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Ethnic identification as part of the Silesians' identity

Ethnic identification is an important element in determining the identity of groups and individuals. It determines the perception of both that of others and oneself. This is not an attribute given once and for all, it is a subject to change, depending on the personal experiences of individuals and groups and on external conditions. The latter being of particular importance for constructing identity. Identification is often constructed in opposition to others and shaped in a situation of dominance of a stronger group. External factors, such as changing political situation, play a major role in the strengthening or weakening of identification. In 1989, Poland underwent such a change. Past actions of the authorities during the period of real socialism did not allow autochthonous communities to highlight Silesian affiliation. It was not until the 1990s that the possibility of articulating their differences opened. This process is subject to change. On the one hand the influence of globalization contributes to the unification of the population of Silesia, on the other hand separatist tendencies, such as slogans advocating autonomy for the region, highlight its distinctiveness.

The article therefore aims to:

1. Show the historical sources of ethnic identification of Silesians.
2. Diagnose the current situation, on the basis of studies by the author, showing the extent of identity among the population of Silesia based on three selected locations.

1. The concept of identity and ethnic identification – a theoretical clarification

An important element of analysis is the notion of identity, which operates on the basis of the social sciences, particularly sociology and social psychology.

Considering the notion of identity itself answers the question “Who are we?” It is often not easy to answer this question because many factors affect the notion. The concept of identity is closely linked to the concept of ethnic or national identity.

Theoretically, the concept of identity has long been the subject of reflection of philosophers, historians and psychologists. It was to assist in resolving the problem of who the individual and what the group is in their own opinion, and in the eyes of others. Charles Cooley already introduced the concept of Looking Glass Self – people shape themselves based on what other people perceive and confirm other people’s opinion on themselves (Mucha 1992). However, the concept of identity defined by Eric Erikson is considered from the standpoint of the social psychologist. He distinguished eight stages of psychosocial development of individuals (Erikson 1963). In his discussion the issue of mental health was dominant. He associates the concept of identity with the process of socialization, which takes place during childhood and adolescence and that affects the self-definition of an individual for the rest of his or her life.

Another way of defining identity is the identity model of worldview, which uses concepts such as value, ethos and/or cultural pattern (Boksański 2002: 254). An essential feature of this concept is a set of permanent self-perceptions shaped among members of a community. Reference is made here to the group nature of identity, which is realized in the process of socialization and inter-generational transfer. Cultural identity is defined as a part of this trend. Such a conception of identity can be found in the works of Antonina Kłoskowska and Zbigniew Boksański (Kłoskowska 1996, Boksański 1989). Boksański distinguished a special category of ethnic identity, understood as the collective identity of separate groups. Kłoskowska introduces the term “culturalization” which is a subsidiary within the meaning of identity, especially ethnic and national identity (Kłoskowska 1996: 109). Cultural concepts indicate a relatively stable identification of a group of people and its individual members with a specific group of views, ideas and beliefs, with specific customs and habits of the axiological and normative system. Ethnic identity forms part of this. Ethnic identity is just an attempt at marking the line of demarcation between it and others and are related to the fact that the position of the ethnic group is placed within the wider communities.

Identification plays an important role in determining the ethnic identity. Methodological recommendations of the study of national identity by Antonina Kłoskowska, can also refer to ethnic identity. According to the author, identification can be expressed in the form of a declaration in response to questions posed directly, it can also take forms similar to the plebiscite (Kłoskowska 1996: 111). What is very important is that the place of national (ethnic – U.S.) identification, the total individual identity, is not only varied individually, but depends on the situation of human life and its entire national (ethnic) communities.

Bokszański distinguishes three types of ethnic identity in multicultural societies (separational, inequality and political) (Bokszański 2005: 92–97). The identity of the inequality in the process of its construction, is associated with the presence of a particular phenomenon, namely the effects of the dominant group. The dominant ethnic community is a group that is at the top of the hierarchy of ethnicity. It has power and exercises control over the structures of economic life. At the other extreme is subordinated collectively, such as that of the Silesian community (Bokszański 2005: 94–95). One of the manifestations of domination of the majority group could even skip the possibility of articulating ethnic identity of the Silesian and push the issue of social and political discourse. As demonstrated, however, a sociological study carried out by sociologists in the 1990s, a significant part of the population of autochthonic origin, as well as the population of mixed origin define themselves as Silesians (Bartoszek and Gruszczyński 1996: 20–22; Wódz 1997, Swadźba 2001: 118–120, Nijakowski 2004: 132–156). Ethnic identification plays therefore an important role in the construction of identity.

