistic groups involved in the dramatic events accompanying the collapse of the communist empire kept in the artificial uniformity.

Probably right is Ralf Dahrendorf who in *Considerations on the Revolution in Eastern Europe* 1990 notices that Eastern and Western Europe still play in different tunes — the second one enters the 21st century — for the first one the time goes in the opposite direction. Speaking directly the point is that occurring in the highly developed societies of the West ethnic-national revindications are the manifestation of the specifically romantic rebellion against the universalizing, unifying tendencies of the modern technicized and rationalized world (Kłoskowska, 1991:19). Nationalism in the post-communist countries is born, first of all, of hopelessness and backwardness, has a decisively destructive character, is manifested mainly in the growth of xenophobia excluding all the compromises in relationships between ethnic groups, often for generations inhabiting a common territory (Zaslavsky, 1992:107—108). Czesław Miłosz rightly underlines that in this part of the world ethnic conflicts almost always have religious component and separating strong national feelings from religious ones is in these cases almost impossible (Miłosz, 1988). Absolute loyalty towards one’s own nation, Czesław Miłosz claims, has something of religious belief in it, it concerns for sure also Polish nationalism closely tied to Catholicism.

Is, thus, nationalism reviving on the ashes of the communist system a phenomenon basically negative and anachronic (Habsbawn, 1990)? Or, as Victor Zaslavsky thinks, referring to the above-mentioned work of E. Gellner, it is a necessary element of building new democracies, and the economic

restructuring of the Eastern European countries entering the difficult road of accelerated modernization. The latter realized under the motto of "return to Europe" would be real only in reference to these countries of Eastern Europe whose economy and system quickest adopt to the standards binding in the framework of the European Community (Asch, 1990, given after V. Zaslavsky, 1992:110).

Unfortunately, today it is still impossible to ascertain whether the phenomenon of ethnic mobilization observed in the majority of the former Eastern Bloc countries, being to a certain extent the understandable form of defense against the psychological effects of the shock which for the societies of these countries are deep economic-systematic change taking place for last years, is permanent or temporary. It is unknown either whether the growth of national (ethnic) feelings will have to be every time accompanied by the signs of hostility based on the ancient grudges and resentments. Whether in the face of the boundless tragedy which is taking place in Bosnia and Herzegovina in front of the eyes of the whole civilized world, one can still believe in nationalism as a constructive force enabling efficient carrying of market force and introducing the western type democracy in the post-communist countries? Or whether one can and should worry that ruthlessly enforcing their right to self-determination the nations (and ethnic groups) of Eastern Europe liberated from the political and military restraint of the recent superpower will substitute "slavery under the old government (communist) by local tyranny" (R. Dahrendorf, 1991:128)? The advocates of the open society, among them the above quoted Czesław Miłosz, Ralf Dahrendorf or Alain Finkielkraut and many others believe that these are not exaggerated worries. Aggressive nationalism and the attitude of hostility towards "the strangers" accompanying it is an infectious disease that all the nations which make the highest value of their own culture and from the right for self-determination (and for cultural identity) the cover for ruthless domination of the group rights over the individual's rights (Finkielkraut, 1992) are threatened with.

## II

In the published in 1990 work *The Faces of the Polish Character*, the editor of the volume, Antonina Kłosowska carried out a detailed analysis of the notions of "national culture" and "national identification" pointing, among others, to the dual, affirmative-negative character of the function which the culture itself and subjective feeling of affiliation to the specific nation or ethnic group may fulfil in relations with other nations or cultural

groups (Kłoskowska, 1990:12ff). How, thus, the author reminds, can the culture break the barriers of strangeness but also create them if the natural in the human world divisions into "native" and "foreign" are accompanied by the belief about both the superiority of one's own culture and contempt towards habits and values of others (Kłoskowska, 1990:24). The attitudes of this type are usually defined as ethnocentrism (Sumner, 1906), and their radical manifestations in the shape of xenophobia, i.e. generalized hatred towards different cultures or nationalities, are the most distinct expression of the negating functions of culture (Sumner, 1906:29).

Poland in its post-war borders has become the state almost unanimous nationally. The majority of Poles born after the war was brought up without contact with national minorities so numerous living in the 2nd Republic (1918—1939) — Ukrainians (15%), Byelorussians (5%), Jews (9%), Germans (2%) (Davies, 1986:120). According to some research workers, this fact could negatively influence the shaping in the Polish society of the socially accepted models of reaction towards the cultural dissimilarity (Łodziński, 1990:259).

Surely, there is a lot of right in this statement, however, the phenomena of extreme intolerance and xenophobia occur also in the multiethnic societies, such as the United States of America. Thus, the very experience of "multiethnicity" is not the satisfactory guarantee of peaceful coexistence and mutual acceptance. Tolerance towards dissimilarity, reactions towards what is strange, unknown, distant — is one of the fundamental problems of group life over which the generations of research workers incline unanimously, representing different areas of humanities — from ethnologist, historian, psychologist to sociologist (Nowicka, 1990).

The division of the social world into "native" and "strange" results, according to C. Lévi-Strauss, from the most elementary and universal human needs, this, however, what rules of separating one and the others will be binding in a given society and what will be the practical consequences of this division — depends on many factors, first of all, on the cultural openness or closeness of a given society. If we assume after E. Nowicka that the openness of a given society should be understood, first of all, as "[...] readiness to contact with people of a foreign group and accept the contents of foreign origin and, at the same time, treating strangers with a relatively small distance" (Nowicka, 1990:44), undoubtedly, the societies differentiated internally, allowing many alternative variants of cultural patterns (the notion of C. Kluckhohn, given after Nowicka, 1990) "[...] offering large margin of freedom in the ways of realizing cultural patterns as well as less punitive and less rigorous cultures in the matters of deviations from the binding norms have greater chances to be more open towards the strangers, both in the sense of readiness for contacts and emotional attitude" (Nowicka, 1990). Is, thus,

confirmed by the results of sociological survey growth of antipathy of Poles towards other nations and ethnic groups — Gypsies, Ukrainians, Germans, Arabs, Russians, Romanians, Negroes, Jews, Byelorussians (Jasińska-Kania, 1991:224—225) connected with the cultural closeness of the Polish society? Formulating the univocal answer to the above questions is extremely difficult, considering that the problems discussed here touch upon a very important subject for Poles — attitude towards one's own tradition, durability of national myths and connected with them stereotypes and prejudices towards old and new neighbours, etc. In the never ending discussions on the **national identity** of Poles take part the most prominent representatives of the Polish humanities — historians, sociologists, ethnologists (*Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, No. 1, 1992). Leaving to the intellectuals solving this extremely ticklish problem in which the national mythology mixes up with the sad, sometimes difficult to accept historical truth, let us look at what is said on this subject by the newest sociological surveys. We will refer here, first of all, to the extremely interesting work of the three Warsaw ethnologists: Ewa Nowicka, Sławomir Łodziński and Jan Nawrocki published in 1990 and containing the results of research carried out by the authors in 1988 within the framework of the topic: *National stereotypes in the Polish Society*, directed by A. Jasińska-Kania on the all-Polish sample of 1000 persons (given after Nowicka, 1990:52—53).

Summing up this part of research which referred to the “maps” of ranges of **homeliness** and **strangeness** in the consciousness of the Polish society, E. Nowicka claims that the present national consciousness of Poles is, to a large extent, of the **polonocentric** character [underlining mine, K. W.], is based on the strong psychologico-cultural relations with the clear addition of the predestined relations (biological continuation). The author arguing with the opinion of a prominent historian Tadeusz Łepkowski, expressed in the published in 1989 work entitled *Uparte trwanie polskości* [*Stubborn Duration of Polishness*] expressed worries that this polonocentrism, so highly evaluated by T. Łepkowski, may be the obstacle in the opening of Poles for the universal community. Nowicka's thoughts are developed in the further part of the work by the co-author of the discussed research, Sławomir Łodziński who made the subject of analysis Poles attitudes towards the strangers belonging to different races and cultures and temporarily residing in Poland (for more details, see Łodziński, 1990:211ff). It turns out that “despite the tradition of openness and multicultural character [the author does not specify closer what traditions he has in mind, footnote, K. W.], the Polish society has no favourable conditions for contact with other cultures and nations. Lack of social roles for “the strangers” and model of tolerance, weak sensitivity to their problems and lack of honest information as well as other socio-psychological consequences of the civilization collapse of Poland point out that it is **the inner situation** of our society [underlining mine, K. W.] that, to a larger extent than other factors,

defines the specific way of seeing and leads to taking specific attitudes towards other races and nations” (Łodziński, 1990:265—266). S. Łodziński critically commenting the results of his own research in the light of which Poles appear as an extremely tolerant nation and hospitable for the newcomers no matter the colour of their skin and cultural differences — shows, the second, less favourable for the picture of the fellow-citizens, side of the medal — opinions of the very interested, mainly the students coming from the third-world countries who have the reasons to feel bad in our country. Divergencies between the declared attachment to such values as tolerance and lack of prejudices and real, as a matter of fact, discriminating behaviour towards strangers is explained by the author by reference to the growing feeling of disappointment and frustration connected with the limitation of the possibilities of meeting needs and fulfilling important life aims and the sources of this state of affair are looked for by the author, among other, following S. Nowak and others (Nowak, 1988; Kiciński, Świda, 1987; Krzemiński, 1989) in the politico-economic phenomenon of the end of the 1980s. The observed in the Polish society of the 1980s growth of the level of aggression, apathy, discouragement, lowering the importance of moral norms in regulating everyday contacts between people, moving them from the sphere of commonplaceness to “the theatre of ceremonial values” (Krzemiński, 1989: 71—76) have their continuation in the changed politico-economic conditions. Disappointment which was brought to a large number of Poles by a 4-year “Solidarity” government, with “war on top”,<sup>2</sup> growing unemployment and lack of real chances for quick improvement of the economic situation is a huge reservoir of negative emotions, which easily can find vent in the attacks on the newcomers from the East or from the South more and more often appearing in our streets. In the climate of social frustration and uncertainty, the popularity of the populist-nationalist political groups is usually growing up. They are morally responsible for stirring national sentiments above the safe level (see skin-heads’ excesses). The acts of hostility are directed not only against “strangers-outsiders” residing in our country temporarily but also against those few,<sup>3</sup> residents often for many generations among Poles “strangers-inners” (Gypsies, Jews, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Germans) raising their understandable anxiety and mobilizing to fight against the aggressive majority. Small in numbers groups of national (ethnic) minorities have gained recently in Poland quite big possibilities of organizing themselves and political representation<sup>4</sup>, but their relationships with the “hosts” are far from ideal. However, the so-called average citizen of our country, especially when he lives in central Poland, has small chances to find out more about the problems of ethnic minorities living in Poland. It happens so that the important in number concentrations of national minorities in the peripheral areas of Poland creating the regions of cultural borderland (Polish—Lithuanian, Polish—

—Byelorussian, Polish—Ukrainian, Polish—Czech and Polish—German). Thus, the socio-cultural phenomena occurring in these regions now deserve special interest of the examiners of ethnic relations in Poland. Here we have to do with crossing of various traditions and cultural influences, conflicting of contradictory tendencies and identification options, taking often the shape of the so-called “borderland consciousness” (Śliwiński, 1991; Dawidiuk, 1991). Antonina Kłoskowska analysing the phenomenon of the borderland culture notices that it [i.e. borderland culture, K. W.] influences in the specific way the processes of national self-determination — it either sensitizes the feeling of national affiliation and strengthens the defensive attitudes (then we have to do with the phenomenon of defensive national identity), or — just the opposite, as a result of mixing up of cultural influences, it leads to a specific ambivalence (but also polivalence and bivalence) or even washing away of the feeling of national identity (Kłoskowska, 1992:137—141). Borderland consciousness is undoubtedly something else than national consciousness characteristic for the members of homogenous national group. Borderland consciousness — M. Śliwiński notices — develops not so much “[...] as the function of the real origin [ethnic, national, footnote K. W.] of the individuals but mainly as a result of conscious choice [underlining mine, K. W.] (Śliwiński, 1991:42). On the choice of such or other national option **attractiveness** decides in such cases (e.g. economic, cultural) of the national group changing in different historical epochs. As a result, national identification of the society often remains unspecified and unstable which, from the point of view of national majority, seems something ununderstandable and suspicious (Sakson, 1990, the same 1991:185—201). It is because of this reason that we can expect that together with the deepening of negative consequences of systemic transformation in Poland in the borderland regions, where the closest neighbour or friend may become “stranger” from day to day, xenophobic tendencies, degenerated forms of nationalism or chauvinism appear particularly strong. The lesson given to us by Sarajevo, the city in which for centuries Croats, Serbs, Jews, Muslims have lived next to each other proves that these are not pure speculations. Let us remember that xenophobia refers not only to big ethnic-national groups. In Western Europe we have numerous examples of degeneration to which leads chauvinist, blind, regional separatism (Basque ETA, IRA, Corsican terrorism). A. Finkielkraut quoted above notices in contemporary regional separatist movements the influence of the same political romanticism which is present in the majority of nationalist ideologies, romanticism which acting in defense of ethnic integrity (and cultural identity) prohibits the individual “[...] to go out of its identity [ethnic, completion mine, K. W.], absolutizes the differences [...] ruins all the community spirit of nature or culture between people” (A. Finkielkraut, 1992: 80). These important and also brave, because going as if upstream of ideas

developed in the circles of the most prominent French intellectuals (first of all, ethnologists gathered in College de France), reflections of the author of *The Defeat of Thinking*, make us seriously ponder on the uncritical sometimes enthusiasm of the groups expressing opinions for the aggressive forms of group identity claims which, as a matter of fact, assume the primacy of the rights of the community over the rights of the man.

It does not mean that all the manifestations of local patriotism and attachment to the native land could be considered as “failure of Mind towards tribal instinct”. This kind of argumentation, attacked with particular passion by anti-(post?)-modernists seems a little naive, but, coming back to A. Finkelkraut’s argument, fascination with cultural variety cannot mean absolutization of differences between ethnic groups and plunging man “with head” in his own culture, without the right of choice and critical evaluation (Finkelkraut, 1992:82—84). Surely, Alain Finkelkraut’s opinions will not be favourably accepted in Poland and not only in the circles of “nationalists”, but also among this part of intellectuals who fascinated with ethnological concepts of culture absolutize the right of ethnic groups to cultivate their own cultural identity even at the price of limiting the rights of some of their more individualistic or even rejecting (why not?) their own cultural heritage members. Culture, in the understanding of the defenders of the rights of ethnic groups to their own identity, often becomes the synonym of **sacrum**, it does not undergo any valuation which, according to Finkelkraut, leads to dangerous in consequences absurd — here in the changed shape returns the spirit of nativism which substitutes the notion of “race” with the notion of “culture”, carrying out new division of the humanity into “invincible and non-reducible collective beings” (Finkelkraut, 1992:86). The words “culture”, “cultural identity” become against the intentions of ethnologists themselves the tool of political fight, the motto overused by those against whom was once directed the intellectual movement of fight against colonialism and racism. It is worth remembering about warnings, maybe slightly too dramatized by A. Finkelkraut when in Upper Silesia opinions can be heard calling for revitalization of the Silesian identity. Upper Silesia is one of these regions of Poland in which the programmes of regionalization are articulated most strongly, in opposition, however, to the Wielkopolska or Kashubian regionalism — here we have to do with clear separatist component. Understanding the reasons of this state of affair, without referring to some elements of the history of this part of Poland, is practically impossible.<sup>5</sup>

## III

Surprising ease with which (unfortunately!) some modern sociologists build generalizations concerning the genesis of regionalism in Upper Silesia results probably from the relatively weak knowledge of the complicated history of this area. This bitter and, there is nothing to hide, directed to a large extent towards myself remark, has occurred to me during a thorough reading of probably underestimated by the sociologists (I do not know if by the historians too) work of Eugeniusz Kopeć *We and They in Upper Silesia* published in 1986. In the preface to this book Józef Chlebowczyk, an eminent specialist in Silesian problems, stresses with approbation that Eugeniusz Kopeć goes decisively beyond the descriptive-factographic, narrative-event approach to the reality towards sociological interpretation. As a matter of fact E. Kopeć's discussed work, apart from his master's, J. Chlebowczyk's works and the classical studies of Stanisław Ossowski devoted to the Opole region belong to the most important works in the sociology of ethnic relationships in Upper Silesia. Before, however, we give the floor to the author of this small in volume, but containing much precious information study, let's remind the basic facts.

There is no doubt as to the border-line character of the Upper Silesian culture, formulated for the centuries of the Prussian-German (and earlier Czech-Moravian and Austrian) presence on the ethnically Polish land (Chałasiński, 1935; Fr. Szafranek, 1934; Ossowski, 1965; Gładysz, 1972; Chlebowczyk, 1975; Stańczak, 1978 et al.). In the Silesian melting pot for centuries have mixed up Polish, Czech-Moravian and German influences and the power of their influence was always connected with the affiliation of the land to wider politico-state structures (wider, see Wereszycki, 1987; Davies, 1981, 1986). The historians of Silesia unanimously claim that the 19th century was of crucial importance for forming the cultural face of Upper Silesia (Chlebowczyk, 1986; Wereszycki, 1987). The sudden acceleration of industrialization processes (particularly from the middle of the last century) and the changes of the local job market connected with it favoured the influx of people from Germany to Upper Silesia, first of all, of medium and higher office personnel, administrators, engineers, technical supervisors, learned professions. These people made the dynamically developing middle class, whereas the local people reinforced mainly the working class (Długoborski, 1986, given after Rykiel, 1991:73). It was then that for the first time to such an extent the Silesian linguistic-ethnic group of an essentially plebeian character was confronted with the middle-class culture of the German colonizers. This specific entanglement of the ethnic-linguistic divisions (as well as religious ones, although in this case it is difficult to separate the established in the

tradition stereotypes from historical truth, wider on this subject, see Robotycki, 1990:25) with socio-economic (German character = higher social and material status, Polish character = lower status, plebeian character) for many has defined the specificity of the nationalistic processes in Upper Silesia. Apart from the unavoidable in the conditions of the government of the Prussian-German politico-administrative, economic, educational (since 1872 — obligatory German education) structures and *Kulturkampf* realized according to a planned cultural expansion of the assimilation processes of these groups of the autochthonous population who joined the general trend of civilization-cultural changes even at the price of eradication in one's own ethno-linguistic group — we have here to do with the described in detail in the scientific literature phenomena of strengthening the feeling of linguistic-ethnic separateness of the native population closing this community within one's own culture language habit, religion (Chlebowczyk, 1975). Connected with this was the far reaching sacralization of "homeliness" and deep dislike of the supralocal territorial-state structures. It is in these conditions (obviously presented here in a simplified way) that the particular, Upper Silesian variant of the Polish folk culture cristalized in the last century being for many tens of years (not without the support on the side of the Polish cultural-educational and religious organizations) the efficient barrier against the total germanization of the native population (Pośpiech, 1982, given after Robotycki, 1990:26).

Born during *Kulturkampf* specific union between the fight for preserving the Polish character and Catholic confession has led to "[...] the stereotype connecting Catholicism with the Polish character" (Lesiuk, 1990:9). The feeling of ethnic separateness of Upper Silesians in accordance with the right of background described by S. Ossowski, created in the conditions of the Prussian-German statehood the favourable conditions for the activities of the Catholic priests education, cultural, political activists directed pro-Polish. The culminating point of their activities falls for the period of plebiscites and Silesian Uprisings (Davis 1986:116) as a result of which a small part of Upper Silesia (together with Cieszyn Silesia) has found itself within the borders of the reborn Polish state (Wereszycki, 1987; Wrzesiński, 1988; Kutrzeba, 1988), of course, as Cz. Robotycki rightously stresses — the First World War and the defeat of Germany have not univocally forejudged the problem of Silesia (Robotycki, 1990:27). Not going into the complicated conditions preceding the final decisions of the League of Nations and not stepping in the reserved for the historians evaluations of the political situation in which Poland has found itself after signing the peace treaty with Germany — one can probably accept, expressed by Cz. Robotycki opinion, that in the political conditions created then in Upper Silesia the occurrence of the sovereign states could not supress the mixed ethnic composition in both divided parts of this area (Robotycki, 1990:29). "None of the sides — Cz. Robotycki writes — resigned from

the measures which in the future would lead to the change of situation. [...] The Polish programme anticipated the activities in three main directions: supporting the beliefs of the Silesian population that the border solutions are temporary and they will change for the benefit of Poland, strengthening the Polish national awareness among people remaining on the other side of the border, supporting these manifestations of economy, demography and culture which connected Silesia with the remaining parts of Poland” (Robotycki, 1990:29, wider see Wrzesiński, 1988). However, already in the inter-war period, in the area of Upper Silesia included to the Polish state there appeared specific confrontation of the regional Silesian culture with the introduced here especially by the numerously arriving Galician intellectuals “romantic-nobleman’s Polish national culture” (Kopeć, 1986:37). Of course, cultural differences were not the only source of misunderstandings and conflicts between the newcomers and the autochthons (wider see Rykiel, 1985, 1988, 1991).