Ethnic identification is a dynamic process. It is subject to change due to economic and political conditions, as well as the personal situation of individuals and their ethnic groups. This theoretical option was therefore adopted in historical analysis and the analysis of the empirical material.

2. The historical basis of the formation of ethnic identity as an element of Silesians' identity

2.1. From the second half of the 19th century to the First World War

Crucial for determining the identity of the Silesian and the formation of the ethnic identification was Silesia's membership to the Prussian state from 1742 (Czapiński, Kaszuba, Wąs and Żerelik 2002: 231). It is in this framework that from the mid-19th century there was a rapid industrialization of the area combined with population growth and urbanization.

The source of recruitment of workers was Silesian villages, providing the first generations of miners and steelworkers. Throughout the 19th century, in spite of a large industrial development in Upper Silesia, there was no trace of the arrival of large groups of people from other countries. During the economic boom Poles from the Austrian partition flowed into Silesia, but did not represent a core group of the population. This population was rapidly assimilated into the local population. Therefore, the tradition of the Silesian village was shaped by the identity of Silesian workers (Bukowska-Floreńska 1987).

The Silesian village was relatively self-sufficient economically and culturally during the pre-industrial period. Due to the isolation of the population, the influence of Germanization was poorly marked. The working population, Poles who spoke their own dialect, was engaged in farm work and initially combined it with working in the industry, not wanting to break their ties with the countryside. The combination of rural with urban customs shaped the identity of Silesians. In turn, the leadership positions that required expertise were occupied by Germans. Their customs and culture also influenced the Silesian identity. Population growth was rapid in the earlier stage of the formation of industry, i.e. in the period 1850–1870 (Michalkiewicz 1976). There is insufficient data for the entire area of Upper Silesia, but according to research conducted at Królewska Huta (current Chorzów), one can conclude that in 7 years (1864–1871) the population doubled from about 9,000 to 19,500 (Stasiak 1963: 52). There was a decreasing number of people engaged in agricultural occupations for people started taking up employment in industry, trade and commerce. In the early 20th century (census 1907) over 70% of the population of Upper Silesia was the working population.

Until the First World War, the Silesian identity in opposition to the Germans strengthened because of *Kulturkampf*. The intentions of the *Kulturkampf* meant the fight against the Catholic Church and Polish affiliation. This meant, limiting the Polish language in the Church, limiting catechesis and devotion and breaking ties with the Church. The Church's teaching in Polish helped to unify the Polish and Catholic values. The Catholic religion dominated the lives of generations of workers and permeated all social structures (family, local communities, the education system) (Świątkiewicz 1997: 36–63). It was also a medium for dissatisfaction and led to the founding of the Upper Silesian Workers Union 1889 – a Catholic trade union, which was to help resolve worker feuds. Silesian identity so marked the nature of work, the Polish nation and the Catholic religion.

Local migration shaped Silesian identity based on the fundamental values that already existed. The formation of identity was also influenced by immigration of Germans. Germans occupied such positions in the Silesian community as officials in the administration, teachers in German schools, and were experts in the growing industry. According to the census from 1890, Bytom was inhabited by about 50.0% of Germans and 25.0% in other cities (Katowice – 27.9%, Zabrze – 23.1%, the former district of Bytom – 26.8%, Tarnowskie Góry – 21.8%) (Michalkiewicz 1985: 48). Germans accounted for about ¼ of the population of industrial districts. The rest of the population, as can be presumed, constituted the population of Silesia. The impact of Germans derived from their occupation of positions and economic positions. Germans coming to Silesia were driven by the mission of Germanization of these areas, and to raise them to a higher level of civilization. This resulted in them as being seen as foreign by the Silesians, carrying other cultural values. On the other hand, due to the fact that

these values were regarded as higher, they were accepted and adopted by the local population. Therefore, incoming Germans played a dual role in shaping the identity of Silesians and their ethnic identity:

1. By the fact of belonging to a different nationality and occupying a higher social position perpetuated the division between “us” and “foreign”, which contributed to the formation of identity of Silesians.
2. Through socialization to work in the industry, they created the specific characteristics for Silesians distinguishing them from Poles from other partitions.

2.2. The interwar period

After Silesia was reinstated as one of the Polish territories, thousands of Silesians expected changes in their social situation. The interwar period was a time of continued consolidation of the specific features of Silesians, shaping their own identity and identification. This was influenced by the following factors:

1. The political decision to join a large part of Silesia to the Polish territory and granting autonomy to the Silesian voivodeship.¹
2. Immigration of Poles to Silesia from other former partitions and occupation of higher social positions by them.

After the First World War, a significant part of Upper Silesia formed a part of Poland. This area was very different from other Polish territories. It was an industrialized region with a much higher level of civilization. The level of development was equal to that of other industrialized regions of Europe, Belgium, France and Germany (Kostrowicka, Landau and Tomaszewski 1966). This situation was a source of pride for Silesians. It perpetuated in their awareness of their special position in the Polish state. The autonomy granted to the Silesian voivodeship contributes to the internal integration and a sense of separateness in relation to the rest of the Polish territories. Political factors shaped the identity of Silesians. As mentioned before, Silesians built their identity in opposition to Germans. After the First World War, Germans lost their rights in Silesia as the dominant nation. In the 1930s, the number of Germans, was estimated at about 160,000 (Serafin 1996: 86–87). Their economic position decreased. People oc-

¹ After Poland regained independence, much of the industrialized area of Upper Silesia fell under Poland rule. The Silesian voivodeship had an area of 4,216 km, which was 1.3% of the area of Poland, it was the smallest voivodeship of the Second Republic. It consisted of agricultural land of Cieszyn Silesia, the county of Lubliniec and other industrialized areas. Opole Silesia and smaller parts of the Silesian industrial areas, along with the cities of Gliwice, Zabrze and Bytom fell mostly under German rule. The Silesian voivodeship region in Poland had extensive autonomy. The autonomy consisted of a vast government composed of autochthons and powers of the Silesian Parliament. The population of Upper Silesia had many privileges associated with the work, which included the priority in employment, maintenance of social insurance and protection against relocation.

cupying high positions in government and industry of Upper Silesia departed. Silesians no longer built their identity in opposition to Germans due to their growing ranks in society.

After leaving these areas by the Germans, jobs requiring higher education were now vacant. The locals generally completed basic education and solid professional preparation for working-class professions. While some insurgents occupied the lower Silesian official positions, but it was not a very large group. There was a surplus of people with higher education in the Austrian partition, where the Polish education system operated and partly in the Russian partition, where technical education operated. Intellectuals from other partitions rushed to fill the positions vacated by the Germans. Wanda Wanatowicz estimated the size of the immigration at 31,500 people (Wanatowicz 1982: 169). This is not a significant number, but the influx played a significant role in economic, political and social life of Silesia. Migrants from the Austrian partition were dominantly humanistic intellectuals, and those from the Russian were technical intellectuals. Immigrants to Silesia differed from the local population. These differences were:

- Professions. Among the immigrant population were the population of bourgeois and landowner origin. The population of immigrants held various positions in society from occupying the highest social positions (directors, administration, lawyers, engineers), to teachers and low-paid civil servants (Wanatowicz 1982: 51, 72).
- Differences in education. Education was diverse among the immigrant population, but much higher. Among them were reputable people having finished their studies at foreign universities, but also those with a secondary education (Wanatowicz 1986: 87).
- Customs. Immigrants and the local population differed from one another in the way of behaviour, speech, dress, traditions. The newcomers brought customs of distance and aversion to physical labour that occurred in other territories, to Silesia. Teachers were also culturally different (Lutman 1932: 28–34, Kopeć 1986, Wanatowicz 1982, Wanatowicz 1986).
- Rootedness in culture. Following the centuries-old separation of Upper Silesia from Polish territories there remained a dialect. Educated immigrants treated many Upper Silesians as Germanized, which also concerned participants of the Silesian Uprisings (Wanatowicz 1986: 75–125).
- The role that religion and the Catholic Church should have played in social life. Both groups of the population were Catholic, but the autochthons were more conservative and the immigrants were more secularized. In the history of Silesia, the Catholic Church played a huge role. The newcomers were manifesting their religious convictions with lower intensity. The immigrant teachers refused to supervise the influx of religious practices and were offended the clergy's role in the environment (Świątkiewicz 1997: 36–64).

Such serious differences between the Polish immigrant populations and autochthons influenced the sustaining of the existing characteristics for the majority of Silesians, which determined their identity and identification around the Silesian affiliation. These were, performing working-class professions, a strong attachment to the Catholic religion, work ethos, the specificity of customs and the use of the dialect. Confrontation with immigrants from other partitions resulted in the appreciation of the separateness of Silesians and further development of identities around these features. It should be noted that some autochthons, especially the ones who obtained education in the interwar period in Polish schools, evolved into the nationwide values depriving the specific features of shaping the identity of Silesia.

2.3. The period of real socialism

The period after the Second World War was a time of changing identities and assimilation of the nationwide character. Three factors played important roles in this process:

1. State policy in relation to the native population.
2. Migrations of the immigrant population in Silesia for work.
3. Silesian emigration to Germany.