But specific sensitivity of the Silesians to “[...] the lordly style of life” of the Polish office clerks had its source in the earlier described specificity of the Silesian national feeling built on the one hand on the opposition towards the German character and on the other — on the deep feeling of harm and wrong, originating in the times of *Kulturkampf*. The Silesian dreams about Poland were strongly connected with the myth of social equality — “The Silesian people — E. Kopeć writes — fought for the Polish state affiliation since it connected with it the hopes of social liberation” (Kopeć, 1986:29). The myth of **just Poland** in which so far subjugated and devoid the right for one’s own culture and language Silesian people are in gremio promoted to the **posts and high offices** reserved once for the German and those of the Upper Silesians who at the price of promotion renounced connections with **homely surroundings** undergoing “germanization” has soon turned out to be phantasy. Silesians, according to E. Kopeć, were the only regional group who proclaiming themselves in favour of Poland has put forward specific conditions to the future state authorities: ensuing the existence at the level at least the same as during the Prussian and Austrian times [in reference to Cieszyn Silesia, footnote K. W.], abolishing unfavourable [for the Silesians, footnote K. W.] social and property classes, opening the unlimited possibilities of social promotion (Kopeć, 1986:46). For the reasons, the detailed presentation of which would go beyond the framework of his study — these great expectations have not been fulfilled. The promises given to the Silesians by the Polish plebiscite propaganda has turned out unrealistic, the expected promotion — in many cases more difficult than it was expected — it was obstructed by the lack of appropriate education of the candidates for the government posts (although in the Act on the Organic Statute of the Silesian Province of 15th July, 1920 special references have been anticipated for the autochthons)

and slower than it was anticipated speed of acquiring by the local people the literary form of Polish (Kopeć, 1986:56). The situation of the Silesian province was worsened by the international obligation of the Republic resulting from the Geneva Convention signed on 15th May, 1922, guaranteeing de facto preserving the German state of possession in many spheres of economy and, what follows — freedom of running the personal policy in one's own companies. Let's add that still fragile institutions of the Polish state soon faced serious social tensions connected with the economic recession of 1925—1926. The symbol of the growing difficulties of integration of the Silesian province with mother country has become the problem of the dictator of the 3rd Silesian Uprising, W. Korfanty, who lost the battle for power with the representing the camp of the *Sanacja* (Davis, 1986:123) regime system Silesian voivode, Michał Grażyński. In the persons of these two politicians, E. Kopeć reminds, have clashed not only two different politico-philosophical options but also totally different visions of the integration of Silesian borderland with the state organism of the Republic (ibid., p. 35). The basic source of tensions and conflicts at different levels of social hierarchy between the autochthonous population and the newcomers was the essential **non-congruence of social structures cultural patterns, customs, mentality and language of both these societies** (Kopeć, 1986:80). In the situation of the growing economic crisis, unemployment and social unrests connected with it — the immigrants coming from other parts of Poland caused aversion and strengthened the Upper Silesia in the belief that they are the subject of discriminating activities on the side of the Polish authorities. Mutual animosities and distrust deepened cultural distances and dissimilarities of ethos — local, conservative-egalitarian with strong influences of German culture and vague nationalistic identification (J. Misztal, 1984) and the progressive, secularized, attached to the national ideas ethos of foreign intellectuals. The conflicts and tensions referred also to the workers' communities — and here, the civilization — cultural differences were observed deepened by the regulating towards the newcomers from **behind the bounds** employment policy. The latter element, independently of the reason which made the Polish authorities introduce them, has added, according to E. Kopeć, to the increase of provincial xenophobia existing in the Silesian province. The feeling of Silesian separateness has become in the period of great economic crisis the factor differentiating the Silesian borderland from the rest of the Polish state. What is more — stressing this separateness, not questioned by anybody, was instrumentally used by the separatist group, such as The Union for the Defence of the Silesians or, founded in 1926, the The Union of Native Silesians (Kopeć, 1986:53). The Silesian regional tie covering both Poles and Germans living for generation next to each other, often friendly and connected by kinship ties has become the subject of numerous manipulations not only on the side of the openly separatist groups but also Christian

Democracy oppositional towards the government camp (after 1926). Grażyński himself trying to neutralize the influences of W. Korfanty and his advocates has undertaken, at least partially successful, attempt of adding value to the Silesian culture by actively joining the occurring then in Poland regionalist movement which was patronized, among others, by Władysław Orkan and Stefan Żeromski (Kwiatkowski, 1984). Rehabilitation of the Upper Silesian homely surroundings, ennoblement of the Upper Silesian dialect, stressing its connection with the historical Polish language, interest in the Silesian folk culture as a source of spiritual richness of the Silesians which “saved the Polish people in Silesia for Poland” (Kopeć, 1986:187) — all these activities of the contemporary administrative authorities of the Silesian province objectively aimed at the appeasement of the growing provincial xenophobia (scrupulously fanned by the German propaganda) was brutally broken by the Second World War.

The Hitler's occupation, including all Upper Silesia together with the part of Kielce Province (the districts of Sosnowiec and Będzin) and the Cieszyn Silesia into the Reich, have brought complete break of open ties with Polish tradition. Persecutions of Polish, carried out with the German consequence as well as carried out on an unparalleled in other regions scale of action of enrolment on the so-called *Volksliste*<sup>6</sup>, favoured it (Broda-Krężl, 1978). The *Volksliste* action covered the whole Silesian population, however, in the old Silesian Province over half of the population (64.1%) was included into III nationalistic group which, according to the German settlements, meant lack of crystalized national awareness (Błaszczak-Waślawik, 1990:48). For anybody who at least slightly understands the complexity of the ethnico-nationalistic identification of the Silesians, it is not a secret that the formal access to German nationality, in the form of enrolment on the *Volksliste*, was in Upper Silesia of decisively smaller importance than in General Government (Davis, 1986:69), and did not in fact mean regermanization (which, as a matter of fact, was the reason of dissatisfaction of the officers of Hitler's administration responsible for the German nationalistic policy, (wider on this subject, see Adamski, 1948, given after Błaszczak-Waślawik, 1990:50). However, in the opinions and feelings of many Poles going through the gehenna of occupation without these substitutes of “normality” which were given to the inhabitants of Upper Silesia, the attitudes and nationalistic declarations of the Silesians were the evidence of opportunism and even national treason (Błaszczak-Waślawik, 1990:57—58). This far too simplified an unjust stereotype of “the Silesian-renegade” has strengthened, first of all, in the consciousness of people inhabiting the areas of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie neighbouring with the former Silesian Province — it is not by accident that the management personnel of the Zagłębie industrial works and the officials of Hitler's administration were recruited in this part of the Katowice Notary mainly from aboriginal

Silesians. These and other "actions" of the invader consequently aimed at breaking up the ties of Upper Silesia with the remaining Polish land and sharpening the nationalistic antagonisms in the very Upper Silesian community.

After painful occupational experience the tragical mistake of the Polish authorities turned out to be the policy nationalistic verification carried out in a shameful way, without even minimum orientation in the specificity of the ethnic situation of Upper Silesia. Soon after the war, especially in the years 1945—1946, there were mass arrests and deportations of people admitting ties with German nationality, thousands of Silesians (including former Silesian insurgents!) got to the camps of forced labour in the Soviet Union, less than half of them came back home at the end of the 1940s (and even later, see Szymański given after Siwiec, 1992) ruined physically and mentally. Those who of their own will or under pressure decided to solicit rehabilitation and restoration of civil rights (it concerned, first of all, people with the II *Volksliste* category), were suffering humiliation, fear and torment (Łempiński, 1979). There were cases of the acts of revenge and cruelty which were committed by the recent victims of Nazi terror (Berlińska, 1993) as well as ordinary corrupt practices and offences on the side of the Soviet military authorities, Security Office or Police (Błasiak, 1990:74). Not uncommon were the cases of displacement of autochthons whose property was taken over by the corrupted representatives of the civil service, being recruited, dominantly, from the newcomers (Misztal, 1984, after Rykiel, 1991:77). There are many proofs that the deep grudges and feeling of harm which occurred then have marked with the seal of distrust and aversion the relationship between native people and "the newcomers" (Błasiak, 1990).

The bitter paradox of history can be called the fact that the way of solving the *Volksliste* problem accepted by the Polish authorities meant, as a matter of fact, recognizing the German legal state and laying almost all the population of the former Silesian Province a "potential charge of national treason and collaboration with Hitler's invader" (Błasiak, 1990:70, wider see Łempiński, 1979:103).

The tragedy of the situation was completed by the fact of mass participation of the Silesians in the German military formation (Wehrmacht). Many of them did not come to Silesia after the war where their wives and children still remained. It was, as it is known, one of the important reasons of emigration of the native population to Germany in the years 1947—1949 and — in the framework of the so-called action of uniting families soon after the October 1956 (Davis, 1986:6—10 and Łempiński, 1979:246). Let's add also the Silesians, former solidiers of the Polish Military Forces in the West, mainly prisoners of war and Wehrmacht deserters, did not come back home (wider see Małkiewicz, 1982, unpublished Ph.D., given after Błasiak, 1990).

In the context of the post-war dramas of verification of nationalistic Upper Silesian community, the appearance in this area of huge masses of newcomers displaced according to the Soviet concept of solving the problem of the Polish borders accepted in Yalta by Western Allies (Kersten, 1985) from the former Eastern borderland of 2nd Republic had to cause the strong feeling of threat among native population. It was strengthened by the commonly prevailing slackness and chaos which the Polish administration taking over authority from the hands of the Soviet military commanders was not able to control (wider see Łempiński, 1979; Miształ 1984; Kersten, 1985). In the territory of the former Silesian Province, which particularly interests us here, the main waves of the immigrants came from the neighbouring Zagłębie Dąbrowskie<sup>7</sup> and adjoining it south-eastern provinces (Cracow, Kielce as well as Rzeszów) (given after Błasiak, 1990:80). The closest neighbours, mainly the inhabitants of Zagłębie, came as the first ones, together with the Soviet Army in the morally doubtful (although maybe psychologically understandable) role of “the judges of the Polish character of Silesia” (Gołba, 1945, here after Błasiak, 1990). From there, “from behind the border”, have been recruited to a large extent the officers of “the new order”, communist administration, security forces, police (wider, see the above quoted study of Błasiak, 1990). In the situation of the specific branding the Silesians with the “national-civil inferiorists” (Błasiak, 1990) which many of them experienced as personal tragedy the foreign origin of the new political “élites” was of crucial importance for shaping the negative stereotype of “the inhabitants of Zagłębie” — *gorols* accused of all the wrong and misfortunes experienced by the native population after the war. On the side of the immigrants, the answer was the simplified and equally negative stereotype of *hanys*, **the man with the unshaped national affiliation whom you cannot trust**. The specific intensification of the anti-Silesian phobias falls in the period of Stalin’s terror when the meritorious for the matter of the Polish character of Silesia nationalistic activists, such as Arka Bożek, have been debarred from posts of authority (Śmiałek-Wróblewska, Sputek, 1988, given after Błasiak, 1990:94). Independently of the real reasons by which the contemporary political authorities were prompted carrying out this kind of purges of the administrative apparatus (first of all), the belief has fixed in the common consciousness of the Silesian that only ethnico-nationalistic motives were hiding behind it (Błasiak: 1990:95). This tendency to see all the problems of Upper Silesia in the ethnic categories with strongly marked feeling of wrong towards the “non-one’s countrymen” political élites has been preserved through all the post-war period, first of all, among the few representatives of the native middle classes — it was they who suffered the greatest humiliation and frustration resulting from blocking or limiting the access to the posts in state administration, education or culture, occupied

by the “newcomers” obedient to the orders from “the Head Office” (Wódz [J.] (ed.), 1990).

The mass influx of the culturally heterogeneous population to Upper Silesia has led to the typical in this situation clash of cultures, stressing and sensitizing of the objectively existing cultural differences between the native population and the newcomers — starting from the problems of the language (Upper Silesian dialect), through the patterns of the family-neighbourhood co-existence, the attitude towards work (considered as the most characteristic discriminant of the Silesian workers’ ethos) and ending with the patterns of religious life (wider see Wódz [K], 1992). The feeling of wrong, inferiority and humiliation felt by the native population in contacts with the representatives of the foreign intellectuals, engineering technical personnel, representatives of higher levels of party-state administration, in the case of mass recruitment to work in industry of unqualified workers gave way to contempt and belief of one’s “civilization” superiority. In contact with the unprepared for hard work in mines and iron works and urban life conditions country population from the region of Rzeszów, Kielce or the Cracow Province — the local workers’ communities for generations connected with the industrial tradition gained confirmation of the negative opinions about the *werbus*, *gorols*, trying to pick a quarrel, *szumownicy* unstabilized in terms of life conditions (W. Mrozek, 1964). However, these *gorols* attracted to Silesia by promises of high income and “social promotion”, have either quickly run away from here not standing the trial of hard physical work in the mines or iron works, or have struck roots making use of the preferential allowance of flats in the gigantic dormitories shooting up like mushrooms on the outskirts of the Silesian towns. The post-war housing policy ruthlessly subordinated to the needs of the industrial production has to a large extent added to fixing the earlier existing socio-ecological structures of the towns of Upper Silesia and deepening the socio-spatial distances between the native population concentrated, first of all, in the old housing estates and the immigrants settled only in the new buildings (Frackiewicz, 1983). The fate of the old workers’ districts of the industrial part of Upper Silesia are the most striking expression of the marginalizations of considerable groups of regional community of Upper Silesia in the period of real socialism — as opposed, however, to the quite commonly proclaimed stereotype — the Silesian blue-collar has not become a Croesus in the Polish People’s Republic and the presented, especially in the times of Gierek’s success propaganda, optimistic pictures of smiling, extracting in the sweat of their brows and supporting the “right forces” miners, have turned out equally false as the enthusiasm manifested by the prominent winners of the state awards “for merits for the development of the socialist motherland”. Hoping that the nearest years will allow to correct the deformed for years of impudent propaganda picture of Upper Silesia, I will only make a statement which,

as one can expect, many will accept with disbelief — for almost the whole period of real socialism it would be difficult to point to the second region in Poland in which the symbolic contents passed in the official circulation (mass media, through educational, cultural institutions, etc.) would swerve so much from the symbols and values functioning within the framework of the first system of culture (i.e. in the framework of primary group or local community, distinction introduced by Kłoskowska, 1981). Again and again these divergences were observed, for example, during conflicts caused by ostentation ignorance of Silesian towards formal education the lack of which the Silesians themselves have often successfully compensated with higher culture of work and many years' professional experience. The Silesian workers' community as a whole to a small extent has used the undoubtful (at least formally) possibilities of social promotion through education. The sociological research of the 1970s and 1980s show that although since the end of the 1950s in the Silesian workers' families disappears the tradition of inheriting by the sons father's profession, still we have to do here with the reproduction of the social status of parents, first of all, in connection with limiting the educational aspirations of Silesian youth (Mrozek, 1987). Let's say it openly — such a state of affairs has for many decades been consciously supported by the regional party-economic bureaucracy — realizing "economic tasks" coming from "the head office". Following the mad assumptions of "the socialist planned economy", the heavy industry of Upper Silesia was to fulfil "the landable" role of "the raw material-energetic source" — it meant in practice limiting the developmental possibilities of the regional economy, strengthening its mono-cultural character together with all the negative consequences of this state of affairs from economic, through socio-cultural, ending in ecological (Kramer (ed.), 1988). The authoritatively imposed model of extensive industrialization forced the specific structure of the regional job market, first of all, 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, attached to the most important branches.

As a matter of fact, thus, the regional system of education favoured the continuation of the traditional models of educating Silesian children and youth, with time it started to play the role of one of the main limiters of the educational promotion of this community (Błasiak, 1980:118). Of course, the objective educational limitations were not the only reasons of socio-cultural marginalization of large groups of native population of the former Silesian Province. We have mentioned above the specific for the industrial part of Upper Silesia ecologico-social processes thanks to which the old dating, to the end of the last century workers' districts have become specific enclave of the native community which up till now have preserved many features of local communities (Wódz [K.], 1992).

By the right of paradox, it was in old workers' districts of the towns of the Upper Silesian Industrial Region that the conditions favouring the preservation and cultivating of local traditions, dialect, treated as the basic marker of belonging to the group of **countrymen**, allowing to separate oneself from the non-Silesian surrounding, have emerged. The supporting of separateness of the native population towards the newcomers was also favoured by the branched network of informal family-neighbourhood ties which could not be ruined by the rides of departures for Germany in the 1950s and the 1970s. The processes of erosion and sinking of Upper Silesians into the culturally heterogeneous community of immigrants was prevented by the presented up till today endogamy — there were cases of the non-Silesians marrying into the resident for generations Silesians families, the opposite examples were rare (Rykiel, 1989). The closed circle of social relationships low socio-spatial mobility (departures for Germany never meant breaking ties with one's countrymen) created particularly favourable conditions of the reproduction of local culture, the carrier and at the same time, the basic element of which, was and is the Silesian dialect. In the individual scope socialization in the traditional Silesian family, in the culturally homogeneous local community, mean acquiring together with the dialect, the specific level of linguistic-cultural competence, and, thus, forming specific for these communities primary habitus which often turned out to be disfunctional towards the requirements of the educational system (Błasiak, 1990:144ff; Łęcki et al., 1992). 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 look at educational failures of children from the traditional Silesian environments from the point of view of their linguistic-cultural equipment which very often had become **cultural inadequacy** painfully felt in the contact with school (Łęcki et al., 1992:27). One cannot exclude that the lowering of the level of educational aspirations, so common among Silesian youth, was a specific form of defense against difficulties in learning easy to foresee (Błasiak, 1990:114ff). It referred, first of all, to the arts subjects the learning of which required acquiring the literary form of Polish and together with it — essentially foreign distant from the historical experience of one's own ethnic group cultural tradition (Łęcki et al., 1992:27). The secondary school — unfortunately! — has often been this place where the children from Silesian families have experienced the effects of negative stigmatization of their native dialect, for many this experience has turned so painful that it decided on the attitude towards school, teachers and to these of colleagues who had no such problems (Bieniasz, 1991:30).

It is in this way that there appeared specific feedback between the outer and inner limiters of the educational promotion of Silesian children and youth

leading finally to fixing the marginal position of the wide parts of native population.

This situation, let's repeat, was during the whole post-war period very convenient for the regional and central party-state administration since it allowed to realize without any obstacles gigantic industrial investments, absorbing the innumerable amount of unqualified labour force. The latter was recruited from both the local population and the foreign element, however, till the end of the 1980s there existed additional barrier of social promotion towards the Silesians in the form of the unwritten rule of moderate trust applied the more willingly the wider the Silesians used specific legal regulations facilitating them settling in Germany. It is not necessary to add that these privileges are very often the subject of envy and desire on the side of the newcomers born in other parts of Poland, they confirmed their belief about the double-dealing and opportunism of Silesians who were ready to renounce the Polishness for the right of using the German prosperity (Marek, 1991).

Passing such evaluations, the newcomers from the up-country did not trouble to understand the complicated motives of the emigration decisions of the Silesians, dictated often by the feeling of bitterness and grudge towards those who came here after the war in search of their place on earth and made it unbearable for the natives.

Summing up the present consideration, we can ascertain that the post-war fate of the Upper Silesian community not only did not facilitate the integration of the newcomers with the native population but strengthened the isolationist tendencies lying in them, they strengthened many negative stereotypes, both among the foreign population (Silesian = German) and among the Upper Silesian threatened in their rights "to be themselves at themselves" who explained all their *miseries* by the presence of immigrants.

In recent years in Upper Silesia appear regional movements which build their political programme on the feeling of wrong and underprivilege in reference to the newcomers.

The few so far examiners who have attempted at explaining the essence of this new Upper Silesia regionalism (Berlińska, 1990; Błasiak, 1990; Gerlich, 1992; Szczepański, 1993) concentrate on the current political, economic, cultural conditionings of this phenomenon, without noticing the surprising convergence of argumentation of contemporary Upper Silesia regionalists with the concepts and proposals of their predecessors, once concentrated round Wojciech Korfanty.

The leading idea of the most influential regional associations openly referring to the political heritage of the prominent Silesian patriot is the integration of regional community round the traditional Silesian values, such as family, work and religion (Klasik, 1988) and the final political aim — restoration in Upper Silesia of the systemic solutions from the inter-war

period with advanced regional autonomy (Kositza, 1991). The above-mentioned traditional values, against the opinions of some Upper Silesian regionalists are not "the signs of the identity of this region" (Klasik, 1988). The so-called "regional values", as Czesław Robotycki has rightly recently observed, are, as a matter of fact, the mythologized picture of one's own regional group, idealized and strongly emotionally tinged (Robotycki, 1990:32, cf. also Gerlich, 1992). The attempts at mythologizing one's own past are often accompanied by specific nostalgia for "the lost paradise" whose artistic expression can be found in the Silesian films of Kazimierz Kutz, in Janosch's novels, in Horst Bienek's creative output (Robotycki, 1990:33). However, the idyllic, devoid of arrises, picture of the Silesian past, opposed to the desintegration and chaos introduced here by the "newcomers" occurs not only in literary or artistic expressions, it is also reflected in the academic expressions marked by evaluation, whose authors uncritically repeat simplified, black-and-white mental schemes, glorifying one's own regional group and opposing it to the "newcomers", embodying the whole evil of this world (see especially Bukowska-Floreńska, 1987, wider see Gerlich, 1992). Of course, these types of attitudes are nothing exceptional in the history of human communities, evaluating the past and its mythologization gain in power in the decisive periods and are, to a certain extent, natural reaction to disappointments and frustrations the sources of which are in the present. However, in the case of Upper Silesia, with its complicated history and cultural mixing, mythologization of the past means not only its idealization but also — unfortunately — its ideologization, which, similarly to Cz. Robotycki, I understand, first of all, as an attempt at giving the universal status to one of many possible versions of the past (tradition, culture) of this region (Robotycki, 1990:31). In opposition to Cz. Robotycki, I do not think that similar phenomena could be discussed only in reference to the obsessive attempts at proving the Polish character of Silesia, changed into the impudent changing of history, barbarious destruction of architectural monuments, questioning the contribution of the German creators into the culture of Silesia, etc. (ibid.). The expression of specific ideologization of the past are the postulates of **revitalization of Silesian** culture raised by some regional movement, based on completely wrong and having no justification in ethnosociological data assumption that Silesian culture is still, despite the passing of time and irreversible to a large extent demographic-social processes, 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 (*Declaration of the Upper Silesian Union*, 1990, wider see Gerlich, 1992). Stressing the cultural separateness of Upper Silesia, magnifying the objectively existing cultural differences between the native population and the newcomers, at the same time promoting the primacy of "the Silesian character" over the culture

of the newcomers, as well as the national culture (wider see Gerlich, 1992), brings the contemporary Upper Silesian regionalism closer to ethnonationalism occurring in many peripheral regions (Gourevitch, 1979). Referring to local traditions, exposing specific features of the Silesian regional ties (Ossowski, 1967), supporting and even strengthening isolation tendencies basing on strong community ties (Gerlich, 1992:29) more and more often serve the campaign run by the regional groups for regionalization — from the concept of great Silesia presented by the activists of the Upper Silesian Union till the projects of restoring the legal state of the Silesian Province from the inter-war period popularized by the Movement of Silesian Autonomy (Kositzka, 1993).<sup>8</sup> The latter seem particularly dangerous, taking into account the dissimilarity of geopolitical conditioning, nationalistic relationships, economic situation of Upper Silesia from the inter-war period in comparison with contemporary times. Upper Silesia is not the Western border of the Republic today, the native population — apart from the country areas — does not exceed even half of its present inhabitants. Affected by the heaviest consequences of the errors of “socialistic industrialization”, the industrial part of Upper Silesia is facing the dramatic civilization challenges which it can cope only with the solidary support of the whole country. Arduousness of everyday life, tiredness and fear of more and more real unemployment, loss of the social prestige by these professional groups which not long ago were on top of the hierarchy of income, are the explosive potential which is revealed in the following strike waves.