After the Second World War, the whole of Silesia became part of Poland. Silesia, due to the lack of war damage, became one of the most important economic regions in Poland. The population of Silesia was treated by the authorities in two ways, first with suspicion because of the signing of Volksliste during the occupation (95% of the population of Silesia was covered by Volksliste) (Boda-Kreżel 1969: 401), on the other hand, because of the demand for qualified staff and labour, sought to attract this population to carry out production tasks set by the central party-state bureaucracy. Therefore Silesians were needed primarily as blue-collar workers. Managerial positions were held by the population of immigrants. Managerial positions also required an ideological commitment, and this conflicted with the Silesian religiousness. State policy also sought to unify education and dialect expulsion from schools and offices. Education of children and young people meant that gradually the younger generation was increasingly using only Polish as a language and this led to their promotion at work. Identifying with the Silesian affiliation was less obvious, although certainly in some professional environments such as mining it was very important. It should be noted, however, that there was a lack of sociological research on ethnic identification, because the authorities were interested in highlighting the unity of the working class, and no indication of its diversity.

The identity of the Silesians and ethnic identification in the period of real socialism was also influenced by migration. Throughout the period of real so-

cialism, Polish migrants arrived at the Katowice voivodeship, attracted by the possibility of employment. The influx of migrants had two dimensions: on the one hand, it concerned the executives and intellectuals whose deficit persisted as it was before the war, on the other hand it concerned the poorly-educated or completely devoid of qualifications of the workforce in mining and metallurgy. Migration to Silesia continued throughout the period of real socialism with varying intensity depending on the demand for labour. The highest demand for labour occurred wherever mines or other industries were expanding. It reached a climax in the years 1976–1985 in the phase of industrial development by Edward Gierek and his team.² Such towns like Jastrzębie, Wodzisław and Źory lost its former character. Migrations mainly concerned towns and settlements where high blocks of flats were erected and inhabited by the population of those needed at workplaces. The lack of building sites led to the demolishing and destroying of workers' settlements such as Giszowiec, which not only acted as an architectural monument, but also as a place of long-term residence and social relations to Silesians.³ Therefore towns changed their character, and influx population overwhelmed the population of Silesia. Initial settling of immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s was dramatic and accompanied with numerous conflicts.

Migration in Silesia also had a different effect. With a large wave of emigration that followed the democratic process after October 1956, 216,799 people left Poland, heading to their German ancestry (Korbel 1988: 272). This was mainly a community having Silesian roots. In the 1970s, giving the same reason, 179,000 to 250,000 people left the country (Korbel 1988: 272). Motives of immigration were national, but above all economic. Then existing rules facilitate settlement in the Federal Republic of Germany. In this way, in the 1970s and 1980s, some people left their traditional home of residence. The remaining population in Poland through family contacts was placed under the influence of German culture.

² Edward Gierek was the secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party in the period from December 1970 to September 1980. He was expelled from the Central Committee during the strikes across the country and the formation of "Solidarity". In the 1970s he pursued a policy of modernization of the economy in Poland. It was based on foreign loans and broader relations with the countries of Western Europe, while not changing the political and economic system and dependence on the USSR (*Nowa Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN*, Vol. 2: 524).

³ Giszowiec is currently a district of Katowice. It was built on forested land in the crossover period of the 19th and 20th century and was designed by Georg and Emil Zillmann as a model workers' housing estate. Workers' houses were modelled after the Upper Silesian village hut, and the whole estate with commercial and service buildings. The housing estate was inhabited mainly by miners from the mine "Giesche" (today "Wieczorek"). Until 1909, Giszowiec was inhabited by 1,349 inhabitants. In the period of real socialism from 1969 in the vicinity of the old colony, the construction of a modern housing estate started, and old houses were demolished for this. Along with the rise, there was a mass influx of residential area migrants, workers and other mines and factories near Katowice. Former housing and social structure gradually disappeared (www.giszowiec.info.pl).

Migration concerned the entire area of Silesia, but in some places took considerable size. In this way, districts such as Szombierki and Rozbark in Bytom, and Rokitnica in Zabrze were deserted by the native population.

Both types of migration influenced the Silesian identity and their ethnic identification. Migration to Germany caused the native population decline in the total population of Silesia. Migrations of the immigrant population was uneven. They were not affected by small local communities, which so far were homogeneous due to the regional origin of the population. Two kinds of processes are associated with the formation of identity.