Aggressive ethnoregionalism antagonizes the regional community, intensifies the feeling of uncertainty, causes on the side of “the newcomers”, threatened in their civil rights, counterreactions in the form of manifestations of the populist-nationalistic groups directed against regionalization projects, treated as the introduction of separating Upper Silesia from Poland (see Szczepański, 1993). It should be added that contrary to what the ideologists of regionalism acting in defense of the “Silesian identity” think — the notions of region, regionalism, autonomy are extremely weakly rooted in the common consciousness. In the sociological survey carried out in 1992 under the supervision of M. Szczepański among 320 inhabitants of Tychy, it has been observed, among others, that as many as 37.7% of the examined admit that they do not quite know what “regionalism” means, the majority of them (62.7%) associate this notion, first of all, with individual, deeply rooted memories, connected with birth, residence or living long in particular parts of the country, only every fourth of the examined inhabitants of Tychy points out that the level of identification with the region depends, first of all, on the deep knowledge of the culture of regions, their dialect, customs and traditions (Szczepański, 1993). The decisive minority (27.2%) of the examined from the above-mentioned Tychy research is for the full, economic and political

autonomy of Upper Silesia, the remaining either have no definite opinion on this matter (50.6%) or are against it (22.2%) (Szczepański, 1993). Summing up the author categorically claims that, at least in the case of Tychy, and maybe the whole region — “as political abuse one should consider attempts at legitimization or rationalization of activities aiming at regionalization with the help of reference to the support of public opinion” (Szczepański, 1993). There is no doubt that regional ideology has not, so far, got too many advocates either among the native population or — the more so as — among the newcomers, although undoubtedly in both these groups there is a potential of ethnocentrism and xenophobia which, through irresponsible activities of the politicians and deteriorating economic situation, may turn into the open conflict. Without forejudging the direction of evolution of the ethnic relationships in Upper Silesia (i.e. being of interest to us here the former Silesian Province) one should warn the local élites against the dangers coming from ideologizing the problem of cultural identity of the Silesians, connecting it with any political programme. Upper Silesia as the region of cultural-linguistic borderland is facing today the exceptional chance of overcoming the prejudices and stereotypes accumulated for decades and having negative influences on the mutual relationships between the native and the newcomers, it may, however, become the scene of confrontation of the most aggressive ethnoregionalism with chauvinism and Polish or German nationalism. Let's hope that the progressing processes of institutionalization of regional identity will not mean the growth of tensions and conflicts between the natives and the newcomers. Responsibility for further development of the events lies, first of all, on the main actors of the local political scene but also, to a large extent, on the academic community which should not stop in aiming at showing the complex truth on the socio-cultural face of Upper Silesia.

## Notes

- 1 Recently many interesting publications have appeared presenting the situation and identification problems of the minority groups living at present in Poland (Cala, 1992; Melchior, 1990; Kurcz, 1991; Sakson, 1991; Sadowski, 1992). These publications, still too few, have to fulfill, apart from cognitive functions, the educational role in breaking the ancient and fixed stereotypes and prejudices and in making the Polish majority aware of the duties resulting from the real cultural differentiation of our society.
- 2 Expression used by Lech Wałęsa at spring 1990, proclaiming the beginning of the division of new Solidarity élites.

- 3 The number of ethnic minorities in Poland after the Second World War is about 2% of whole population.
- 4 It should be important to mention that Poland after 1989 has introduced several law regulations favourable to ethnic minorities, like special electoral law, the possibility to teach minorities languages at school, special programmes for social and cultural activities of ethnic groups, etc.
- 5 To avoid misunderstandings connected with divergent opinions of historians, ethnographers, geographers on the actual range of Upper Silesia, I am explaining that the considerations presented here apply almost exclusively to this part of historical Upper Silesia (covering, first of all, the part of the Katowice Province separated on the East by former partition borders dividing Upper Silesia and Zagłębie Dąbrowskie) which in 1922 was in the borders of reborn Poland. I am stressing this fact not because some autonomous groups give it a symbolic meaning — there will be a more detailed discussion of it — but because it is in this part of Upper Silesia where the conditions favouring the creation of specific attitudes and xenophobic tendencies appeared which reappear in the current programmes of revitalizing of Silesian identity. For the details concerning the history of Poland see Davies, 1981, 1986.
- 6 *Volksliste* was the element of the Nazi national policy of germanization in the areas incorporated to III Reich after 1939 (Upper Silesia, Great Poland). The aim of this policy was to separate the German or those who could be recognized as German from other part of population.
- 7 The extreme part of Katowice Province which at the time of partition of Poland (1795—1918) belonged to the Russian Empire (Davis, 1986:354).
- 8 The above analysis is far from being complete since it does not take into account the organizations of the German minority acting on the regional political scene, there are, on the one hand, the Socio-Cultural Society of the Population of German Origin from the Katowice Province and, on the other, run by Dietmar Brehmer, German Working Community "Reconciliation and Future". Both these organizations — in opposition to the similar associations acting in the Opole region, keep far going moderation in the matters of regionalism and autonomy. Wider see Gerlich, 1992:33ff.

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Kazimiera Wódz

### Rewitalizacja śląskiej tożsamości — szanse i zagrożenia

#### Streszczenie

Artykuł składa się z trzech części. Część pierwszą i drugą poświęcono analizie zjawiska etnocentryzmu we współczesnym świecie, w tym także w Polsce. Autorka zastanawia się między innymi nad przyczynami rewindykacji etniczno-narodowościowych, których widownią stały się kraje byłego bloku wschodniego, rozważa podobieństwa i różnice między nacjonalizmem, etnoregionalizmem, separatyzmem, odwołuje się do wyników prowadzonych w Polsce w ostatnich latach badań socjologicznych, ukazujących wzrost nastrojów ksenofobicznych i niechęci wobec innych narodów. W trzeciej części artykułu autorka wyjaśnia źródła napięć etnicznych na Górnym Śląsku, zwracając szczególną uwagę na historyczne uwarunkowania separatyzmu górno-śląskiego.

Kazimiera Wódz

## **Neubelebung der schlesischen Identität — Chancen und Bedrohungen**

### **Zusammenfassung**

Der Artikel besteht aus drei Teilen. Der erste und zweite Teil wurde der Analyse des Phänomens des Ethnozentrismus in der gegenwärtigen Welt, darunter auch in Polen, gewidmet. Die Autorin erörtert unter anderem die Gründe der ethnisch-nationalen Neubelebung, die in den Ländern des ehemaligen Ostblocks auftauchten; sie analysiert die Ähnlichkeiten und Unterschiede zwischen dem Nationalismus, Ethnoregionalismus und Separatismus; sie beruft sich auch auf die Ergebnisse der in Polen in den letzten Jahren durchgeführten soziologischen Untersuchungen, die eine Steigerung der xenophobischen und ablehnenden Stimmungen anderen Völkern gegenüber aufweisen.

Im dritten Teil des Artikels erklärt die Autorin die Gründe der ethnischen Spannungen in Oberschlesien, indem sie besondere Aufmerksamkeit auf die historischen Grundlagen des schlesischen Separatismus lenkt.

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# **“One’s Countrymen” vs. “Strangers” in Upper Silesia**

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## **1. The Concept of Research. Theoretical Assumptions**

### **1.1. Introduction**

For several years the team of sociologists from the Department of Research on Contemporary Culture has conducted research on the socio-cultural identity of the inhabitants of Upper Silesia (Wódz [K.] (ed.), 1992; Łęcki et al., 1992; Łęcki et al., 1992a).

In the first stage of the research the authors’ team has set itself the task of “defining by means of the phenomenologico-formal analysis the limits and contents [...] of the Silesians’ experienced world” (Łęcki et al., 1992). We assumed that the source of the socio-cultural identity of the Silesians is transmitted in the processes of primary socialization and strengthened in everyday relations of the personal type social scope of knowledge about the specific features and location of one’s own regional group. An attempt to reach the resources of common knowledge of people who define themselves as Silesians, was taken on the basis of the analysis of a dozen or so life stories, and more precisely — stories of one’s own life recorded on a tape. The material collected in this way was the basis for reconstructing the ways of defining the limits of social world by the examined, its inner structurization, and especially division into one’s countrymen and strangers. In the following stage

we concentrated on two, key from the point of view of ethnic relationships, problems — identification dilemmas and the dynamics of the picture of a “stranger” in a conflict situation.

The results of current analyses concerning both of the above-mentioned problems were presented in the work *One's Countrymen and Strangers in Upper Silesia* (Wódz [K.] (ed), 1993). The integral elements of this publication are included in the annex original scripts of two “life stories” being the basis for the reconstruction of mental structures being of interest to us. The considerations presented below are devoid of crucial — from the point of view of accepted research procedure — fragments of the original utterances of the examined. We do hope that we managed to present without too far reaching deformations — the most important features of the common way of thinking of the Silesians about themselves and about the world.

The accepted by the team methodological option is contained in the widely understood humanistic-interpretative paradigm connected with the names of Wilhelm Dilthey, Max Weber, William Thomas, Florian Znaniecki, George Herbert Mead. We took theoretical inspirations, first of all, from the sociology of knowledge in its form suggested — in reference to Alfred Schütz's concept — by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. We also made use of some solutions offered by the classic of formal sociology George Simmel, in the works of William G. Sumner or Robert Ezra Park. We finally took into consideration the experience of Fritz Schütze from his research on trajectories.

The starting point of the undertaken research was the assumption about the existence of the separate “experienced world” (*Lebenswelt*) of the specific ethnic group created by the Silesians. The core of this world is — as we believe, transmitted in the process of primary socialization and strengthened by everyday “face to face” interactions social resource of knowledge (beliefs about the specific features and location of one's regional group). Reaching this resource is not an easy thing, since it is part of this natural, prereflexive attitude which tells the members of this cultural group to “take for granted” the beliefs about the essential separateness (relating to customs, mentality) of native Upper Silesians influencing their attitudes towards the strangers. The analysis of the subjective interpretation of one's own life seemed to us to be the best way enabling reaching the “experienced world” on condition that the life story is treated as “a text requiring deepened interpretation and understanding” (Giza, 1991:105).

The starting point were the experiences gathered in many research on the Upper Silesian community both by means of the qualitative and quantitative methods. Such and not other choice of the respondents is justified wider in the part “Selection of Testees. Characteristics of Material. Course of Research”. Here, we would just like to point that in order to examine the interesting

us interdependencies — the representativeness of the testees — the proving of which with the analysis of only two autobiographic stories would be a breakneck task — is not necessary. When the subject of the research are opinions and the attention is concentrated on their coexistence and mutual relationships and not on their distribution in the society — Zetterberg claims — the testees representativeness is not necessary (Zetterberg, 1954).

The characteristics of observing "one's countrymen" and "strangers" in conflict situations or the dilemmas of one's own picture of the people from cultural borderland (such are undoubtedly Silesians), as they were presented here, do not obviously pretend and cannot pretend to the description of the whole very diversified Upper Silesian community. They show, however, as it seems — certain important — aspect of the situation, characteristics of something which can be defined as a social "grey zone", maybe closest to the world experienced in the clear form. And it was this world — although we do not want to absolutize its importance for the more widely understood social life — which interested us most. In it, in turn, the most important seemed to us the problems of divisions into "one's countrymen" and "strangers" such as they appear in conflict situations as well as connected with these divisions dilemmas of the picture of oneself.

## 1.2. "One's Countrymen" and "Strangers"

The problems of "strangeness" and "homeliness" have become the subject of analyses of social researchers since the end of the 19th century. The first important work discussing these problems was written by Ludwik Gumplowicz (Gumplowicz, 1905). He connected the intergroup relationships with two types of attitudes: solidarity in relationships with one's own countrymen and hostility in relationships with strangers. In the order of the history of sociology the continuator of these trends of thoughts of the author of *Der Rassenkampf* which are connected with the attitudes towards "others", was the American sociologist William G. Sumner who distinguished the notions of in-group and out-group (Sumner, 1906). According to Sumner, there is a distinction between us, we-group or one's own group and all others or groups of other foreign groups. This distinction has far reaching consequences: the members of one's own group are characterized by the mutual relationships of peace, order, law, government and economy; the attitude towards all people from outside one's own group is war and plunder, unless it has been changed by agreements. For Sumner the attitudes of comradeship and peace in one's own group and war in reference to foreign groups are interdependent — loyalty towards one's own group, devotion to it and hatred and contempt for people from outside the group, fraternity

inside, war outside, all this appears simultaneously as the product of the same situation (Sumner, 1906:12—13, quoted after Merton, 1982:350).

The basic notions used by Sumner to characterize the phenomena of ethnocentrism have dominated for many years in the considerations about the nature of “strangeness” and “homeliness”. Many researchers believed that relationships and attitudes described in *Folkways* are the only, or — in the weaker version — basic form relationships between the communities of the in-group and out-group type. Only Robert K. Merton paid attention to different types of the psychosocial attitude of persons not being group members towards the specific groups depending on meeting or not meeting the conditions of membership and the attitudes of candidates towards group participation. Merton’s classification scheme points to the possibility of much greater complication of relationship towards the community than the pattern distinguished by Sumner (Merton, 1982:338—349).

Georg Simmel, the author of the essay *Stranger* puts forward the thesis that about strangeness in the sociological sense one can talk only within the framework of the opposition “close—distant” (Simmel, 1975:504—512). Simmel characterizes the situation of a “stranger” first of all due to the common group features of the community which the stranger represents and persons with whom he comes into contact. According to Simmel, “stranger” is close to us, in so far as we feel common to us and him similarity of national, social, professional or universal features; he is distant to us in so far as these common features do not cover only us, in so far as they connect us only because they connect very many (Simmel, 1975:509). Simmel roughly distinguishes several kinds of “strangeness”. Firstly, separation occurs when, despite the feeling of closeness, similarity and harmony, the belief appears that these features are common and belong to many people. In this case an individual loses the feeling of the exceptionality of relationship. Secondly, there is sometimes separation outside the community of general values when the meaning of “stranger” is not assigned positive properties. Simmel leaves this last situation away from the analyses carried out in the essay. The relationships between the elements of “closeness” and “distance” occurring — according to Simmel — in each social contact in certain defined proportions and with certain tension change into the attitude towards the stranger.

In the American sociology the continuations of some theoretical trends of William G. Sumner and Georg Simmel can be found in the concept of “marginal individual” by Robert E. Park (Park, 1928:881—893; Nowicka, 1990:8). Marginal man is a person not assimilated with the culture of the group to which it aspires and simultaneously no longer connected with the community he comes from. Park’s category seems to be a good tool for the description of the situation of individuals and community in the multiethnic society where the processes of aculturation and assimilation

take place. Besides, Park applied for the first time in the analysis of ethnic relationships the notion of social distance which was earlier used by Leopold von Wiese and Max Weber (Wiese von 1941:30, quoted after Abel, 1977:232; Weber, 1959, quoted after Bendix, 1975:82). Operationalization of this term was done by Emory S. Bogardus creating the scale later named after him. By social distance he understood the scope of acceptance or rejection of the members of different ethnic groups and the difference of the degrees of distance felt by the groups he called "social distance differential". Park's and Bogardus' works started in the 1920s had for a long time great influence on the sociological analyses of attitudes towards "stranger".

In Poland the precursor of research on the attitude towards "the stranger" was Jan Stanisław Bystron whose subject of analyses was national xenophobia (Bystron, 1923:371—396; 1935; 1980:277—313). Florian Znaniecki and Józef Chałasiński, on the other hand, dealt with the problem of antagonism in relationship between ethnic group (Znaniecki, 1930/1931:158—209; Znaniecki, 1931:80—108; Znaniecki, 1990:265—404; Chałasiński, 1933). All these works are models of very interesting deepened studies. It is worth stopping especially at Znaniecki's analysis contained in the work *Studies on Antagonism Towards Strangers*, since his theoretico-empirical proposals — although they were founded on the ground of a different philosophical tradition — are close to the meaning given to the notion of "stranger" later by Alfred Schütz. Znaniecki widens the scope of the notion of *der Fremde* taken from Simmel's tradition. For the author of *Contemporary Nations*, one should introduce what we call **humanistic coefficient** the definition of strangers, just like in general to any scientific approach to social phenomena. Foreign in reference to the examined individual or group are those, and only those whose this individual or group experience as foreign. Strangeness in Znaniecki's approach stops being absolute feature all the time rested in the same man or the same class of people and becomes the relative feature which the same man or the same class of people independently of their own modifications may possess in certain conditions and not possess in others. The problem of strangers does not, thus, limit itself for Znaniecki to the question, which people are foreign in reference to the specific individual or group but boils down to the question "in what conditions given people of a given class are foreign in experiencing the specific individual or group"? These conditions obviously are part of the conscious social life of this individual or group which sometimes experiences and sometimes does not experience given people or people of a given class as foreign or non-foreign. It does not mean that they are "subjective". Using the humanistic coefficient, taking the position of a man as the experiencing and acting subject, as subjective, we can consider only what he himself considers subjective (Znaniecki, 1930/1931:292—293), Znaniecki puts here forward the hypothesis as a statement — human object is experienced by the subject

as foreign only when there is social contact between them on the ground of separable systems of values (Znaniecki, 1930/1931:300). In accordance with this statement during the analysis of the problem of a "stranger" special attention should be paid to the experienced by man sphere of different systems of values of individual and persons or groups with whom the acting subject contacts. The significant turn in the studies over the "stranger" took place thanks to phenomenological sociology. The founder of this trend, Alfred Schütz, in his earlier works and especially in the book *Der Sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt* attempted to create theoretical framework for the experience of "the other", which he called the theory of understanding of a "stranger" (*Theorie des Fremdverstehens*) (Schütz, 1981:137—197). The real understanding of a "stranger" was based, in his opinion, on the acts of one's own interpretation of the other (more specifically, the objectives of his activities). In other words, the acting individual is trying to change foreign motives "in order to" (*Um-zu-Motiven*) into its own, in accordance with the scheme of meanings established for the activities of the other (Schütz, 1981:156—160).

The problem of the specific attitude of a "stranger" towards the group is developed by Schütz in the essays "The Stranger" and "The Home-comer" (Schütz, 1964:91—105; Schütz, 1972:70—84). The notion of a "stranger" means for him an adult who is constantly trying to be accepted or at least tolerated by the group to which he would like to belong. The greatest obstacle in this individual's attempts to be accepted, is the difference of the cultural patterns of groups (one's own and foreign). It results from the specificity of knowledge about the social world experienced by an individual. Schütz writes in his essay: "The system of knowledge thus acquired — incoherent, inconsistent, and only partially clear, as it is — takes on for the members of the in-group the appearance of a sufficient coherence, clarity, and consistency to give anybody a reasonable chance of understanding and of being understanding and of being understood. Any member born or reared within the group accepts the ready-made standardized scheme of the cultural pattern handed down to him [...] as an unquestioned and unquestionable guide in all the situations which normally occur within the social world. The knowledge correlated to the cultural pattern carries its evidence to the contrary. It is a knowledge of trustworthy recipes for interpreting the social world [...] Thus, it is the function of the cultural pattern to eliminate troublesome inquiries by offering ready-made directions for use, to replace truth hard to attain by comfortable truisms and to substitute the self-explanatory for the questionable" (Schütz, 1964:95).

The reality basic for man, the world of everyday life is based on the system called "thinking-as-usual". The stranger does not have the same — as the group to which he aspires — system of rules — recipes. He is a man who

has to reflect on almost everything which for the foreign group remains understandable by itself. Only after collecting certain knowledge about the interpretative functions of the new cultural patterns "the stranger" can use these patterns as schemes of his own experience.

In a specific case when "the stranger" is a person coming back home (to one's own group) after a longer stay abroad obstacles in mutual understanding result from the difference between exceptionality and importance that the absent assigns to his experiences and the evaluation of these experiences by his countrymen (Schütz, 1972:80). Big role is played in this process by the evaluation of experiences of the returning person by his own group in the categories of success or failure. The degree of intimacy of contacts of the returning person with his own group changes depending on the changes in the essence of "the stranger". Schütz believes that once interrupted relationship of "you" is again established with difficulty since the condition of this relationship is mutuality.

An interesting proposal of the analysis of the relationship of acting-actor with the patterns of his interaction was presented by Erving Goffman, the founder of the dramaturgic perspective in contemporary sociology.<sup>1</sup> The dramaturgic model of interaction pays special attention to the processes of mutual communication of partners combined with mutual presentation. The understanding of the other ("stranger") consists in catching the sense of situationally conditioned behaviour and grasping the cohesion and situational adequacy (Ziółkowski, 1981:120). During interaction the actors carry out idealization, consisting in adjusting the behaviour so that it would suit the way of thinking and expectations of the community in which this "information game" is taking place (Goffman, 1981:74). Localization consists in learning the basic techniques which enable performing different types of roles. In accordance with this perspective inner states play important role in understanding the other, if only they are connected with outer behaviour. Finally, one can say that understanding which is situationally determined takes place in the dynamic interaction. In a narrower sense it consists in investigating the partner's motives and intentions. Understanding the sense of behaviour of "the other" does not always consist in reaching the hidden reality since the major part of institutionalized activities can be understood at the level of outer manifestations (Ziółkowski, 1981:122). One can say that "the stranger" in accordance with the dramaturgic perspective, is the acting whose basic system of meanings strays to a large extent from the sense given to other elements of everyday life by his partner.

In the Polish sociological, ethnological and historical literature one can find many important works concerning the widely understood problem of "the stranger". From the sociological analyses, it is worth paying attention to, first of all, studies by Stanisław Ossowski (Ossowski, 1966:110—220;

Ossowski, 1967:201—300), Aleksander Hertz (Hertz, 1988) as well as Aleksandra Jasińska-Kania (Jasińska-Kania, 1988) and Ewa Nowicka (Nowicka (ed.), 1990). Among ethnologists are the distinguished analyses of “the stranger” carried out by Ludwik Stomma (Stomma, 1986) creative continuator of the approach started by Jan Stanisław Bystron.

As far as the research on “homeliness” and “strangeness” in Upper Silesia is concerned, it was undertaken both by sociologists (Wódz [J.], 1991) and historians (Kopeć, 1986). The problem of “one’s countrymen” and “strangers” is in Upper Silesia not only the problem of academic investigations. It is a real social problem of the region. Such divisions are deeply rooted in the consciousness of many inhabitants of this region.<sup>2</sup> It is also worth reminding that it is also a problem which in different historical periods and in different ways was used as the element of political game.

### 1.3. Conflict Situation

All this causes that the crucial perspective in which it is worth looking at the division into “one’s countrymen” and “strangers”, is the perspective of conflict. This real and only potential; the one which should be defined as social tension rather than something already completed in the irremovable from the definition of conflict situations acts of aggression. Maybe, as it has been assumed in these approaches which put stress on examining the origin of the phenomena, these are only two sides of the same medal. Maybe without knowledge about the sources of social tensions we are not able to understand the nature and dynamics of the resulting conflicts. If, however, such or similar assumptions are made, it is essential to examine both mythologized forms of ideological thinking and the forms of common consciousness. In the latter one should look for important lodgements which can be referred to in the processes of transition — from social tension to mature conflict situations.

Similarly to the distinction between “one’s countrymen” and “strangers” also the problem of conflict situation, in the perspective of which we would like to look at the relation between “one’s countrymen” and “strangers”, has in sociology its rich literature. Although far away, not all of the described determinants of this situation find application in the analysis of the empirical material collected by the authors, at least some deserve reminding. They allow to locate the conflicts of “one’s countrymen” and “strangers” in Upper Silesia in a slightly wider theoretical context, facilitating understanding their so often hidden and always complicated sense.

“Conflict situation is such a social situation in which the acting people have contradictory aims, expectations, interests and are forced to take up either defensive or aggressive activities in reference to other people” — it

is only one of the possible descriptions of the conflict situation (Białyszewski, 1983:68).<sup>3</sup> The main feature of the conflict situation is the type of behaviour called aggressive, connected with it. There are five types of aggression being the basis and, at the same time, the form of social conflict. They seem to correspond to the established — to the large extent situationally — degrees of increasing the conflict. Putting it briefly — every manifestation of "hidden verbal aggression" carries in itself potential, situationally liberated "verbal aggression of the public character", this, in turn, carries with itself not at all imagined threat — the history of great social and national movements give here enough examples — of "physical aggression": each form of "avoidance aggression" (manifesting itself in the form of applying isolation as a means of doing harm to others) contains in itself the embryos of "sabotage aggression" — consisting in intentional impediment or frustration of the existing cooperation, in minimizing its effects.

Two parameters fix conflict situation: 1) the scope of conflict — which can be expressed through the number of people directly involved in it and through its feedback in the public opinion and 2) its intensity — measured by the degree of engagement in the defense of the rights of the parties being in conflict.

The smallest scope — due to the participation of direct participants — have interpersonal conflicts, they are often described as incidents. They are usually short-lasting, reflect individual's interests, rarely engage deeper the attention of the wider social surrounding. They are — usually — easy to solve. The reservation as to the latter one seems necessary. If interpersonal conflicts will overlap on the conflicts taking place in small social groups and — further — they can be read as an expression of conflicts breaking large social groups, then their inner dynamics changes naturally and — what follows — the characteristics of this type of conflicts. This specific conflict interference is not a rare phenomenon in contemporary world, however, its nature should be clearly distinguished — although in many cases it can cause big problems — from interpersonal conflicts generated through macroconflicts. The source of these difficulties maybe even the fact that very often the thesis is written in the ideology of macrosocial conflicts that it is only the expression of accumulated interpersonal conflicts.

In the case of ideology which is one of the markers of the intensity of conflict, the above-mentioned relationship governs itself with the "rule of reflection". Here the ideologists of macrosocial conflicts often refer to interpersonal conflicts if not to legitimize their visions, then at least to illustrate them. However — on the other hand — at the interpersonal plane eliminating the personal factor makes this conflict more severe. This is how the two seemingly opposite tendencies jointly work to dynamize the conflict. The same ideology integrating the community by showing the necessity of subordinating

to the collective interest, blurring the divisions inside it and preventing the disputes, sharpens the differences between the parties of the conflict. Another function of ideology is widening the scope of the disputable problems and polarization of the position of the parties of the conflict.

The emotional marker of the conflict situation covers intensive emotional states, first of all, of the negative character, thus, prejudices, anger, hatred, fear, jealousy, etc. It increases the mobilization of the powers in the conflict and fans the tendencies for excessive involvement of the systems of values which leads to deobjectivization of debates. In the natural way it imposes the affective definition of the conflict situation.

Four psychological mechanisms influence the intensification of conflict:

1. Mechanism of "*post facto* rationalization" — the present involvement in the conflict is justified by past involvement. The conflict has lasted for a long time, the "last fight" is needed for victory.

2. Mechanism based on the process of reduction of cognitive dissonance — people start to appreciate things they made sacrifices for.

3. Mechanism defined by Deutsch as the "vicious circle of fear" — based on the psychological phenomenon of the feeling of threat, growing together with the development of conflict. Threat intensifies conflict, more intensive conflict causes the increased threat, etc.

4. "Situational trap". Its source is often manifested among people being in conflict belief that the undertaken act of aggression will necessarily cause withdrawal of the enemy. Other markers of the intensity of conflict are the degree of complexity of the conflict problem — whereas, not only important is the multiplicity of the debatable problems but also to what extent there is clarity as to the hierarchy of the importance of these matters. But — and here comes the last of the factors of conflict intensification, i.e. importance given by the parties of the conflict to the problems being the subject of the conflict — an important (central) problem is such a problem which is considered as important by individuals or communities being in conflict.

The latter statement — similarly as it happened in the case of the sociological problem of the "stranger" refers us to the accepted by the authors of "the humanistic coefficient" and the whole trend of humanistic sociology.

#### 1.4. The Picture of Oneself and Its Function

Individual life always contains its own, unique history. However, in order to understand it, it is necessary "to place" it in the concrete of social conditions in which it takes place. This way this human life becomes, on the one hand, conditioned by this concrete of the social context in which it takes place

and, on the other hand, it is the evidence of one's own participation in the constantly created social world. In all these processes the individual is (to a different degree) the consciously acting actor. All the activities, in turn, are in the important degree dependent on how the socially acting individual sees itself, how it evaluates itself as an individual and itself as a participant of the social game in which it participates. Hence, considering the problems of offending oneself has for a long time interested sociologists. It concerns particularly all those sociological trends encompassed in the trend of so-called "humanistic sociology". It was not by accident that the great Polish sociologist Florian Znaniecki, writing about social personality, pointed to the role of the so-called "subjective ego and reflected ego", i.e. the variants of one's own picture in social shaping and functioning of an individual (Znaniecki, 1934). In the whole phenomenological and derived trends we can also find many considerations concerning the function of the picture of oneself in the social activities of individuals, but in the activities of the communities within the framework of which certain kinds of the picture of oneself seem to dominate or characterize the average members of the community (Kellerhals, Lalive d'Epianay (eds.), 1987). In this way the considerations about the picture of oneself and its functions become an important element of the sociological analysis and allow to understand human behaviour.

Considering this problem gains additional sense in connection with running for a long time discussion on the dimension of social identity in Europe, this identity which is to a large degree dependent on the really functioning in specific social communities the pictures of one's own created in the consciousness of the members of these communities (Morin, 1989). Considerations of this type introduce us into an additional sphere — the sphere of political conditionings of the discussions on identity taking place in Europe. It is clearly pointed out by Elise Marienstrass (Marienstrass, 1991: 27—34) who, on the example of France, shows the importance of political conditionings in the processes of looking for identity by specific individuals, communities. Obviously it also influences the picture of one's own. Another aspect of the same problem is pointed by Rene Gallisot differentiation into social self-identification through the feeling of real affiliation to the specific social community (*identification d'appartenance*) and through reference to some community, either existing in the past (thus, reference to historical premises or experiences both individual and communal), or existing currently in another (distant for the real for a given individual or community) social space (*identification de reference*) (Gallisot, 1987: 12—38). It is the differentiation worth making use of in the case of the analysis of social phenomena in the regions of the neighbouring or trans-border character, where the problems are current and often influence creating the picture of oneself by the individuals and larger communities (Wódz [J.], 1992). One should also refer here to the

references to symbolic space, being often the framework of the pictures of oneself. Such symbolic space may also be the really experienced space or the reference space, thus, the idealized picture (Wódz [J.], 1989:263—279).

Pointing briefly to the most important functions of the picture of oneself, one cannot ignore the problem of background against which the processes of autodefinition of individuals and communities take place. This background are, first of all, other communities participating in everyday life, the ones which through everyday contacts force to create the picture of one's own against others. Marie-Jose Chombart de Lauwe writes directly that the picture of the individual depends directly on the game of the picture of one's countrymen and strangers who have to be somehow defined, so that one's countrymen could be defined against their background, and among one's countrymen oneself (Chombart de Lauwe, 1992:9—29). We, thus, have to do with as if necessary process of defining the social world on the background of which we define ourselves. These phenomena are the more interesting in our analyses where the basis is the story of everyday life, where every contact influences the fixing or modification of the picture of oneself.

Stressing the dynamics of the problems of functioning the pictures of oneself makes us in this way look at the totality of the problem of identity. It refers both to the so-called inner identification and to the so-called outer identification. It is, thus, once reference to one's own activity seen through one's own picture and once reference to the outer world, to social ties to the vision of oneself as the social actor in the social world created by "one's countrymen" and "strangers". These problems are discussed by Zbigniew Bokszański who develops the analysis of mutual interdependencies of these identifications (Bokszański, 1989:17).

### **1.5. Reconstruction of the Picture of Oneself through Life Story**

The story of life or, as some want it, life story, is always the individual, always subjective story of an individual about what for himself, in his spontaneous account was important in his life. However, thanks to this spontaneity of account, we obtain in the life story the most important elements of the collective memory about commonplaceness. The importance of this problem is stressed by Franco Ferrarotti where he writes about as if natural appearance in these accounts of rootedness in the realities of place, social relations, the importance of earlier part to which the examined refers (Ferrarotti, 1983:33ff). Thanks to this the researcher obtains, through the application of special interpretative techniques, the possibility of reconstructing the social world in its everyday dimensions, which is impossible when applying the traditional sociological approach. One should be aware,

however, that the very acceptance of the research perspective based on life stories, forces the researcher to critical approach. Roberto Cipriani, Enrico Pozzi and Consuelo Corradi analysing the stories of family life warn against a very easy to commit mistake of ideologization of everyday life. The researcher has to very precisely mark the borders what is the examined account of his life story. Otherwise, he is threatened by falling into ideology, or overestimating the role of everyday life, or local life, or the examined world of work, etc. (Cipriani et al., 1985:253—262). This warning refers to any research but it is the more important the more the accounted reality, due to its earlier fixed images, easily undergoes ideologization. It seems that we have to really do with this danger in the case of analyses of life stories coming from the region of Upper Silesia.

Zbigniew Boksański discussing Florian Znaniecki's earlier settlements points to the occurrence in life stories of specific ordering and consequence in the selection of persons which appear in biographies (Boksański, 1989:72—73). It refers, going further, to the typical character of roles fulfilled by these persons and to the values advocated by these persons. Another author, Jean Remy, writing about the method of research on life stories pays attention to the necessity of being consequent in defining "one's countrymen" and "strangers" by the teller who most often are presented as specific "adversaries", although it does not always mean rational objections or grudges against these "strangers" (Remy, 1987:115 ff). It can be read, according to this author, from the context or the dramaturgic situation within the framework of which the examined locates and defines this "stranger". It is important to the extent that later the picture of one's own is often created in opposition to the picture of this "stranger". It is, thus, necessary to understand precisely how the "stranger" is presented, in order to understand against this background the picture of one's own.

Reading the picture of one's own through life stories is always burdened with the danger of relative subjectivism (the examined relates himself, even if he talks about others, whom he sees through his own experience), and the objectivization of this picture is only possible through interpretation which must take into account the context in which particular fragments of the story were created and through comparing the accounts with outer events known to the examiner. It is this type of interpretation that we use in further analyses.

## 2. Choice of Samples. Characteristics of Material Course of Research

In the case of two in-depth biographical interviews, the choice of respondents, although unavoidably must have the features of vague freedom, should be particularly well justified. Both advantages and limitations of the always to a certain degree arbitrary choice of the examiners should be pointed out. In the research run by the authors' team the great role was played by the fact that it was the continuation of earlier, many years' interest in the Upper Silesia problems. Particularly this stage of research the result of which was the work *The Social World of the Silesians, Reconstruction of the Contents of Common Consciousness* (Łęcki et al., 1992) fundamentally influenced the shape of these research intentions, the final results of which were put in this volume.

In the above-mentioned research, it was possible to reach and persuade to participate in the research of one these Silesian families which has been connected with this land for generations, in the history of which have concentrated many typical for the resident inhabitants of Upper Silesia biographical moments and the kinship and kindred ties covered both Polish and German ancestry — among them were both Silesian insurgents and Wehrmacht soldiers. The kinship relationship connected this family with the name of the activist for the Polish character of Silesia — Wojciech Korfanty. The majority lives in Poland and did not intend (despite having the legal possibility of obtaining the German citizenship and conferring German nationality) to leave Upper Silesia. Only few members of the family made use of this possibility.

Not all agreed to be interviewed, not all out of whom expressed such agreement (at least initially) endure till the end. They pointed, however, to next potential interviewees, and we considered such "orders" as sufficient.

Now we faced another type of problems. Considering the declaration as to the nationalistic orientation of the respondents as binding, we tried simultaneously — which was of course possible for only two respondents — to find more "tough" bases, to make the qualification as univocal as possible. Respecting the choice of the nationalistic option of these respondents whose declarations remained in contradiction with the otherwise known, often told by themselves facts from the history of themselves and their families.<sup>4</sup> We would not want to consider this type of causes as not fully univocal. But — putting aside for the time being interest in these intriguing divergencies — we would now like to concentrate attention only and exclusively on the doubtless cases. We were looking, thus, for:

1. Silesian living (which is important!) in Poland, declaring the German nationalistic option.

2. Silesian declaring the Polish nationalistic option. We tried to reach the respondents outside the organizations and associations acting in the region and grouping the persons who not only univocally define their national option (referring in both cases to their Silesian roots), but actively act for ideological constructs connected with these options. In accordance with the distinction between “experienced consciousness” and “created consciousness” (Łęcki et al., 1992) made by us in the work *The Social World of the Silesians*, we would like to consequently concentrate on these forms of consciousness which are as close as possible to the first one.

The persons found in this way should have — that is what we wanted — additionally met the condition of some comparability of the experienced fate. In the reality of Upper Silesia '92, it was not easy to find the respondents who would meet requirements, and at the same time would agree to give the interview of the autobiographical character. In so far as it was relatively easy to obtain knowledge about the opinions of this type of respondents on particular matters and problems, especially the ones which released their emotions, they agreed to the accounts of the autobiographical type unwillingly, or not at all. There were surely reasons for it: arduousness connected with the larger amount of visits of the interviewer, something which we called “the microphone effect” (Łęcki et al., 1992:21—25) in the description of the course of our previous research. This effect causes difficult to anticipate disturbances in the interviews run in various environments, and it would be very risky to make it dependent on, e.g. the respondents’ level of education. The example can be not only interviews collected by us. Interesting is also — in this aspect — sociologists’ report which examined the groups’ style of life which practically does not part with microphone — reporters. In the book entitled *The Style of Reporters’ Life* (Miller, 1983:307—308) we read: “Marek Miller: Before I pressed the cassette-recorder’s button, you told about your ill will towards its presence in our conversation. Where does it come from? Ludwik Flaszen answers: I feel the tape-recorder as the undesirable witness. If the conversation is between us, it is between us. We can then find a common vista which is the organic vista. However, the cassette-recorder records in the objective mode. It is blunt and very faithful. Such a demonic ear which intends to take notes and then reproduce. It unables situationality, privacy between us. The listener who does not react now but... I am not saying that the cassette-recorder is a bad shamanic invention. I would only like to explain why for me speaking to the microphone is very embarrassing. As if I had to do with the listener whom I do not know, with whom I cannot make contact. [...] Here the cassette-recorder is still considered to be a certain wonder. If we talk to the cassette-recorder, there have to be important, festive, clever

things [...] This machine puts on certain mask which has to be very clear, which goes beyond me [...] I don't know if you paid attention, but when we were talking, before you switched on this machine, our voices were different, our syntax was different, and now all this looks different."

Also "the fever" of our times in which there is little time for the deepened reflection over one's own life, did not favour long conversations. Some of our attempted respondents did not even want to come back to the history of their life, their life choices — the perspectives of systemic changes for many old persons (and we were to reach them) seemed something lost, unimportant. We had to with this phenomenon independently of the respondents' attitudes to the changes taking place in our country. Sorrow for something lost together with the collapse of real socialism, minimum social safety mixed with bitterness — "new Poland" is no longer for them.

For the first time we have also come across the questions about compensation for "the lost time". We had to give up — sometimes with pity — such possible respondents. One of the respondents (I. Z.) her permission to give an interview made dependent not only on listening to the tape (it also happened in the earlier run research and seemed natural) but on the possibility of correcting the typewritten version of this interview. The correction included also completing the fragments of interview with crucial and omitted in the nervous, marked by "the presence" of the tape conversations. We considered it as permissible both for practical (we would have to give up the participation of the respondent in the research) and methodological reasons. We thought it inadmissible to run the introductory selection of the respondents depending on the easiness of their getting accustomed to the technique of the recorded interview. These added fragments, often caused by our questions, were marked in the text by square brackets — [...].

The recordings of two autobiographic interviews which in the authors' intention were to lead to the reconstruction of the "course of life" (Dobrowolska, 1992) present at the same time two national options — Polish and German. The father of the first of the respondents (I. Z.) was the regular officer of the Polish army — military service brought him to Upper Silesia. During all the years of the German occupation he carried sewn on the arm letter "P" — he did not sign the *Volksliste*. The maiden name (I. Z.) belongs to the best known names of the Polish nationality.

The father of the second (R. R.) fought in Wehrmacht during the war. Her name clearly points to the German roots.

In the selection of persons whom we asked for opinions, we tried to — as it has already been mentioned — use the criteria enabling creating (even very general) plane of comparison of their life stories. In this specific case (apart from belonging to one generation) the criterion was — the same in both cases

— the "landmark"<sup>5</sup> from early childhood, the loss of father. In the first case it was the death, in the second, transportation up to the Soviet Union. These events seem to be of a comparable character — that the father is alive the second respondent learnt as a grown up woman. Both respondents unanimously stressed the importance of this fact for their further fate. These events took place directly after the end of Second World War. In the primary socialization of both respondents, thus, the main role was played by mothers, older siblings and relatives. The role of the latter, due to the difficult material situation of the respondents' families, was becoming more important than normally.

The poverty caused that both respondents despite the talents revealed at school (both — as they claim were distinguished pupils) were very early forced to take up jobs. Both the first and the second starting their professional career from simple functions of an office-boy or physical worker, after many years reached the posts included into the so-called middle viewer. And only the first one (I. Z.) completed her education, obtaining in the 1970s "evening certificate of secondary education". Both respondents consider themselves to be "Silesians" (of the Polish and German option respectively), but (R. R.) tends to assign greater importance to this self-determination. Both respondents have relatives and friends in Germany with whom they frequently interchange letters. None of them has ever thought about leaving Poland (Silesia) for good, although both had chances and possibilities to do so. Finally — children (daughters) of both respondents are studying, strangely enough the same field (arts).

So much for — at least the most general and possible to grasp in the initial stage of research — similarities. Obviously, differences appear next to them in the natural way.

The husband of the first of the respondents (I. Z.) has become a miner who came from the Rzeszów region, the second (R. R.) — native Silesian, a son of the Silesian insurgent. Different was also the atmosphere of childhood — direct **consequence** of the loss of father. Finally, respondents differ in their relationships with siblings. Intimate and full of warmth in the case of (R. R.), quite cold in the case of (I. Z.) It is difficult to completely univocally decide, how much complete coincidence is there in the last difference and for how much one should blame (then how interpreted?) taken from childhood memory of the situation of the feeling of threat and released by this feeling of ties and solidarity within nuclear family. Let's add that the first respondent had only a brother, while the second — several siblings.

The reasons given above seem to be sufficient for the authors of this work to carry out — in some way surely enriching the analysis of the respondents' utterances — the comparisons.

The obtained biographical responses are — in many aspects — highly differentiated. The first one (I. Z.) is shorter, the life facts are presented in

a more abstract, impersonal way. There is lack of the whole mosaics of particulars and details which so visibly add colour to the response of the second respondent (R. R.). To a certain extent decisive here was the fact of certain type of experience, the fact that (R. R.) had already had direct contact with sociological research. This explanation, however, does not seem to be sufficient to explain such a drastic difference. "Polish orientation" respondent (I. Z.) used without any difficulty the language for which the norm is literary language, switching, however, in the course of narration freely into dialectal vocabulary.

Fairly detailed analysis of the linguistic means of building the social world in the autobiographical utterances of the Silesians was presented in the earlier mentioned work *The Social World of the Silesians* (Łęcki et al., 1992:26—55). Here, we would like to devote some space to the discussion of the language of utterance of the (I. Z.) respondent, who clearly declaring the Polish nationalistic option considers herself to be Silesian. The analysis of the material collected by us points to it, as well as deviations from the linguistic norm established by the standard of spoken Polish, and further by literary language, are in the case of (I. Z.) of the individual and not cultural character. Incorrect syntax, wrong use of words, chaos of utterance, numerous parentheses having the character of digression are quite characteristic for certain performances of spoken Polish in general. These imperfections, even when they take the form of errors, do not thus become the element of stigmatization.<sup>6</sup> The respondent defining herself as Silesian could not give even one example of resulting from this ill will on the part of the no-Silesian environment. It seems to confirm the hypothesis that it is the dialect which is the most recognizable element of the negative stigmatization of the Silesians.

All this is connected with the slightly different in reference to two respondents linguistic and wider — cultural background. The thing is worth noting.