First of all, in small local communities the identity of Silesians remained to a large extent, which also affected ethnic identification. These communities live their own lives that revolve around their own affairs. Due to the existing family and neighbourhood ties, a social bond is created with the residents. Regional Silesian values were cultivated. They focused on religion, family and work. Religion played a large role in these communities. Its role was reinforced by authority of the priest. Cultivated forms of religiousness were specifically Silesian (birthdays, Early Communion) and professional ("Barbórka", St. Florian's day). Throughout the period of real socialism, the Catholic Church played an important role in shaping regional identity of Silesians. The family was a mainstay in which the bond was maintained. It was here during family celebrations such as birthdays, christenings and wedding anniversaries that people typically gathered to sustain the Silesian tradition as expressed in for example; traditional cuisine. An important role in cultivating this tradition was the dialect. Work also determined the Silesian identity. However, during the period of real socialism, there was a breakdown of the work ethos of Silesia (Swadźba 2001). The work ethos continued in the private sphere, because only there could it be realized. Small Silesian communities in this period were the traditional mainstay of the Silesian identity.

In big cities and neighbourhoods settled by immigrant population it was more difficult to maintain a specific identity. Followed by processes of assimilation, which also affected ethnic identification. The values and patterns of behaviour of immigrants affected the population of Silesia. The specific Silesian religiousness also changed. In communities inhabited primarily by immigrants, religious practices were not as frequent (Świątkiewicz 1997: 160–191). Also, work ethos so specific to this region was gradually eroding in the period of real socialism. Its duality and the transformation was affected by ideological factors, but the migration to Silesia of people representing different values of work was not of less significance (Swadźba 2001: 89–94).

The shaping of a regional identity was not monolithic, and consisted not only of the diminishing traditional features of Silesia by the native population. Part of the immigrant population, especially those who through marriage entered into Silesian families and assimilated Silesian value system and identified with them,

as the results of sociological research show (Swadźba 2001). Among the immigrants there was less than 20.0% who declared Silesian as their nationality. There is a parallel between the length of time living in Silesia and the declaration of Silesian as a nationality. These declarations were the acceptance of Silesian affiliation with Silesian values and characteristic features of Silesian identity.

2.4. The period of systemic transformation

The beginning of the systemic transformation brought the awakening of the ethnic and national minorities, highlighting their identity. Gone were the ideological and political barriers blocking the declaration of another ethnic or national identity other than Polish. In the 1990s increasing numbers of Silesian autochthons declared their membership to the German nationality. In 1992, Zbigniew Kurcz estimated this population group in the voivodeship of Katowice at 80,000 people (Kurcz 1995: 42–43). The declarations of these people have a double meaning, on the one hand, it was to determine their identity, which was related with a different nationality other than Polish, the other had an economic dimension.

Sociological research was already possible, where residents were asked to identify their national-ethnic origin (Jacher 1993, Świątkiewicz 1995, Szczepański 1997, Wódz 1993, Swadźba 2001, Swadźba 2007). In 1997, in studies conducted on the inhabitants of the Katowice voivodeship, 63.8% felt Polish, Silesian – 12.4%, German – 1.1%, Polish and Silesian – 18.1%, German and Silesian – 2.4%, Zagłębie – 1.4%, 0.8% of other nationality (Bartoszek and Gruszczyński 1996: 21). In another study conducted on a group of miners from Upper Silesia, 47% identified themselves as Silesians, 29% as Silesians Poles and 23% as Poles (Wódz 1997: 80). So the study showed that despite the policy of the authorities during the period of real socialism, which endeavoured to unify the society, some people felt the Silesian ethnic separateness. In the polemics carried out in the 1990s and the first decade of this century by sociologists, there were attempts to answer whether there really was a Silesian nationality (Nijakowski 2004, Bartoszek 2001).

In 2002, there was national census conducted in which, among other nations it was also possible to declare Silesian nationality. Census results showed that in the general population of Silesian voivodeship (4,363,000 inhabitants), 92% declared their nationality as Polish and 186,300 (3.9%) declared a nationality other than Polish. Among the latter group most indicated Silesian nationality 148,500 (79.7%) and German nationality 31,900 (17.1%). Within the Silesian voivodeship, 86% (Silesian) and 21% (German) from the nationwide figures were indicated (National Census, 2002 and 2003).

The abovementioned figures indicate a significant decline in the number of people declaring themselves as Germans (about 50,000), but revealed a very large

group of Silesians. Part of the population of Upper Silesia who felt a strong relationship with the local homeland did not declare to none of the “great” nations of Poland or Germany. For some, German affiliation was not a subject to economic fluctuations. It should be noted that in the census there it was not possible to simultaneously select both Polish and Silesian as an option, which put part of Silesians in a difficult situation.

What follows is the data from the census of 2002 for the declaration of nationalities in selected cities and municipalities of the voivodeship. Katowice, Rydułtowy and Wryy are included in the table, which will then be subject to empirical analysis.

Table 1. Population according to declared nationality

City / Municipality	Total	Other than Polish nationality		City / Municipality	Total	Other than Polish nationality	
		Total	%			Total	%
Katowice	327,222	2,986	5.8	Racibórz	59,495	3,448	5.7
Rydułtowy	22,047	2,924	13.3	Zabrze	195,293	6,755	3.4
Wryy	6,049	1,296	21.4	Boronów	3,260	322	9.8
Tychy	132,816	1,988	1.4	Marklowice	5,049	581	11.5
Rybnik	142,731	9,702	6.7	Świerklany	11,017	1,848	16.7

Source: general information from the national census, towns and municipalities in Silesia, Statistics Office in Katowice (Katowice 2003) and the author's own calculations.

The emergence of such a number of Silesian nationality declarations indicates the revival of the Silesian identity. At the same time it shows that previously only subjects designated by history were considered, but reality have shown that in times of pluralism consideration should be taken as to exclude terms of nationalism and take into account the situation of the border population. It turned out that part of the indigenous inhabitants of Silesia with the opportunity declared Silesian nationality. Part of the population were nationally indifferent who once declared German nationality would not “declare” belonging to any of the “great” nations. The emergence of such a number of declarations of Silesian nationality points to the increasing phenomenon of emphasizing their distinctiveness. The problem, however, is more complicated because of the culture-border, like Silesia, part of the population cannot always choose the option of explicit national or ethnic origin, and feels as such Silesian-Polish or Silesian-German. For part of the Silesian population the ethnic identity statements mean only to highlight their identity. However, for the other it means that by showing the diversity of the region they promote the activities of the Silesia Autonomy Movement.

Cultural unification also affects the ethnic identification of the region. This means on the one hand, the impact of the unification process, which the popu-

lation of Silesia in the Polish state was subject to (school, media, culture), on the other hand the stabilization of the population. There is no mass migration. Since 1993, the voivodeship has had a negative balance of migration (*Statistical Yearbooks of the Katowice Voivodeship*, 1994–1998 and 1999–2009). By 1999, it resulted from the outflow abroad and not from internal migration. Since the beginning of the 1990s almost 100,000 (94,298) inhabitants of the voivodeship formally disappeared due to migration. These were mainly autochthons of Silesia. The balance of internal migration up to 1999 was positive (*Statistical Yearbooks of the Katowice Voivodeship*, 1994–1998). Since 1999, internal migration has also had a negative balance. The local labour market is too small to offer employment to the whole local population and the work is hard to obtain. Non-autochthons are also among those to emigrate. The possibility of a one-off severance or early retirement under the Mining Social Package prompted some migrant miners to return to their homeland, where life is cheaper. The consequence of such a social processes is the depopulation of the voivodeship. Since 1993, 81,069 inhabitants disappeared (*Statistical Yearbooks of the Katowice Voivodeship*, 1994–1998 and 1999–2009).

Mixed marriages are common. The young generation born in Silesia from both mixed families and migrant families, often identified with Silesia and feels compelled to the Silesian identification. However, there is definitely more often a double Silesian-Polish identification (50.3% in the counties of Silesia) than Silesian (8.5%) (Bartoszek, Nawrocki and Kijonka-Niezabitowska 2009: 18). Silesian identity and ethnic identification is therefore involving the younger generation of indigenous families, but also those from mixed families and migrant families.

3. Ethnic identification – an empirical analysis

According to the research, ethnic identification is a dynamic process and subject to change. Therefore, within the studies on Silesian values conducted by the author in 2009–2010 in the Silesian towns of Rydułtowy, Wyrzy, and the district of Katowice – Bogucice, the question regarding Silesian ethnic identification was asked⁴. Ethnic identification is tested in two ways. This can be done by placing

⁴ Studies were carried out in 2009–2010, as a part of the awarded grant by the Ministry of Education: “Values – continuity and change. Sociological study of communities in Silesia”. The study involved people aged 19 to 75. Quota sampling was used to study the selection of residents. Altogether 540 categorized interviews and 45 individual deep interviews were conducted. The selected places for the study were representatives of the community of the Silesian voivodeship. Katowice-Bogucice inhabited by urban population, Rydułtowy in an average mining

an ethnic group among the other options of nationality (ethnic groups) (Bartoszek and Gruszczyński 1996: 21, Wódcz 1997: 80) or by asking a question directly as to which particular national or ethnic group a person belongs to. This second method does not put the respondent in a situation of choice between different national and ethnic options. During the author's studies the second method of testing was used. Respondents were asked the question: "Do you feel Silesian?" The question was close-ended and the respondents had to declare their identification. The following table shows the respondents' answers depending on where they live:

Table 2. Ethnic Identification of respondents in the surveyed areas (%). N = 540

Do you feel Silesian?	Place			Total
	Bogucice	Rydułtowy	Wry	
Yes	57.2	61.1	86.7	68.3
No	9.4	8.3	1.7	6.5
Associated with Silesia	26.1	17.8	7.8	17.2
Hard to say	7.3	12.8	3.9	7.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: own research and calculations.