The elements of conventionalization to be observed at [I. Z.] are explained by the finished secondary school — evening secondary school for the working people ([R. R.] finished her education on vocational courses). The higher degree of conventionalization was probably also decided by — connected somehow with the obtained education — books from the obligatory reading list [I. Z.]. We can treat her as a person relatively — when the system of reference is her generation, persons with similar status to hers — well-read. Her flat is full of books of Polish (Sienkiewicz, Mickiewicz) and foreign classics. The respondent [I. Z.] is the reader of these books, she was one — as she claims — much earlier before revealing the humanistic talents of her only daughter. She regularly reads *Gazeta Wyborcza* (the most popular newspaper) and *Twój Styl* (the fashionable women's magazine).

The [I. Z.] respondent does not speak German at all which was fluently used by her mother — the Silesian from Ruda Śląska, with clearly Polish orientation (the fact that she went to a "Polish school" and then married the Polish officer against her family, is a proof of it).

The [R. R.] respondent knowing German very poorly limits her reading to women's magazines (Polish and German) and watching German satellite TV programmes. These programmes are "Glücksrad" ["The Wheel of Fortune"] and "Heimatsmelodie" ["Native melodies"]. It is difficult to univocally interpret this fact — it may testify to, e.g. better adjustment of German TV to the tastes of mass receiver. The proof of it is that as most important journals she considers *Bunte* [Colourful], *Quick* [Quick]. On the basis of this reading she considers herself to be well-oriented in world politics. She considers Polish press as not highly reliable and interesting. She sporadically reads *Uroda*, *Kobieta i Życie* (popular women's magazines) and *Skandale*.

Both respondents had difficulties in direct answers to the questions when the questions referred to their own life. There were also communication difficulties resulting from the phenomenon which we characterized elsewhere as "historical inadequacy" (Łęcki et al., 1992:28—29; Łęcki, Wróblewski, 1991:119—132).<sup>7</sup> In the case of the [I. Z.] respondent it is, however, connected not only with "marginalization of the ethnic status" (Łęcki, Wróblewski, 1992b) but with the phenomenon encountered much more often — being outside, or — still better — near history. In the book by Sławomir Łubiński (defined as a writer with unusual sociological hearing) we find such an illustration of the discussed phenomenon — "I am not interested in politics either. For a woman house and family are important. For example, I've learnt about President Bierut's death two days later. I didn't care about it, anyway. Not this one, then the other one. And I will have to go to work every morning anyway [...]" (Łubiński, 1980:28).

Somehow breaking the course of narration, its anecdoticity is also connected with it. Lack of strong placement in the framework of influences of the field with high degree of institutional legal validity, with simultaneous desintegration of the forms of one's own subculture<sup>8</sup> seems to be responsible to a certain extent for the state of certain "crookedness" in attempts of giving sense to the course of one's life. What remains is the attitude of cognitive openness resulting from the methodological credo of one of the best known examiners of trajectories, Fritz Schütze, according to whom: "It's not that we are using certain accepted from the outside concept of biographical trajectories which we impose on empirical data. Analysing the text of the story, we have to be open to the social and biographical processes revealing themselves in its content and formal features. For our considerations the fact is important that 'trajectory' is simultaneously

a very abstract notion and strongly rooted in empirical data" (Schütze, 1987:67—156, quoted after Riemann, Schütze, 1992:103).

The research was carried out in August, September and October 1992 in Chorzów and Michałkowice, a district of Siemianowice Śląskie. The respondents were interviewed in the presence of two examiners. The interviews took place in the living room, in the case of the [R. R.] respondent also in the kitchen — in the absence of the respondents' families. These meetings were always preceded by loose social conversations which was thought to be the necessary (although never clearly stated) initial condition of running the interview. These conversations have sometimes extended, becoming then, however, additional, unique sets of information on our respondents. Particular "approaches" of the examiners, which is also worth mentioning, differed in length.

The interviews were recorded on tapes. In the case of the [I. Z.] respondent — as it has already been mentioned — completed during meetings on the typewritten form of the interview. In the case of the [I. Z.] respondent one could get the impression that the skeleton of the course of life sketched in the recorded conversations, she herself wants to treat as the first step, "place to complete".

It seems that in other, similarly designed research, it would be necessary to introduce the alternative towards the tape form of recording.

### **3. "One's Countrymen" and "Strangers" in Conflict Situations**

In the story of [I. Z.] conflict situations are signalled rather than described. It remains in close relation to the general character of her utterance which was described in one of the earlier parts of this work. However, it deserves — for the form of the utterance — attention.

Here, the appearing in all the interview motive of the pride of father — Polish patriot, in the perspective of analysis "one's countrymen" and "stranger", is balanced by the "strangeness" of the father's family. First, it is the strangeness resulting from unacquaintance (which in itself may seem symptomatic); then this "strangeness" is confirmed during the division of heritage — small property near Warsaw. This situation so often and in various environments leading to conflicts, the inner history of which we can only guess, shows the respondent other, than only clearly spatial dimensions of "strangeness" ("Only not long ago I met this part of the family, when dividing the heritage — small property near Warszawa. They always considered us as strangers, although it was my father who was giving his mother money to survive. It wasn't a rich family, besides I never really

treated them as real family”). This feeling of isolation (“they always treated us as strangers”) combines with the feeling of harm (“my father was giving money to his mother to survive”) and rejection (“I never treated them as true family”). In the utterance of [I. Z.] one can find here rancour caused by the noticeable accusation of father’s family of what, in accordance with the terminology accepted here, we would call the weaker version of “avoidance aggression”.

But although the description of gaining a footing among mother’s Silesian family contrasts with it clearly (“I was very close with this family. We often met with the whole family, told jokes. It was very funny. [...] We recollected my father. Everybody remembered him well. Even this brother of my mother who came from Germany after the war”). The [I. Z.] respondent never connects the different character of the relationship in both families with any form of ethnic division. It is connected with the observable uncertainty of the respondent’s “own position” in the world in which the examined feels the incoherence of the definition elements of this “world of one’s countrymen” in reference to her own position.<sup>9</sup>

With the character of respondent’s father are connected further, very varied forms of conflict or proto-conflict situations. The proto-conflict situation is connected with the position of “fulfilling” the role, in this way we define the situation which objectively should lead to conflict but accidental circumstances hinder or even make impossible the articulation of this conflict.<sup>10</sup>

To the proto-conflict situations one can surely include the respondent’s reaction to the upsetting her fact that when she was very proud that her father did not sign the *Volkliste*, the Silesians whom she met in Germany (the first trip of the respondent to Germany falls in the 1990s) are proud of the fact that their parents signed the *Volkliste*. The respondent uses the same word in both cases, “to be proud”. Although here again there is lack of wider discussion of specific situations, it is obvious that these situations should be called proto-conflict ones. Towards the symbolic provocation which must have been for the respondent ostentatious (this is at least how she felt about it) showing of pride by her peers, the pride resulting from the fact that their parents signed the *Volkliste* — the situation was created which could be defined as proto-conflict: it did not even reach the level of hidden verbal aggression. The opinion recorded on the tape convinces about the latter (“I was in Germany and I observed that those whose parents once signed the *Volkliste* are very proud of it. Thanks to this they could now stay in Germany. Thus, they were proud of this fact just like my father was once proud that he was Polish”).

The inconvenient in this type of cases position of “the guest” certainly fulfilled to some extent the role of a buffer relieving obvious, in the case of such evident and brutal violation of the myth of childhood tension. The fact that [I. Z.] respondent completely consciously did not renew contact with

their German but coming from Upper Silesia hosts seems to confirm correct interpretation through the concept of crypto-conflict.

It is of course difficult to define to what extent this type of situations are typical, although much points to the fact that the one presented here is not isolated.

The figure of the [I. Z.] respondent's father tones up — which may surprise — the attitude of the respondent towards the Germans, even those whom she knows only from her mother's recollections talking about the Second World War. When the [I. Z.] respondent's father as a Pole was kept in the camp near Opole, against mother's speculations he was not beaten, nothing wrong happened to him. The justification, according to which "there are very good people among Poles" and, thus, nothing wrong will happen to father, must seem quite difficult to accept. Even because of the thought consequences. Did all other Poles, the ones who did not come, did not come only because they were not "very good people?" The [I. Z.] respondent prefers to explain to herself the case of saving father in the categories of the "precedence" which was enabled by father's inborn nobleness. Such purposeful narrowing of the cognitive perspective — quite common as a social phenomenon — allows the [I. Z.] respondent to preserve the coherence of opinions from the position of "withdrawal", i.e. reconcile the positive family experience (father was let free, anyway) with known to her historical proofs of German murders.

The notion of "strangeness" is reserved by [I. Z.] for the persons from outside the Polish national community identified with Polish language and Polish citizenship. But the way of pointing to the "stranger", i.e. Romanian, Gypsy, should rouse reflection. Here different is in this case also "worse". Such and not other choice of example may be attributed to incident but one can observe in it also characteristic symptom of seeing "strangeness" in the unclear situation, unsure own position based on the network of incoherent identifications.

Such a hypothesis is not refuted but, just the opposite, the reason for its formulating seems to be strengthened by the attitude of [I. Z.] to the ethnic divisions responsible for incoherent identifications of the respondent — ("I have never distinguished between Poles and Silesians. Never because of being the Silesian have I had any problems or difficulties. And I often have contact, due to my job, with people from outside Silesia").

This general belief is strengthened by two examples. In the first one one can easily find the conditions enough to cause the conflict situation — in practice we have to do with the almost classical scheme of the conflict situation based on the game of interests of the zero sum which could, but at least in these specific case, it did not become — the beginning of real conflict — ("in the 1960s we had a flat with mining damages with a zero standard. My mother moving to a larger city got married once again and bought a house. In this

house there was a flat consisting of a room and the kitchen, dry, without humidity, without cracks. It would seem that I as the daughter had the right to this flat. I was born in Silesia. I have lived here in Silesia, the house was ours, and the chances were that I would get it. But it turned out that no, that the flat was assigned to the newcomers. And I still lived in a flat with cracks, with holes. The fact that I am Silesian never helped me. Nothing has been godsent to me because I am her at myself").

In the second example ("My friend's from work husband went to Germany. She was from Warsaw. She has never had any problems because she was from Warsaw, she was liked in fact. These prejudices have disappeared and now it is not important who comes from where") to the foreground comes with greater strength the belief about the unimportance of criteria of evaluation resulting from ethnic divisions which once were (since now they disappeared) according to the respondent important. One should remind here the reception of the father of [I. Z.] in the Silesian or rather German nationalistic orientation — ("When my mother got married her family was not happy. To choose a Pole as husband... But later on when they got to know him better, the situation has changed. My father did not hinder anybody, if he could he would help everybody. Thus, he was accepted. Maybe not to such an extent as if he were German or Silesian but still they accepted him").

The conclusions which the respondent draws seem to confirm that she is looking for the social determinants of her life difficulties rather in general, layer or class-layer categories than ethnic ones ("That my life had difficult periods resulted from the fact that I was poor and not from the fact that I was Silesian. It also refers to my father's family in Warsaw. As I've said I don't make distinctions Poles — Silesians"). It is characteristic that [I. Z.] herself in her own, individual fate seems to detect some sort of equivalent of the Silesian melting pot ("My father was a Pole, a Varsovian and my step-father Silesian, so everything seems to be clear. However, I always preferred my mother's family, more German. Although in Silesia everything is mixed up"). Here one should quote the fragments of interview telling about the conflict of [I. Z.] with step-father — Silesian while idealizing the father coming from Warsaw.

The respondent finds around her enough proofs for the truthfulness of her beliefs on the great "mixture of matter" in Silesia — vide the story of the respondent's friend, "the Varsovian" who left for Germany.

The picture of conflicts outlined in the story of [I. Z.] has greyish shade. One cannot resist the impression that this greyishness — maybe having its sources in the uncertainty of one's position towards "the world of one's countrymen" — somehow becomes the interpretative imperative through which [I. Z.] wants to read the history of her life. It is difficult to find

here any forms of aggression even the one that the theoreticians of conflict call "verbal hidden". These conflicts usually involve a small number of people (the Warsaw family of the father of [I. Z]) and do not show interference tendencies. Even when in the place of specific persons appear general categories (these Silesians who after leaving for Germany are proud of the signed by their predecessor *Volksliste*), these generalizations to a small extent influence the scope and intensity of the conflict. As a matter of fact it is difficult to talk here about conflict in the right sense of the word. Maybe the suggested by us category of proto-conflict or rather the proto-conflict situation will turn out to be more appropriate and helpful in the case of wider analyses. And the emotional indicator of the conflict situation is, in the latter case, probably toned down by — which was mentioned earlier — the feeling of relative handicap of one's own position, in relationship to these Germans who decided to leave for Germany. It seems that this situation has undergone quite complicated changes in the recent times. Disappear, for example, the most glaring disproportions in the level of life, at the same time appear others, of the cultural-civilization character. The long-term consequences of these changes are extremely difficult to anticipate.

If in the story of [I. Z.] the conflicts are signalled rather than described, then in the life story of the second respondent [R. R.] they appear only in the far perspective, they are, as if, in the model form filtered through the prism of everyday life. Characteristic seems to be here the attitude of the respondent to the social crises decisive for the life of the country. All the dates important for the contemporary history of Poland are reduced to the events from respondent's everyday life, so that one can get the impression that the question about, for example, 1956 (and not, for example, 1959) is for the respondent almost an accidental choice. And so particular dates are associated by the respondent either with greater wealth (the beginning of the 1970s) or empty shelves of the shops (the 1980s). Only the question about martial law reminds the respondent — remembering the horror of war — her own fear about her children.

Such utterances can be easily neglected, as one can suppose, it is not the people coming from these social groups who decide about the dynamism of great social conflicts. At the same time — which is easily observable — without exploring the consciousness of the members of this silent majority, it would be impossible to explain very varied attitude of the Polish society towards the heritage of the Polish People's Republic (for example, extreme popularity of linked with propaganda films of this period — vide "The Four Tankmen and the Dog").

Three elements: residence, practical lack of spatial mobility as well as the connected with the two previous elements and, in a sense being their consequence — isolation from the world different than the old district of Siemianowice Śląskie, as well as connected with this attitude towards the

strangers establish the frameworks of life in which there was no place for big conflicts. The [R. R.] respondent interprets rather the story of her life — and here there are many divergencies with the story of [I. Z.] — in rather the categories of individual (and family) material poverty than the result of unfavourable social conflicts, or on the ethnic basis or not.

Let’s take into consideration the understanding of “strangeness” by [R. R.] — which is reduced to two elements only — friendliness and understanding, the ability to understand the other’s situation. One can observe here clearly some sort of narrow, reduced to the situation of everyday life pragmatism in noticing separating “one’s own countrymen” and “strangers”. Everybody who uses appropriate procedures (“understanding”), meets specific conditions may be considered as one’s own countryman. It is clearly seen on the example of the brother-in-law of [R. R.] coming from a different region of Poland, fully accepted by the Silesian family.

Characteristic seems also the description of the situation which for many years has caused real conflicts, in which through all kinds of aggression, physical aggression was also reached. It is the problem of the immigratory workers quartered in the workers’ hotels. In the story of [R. R.] the conflicts are reduced to the natural for young age attempt to relieve energy, will to frolic.

The behaviour of the inhabitants of the workers’ hotels towards the local girls is not glaring for [R. R.], it explains itself by their youth, although it clearly is different from the patterns of meeting girls in the neighbourhood environment — which is exemplified by the second of the brothers-in-law of [R. R.] — a Silesian who meets his wife through family contacts. It is understandable that such a way was closed for young men who came from different regions of Poland.

Similarly happens in the case of the second ticklish in Silesia problem — assigning newly built flats, to the newcomers rather than native Silesians. And here — as in the case of fiancée’s of [R. R.] — the respondent tends to look for rational reasons of this type of divisions — new flats are assigned to people who are better educated.

The same pragmatism which establishes the attitude of [R. R.] towards non-Silesians she tends to quite clearly attribute also to the second side — assigning them, for example, very high evaluation of the Silesian women’s thrift.

Connected with this is — maybe — the general attitude of [R. R.] to the conflict situations — which she tries to tone down, calm down, also her prejudice towards people orientated towards conflict.

But the description of contemporary situation the virtue of which is not interfering with others lives, even the closest neighbours, contrasts, however, with the picture of the neighbourhood environment a little bit idealised due to the childhood of [R. R.] when the community in which she lived

was much more homogeneous. This contrast, however, does not have to be connected with the environmental mixing, it can be read as a manifestation of the general civilization — cultural changes.

In both analysed life stories there dominates seeing conflicts as inter-personal, without referring to more general categories, such as “one’s countrymen” or “strangers”. This ill will may be of course explained in different ways. In order to responsibly attempt at answering these questions resulting from the outlined here problem situation, it seems purposeful to examine the greater number of cases as well as combine the instruments of sociological analysis with psychological perspective.

## 4. The Dilemmas of the Self-Image

### 4.1. The Space of Everyday Life as the Framework of Seeing Oneself

In the case of both analysed utterances we have to do with the stories of life very strongly established in the concrete reality of everyday life. Although both utterances differ considerably, also in terms of the frequency of occurrence in them details from everyday life, it is impossible not to notice that the crucial elements of these life stories are always located in the realities of commonplaceness and not in any events of the general — social or political — nature. Great problems which must have strongly influenced life of inhabitants in this region since inter-war up till modern times, remain, as if, in the background of this very personal stories about life. One could, thus, say that this told life happened mainly in the framework of commonplaceness and the social space of everyday life (what in the dramaturgical analysis we would call the scene of everyday life) is at the same time the space in which the picture of oneself is shaped to the largest extent. Is it really like this? It seems that it is necessary to distinguish here two planes of the definition of oneself occurring among the examined. The first one are surely the elements of the specific context of everyday life (we would say again referring to the dramaturgical concept — this scenography, building the space of everyday life scene), the second are references to the events important for the examined (both for family reasons and due to the general social and political context of their life), where the events influence the way in which the examined act in this space of everyday life. And in the second case the space of everyday life is no longer the clearest element of their autodefinitions. Let’s take some examples from the utterances of the examined. First, some examples pointing at the first of the above-mentioned planes. In the first interview [I. Z.] in which we have far less

than in the second interview [R. R.] references to the details from everyday life, we find, however, pointing both to work and everyday life realities. The first of the interlocutors, although she is not enthusiastic about her work, which she probably does not like, writes about her relationships with her co-workers — "Maybe a little bit about my work. 27 years ago I was employed as a physical worker. It was quite a difficult period in my life. I worked in different posts. I managed somehow. And they started to promote me. After 5 years of work I was promoted for the head of the complex of warehouses. And I have been working on this post for 20 years. I had different workers. I worked also with my relative. We enjoyed working together, we have worked for 10 years." [I. Z.]. In the picture of oneself very important is getting used to fulfilling the specific social role. Here we have to do with the situation in which this role has been considered by the examined as a result of length of fulfilling it, as something in a sense obvious in her everyday life. Undoubtedly it has a stabilising influence on the picture of oneself presented by this examined.

As we have already mentioned, the second of the examined in her utterance much more often refers to everyday realities looking in them for the elements determining her life. The whole extensive fragment concerning her girlhood and decision whom to marry is a clear proof of it. Then we also have a proof how important were some elements of the scenography of this scene of everyday life for her future decisions (e.g. the story about the way of dressing when going to meet her boyfriend's parents, or the story of a cake at a party). There is no doubt that all these elements must have influenced her own imagination about herself and, thus, also her autodefinition. It confirms our observation from our previous research about the big role of everyday life in shaping the examined identity (65).

The second plane of analysis is pointing to reference either to very important events from the family past or important events of the social or political nature. Of course what is meant here are such important events which condition thinking and acting of the examined in their everyday life. In the case of the first interview [I. I.], will be undoubtedly her father's decision not to sign the *Volksliste*. This decision will several times appear in the utterances of the examined as the justification of her own thinking and acting in many everyday situations. She justifies in this way certain important elements of the picture of herself. In the case of the second interview, we have several such facts. It is surely the history of father but also the course of events connected with promotion at work and participation in the Festival of Youth in Warsaw. All these events, however, do not play such important role as the mentioned in the case of the first interview decision of the examined father.

If one, thus, agrees that many important elements of autodefinition are in everyday life realities, that important events and political and social discussions do not play the essential role in everyday life of the examined than

the importance these important events have in forming some elements of the contents of everyday behaviour should be stressed, even if this influence is indirect. We, thus, have certain frameworks of search for the contents of autodefinition, it is time to consider these contents.

#### 4.2. Life among "One's a Countrymen" Noticing "Strangers"

Shaping the picture of oneself is a social process consisting in defining oneself in specific social situations. From this point of view, it is very important to what extent the co-tenants of everyday life are seen in the categories of similarity or difference in relation to the examined own status. It is not only the cultural differences that matter here, it is important, which clearly results from our interviews, to what extent are seen the differences of the social position resulting from the degree of wealth and the degree of education. On the other hand, and this also clearly results from our interviews, being among "one's countrymen" (defined always individually by the examined herself) gives the feeling of certainty, thus, strengthens the elements of the definition of oneself.

In the first interview [I. Z.] we have to do with the clear situation of uncertainty of one's position in the world in which the examined feels incoherence of the definition elements of this "world of one's countrymen" in reference to her own position. If she remains in reference to her own position, if she remains in everyday contacts with the closest, this world seems to her defined, but in this everyday life there are references to the past (especially the ones which are somehow connected with her father's position, his demonstrated Polish character), it turns out that not always and not all persons from her world of everyday life can be fully included into this world of one's countrymen. This dilemma seen in many situations causes several times lack of consequence in her own life stories, finally causes that the border between the world of one's countrymen and strangers is not univocal for her and changes in particular situational systems of everyday life.