Between ethnic identification and the place of residence there is a statistically significant association (*chi*-square accepted significance level $p = 0.001$, Cramer's $v = 0.236$).

In each of the surveyed areas the Silesian ethnic identification prevailed. It also prevailed in the overall percentage of respondents. Even in Bogucice, where less than half of the respondents declared themselves as being autochthons. Silesian identification was declared by the residents of Wry and Gostyń (cf. Swadźba 2005). In Bogucice the term "associated with Silesia", was common, also a large proportion of respondents in Rydułtowy chose this answer. This answer was often chosen by non-autochthons who wanted to define their relationship with the inhabited area.

The ethnic identification is affected by regional origin. The criterion of regional origin was often used in the publications of the 1990s. Mrozek indicates the validity of this criterion in research on values in Silesia. The following are important in the analysis: regional traditions preserved in the family and local community, homogeneity of social contacts, the stereotype of one's own and foreign groups are the features to which attention should be paid. The Table 3 shows the regional origin of the inhabitants in the studied areas.

town and the municipality of Wry (with the villages of Gostyń and Wry), a suburban village, 23 km from Katowice.

Table 3. Regional origin of the respondents in the surveyed areas (%). N = 540

Regional origin	Place			Total
	Bogucice	Rydułtowy	Wry	
Autochthonic (both parents Silesian)	47.2	55.0	78.3	60.2
Mixed (mother: Silesian, father: other)	9.4	10.6	8.9	9.6
Mixed (father: Silesian, mother: other)	16.7	11.7	4.4	10.9
Migrant (both parents: other)	26.7	20.6	8.3	18.5
Other description	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: own research and calculations.

Between the regional origin and place of residence there is a statistically significant association (*chi-square* accepted significance level $p = 0.001$, Cramer's $v = 0.193$).

As expected the highest proportion of autochthons was observed in the municipality of Wry (Gostyń and Wry) and lowest in Bogucice. In Bogucice and Rydułtowy a higher proportion of immigrants was the result of migration of the 1970s and 1980s, when developing mines recruited people from other Polish territories. In the years 1978–1988 the population of Bogucice grew from 5,449 to 9,628, mainly due to migration (Swadźba 1994). In 1960, the inhabitants of Rydułtowy numbered 16,267, 19,925 in 1973, and 21,843 in 2008⁵ (*Statistical Yearbook of the Katowice Voivodeship*, 1974 and 2009). The municipality of Wry only now began to be a place of migration and the percentage of migrants is gradually increasing. In the research sample, one can note an interesting trend. In Bogucice the percentage of people who have a migrant mother and Silesian father, far exceeds the percentage of people with the reverse situation – as written by most sociologists was the most common situation (Mrozek 1965, Dutkiewicz 1968). So a qualitatively new situation can be noted. This shows the importance of not trying to choose a wife who would be the carrier of Silesian culture and traditions. Traditional aversions of autochthons ceased to function. There may also be greater “availability” of such candidates for wives in urban Bogucice. Young people meeting at school, college and work have the opportunity to weaken the stereotypes and follow rationally.

Regional origin affects the Silesian ethnic identification (Bartoszek, Nawrocki and Kijonka-Niezabitowska 2009: 18–19). As previously written in sociological research, the mother has a greater influence on the transmission of cultural values of their environment than the father (Dutkiewicz 1968). Therefore, in studies carried out, mixed regional origin will be divided depending on the origin of the mother and father. Below are the results of the analysis:

⁵ By 1975, Rydułtowy was a separate administrative entity, in 1975 it was incorporated into Wodzisław Śląski. Since 1992, it is again a separate administrative unit.

Table 4. Regional origin of respondents vs ethnic identification (%). N = 540

Ethnic Identification (feeling Silesian)	Regional origin of respondent				Total
	autochthon (both partents Silesian)	mixed (mother: Silesian, father: other)	mixed (mather: Silesian, mother: other)	migrant (both parents: other)	
Yes	86.5	73.1	52.5	18.0	68.3
No	2.2	0.0	8.5	22.0	6.5
Associated with Silesia	7.1	9.6	30.5	46.0	17.2
Hard to say	4.2	17.3	8.5	14.0	7.9
Total	100.0	9.6	10.9	18.5	100.0

Source: own research and calculations.

There is a statistically significant relationship between the regional origin and ethnic identification (*chi*-square accepted significance level $p = 0.001$, Cramer's $v = 0.423$).