Slightly different looks the situation in the case of the second interview [R. R.]. Here the world of one's countrymen, defined by precisely described situations of everyday life and the positions of all the actors of these situations seems to be disturbed in a double way. First of all, and this is characteristic, through the differences in the social position coming from the differences in wealth, education, position within the framework of the systems of subordination — super ordination at work, secondly, through noticing the dissimilarity of persons coming from other regions. These disturbances are not caused by referring to important events from the past, as is the case with the first interview, but they appear in the accounts from

many different situations of everyday life. In the second interview [R. R.] we find the description of the situation in which there are simultaneously both these disturbances. The respondent recalls the conversation with her mother on one of her suitors, being a relatively rich man, educated and with a professional position in mining but coming from different region of the country. Here we have to do with the consciousness of the separateness of this suitor's position, for the examined it is obvious that he does not belong in the simple way to "her world". It is expressed by her mother pointing out that everybody will envy her daughter such a feature situation. It is characteristic that in the situation when we have to do with double disturbance of the border of "the world of one's countrymen" to the foreground come the differences resulting from differentiating the social position and not the differences of the regional origin. One can observe that when in the case of the first interview (I. Z. — respondent clearly declares her affiliation to the "Polish option") these dilemmas in the univocal drawing the borders between "the world of one's countrymen" and "strangers" come from the reference to the Polish option, then in the case of the second interview (R. R. — the respondent refers to "the German Option") the dilemmas come from feeling the differences in social position, reference to regional differences, although they appear, they come second in order, there is, however, lack of any clear reference to the feeling of national affiliation. The latter factor does not appear here as the definition element of "the world of one's countryman", as if it were outside the world deciding about the definition of oneself. It is worth stressing that often exposed today by different types of movements and regional societies feeling of separateness of the local people and "the newcomers", thus, people coming from other regions of Poland, does not find in the second interview (by the way — how deeply rooted, in the realities of everyday Silesian life!) greater confirmation (Gerlich, 1992; Wódz [J.], Wódz [K.], 1992). The world of everyday life of the examined in which appear the pointed out dilemmas of the picture of "the world of one's countrymen" closes in the realities experienced by her and does not give the basis for further generalisations.

#### 4.3. "Me" through Seeing "One's Countrymen" and "Strangers"

Continuing the considerations started by the analysis above, it is necessary to ask how the picture of the examined themselves is influenced by differentiating between "one's countrymen" and "strangers" noticed in their everyday life. Specifying still this wide question, it is worth pondering over the question — whether this differentiation is always acute and whether it can be identified with the emotional attitude of the type "one's own countryman — friendly" and "foreign — unfriendly".

This question is justifiable to the extent that in the present opinions on ethnic relationships in Upper Silesia there is no lack of such simplification (Gerlich, 1992: *passim*, originating often from the so-called "regional ideology" (Wódz [J.], Wódz [K.], 1991:93—110) having often the functions of political justification for the ambitions of the local leaders in their political games. A sociologist who does not evaluate but tries to understand the existing situation, must be interested to what extent the individual picture of the region inhabitants, the one which appears from the analysis of their life stories is or is not written in this scheme of mutual relations of "one's countrymen" and "strangers" in Upper Silesia.

These problems appear in the univocal form in the first interview [I. Z.] when the examined refers to the past of her family. When talking about her mother's getting married (a Silesian was marrying a Varsovian), she refers to existing then associations connected with the origin ("stranger") of her father ("When my mother was getting married her family was not happy. To choose a Pole for a husband... But later on, when they got to know him better, the situation has changed. My father was not in the way of anybody, if he could he would help everybody. Thus, he was accepted. Maybe not to the extent as if here German or Silesian but still they accepted him"). This opinion refers to the past but it seems to be deeply rooted in the examined memory, and it is difficult to acknowledge that since it referred to the person close to her, it had no influence on shaping her own "me". Characteristic is the last part of the utterance pointing to the difference in evaluating the distance between "the native", Varsovian, Pole and German. Of course from such single utterance one cannot draw any general conclusions, but one cannot either not notice that such a scheme of mutual relationships registered in the memory of the examined must have influenced her own picture of herself. She must have in many everyday situations meet the conflict evaluations of specific persons, she must have considered these distances in these evaluations.

The second of the examined [R. R.] sees the world in a slightly different way than the first of the examined. She also notices the influences of functioning in the world divided into "one's countrymen" and "strangers", but accepts this world more openly, not building from the observed distances permanent elements of her own picture. A number of her opinions confirms this thesis, since the intensity of contacts in her family house clearly influenced her own experiences.

Coming back to our analysis of the influence coming from the contacts with "one's countrymen" and with "strangers" on shaping one's own "me" of the examined, it must be noticed that the problem of mixed marriages, very important for forming the picture of oneself against the divided common-placeness, is quite similarly put in both cases. One can observe the differences of the regional origin, but it does not make the final prohibition of such

marriages, just the opposite, both examined, although in different situations point to the possibilities of accepting such marriages. Obviously, they still remain different and the second of the examined notices that certain stereotype opinions about "the strangers" (in this case — *gorols*) undergo, in the course of experience, even serious modifications. One can also observe certain interesting interdependence coming from the degree of reflectiveness of the story of the first and second of the examined. Undoubtedly, the story of the first of the examined [I. Z.] is more reflexive, it refers to the whole of her story. The second of the examined [R. R.] stops much more often on the details themselves; there is less general reflection in her story. One can notice, reading both these life stories that the division of the world of everyday life into the contacts with "one's countrymen" and with "strangers" in much stronger way influences the "me" of the first of the examined than it is in the case of the [R.R.] examined. Can one generalize this conclusion even more assuming hypothetically that the deeper and more reflexive the personality of the examined the stronger is the influence on her own picture of herself of the experience coming from everyday contacts with "one's countrymen" and with "strangers"?

#### 4.4. Attitudes towards Germans and Departures for Germany as an Element Shaping and Disturbing the Self-Image

Both examined are the women in the age allowing them to remember the post-war times, the period of tense Polish — German relationships, finally, the times of normalization. Thus, they have the possibility to evaluate the difficult problem of the influence of Polish — German relationships on the social reality of Upper Silesia, on the existing here social relationships. On the other hand, it is here that the generation of our examined created its picture, gained its identity in the conditions of complicated relationships between the local people and the migrants, between the Silesians for years favouring the Polish option, the Silesians who were brought up in the German option, finally, the ones who not favouring any of these options considered themselves as "the people from here". How did this situation influence their picture of themselves? How were these divisions reflected in the definition of oneself? Obviously, we are not going to deal here with all the problems of the Polish — German relationships in Upper Silesia, here is neither place nor necessity to develop such a complicated topic. What we want to do is to draw attention to some consequences of these relationships on the level of everyday life of our examined.

The first of the examined, stressing her Polish option, points many times to the disturbing role of certain conflict systems connected with Polish — Ger-

man relationships for her “inner calm” which should be understood as the occurrence in her own picture of herself the necessity of sensitising to how she is seen by the others. On the other hand, however, we do not find in her story any traces of ill will towards those who have a family in Germany or decided to leave for Germany for good. Sometimes it seems that she feels sorry for them. On the other hand, it cannot be not noticed that this problem forces the examined to permanently define herself towards the current problems of the Polish — German relationships. She herself while expressing opinion admits that it was certain shock for her, a mature and experienced woman, that being in Germany she met the Silesians who were satisfied of the fact of signing *Volksliste*, since it facilitated them settling in Germany. Let's not forget that the examined for many years has shaped the picture of herself under the impression, according to her, of a very proper attitude of father who refused to sign this list. This is of course only an illustration of a wider phenomenon which could be expressed by a simple statement — for many, even older Silesians the Polish — German relations in this land are still the factor dynamizing their own imagination about themselves. They have to, even after many years, change certain life evaluations, they have to verify their imagination about the closest or about themselves.

Let's come back to one more aspect of the opinion of the first of the examined [I. Z.]. She recalls the example of her friend who left for Germany and is constantly homesick, she cannot fully adapt to live in Germany. This aspect of “the fate” of the local people is also present in the picture of oneself. From other research results also the confirmation of the consciousness of this “condemnation to homesickness” written in the picture of oneself being the element of identity of local people. In the competition for the opinions of Upper Silesians about themselves we also meet references to this homesickness for Silesia of the persons who emigrated to Germany (Wódz [J.] (ed.), 1990).

The second of the examined, although she has a clearly different than the first of the examined attitude to German culture, also points to this aspect of the separation of family ties in the case of departures for Germany. It is always an unpleasant moment in life and the frequency of mentioning this fact proves that in the personalities of the examined there is, as if, the coded reaction to such a possibility. As important observation coming from the analysis of the second interview [R. R.] is the claim that the examined [which she proves many times] does not consider the German cultural area as strange for her and she treats the departures for Germany as one of the possibilities of the fate of local people. It would be difficult to say to what extent this fact is connected with the lack in her opinion of reference to the feeling of national affiliation. One must not from the fact of the lack of such references conclude about the lability of the very feeling of national affiliation, one can, however, ascertain that it is not a problem which would be one of the dilemmas of autodefinition

of the examined. In the case of the first of the examined [I. Z.], clearly admitting to the Polish option, the elements of the feeling of national affiliation appear several times and, as we have mentioned it above, at this examined it is one of the elements conditioning her own picture of herself.

## Notes

- 1 The dramaturgic concept of the life of Erving Goffman, being one of the trends of symbolic interactionism, is treated together with phenomenological sociology as a variant of humanistic sociology (Ziółkowski, 1981:106—127).
- 2 For example, a well-known Silesian blues musician Jan Skrzek in the interview for *Goniec Górnosławski* tells this about his new record: "The majority of the subjects on this record concerns the district of Siemianowice called Nowy Świat. It is a typical Silesian district, like Batory or Lipiny. Nowy Świat is an area 'where strangers are not allowed and the natives know who is who'" (*Goniec Górnosławski*, No. 52, 1865, Dec. 22—31). About "strangeness" as one of the elements of the social closure of space wider in Łęcki, Wróblewski, 1990.
- 3 The problems of conflict situations have been presented basing on this — being to a large extent of the compend character — work.
- 4 When his German origin is declared by the son of the Silesian insurgent, obviously such a decision may be and even should be respected — the complicated fate of Silesia are maybe for such declaration satisfactory justification. In this part of our research of a clearly qualitative character, we would like to concentrate, however, on the cases not presenting the smallest, even unjustified doubts.
- 5 The distribution between "life events" and "decisive events" has been taken from Danuta Dobrowolska (Dobrowolska, 1992:82—87). "Decisive events" are "such events which according to a given individual had essential influence on her, for example, they changed the course of her life, they radically changed her social environment or, in general, wider society within which she remains, they changed her own mentality and identity (Dobrowolska, 1992:84). "While in the case of life events — as one can suspect — one applies both objective and subjective criteria, here only the latter come into play: only he himself may decide what was for a given man a decisive event" (Dobrowolska, 1992: 84).
- 6 The character and mechanisms of this "negative stigmatization" were discussed wider in our work devoted to the social world of the Silesians (Łęcki et al., 1992: 26—28).
- 7 Empirical material, pointing to the existence of this phenomenon, the reader will find in Łęcki, Wróblewski, 1992b: 90—104.
- 8 The biographies of our respondents take place in the "grey", "blurred" sphere, where there is, lack of classically understood rites de passage or status passage. The culture of Silesia is also much less rooted in habits (which function here in the residual form) and much less folkloristic in its commonplaceness than — following easy stereotypes — one used to believe.
- 9 See part of "Dilemmas of the Picture of Oneself" of the present article.
- 10 It slightly reminds the theoretical status of "hidden interest" in the sense suggested by Ralf Dahrendorf (Dahrendorf, 1975:443—444).

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„Swoi” i „obcy” na Górnym Śląsku

Streszczenie

Analizy, zamieszczone w tym artykule, zawierają dane zebrane w wielu badaniach społeczności górnośląskiej, tak za pomocą metod jakościowych, jak i ilościowych. Koncentrują się one przede wszystkim na dylematach identyfikacyjnych oraz na dynamice obrazu „obcego” w sytuacjach konfliktowych. Przyjęta opcja metodologiczna mieści się w szeroko rozumianym paradygmacie humanistyczno-interpretatywnym. Punktem wyjścia podjętych badań było założenie o istnieniu „świata przeżywanego” (*Lebenswelt*) tej szczególnej grupy etnicznej, jaką tworzą Ślązacy. Charakterystyka postrzegania „swoich” i „obcych” pokazuje pewien — niezwykle ważny — aspekt sytuacji, charakterystykę czegoś, co można by określić jako społeczną „szarą strefę”, najbliższą, być może, światu przeżywanemu w czystej formie.

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„Unsere” und „Fremde” in Oberschlesien

Zusammenfassung

Die in diesem Artikel vorhandenen Analysen beinhalten die während vieler Untersuchungen der oberschlesischen Gesellschaft gesammelten Daten, wobei sowohl die quantitative wie auch die qualitative Methode verwendet wurde. Sie konzentrieren sich vor allem auf die Identifikationsdilemmata und auf die Dynamik des Bildes eines „Fremden” in Konfliktsituationen. Die angenommene methodologische Option ist Teil eines breit verstandenen humanistisch-interpretativen Paradigmas. Den Ausgangspunkt der durchgeführten Untersuchungen bildete die Annahme, daß es eine „erlebte Welt” dieser besonderen ethnischen Gruppe — der Schlesier, gibt. Die Charakteristik der Wahrnehmung der „Unseren” und „Fremden” zeigt einen äußerst wichtigen Aspekt der Situation, eine Charakteristik von etwas, was man als eine gesellschaftliche „graue Sphäre” bezeichnen kann die wahrscheinlich am nächsten der erlebten Welt in reiner Form steht.

*Wojciech Świątkiewicz*

## **“We” and “They”: Making the Municipal Authority Familiar**

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The article presents some results of sociological investigations carried out in January 1994 in the area of the Province of Katowice, that generally agrees with the area of Upper Silesia. The study included 960 people, the inhabitants of three subregions that differ in respect of cultural features. Katowice (the provincial city, Rybnik (the centre of the so-called Rybnik Coal Basin) and Dąbrowa Górnicza (the centre of the so-called metallurgic-mining basin) are their main centres.<sup>1</sup>

The topic of the work refers to the well-known in Polish sociological literature dichotomy that refers to the way of perception of the structure of political power among Polish society which is deeply rooted in collective mentality. This division is associated with the period of the communist system of government unaccepted by the society in the latest history of Poland. It created not only situations that made it possible to satisfy the need of social affiliation through identification with the society of „one’s own familiars”, but it also gave reasons explaining social wrong and pointed at its authors. In this way the conditions of psychical compensation were created. They made it possible to rebuild psychical comfort and release from the feeling of guilt and responsibility for the wrong. In this meaning “they” means not only “strangers” but also “guilty of” destruction of social order and personal failures. While tending towards clear social structures or divisions of the spheres of good and wrong, it was and still is difficult to accept the view that

division into “we” and “they” could somehow run across human personality, family and local society and therefore disturb the legibility of desired images of social world.

Is the authority “theirs” or “ours”? “Theirs” which means strange, imposed, having no moral warrant and social consent, the corrupt one. “Ours”, i.e. “one’s own”, is concerned about the common good of society, has our backing and is the just one. The answer to the question has a very important social meaning not only in the way of conditioning of practical results of methods of performing the authority but also in the context of transformation of collective mentality. Because one of the fundamental purposes given more or less consciously by the structures of authority appearing after the fall of communism in Poland was the “making familiar with the authority”, convincing the society that the authority is “theirs” and that it has social identity.

### 1. “Familiar” or “Strange” Authority?

In our studies we asked the question that is most important for the evaluation of functioning of the authority. We asked whose interests, first of all, were represented by the city (commune) authorities; the interests of local society, theirs own’s or of some narrow social groups.

In the light of received answers, we may conclude that nearly half of investigated people (439 people, i.e. 45.7%) “made familiar” the authority deciding that they represent the interests of all the inhabitants of the city (commune). It is the kind of identification with the authority that is based on breaking the barrier of strangeness. But for 26.4% of people the authority is still associated with particular interests of some group of inhabitants who are identified in social awareness as a “nomenclature”, i.e. widely understood authority joined by personal ties of interests (35.8%), groups of rich people (23.3%) and also their relatives and “family cliques” (34.2%). Over 27% of respondents could not assume any attitude towards the essence of the question using the possibility of answering it with the expression “it is difficult to say”. Such a position could be interpreted as some specific lack of engagement in the problems of local community, the attitude that is characterized by indifference and lack of procommunitiveness.

The process of “making familiar” the municipal authority has also its structural differentiations to which we should pay attention. The conviction that local authority represent the interests of all the inhabitants is more of-

ten shared by men, people with high education, highly qualified specialists employed in socialized section, aged 31—40, the inhabitants of the country from Rybnik subregion and coming from Silesia.

The opposition to the presented above attitude is that which accepts the opinion that local authorities “care only about their own, personal interests”. Such an attitude is represented first of all by men, people in the age from 41 to 60, with technical education, the workers, people living in the towns of more than 100 thousand inhabitants. We can express more general conclusion proving that the process of breaking the barrier of strangeness of local authority is most advanced in the surroundings of young people (31—40 years of age) with university education, with high professional qualifications (specialists) who inhabit the country and the subregion of Rybnik in the Province of Katowice. The vision of authority not representing the interests of local community, i.e. still present in collective awareness, is strongly rooted in the beliefs of people who are a bit older (41—60 years of age), people with secondary education, the workers living in big cities of Katowice and Dąbrowa Górnicza subregions. It is a real paradox that, as a result of social revolution of the 1980s that took its power first of all from the support of workers, the aim of which, among others, was radical transformation of political structures of authorities, the essential process of “making familiar” the authority did not take place just in those environments.

More than one fourth of investigated people think that civic authorities (commune authorities) are concentrated mainly on their own particular interests, “working out a position for the future” (25.3%) and their members are first of all busy with making individual careers (21.88%). These are, as we may think, high percentages of people who judge commune authorities negatively. This opinion is not changed by the fact that more than two third of investigated people do not confirm such an opinion and others do not form their own attitude towards the matter. The participation of the group of respondents who agree that municipal authorities show disrespectful attitude towards the citizens is also relatively high (12%). But the structure of other answers is more beneficial (for the vision of municipal authorities). Nearly half of the investigated people do not agree with the opinion of disrespectful attitude of authorities towards the citizens. Such an attitude might be interpreted as the manifestation of positive acceptance of local authorities. They are not defined as the source of psychological discomfort of citizens and the confirmation of social distances between the governing people and the governed ones. But it is also important that over 37% of investigated people do not take any position manifesting a specific lack of interests in local structures of the authorities.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. “Acquainted” or “Anonymous” Authority?

The evaluation of the way of wielding local power may grow out of general observation of functioning of different structures and commune institutions, transformations taking place in the conditions of everyday life, e.g. in the sphere of public communication, aesthetic of space, distribution of services supported by some special kind of theorizing that is expressing individual experiences, perceptions or conclusions in the system of generalizations explaining and expounding or justifying social processes and phenomena that are taking place. The possibility of direct and somehow nominal contact with its representatives is an important factor that interferes in the character of essence of general vision of authorities created in collective awareness. Municipal authorities are also aware of the possibilities of direct shaping of inhabitants' opinions on the way of personal contacts of “the governed and those who govern”. The consultative meetings of representatives of city authorities and aldermen serve those purposes. They are most profitable for “both sides” possibility of mutual transmission of interpretations of different attitudes and views and influence by inhabitants on the direction of decisions made by local authorities, on politics realized by them towards commune society.

One of the question from the study questionnaire concerned the ability to state the name of the chief of a group of villages, the mayor or the president of a city properly. We assume that such an ability belongs to fundamental indices of everyday knowledge of structures of local authority. But it does not prejudice the attitudes towards them but is the expression of basic interests in local system of authority. Unfortunately, nearly 41% of investigated people could not give the answer to the question concerning the name of the chief of a group of villages, the mayor or the city president. The answers properly identifying the superiors of local authorities were given by 29% of the investigated. The received results approximate the results received to similar question in the study of Katowice<sup>3</sup>. Nearly half of investigated inhabitants of Katowice could not tell the name of the president of their city. Nearly one fourth of people gave wrong answers. And only 26.6% of investigated people identified the name of the city manager properly.

More than a half of investigated people (58%) did not know well any of the councillors of other representatives of local authorities. They could not identify their education, profession, steady place of work. The other group of investigated people was, to some extent, in non-anonymous, “nominal” contact with councillors, i.e. according to the intention of our question, they knew what education the councillors had, where they worked and what professions they had. Nearly 7% of respondents declared that they knew many councillors, 19.5% knew a few of them and 15.1% knew at least one

councillor. If the given numbers were summed, it would turn out that about 32% of investigated people knew at least one councillor. Non-anonymous perception of the structures of authority is characterized by some social interdependencies. So it turns out that the higher the education of the investigated person is, the wider circles of councillors are known to him or her. Among the group of investigated people 37.9% of people with university education and only 6.1% of people with elementary education "knew many councillors". But 22.8% of people with elementary education and only 8.4% with university education were among the group of the investigated who "did not know well any councillor". Among the investigated women, most of them (48.9%) said that they knew "many councillors", and among men, most of them agreed that they knew a few councillors (65.8%). The age of investigated people also influenced the size of group of "known councillors". People who were 41—60 years of age dominated in all groups of answers, but among the people who stated that they knew "a few" or "many" councillors, people from younger age group, i.e. from 31—40 years of age, also distinctly marked their presence.

Another interesting dependency that was observed was associated with the dwelling place of the investigated person. The "common sense" suggestion that together with the growth of the size of cities, the circles of "known authorities" became smaller, was quite strongly confirmed there. For example, among the people who claimed that they knew "many councillors", 45.5% lived in towns to 100 thousand inhabitants, 42.4% lived in the country, and 12.1% lived in cities with more than 100 thousand inhabitants. But among the group of investigated people who declared the lack of closer acquaintance with people who occupied places in the structures of local authorities, 44.7% lived in big cities, 35.9% in cities to 100 thousand inhabitants, and 19.4% lived in the country.

Nearly 44% of the investigated population acknowledged that meetings with representatives of a city authorities and councillors were not organized in the commune and nothing was known about organizing of such meetings to the people. Those results might be interpreted while pointing at least two factors that could influence such evaluations. First, that time municipal authorities paid too little attention to direct contact with inhabitants, and information about meetings that were organized were not enough popularized, i.e. in effective degree. But we should not exclude such a social situation, which existence I mentioned in the first point of the study, that manifests the existence of social groups that do not show active interest in local community problems and what is more, in the desire to influence directly the processes of deciding in the structures of the authority. Indirectly, the importance of such an argumentations is strengthened by the answers to the question concerning the frequency of contacts with councillors or other representatives of local authority. So, among those who stated that meetings with councillors and other

representatives of authorities were organized in the commune, still 57.2% never used the possibility to get in direct touch with the representatives of local authority. Only 3.6% of investigated people declared frequent participation in such meetings, 18.1% of investigated people took part in such a meeting only once, and 20.7% of investigated people declared repeated participation. Among the people who participated in such meetings more than once (there were 225 of them, i.e. 23.4% of the general number of the community investigated by us), 39% agreed that such meetings were needed and judged them positively. 36% of that group of investigated people agreed that such meetings were useful, but only for the people who were interested in particular problems. For 12.4% of them, the participation in meetings did not bring about satisfactory results, and for 7.6% it was losing the time. So according to nearly one fifth of the investigated group of people who participated in meetings more than once, the meetings did not satisfy their expectations. In other words they were judged negatively.

We may also express more general conclusion concerning relatively big lack of interest in direct contact with councillors and other representatives of local authority. The question of how often such meetings should be organized was not answered concretely by nearly 40% of investigated people and for 13.1% of them, those meetings were completely useless. That group of respondents was extended by nearly 2% of investigated people who thought that such meetings could be organized still less frequently than so far. The conclusion expressed above was not weakened, as I think, by the fact that nearly 23% of respondents recognized the need of regular direct meetings with the representatives of local authority with bigger frequency than so far, and for 21.5% the frequency of meetings was satisfactory.

### **3. Efficient or Incompetent Authority**

The evaluation of the competence of local authority is shaped by different complex systems of factors. Some of them take their contents from the stereotypes functioning in collective awareness, from the information and especially from the judgements generalized by mass media, others are based on personal experiences coming out of direct contacts with departments and representatives of local authority. Those factors are paid most attention in our study. Nearly 46% of the investigated people had no need to settle any personal problem in the town (commune) council during the last three years. Nearly half of the grown up inhabitants of investigated communes did not “settle their matters” in local municipal departments. Considering the results of the study, the workers of those departments who complained

about overworking, could think about the vision of how their work would look, if the rest of inhabitants noticed the need of settling their official matters.

More than one third of the investigated people very seldom got in official touch with local departments of authority. But over 18% of the people "settled their matters" many times in the last three years. So we can formulate more general conclusion showing that relatively steady customers of departments of local authority created no more than 19% of the grown up inhabitants.

The opinion about the competence of authorities was in a big extent dependent on that in which way the purpose of the visit in a department was reached. And so it was a very positive fact that only 7% of the steady customers of the office departments agreed very decidedly that the problems with which they applied to authorities were considered negatively. But 52% of the investigated people agreed that their problems were settled positively and 38.4% did not express univocal opinions. But on the grounds of the answers to the asked question, we cannot present the judgement of functioning of departments that seemed to be univocally sounding. Because positive or negative "settlement of a problem" was not only the result of good will and competence of a clerk. In spite of that I would pay attention to presented results of the study because I am convinced that they gave the grounds for concluding about the range of "generally positive" attitudes of clerks towards the problems with which the inhabitants of a commune came to them. As I think, the intentions of opinions formulated on the grounds of the studies carried out in a few communes of the Katowice Province were similar. The author stated there among others: "All the presented material proves that in the case of investigated office we have to do with a real change for better. Such is the general judgement of inhabitants. High marks are received by urban clerks from the customers."<sup>4</sup>

As I pointed, about 23% of investigated people declared that their problems were not always settled positively by the clerks, or they univocally stated that they faced negative settlement of their cases in offices. The red tape (43,9% of answers) and misinformation (41%) were enumerated on the first place. Nearly 14% of people agreed that applying to a bad office which was partly the result of the lack of proper information accessible for the inhabitants who were interested in it was the reason for the negative settlement of their official problem. More than one third of the investigated people also pointed at the organizational and competence disorder that prevailed in offices. The fact of too little number of clerks employed in the office that brought about long waiting for decisions, stated by over 11% of respondents, could also be counted to that group of factors.

As I think, it was an important social fact that in convictions of investigated people the sources of non-effective functioning of offices were defined

first of all as impersonal factors. The red tape, misinformation, organizational mess, too small number of clerks belonged to those factors. Laziness and ill will of clerks (18.8%) and their incompetence (29.3%) were pointed at in a smaller degree. The numbers were not small so we could not disregard them. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of local communities saw the non-effective functioning of offices not mainly in personal dispositions. The judgements were very well weighed and formulated with conviction and autocriticism. It was testified among others by the fact that over 22% of investigated people agreed that their opinion about the non-efficient settlement of the problem was associated with “objective” conditioning: “the matters impossible to settle” and 7.1% of people agreed that the lack of positive settlement of their problem was the result of an individual negligence.

#### **4. New Authorities: The Same or Different**

The fact that the power comes from election and the time of its being in authority is limited is one of the non-transferable features of democratic political system in which the way of functioning of municipal local authorities is inscribed. Not entering the election procedures that could limit or garble the electors’ will or the range of free choice, the fact of election and time of holding the function that is defined is very important. The studies were carried out by us during the pre-election time. As a matter of fact, the inquiry was realized in January 1994 and municipal election should take place in June of the same year. Such a situation created a very convenient and socially important circumstances that let us judge the functioning of local authorities and register anticipating attitudes of electors. Later electoral decisions do not have to be fully direct consequences of the suggestions reported earlier. Nevertheless, they were registered in evaluation of functioning of the structures of authorities.

Over 40% of the investigated people agreed with the opinion that local authorities had done a lot for the “city (commune) and local people”.

The percentage of people who decidedly positively judged local authorities grew if we take into consideration that co-called “possibilities of actions” and legitimate, political, organizational and financial conditions that really created the ranges of possible activities. At the same time, the percentage of the investigated people who did not accept positive judgements of actions of the authorities was smaller in that case. The comparative data is included in the Table 1.

Table 1

**The evaluation of activities of local authorities  
(in %)**

Kind of the evaluation	Generally	Taking into consideration the conditions of activities
Positive	40,3	55,6
Negative	26,5	16,9

More specific characteristics of differences in the evaluation of municipal authorities is presented in the Table 2. Comprehensive data concerning the degrees of positive judgements directed to the present municipal authorities is included in it.

Table 2

**The degrees of positive judgements of activities of municipal authorities (in %, N = 960)**

The percentage  
of investigated people

1. Generally positive judgements . . . . .	40.3
2. Judgements that were positive in given conditions of activity . . . . .	55.6
3. The appreciation of competence, efficiency and social backing of local people . . . . .	35.0
4. The rejection of the opinion that the authorities did not reach anything important, but at the same time they did not destroy anything . . . . .	38.9
5. The rejection of the opinion about the lack of activities and anonymity of the authority . . . . .	41.5
6. The rejection of the opinion that the authorities did nothing . . . . .	62.8
7. The rejection of the opinion that the authorities "did more wrong than good" . . . . .	63.6

The formulations of particular degree of judgements are taken from colloquial speech. We may still hear them during meeting of different groups of people, in speeches published in the press, the radio or on TV. And local authorities are most often perceived and critically judged just in such categories. If we accept hypothetically that the criticism of the so-called public opinion, directed towards local authorities, most often operates with generalized canon of total rejection while usually referring to statements that "as a matter of fact the authorities do nothing" or that their activity "brings more wrong than good", and then the results of the investigation presented here might be treated as negative verification of the position which assumes that such opinions have the widest social backing.

But on the grounds of the results received in our study, we may not agree univocally with the fact that in local communities municipal authorities enjoy appreciation of the greater part of inhabitants. Our respondents seemed to notice objective difficulties in which the authorities functioned, but they did not treat those difficulties as circumstances that really justified generally perceived lack of activity, efficiency and competence of authorities and neglecting the sphere of looking for social acceptance and the backing for the decisions taken by them during that time.

In generalized evaluations of local authorities the following notes were decidedly dominant: “satisfactory” (39.1% of investigated people) and “good” (36.6% of the investigated). But the arithmetic of the public opinion showed some predominance of rather negative notes.

There were more respondents who judged the present authorities rather in the categories of “insufficient” and “mean” (26.4% of investigated people) than those who gave them “very good” and “excellent” notes (7.7% of investigated people). The authorities were more strictly judged by men than by women, by older groups of inhabitants than by younger people. Similarly, workers employed in the state-controlled economy gave more often satisfactory notes, while the workers employed in the private economy gave more often good marks. Also the inhabitants of big cities gave more often satisfactory notes (48.3%), and the inhabitants of little towns and villages gave them less often but, in turn, they more often gave good marks: the inhabitants of villages in 43.7% and the inhabitants of small cities in 36.1%.

Nearly one third of the investigated people expressed the opinion that their authorities somehow coped with reality, although it happened that they made mistakes, but over one fifth of investigated people thought that authorities could not cope with the problems they had to face. Nearly 45% of respondents did not take any position in that matter.

Those opinions and their range of social backing might be regarded as a specific summary of different judgements formulated by inhabitants towards local authorities.

The declarations concerning the next municipal election is also the consequence of the respondents attitude towards the present local authorities. Nearly one third of the investigated (32.2%) thought that hitherto authorities proved correct and should stay in their positions, one fifth (19.3%) did not share such an opinion claiming that authorities should change but as much as 40.1% of investigated people did not express their attitude towards the matter. The contribution of answers to the question if hitherto authorities should leave the occupied positions is similar.

Nearly 14.7% of investigated people were decided to choose the present councillors for the period of the next tenure, and 35.6% gave further backing for some of the contemporary councillors. Joining both the categories of

respondents, we will have a group of about 50% of the investigated people who, although in a different degree, were ready to extend the tenure of the councillors of that time. That index should be treated as the degree of backing for municipal authorities working that time. The explicit lack of such backing was declared by 26.2% of the investigated group.

Among the investigated people who were fully ready to choose again the contemporary municipal authorities, the people from the age group of 41 to 60 years with primary professional education who lived in the country, in Rybnik subregion people coming from Upper Silesia and working in socialized economy dominated.

A bit different picture of social backing for municipal authorities of that time appears when we aggregate data according to different criteria. And so, for example, among the inhabitants of big cities, the biggest percentage (30.4%) declared postponement of the participation in election, although the groups of the contemporary councillors (27.6%) were also remarkable. Among the inhabitants of smaller cities (up to 100 thousand), similarly to the inhabitants of the country, there were more advocates (40.8% and 38,3%) of choice of some of councillors from the contemporary ones.

But at the same time over one fifth of investigated people exempted themselves from the "responsibility of choice" stating that they would not take part in the nearest municipal election. Among the investigated people who declared the absence in the next election the inhabitants of big cities, with primary professional education, more than 60 years old, who worked in collectivized economy in Katowice subregion, people coming from Upper Silesia constituted the biggest group.

The declarations of refusal to take part in municipal election are a separate social and political problem not associated directly with the subject of our study. In our investigation they were the illustration of the attitude of "withdrawal and indifference" and resignation from the subjective participation in the life of community which undoubtedly points at little interest in local problems and the conviction about the lack of real possibilities to react to problems of the closest surroundings. In what extent is the degree of the phenomenon of withdrawal and indifference the problem of local authorities? Indirectly, it identified the sphere of social life and social groups which were excluded from the processes of co-decision and co-creation of local community. Individual reasons for the withdrawal or indifference were certainly different. But, as a social phenomena, they all should be surrounded with special care of local authorities which in its most basic task, that consisted of the realization of common good of community, should be directed to cooperation with the widest social groups.

The leading idea formulated in the topic of the paper has been discussed taking into consideration four basic dimensions in which the authority was

perceived in social awareness. In their formulation they referred to contemporary political transformations that took place in our country in the context of the fall of the communist system.

The realization of sociological investigations on a big investigative sample in three differing in respect to socio-cultural features subregions of Katowice Province in the period before municipal election, so in the situation when the balance-sheet of achievements and failures of local authorities was known, as a matter of fact, and their social evaluation was more based on experiencing facts than hopes for the realization of preelection programmes and promises — it brought about the fact that the received results might be expressed as the picture of the state of social-political awareness of the inhabitants of Upper Silesian region in the situation when some stage of shaping of municipal authority structures is coming to the end but their further lot is not known yet.

For more than a half of investigated inhabitants of Katowice Province the barrier of strangeness of the authority was not broken yet. The authority was not familiarized. More than a half of people who participated in the investigation could not identify their representatives in commune councils. They did not know the names of superiors of their local authority: the president, the mayor, the chief officer of a group of villages. There was little interest in direct contacts with councillors and other representatives of municipal authority. One fifth of the people who took part in organized meetings with councillors judged them negatively. General opinions about their activity were more favourable for municipal authorities. The sources of inefficiency in the functioning of offices were seen rather in impersonal factors than in negative features of people representing local authorities. The awareness of legitimize, organizational and financial conditions of functioning of municipal authority was also articulated. They were treated, to some extent, as factors justifying the level of efficiency that was lower than we accepted.

A half of investigated people tended to extend the tenure of the contemporary councillors which finally was an important index of social acceptance. One fifth of investigated people gave up influencing the shape of the future of self-government declaring the absence in the election. Bigger backing was found by the structures of authorities of that time among younger people who have university education, live in smaller cities and in the country. The process of “making familiar” the municipal authority that was “taking it as one’s own” was most advanced in Rybnik subregion. In the other two subregions it did not even reach the half of general number of inhabitants. Still the authority meant “they” for majority of inhabitants of the investigated region.

## Notes

- 1 The study that was entitled "The Evaluation of Communal Institutions of the Province of Katowice" was carried out on the instruction of the Municipal Regional Council of the Katowice Province. Dr J. Burzyński, Dr B. Klimiński, Dr A. Niesporek are also the co-authors of the whole project. J. Burzyński, B. Klimiński, A. Niesporek, W. Świątkiewicz: *Gminy i instytucje komunalne w ocenie mieszkańców województwa katowickiego*. [*The Evaluation of Communes Institutions by the Inhabitants of Katowice Province*]. Katowice 1995.
- 2 See also results of very interesting investigations published by Z. Drąg, J. Indraszkiewicz, *Regionalna elita władzy w Polsce* [*The Regional Elites Authority in Poland*], Friedrich—Ebert—Foundation Poland, Warszawa 1994.
- 3 The studies entitled "The City and Its Inhabitants" carried out under the administration of Wojciech Świątkiewicz on the commission of Urban Council in Katowice (the report is being worked out). A. Bartoszek, "Opinia społeczna o działalności władz i urzędów miejskich" ["Social Opinion on the Activities of Authorities and Urban Councils"], in *Gminy województwa katowickiego. Społeczności lokalne i rozwój lokalnej demokracji* [*Communes of Katowice Province. Local Communities and the Development of Local Democracy*], ed. M. Barański, Katowice 1993, p. 49.
- 4 Ibid.

Wojciech Świątkiewicz

„My” i „oni”. „Oswajanie” władzy samorządowej

Streszczenie

Tytuł artykułu nawiązuje do znanej w polskiej literaturze socjologicznej dychotomii odnoszącej się do głęboko zakorzenionego w mentalności zbiorowej społeczności sposobu postrzegania struktury władzy politycznej. Podział ten, związany w najnowszej historii Polski z okresem panowania komunistów, nie tylko kreował sytuacje umożliwiające zaspokojenie potrzeby afiliacji społecznej poprzez utożsamienie się ze społecznością „swoich”, ale dostarczał również argumentów tłumaczących społeczne zło i wskazywał jego autorów. Stworzone zostały w ten sposób warunki psychicznej rekompensaty, umożliwiające odbudowanie komfortu psychicznego, zwalniające z poczucia winy i odpowiedzialności za zło. W tym znaczeniu „oni” to nie tylko „obcy”, ale również „winni” destrukcji ładu społecznego i osobistych niepowodzeń.

Jednym z fundamentalnych celów stawianych bardziej czy mniej świadomie przez wyłaniające się po upadku komunizmu w Polsce struktury władzy było „oswojenie” władzy, tzn. przekonanie społeczeństwa, że władza jest „jego”, że ma społeczną legitymację. Artykuł, opierając się na badaniach empirycznych przeprowadzonych na przełomie 1993/1994 roku, jest próbą odpowiedzi na pytanie, czy nowa władza jest „ich” czy „nasza”. „Ich”, tzn. obca, narzucona, nie mająca legitymacji moralnej i przyzwolenia społecznego, skorumpowana. „Nasza”, tzn. postrzegana w społecznej świadomości jako „swoja”, zatroskana o wspólne dobro społeczności, mająca społeczne poparcie, sprawiedliwa.

Wojciech Świątkiewicz

„Wir” und „Sie”. „Das Zähmen” der Selbstverwaltungsmacht

Zusammenfassung

Der Titel des Artikels knüpft an die in der polnischen soziologischen Literatur bekannte Dychotomie, die sich auf die in der gesellschaftlichen Mentalität tief verwurzelte Art und Weise der Perception der Struktur der politischen Macht bezieht. Diese Einteilung, die mit der neusten Geschichte Polens — mit der Zeit der Kommunistenherrschaft verbunden ist, kreierte nicht nur Situationen, die die Befriedigung der gesellschaftlichen Afiliation durch das Identifizieren mit der Gesellschaft der „Unseren”, zu eigen hatte, sondern lieferte auch Argumente, die die gesellschaftlichen Mißstände erläuterte wie auch ihre Urheber zeigte. So wurden Bedingungen für die psychische Genugtuung geschaffen, die den Wiederaufbau des psychischen Komforts ermöglichten, die wiederum von Schuldgefühlen und Verantwortung für die Mißstände befreiten. In dieser Bedeutung sind „Sie” nicht nur die „Fremden” sondern auch die „Schuldigen”, die für die Destruktion der Gesellschaftsordnung und die persönlichen Niederlagen verantwortlich sind.

Eins der Hauptziele, das mehr oder weniger bewußt durch die nach dem Fall des Kommunismus in Polen aufkommenden Machtstrukturen gestellt wurden, war die „Zähmung” der Macht, d.h. die Überzeugung der Gesellschaft, daß die Macht die „Ihrige” ist, und daß sie gesellschaftlich akzeptabel ist. Indem der Artikel auf den empirischen Untersuchungen, die um die Wende 1993/1994 durchgeführt wurden, basiert, bildet er einen Versuch, eine Antwort auf die Frage, ob die neue Macht die „Ihrige” oder die „Unsere” ist, zu geben. „Ihrige”, d.h. die Fremde, aufgezwungene, die keine moralische Legitimierung hat und gesellschaftlich nicht akzeptiert wird, die korrumpiert ist. „Unsere”, d.h. im gesellschaftlichen Bewußtsein als „Unsere” wahrgenommen, die um das Gemeinschaftsgut besorgt ist, die gesellschaftlich akzeptiert wird und die gerecht ist.

*Marek S. Szczepański*

# **Upper Silesia — Social Preparedness for Restructuring Processes: 18 Sociological Propositions**

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## **Introduction**

This article represents a kind of retrospective summing up of empirical studies conducted in Upper Silesia during the period 1985—1993.<sup>1</sup> The principal objective of these studies was to identify the protagonists in the regional political scene, reconstruction of the ideology and doctrines they put forward and also a prediction of the social consequences of their implementation. In fact these investigations were restricted to only one region of our country, nevertheless it may reasonably be claimed that the conclusions drawn from them have a more general and universal application. With a certain caution they may be taken to refer to the traditional industrial regions throughout Poland.<sup>2</sup>

1. From careful study of available documents and of the results of many investigations and observations it is possible to formulate a general thesis as to the overall state of the regional system. Upper Silesia is suffering from ecological devastation (natural system), infrastructural neglect (technical system), economic underdevelopment, a deformed employment structure, it is treated by the political “centre” and the regional industrial lobby as a “raw materials enclave” of the country (production system), it is socially disintegrated while a substantial proportion of the regional community is subjected

to a process of cultural disruption (socio-cultural system). Further, it exhibits a chaotically developed architectural-town planning spatial layout (settlements system). This dramatic diagnosis should not be taken to imply that there are no positive factors to be discerned in the Katowice Province. Here is found a considerable — by Polish standards — influx of foreign capital (700 firms operating with the participation of foreign capital), and also a rapid development of private entrepreneurial undertakings. Here, again, the unemployment is relatively low (10.1% — December 31, 1994), although the actual number of unemployed was, and still remains, the highest in the country. The share of this Province in Polish industrial production continues at a high level (15.3%), similarly as its share in the creation of the gross national product (13.0%).<sup>3</sup> These encouraging effects and processes cannot hide, however, the sad truth of the present critical state of the region and its component subsystems: natural environmental, technical, production, settlements and socio-cultural (see Fig. 1).

2. The strategic aim of regional restructuring must be recognized to be:
- stimulation of innovative enterprises, backed up by Enterprise Incubators, Enterprise Promotion Centres, Information and Entrepreneurial Skills Centres, Technological and Scientific Parks; success of undertakings of the type will depend to a very large degree on the participation of foreign capital and credits in the process of restructuring of the region;
  - halting further degradation of those sectors of state industry, in particular mining, in which radical reform could be a source of **primary accumulation** governing the financial foundations for modernization of the region;
  - privatising a substantial proportion of the large and medium-sized industrial plants currently state-owned;
  - radical restructuring of the productions system involving **tertiarisation, i.e. major increase in numbers employed in the services sector**. This process should be brought about by requalification training of a significant part of the regional workforce, preparing them for the changeover from the industrial to the traditional — and wherever possible up-to-date — services sectors;
  - creating institutional facilities for retraining of sections of the workforce together with assistance in reaching new occupational stabilization;
  - guaranteeing elementary social services and benefits for the unemployed and their families;
  - creating regional and local, and necessarily competitive, political, financial and technocratic élites;
  - restoring the cultural identity of the region, founded on the preserved culture core traditions;
  - reordering the physical planning — architectural space of the region;
  - rehabilitation and revitalising of the province's ecology.



3. The restructuring of Upper Silesia — a region of ecological catastrophe reduced to a live museum — basing on traditional industries, will require the mobilization and cooperation of numerous partners in many areas at many levels. An indispensable priority here is radical substantive and financial policy rethinking from the side of central treasury authorities and the government, backed up locally by the conceptual, financial and organizational preparedness of the regional (provincial) establishment, restructured plants and also by the trade unions. And finally, of immense importance is the psychological preparedness of the actual workforce and the individual workers and their families to face up to and accept the approaching changes.

4. Only an integrated planned preparation of this sort can guarantee success for the restructuring processes. Nevertheless, judging from the results of studies carried out, it may be stated with a large degree of certainty that this process now initiated has slipped beyond the control of the organizers and threatens spontaneous, uncontrolled solutions and uncontrollable effects.<sup>4</sup> It is absolutely certain that at present, neither central treasury office nor the responsible government authorities, especially from the Ministry of Industry, nor again the regional establishment or local government bodies, local trade unions and least of all the workers, are prepared to deal with the restructuring of the province. The central budget estimates do not envisage long-term financing of restructuring, the Minister of Industry has no coherent conception for implementation of this process, the local authorities focus their efforts on anti-recession areas (agriculture, forestry, building, ecology), the trade unions concentrate mainly on claims and demands while the workers cannot really believe that some of the industrial plants will actually be shut down. Additionally, the private sector in Upper Silesia, despite its development potential, is not at present in a position to absorb the workers who will lose their jobs. Tax and credit regulations form a barrier hindering development investment in the private sector, which could result in the creation of new job opportunities.

5. In the restructuring projects successfully implemented, in Europe and throughout the world, three basic variants of this process may be distinguished, i.e.:

- restructuring involving definitive and planned phase out of certain traditional sectors (e.g. mining, metallurgy) and expansion of new, alternative branches of the economy, offering future prospects, especially the services sector;
- restructuring based on updating certain traditional economic sectors and adapting them to world market conditions;
- restructuring involving partial phase out of traditional sectors, together with their partial modernization coupled with the extension of new,

alternative branches of the economy, offering future prospects, especially the services sector.

It is of signal importance to make a careful choice of the most advantageous restructuring strategy for the Katowice Province, based on a balance of profit and loss associated with the three variants of possible implementation of this undertaking.

6. Thanks to sociological studies, it is known that success in the key issues of system restructuring is very largely governed by the positive approach to these changes evinced by individuals and social groups. Taking the widest overall view, the human reaction may be approval for restructuring and support for it, or on the contrary, neutrality, lack of interest and disapproval or even violent resistance. Therefore it is clear that if the need for, and acceptance of, changes (restructuring) has not earlier taken root in the social system, in the individual and collective awareness, then these changes will take place at a sluggish pace, often giving rise to deformed and pathological effects. Hence a full realization of the inevitability of changes by the principal persons and bodies concerned, the regional communities, local communities and individuals, is a matter of vital importance.

7. In the course of implementing the major development and restructuring projects undertaken up to now, whether crowned by success or leading to failure, all the mentioned possible attitudes, from approval up to violent protest, have been encountered. For inevitable restructuring is carried out in someone's interest and for someone, but at the same time threatens the interests of the individuals and social groups who desire to preserve the *status quo* or even struggle to regain the *status quo ante*. In this game the resultant score is always zero, success for some inevitably means defeat for others. Passive or active resistance to changes is shown above all by individuals and social groups for whom modernization appears as an existential threat and a source of psychological discomfort. Thus opposition may be expected on the one hand from groups of the lowest qualified persons associated with the obsolete branches of production and the extraction industries (e.g. mining), and on the other hand, from the managerial staffs who were particularly well rewarded — materially and symbolically (prestige) — under real socialism.

8. Workers and the whole population of the region must not be taken unaware by the consequences of the operations undertaken, but must be fully prepared for the changes. Restructuring should not be, and may not be allowed to be associated with existential threats. Quite the opposite, it should create encouraging life prospects, depending, nevertheless, on the individual efforts of the persons concerned. How deep and dangerous is the frustration engendered among the workers by hurriedly prepared actions shutting down ecologically onerous and unprofitable enterprises may be evidenced by the example by the individual and collective behaviour of workers from Silesian

metallurgical works (Bobrek Plant), coking plants (Jadwiga Cokery) and mines (Hard Coal Mines Saturn and Sosnowiec). Many of them find great difficulty in envisaging the possibility of rapid retraining or of taking up some individual economic enterprise. Dominant here are pretensions linked with the conviction that the job losses are not the result of economic calculation but of manipulation by the management bosses, the ministerial and central authorities. And though it is certainly exaggeration to describe the present situation in the labour market as near to panic, it would be very unwise to make light of the paralysing fear felt by the workers in the face of the further consequences of unpopular reforms. Such errors may not be repeated in the province and full information on modernization of the production system, its governing conditions, the significance for the workers, his family, the local community, regional community, should be widely disseminated as quickly as possible, in a clear and easily understandable form. If this is not done, groups of rebellious workers could become easy converts to the already relatively well-organized radical and subversive political groups.

9. Successful implementation of long-term restructuring projects undertaken in the Katowice Province will depend to a very large degree on thorough reorganization of the educational system of the region. The present structure of this system, despite many changes already made, due to the domination and persistence of specific occupational knowledge in effect, though indirectly, favours marginalisation of the region, strengthening its peripheral nature and its outdated, unhappy status as the raw materials enclave of the country. This same tendency may be observed in the deepening distances — social, civilizational and cultural — between this province and the remaining regions of Poland. It would be unreasonable to expect any other result when remembering that in the group of graduates from secondary level schools, for the school year 1992/1993 the clear majority of students finished basic vocational schools (53.2%) and secondary vocational school (27.5%), and hence this group represents jointly four times the number of graduates from secondary grammar schools (19.3%). In fact this disproportion is changing, but too slowly to give satisfactory results. For comparison it may be cited that in the school year 1990/1991 the proportion of basic vocational schools graduates was 54.8%, from the secondary vocational schools 26.1% and from the secondary grammar schools 19.1%.

10. The educational capital possessed by the workforce of the economy of the province is also very modest and in no way measures up to the requirements of the projected restructuring undertakings. From the aspect of proportion of persons with higher education in the total number of those employed, Katowice Province rates 32nd in the country, considering those with post-secondary school and secondary vocational education — 48th place and secondary grammar school — 41st.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, it is obvious

that restructuring of the region cannot be implemented by functional illiterates, people possessing a low educational capital, in this way excluded from the circle of symbolic culture.

11. From the very outset reform of the regional educational system should be precisely correlated with the restructuring aims and undertakings. To phrase it differently, adapting of the educational system to the prospective requirements of the provincial transformation projects must be founded on several basic preliminary principles:

- The central, regional and local authorities and their highest-placed representatives, in particular the Minister of Finance, Education, the Provincial Governor, the municipal presidents, mayors, rural chief officers, chairmen of the commune councils must share the basic conviction that investment in the educational system of the Katowice Province and its local representative bodies, is to be considered — to a very large extent — as investment in the restructuring of this region, reduced to a catastrophic state rendering it a veritable museum of errors. Without the active financial, conceptual and organizational support of these persons and bodies the process of educational reform will be protracted and deformed, rendering the restructuring plans impossible to realize. This has been evidenced by the experiences of countries and regions who have achieved successful modernization processes, particularly Japan, South Korea, the Asiatic Tigers, the Ruhr Basin and the Saar Basin. In each of these states and regions the arrangement of privileged finance for the educational system and wide ranging support for educational reform were an integral part of restructuring strategies.
- Restructuring — irrespective of its essence and nature — is a long-term process, usually envisaged over a span of 15—25 years. Hence the principal responsibility for realization will rest on young people at this moment finishing elementary schools or attending schools of higher grades. Investment in their education and individual educational development may be seen as indirect, or even as direct financing of the fundamental restructuring of the region.
- The chief educational office, educational authorities and their representations must be fully informed of the essential purposes of restructuring projects, both long-term and immediate. Without the existence of a long-term restructuring project, planned for 15—25 years, partially supported both as regards legislation and finance by the central budget allocations, genuine transformation of certain sectors of the educational system of the province is quite impossible, referring here particularly to vocational schooling. In other words, it is essential to possess elementary knowledge of the future picture of the province and Upper Silesia in the short view (5 years) and in further perspective (15—25 years), of the planned structure

of employment and the envisaged demand for professionally trained workers of various types, in order to limit or simply finish recruitment to schools of anachronic profile, and at the same time to set up schools and facilities catering for the manpower needs of the new labour market.

12. The success of the restructuring programme will only be feasible if a group of **new individualists** develops, worker-pioneers with forward looking attitudes; this does not imply simply a group of technocrats and managers but also highly qualified workers, technicians and engineers. For individualism is an indispensable element of democratic order, and in many countries proves to be the moving spirit inaugurating organized changes. Among the most significant characteristics distinguishing an up-to-date personality and the new individualism may be perceived:

- a heightened need for achievement,
- a high level of empathy,
- nonconformism,
- an open attitude towards new experience,
- readiness for conscious acceptance of change,
- ability to collect data on factual material and a capacity for making use of knowledge to achieve specific purposes,
- planning competence, as regards personal, family and public affairs,
- skill in calculation, grounded in the conviction that man's world is **commensurable**, and that many phenomena lend themselves to prediction,
- a high appreciation of technical skills, facilitating optimum exploitation of the possibilities offered by new, modern equipment,
- understanding the underlying logic of production processes and the principles of decision-making at the basic levels,
- high educational and professional aspirations,
- self-respect and also respect for the dignity of others,
- universalism and optimism in undertakings.

13. Actions designed to promote individual mobilization must be backed up by measures to mobilize social groups, in particular microgroups (a worker's family), medium rank groups (local communities and populations) and also macrogroups (fractions of the individual classes and spheres).

14. The family could play a particular role in the processes of social mobilization to promote restructuring of the regional system. As is generally accepted, the family fulfils a key function in the socialization institution. It prepares and trains the new generations for social life in a community, influences the acceptance of models of professional and social mobility. Hence it is important here that, for example, the family should not continue to uphold values which in contemporary conditons must be viewed as anachronistic. This refers particularly of interrupting the tradition of inheriting the occupation of miner, metallurgical worker, coking plant worker, whose

virtues were mythologized under the conditions of real socialism. At the same time, it is essential to propagate the "new work ethic", based of course on the traditional respect for work but putting forward new models of professional advance, working careers founded on the latest technologies and equipment, scientific research results, etc. Walt W. Rostow, the American economist, claims even that the condition for change in the traditional system is the natural desire of parents that their children should have a better, easier life, gain higher positions, fulfil more important roles. It is quite certain that such an intrafamilial reorientation in attitude is a prolonged and difficult process but would appear to be indispensable for long-term modernization and the developing of a new work ethic. The organizers of transformations in the production system should also take into account the fact that in the Silesian family circle a peculiarly important role is played by the housewife. It is she who is normally the manager, financial decision-maker, lifestyle organizer, and thus the modernization (restructuring) process will be for her a matter of close concern. Full appreciation of this very particular social-professional category formed by the housewives should by no means be dismissed as a marginal problem in the modernization process. At this point it is worth recalling that the factual role of the housewife in the modernization process has drawn the attention of such eminent scholars as John K. Galbraith and Jan Szczepański. The housewife, equally with the working husband, must be made aware of the fundamentals, governing conditions and consequences of the modernization process, and a significant factor in this **indoctrination could be the regional and local mass media.**

15. Mobilization of forces to forward restructuring in the microscale can be taken over, although only to a certain degree, by neighbourhood institutions, estate (settlement) councils, local organizations and associations. In the most developed modern states this specific process of ceding of rights associated with the discovery of the "lesser sky", local communities and loyalties is already advanced. There are also no formal obstacles to **acceleration** of this type in the Katowice Province. It is worth stressing the point that many successful restructuring projects began in this way with social consolidation around the idea of **making the most of your own resources**, in the scale of the regional and local communities (let's help ourselves, then heaven and the bank will help us too).

The private homeland, or *Heimat*, is a concept expressing the area with which a person feels strong emotional ties. And in this area, to a very large degree, is decided the fate of restructuring undertakings. It needs to be emphasized yet again the residents' councils, workers' councils — these are the groups especially predestined for the organization of such undertakings in the microscale. Of significant help in local restructuring efforts could be the cooperation of local sociometric "stars", individuals showing a positive

attitude, formal and informal authorities. Their important functions is associated with the commonly now recognized "revolution of the smaller communities", a return to neighbourhood relations, the smaller sky. The neighbourhood unit, the parish community, the workers' group — these are the newly rediscovered social structures, powerfully acting in the crystallization of the personality traits of the persons forming them.

16. Development and wide ranging reorganization of regional and local mass media — promoting the need for achievements and for professional advance in the most up-to-date sectors of the economy, reevaluation and deeper appreciation of native Silesian culture together with the heterogeneous cultures of the people who have come here from other parts are essential to ensure success for the modernization project. Together with the revitalising of small communities can start the career of smaller periodicals, radio stations, regional television. It is known that a considerable proportion of the population is interested in events in which either they themselves take part, or where they are well-acquainted with the circumstances and background. This is a natural leaning which could be usefully exploited in the regional modernization process. Regional television, radio, local press publications should broadcast and propagate essential knowledge of the restructuring principles on the scale of the province, town, village community, and even of individual plants. Thus it is desirable that the *Tychy Echo* should support restructuring ideas as applied to the local mines, and the *Głos Pszczyński* and *Nowiny Gliwickie* newspapers should deal with the restructuring problems affecting the local firms in Pszczyzna and Gliwice, etc. What is more, an important informational role could be taken by plant newspapers, plant radio transmitters and special periodicals (e.g. the *Ziemowit Mine Miner's Calendar*). The essential aim here is that the viewer, reader and listener understands what is being communicated.

17. Individual and group mobilization should be accompanied by **participation**. This is essentially identified with decentralization of power and management responsibility and the ceding of rights formerly vested in regional institutions and organizations into the competence of lower level institutions and organizations (workers' autonomous council, territorial autonomous council).

18. If the modernization and restructuring projects are put aside or implemented incorrectly, Upper Silesia is threatened by:<sup>6</sup>

- escalation of separatist and autonomy and tendencies by part of the native population and their political representatives;
- escalation of conflicts between the autochthonic people and the "new-comers" from other parts;
- radical strengthening of the position of the German minority in Upper Silesia, especially if it were to obtain financial and political support from Germany;

- erosion of the Polish national identity;
- domination of the regional political scene by radical populist groups;
- uncontrolled social outbursts, unrest and rebellion in the more degraded parts of the region.

When planning restructuring on a regional scale, which should aim to mitigate and limit these negative tendencies, a significant fact should not be overlooked. Such projects have been, and are still being, implemented with considerable success in advanced and wealthy countries (e.g. Germany — Ruhr Basin, USA — Pittsburg, Great Britain — the Hull region), and with minor success or even with catastrophe in backward third-world countries and certain post-socialist states. Therefore in the devising of a restructuring plan for the Katowice Province and defining its principal objectives attention should be given to the efforts of more developed countries and regions. The genuine system of reference cannot be provided simply by Polish experiences, since they are inseparably linked with the relative backwardness of the country and its continuingly peripheral position in the European system.

In these circumstances it would seem to be clear that successful restructuring in Upper Silesia demands special — multidimensional and international — forms of participation and cooperation. For the critical point has already been passed, in the present situation even the greatest efforts by the regional community would be ineffective if not backed by economic and political support from outside. On the one hand, it is essential to have participation of the regional community itself, making a significant contribution in the implementation of the restructuring projects, while on the other hand equally essential is the backing of the central government and the Treasury. It seems reasonable to suppose that speeding up the restructuring process will also involve a more considerable contribution both of investment capital and conceptual — technological know-how from our partners in Western Europe. Their practical restructuring experience could be of significant help in finding solutions to the problems of Silesia. Such assistance should not be envisaged in terms of charitable efforts, quite the opposite, business and commercial participation is most vitally needed. It should be remembered that the Upper Silesian region is a potentially large sales market, with well-founded traditional links with foreign partners, possessing important natural resources, vigorous scientific research centres, with a tradition of good workmanship and work culture, having a convenient geographical situation. What is more, participation from abroad should also result from the conviction that the problem of Upper Silesia is, at least to a certain degree, a European and transfrontier problem.

## Notes

- 1 Used throughout the whole article is the imprecise term "Upper Silesia". This lack of precision is due essentially to the fact that the historically shaped Upper Silesian region, returning after the Second World War almost entirely within the Polish frontiers, comprehends within its extent a considerable part of the Katowice and Opole Provinces and also a part of the Częstochowa Province. A considerable group of researchers also include in Upper Silesia the territory of Cieszyn-Silesia, today located in the Province of Bielsko-Biała. Opponents of this denomination, however, point out that after the Silesian wars Cieszyn-Silesia found itself incorporated in the Habsburg monarchy lands, while Upper Silesia became part of the Kingdom of Prussia and tended to look towards Great Poland (the Poznań lands). Due to limitations of space this article deals exclusively with the Katowice part of Upper Silesia.
- 2 Each of these propositions was formulated on the basis of empirical research carried out by the author and co-workers from the Institute of Sociology, University of Silesia, from the Department of Pedagogics and Psychology, University of Silesia, the Faculty of Economic Geography, University of Silesia, the Central Mining Institute in Katowice, the Provincial Methodological Centre in Katowice, the Chief Educational Office in Katowice, the Silesian Museum in Katowice.
- 3 Data from 1994.
- 4 From studies on restructuring concepts it becomes obvious that neither the central nor the provincial government authorities have as yet developed a clear, definitive and comprehensive project for this purpose, ready for implementation and supported by financial and legislative measures. The requirements and expectations of the original restructuring plan for the region, entitled: *Principles for the Regional Plan of the Katowice Province* (1986) have not been realized, nor those of its updated version. (*The Katowice Restructuring Project for Industry*, 1990). Then again, the *Regional Programme for Economic Policy in Upper Silesia* (1992), currently being implemented, is of emergency type, similarly as is the sector programme dealing with **restructuring of hard coal mining**, (1991) and with **iron and steel metallurgy**, (1992). The ultimate synthesis of regional and sector programmes was foreseen to be prepared at government level in 1995. In such conditions of vacuum in implementation with a lack of clear restructuring concepts, changes in the regional system associated with modernization can be only of emergency, or at the most medium-term nature.
- 5 The role of the services sector in stimulating restructuring processes. *Local Government Regional Council*, No. 29, May 30, 1993.
- 6 Proposition developed jointly with Tomasz Nawrocki.

Marek S. Szczepański

**Górny Śląsk — społeczna gotowość do procesów restrukturyzacji:  
18 tez socjologicznych**

**Streszczenie**

Tekst ten stanowi rodzaj refleksyjnego podsumowania badań empirycznych prowadzonych na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1985—1993. Głównym ich celem były: zdefiniowanie podstawowych problemów tego „katastroficznego” i „skansenowego” regionu Polski oraz Europy, rekonstrukcja projektowanych działań restrukturyzacyjnych, a także opis społecznych i gospodarczych konsekwencji ich realizacji.

Wyniki tych badań i obserwacji pozwalają na sformułowanie generalnej tezy dotyczącej ogólnego stanu Górnego Śląska. Jest to region dotknięty klęską ekologiczną, zaniedbany infrastrukturalnie i zacofany gospodarczo. Posiada zdeformowaną strukturę zatrudnienia, jest traktowany przez polityczne centrum i regionalne lobby przemysłowe jako „surowcowa enklawa kraju”, cechuje go duży stopień społecznej dezintegracji, a znaczna część zbiorowości regionalnej podlega procesowi wykorzenia kulturowego.

Zaniechanie działań modernizacyjnych i restrukturyzacyjnych lub przeprowadzenie ich w sposób niewłaściwy może grozić na Górnym Śląsku:

- eskalacją działań i tendencji separatystycznych oraz autonomicznych podejmowanych przez część ludności rodzimej i polityczne jej reprezentacje,
- eskalacją konfliktów między ludnością rodzimą oraz napływową,
- radykalnym wzmocnieniem pozycji mniejszości niemieckiej na Górnym Śląsku, zwłaszcza wówczas, gdy otrzyma ona kapitałowe i polityczne wsparcie ze strony Niemiec,
- erozją polskiej tożsamości narodowej,
- zdominowaniem regionalnej sceny politycznej przez radykalne ugrupowania populistyczne,
- niekontrolowanym wybuchem społecznym, buntem i rebelią w najbardziej zdegradowanych częściach regionu.

Marek S. Szczepański

**Oberschlesien — eine Gesellschaft Bereit für Restrukturalisierungsprozesse:  
18 soziologische Thesen**

**Zusammenfassung**

Dieser Text ist eine Art einer betrachtenden Zusammenfassung der empirischen Untersuchungen, die in den Jahren 1985—1993 in Oberschlesien durchgeführt wurden. Das Hauptziel war das Definieren der Grundprobleme dieser „katastrophischen” und „skansenartigen” Region Polens und Europas, die Rekonstruktion der vorgesehenen Restrukturalisierungstätigkeiten, so wie die Beschreibung der gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen Konsequenzen ihrer Realisierung.

Die Ergebnisse dieser Untersuchungen und Beobachtungen erlauben eine generelle These zu formulieren, die den allgemeinen Zustand Oberschlesiens betrifft. Diese Region ist von einer ökologischen Katastrophe betroffen, infrastrukturell vernachlässigt und wirtschaftlich im

Rückstand. Sie besitzt eine deformierte Arbeitsstruktur und wird sowie politisches Zentrum vom der regionale Industrieverwaltung als „Rohstoffklave des Landes“ betrachtet. Außerdem wird diese Region durch einen hohen Grad der gesellschaftlichen Desintegration charakterisiert, und der Großteil der Regionalgesellschaft wird kulturell entwurzelt.

Im Fall, daß die Modernisierungs- und Restrukturalisierungsprozesse vernachlässigt oder falsch durchgeführt werden, drohen Ober-Schlesien folgende Konsequenzen:

- Steigerung der separatistischen und autonomen Aktivitäten und Tendenzen, von einem Teil der Einheimischen und deren politischen Repräsentanten unternommen werden,
- Steigerung der Konflikte zwischen den Einheimischen und Einwanderern,
- radikale Stärkung der Position der deutschen Minderheit in Oberschlesien, vor allem dann, wenn sie eine Kapitalunterstützung wie auch eine politische Unterstützung aus Deutschland bekommt,
- eine Erosion der polnischen Nationalidentität,
- das Beherrschen der regionellen Politik durch radikale populistische Gruppen,
- unkontrollierte gesellschaftliche Auflehnung und Aufstand in den am meisten degradierten Teilen der Region.

## BUŚ

On the cover: an old ironworks in the Wełnowiec District (the town of Katowice), about 1840  
— E. W. Knippel's coloured lithography (a gouache) from the Museum of Gliwice collection

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