The percentage of respondents with an autochthonous origin is lower than the percentage of self-declared Silesians. The results indicate that the respondents were more likely to declare non-indigenous Silesian than autochthonous origin. The higher result is influenced by self-declaration by especially people from mixed marriages. These are higher self-declaration of respondents from mixed marriages, where the mother is Silesian (73.1%) than where the father is Silesian (52.5%) – there is often a response option “associated with Silesia” (30.5%). Therefore it confirms the conclusion that the mother is rather the carrier of cultural values than his father. When both parents are migrants, the most common statements were “associated with Silesia” (46.0%) or “hard to say”.

The demographic factor such as sex rather does not influence the self-declaration of Silesian affiliation: 67.8% men and 69.2% women declared as Silesian. A slightly higher proportion of men said that they feel connected with Silesia.

Ethnic identification is slightly affected by the age of respondents:

Table 5. Ethnic identification vs the age of the respondents (%). N = 540

Do you feel Silesian?	Age ranges						Total
	< 30	31–40	41–50	51–60	61–70	> 70	
Yes	62.1	65.6	66.7	68.4	71.8	72.5	68.3
No	8.7	8.9	9.0	6.3	3.8	5.9	6.5
Associated with Silesia	24.3	16.7	14.4	20.0	15.4	13.7	17.2
Hard to say	4.9	8.8	9.9	5.3	8.9	7.8	7.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: own research and calculations.

Older respondents more often feel Silesian. As one moves up from one age group to another there is a direct increase in the number of people declaring Silesian identification (the difference of 10%). The more common response among the younger generation was “associated with Silesia” or “no”. Age fosters a sense of identification, however, even in the younger age groups, there is a high feeling of Silesian affiliation. More young people in Bogucice feel “associated with Silesia” than in the municipality of Wryry, where the young generation often declared Silesian ethnic identification. This is due to the far higher proportion of autochthons in the municipality of Wryry.

Is Silesian ethnic identification affected by education? As a rule, Silesian affiliation was felt more by people with lower education or with poorer material conditions (Bartoszek, Nawrocki and Kijonka-Niezabitowska 2009: 19). The following table shows the results of the studies.

Table 6. Ethnic identification vs education of respondents (%). N = 540

Do you feel Silesian?	Education of respondent				Total
	primary education	basic vocational	secondary / post-secondary	higher	
Yes	67.9	70.7	68.6	69.4	68.3
No	3.6	4.6	7.2	10.2	6.5
Associated with Silesia	25.0	13.8	15.5	16.7	17.2
Hard to say	3.6	10.9	8.8	3.8	7.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: own research and calculations.

Education does not affect the sense of being Silesian. “Yes”, granted in individual compartments of education from 67.9% (primary) to the basic vocational (70.7%) of respondents. This is not a significant difference. It is interesting that even people with higher education declared Silesian ethnic identification. This shows that education in a national culture and the impact of schools and universities do not affect the disappearance of the Silesian identification and the associated identity. Silesian identity has been built on working-class ethos, the hard work of miners and steelworkers. If there is still an integral part of the identity of the inhabitants of Silesia, in spite of the qualification and intellectual professions, it is occurring in the same shift. Nowadays, designations other than only the working class carry the Silesian identification. This would require further in-depth research.

Self-declaration of Silesian affiliation and rootedness in the Silesian culture is influenced by the time of residence in Silesia and time of residence in a particular area. As one might have expected, due to the lack of migration to Silesia, inhabitants belong to the incumbent. The vast majority lived in Silesia since their

birth (70.6% – Bogucice, 78.9% – Rydułtowy, 94.4% – Wry). Much of the remaining residents of Bogucice and Rydułtowy lived in Silesia for more than 20 years (17.8% – Bogucice, 15.6% – Rydułtowy). In Bogucice lives only a few percent of those who lived there for less than 20 years. There are also students who live there. The study population is therefore incumbent on Silesia, which was already noted in other studies (Swadźba 2006). The length of residence in a particular city is lower. In Bogucice 47.8% of respondents declared that they lived there from birth, in Rydułtowy – 58.3%, and Wry – 63.3%. A high proportion of respondents lived in the surveyed municipalities for over 20 years. The period of systemic transition brought stabilization to the population, which was confirmed by our study. Part of the immigrant population has become firmly established in Silesia and feels connected with the region and is planning their professional and personal life here. It affects their identity and ethnic identification.

Conclusions

Ethnic identification is an important element of social identity of groups and individuals. It allows them to be located in the wider society. It is a hallmark in the unified world. It determines the continuity of cultural processes in the community. As the analysis shows, ethnic identification is subject to certain dynamics. It is not a constant element in the community. Based on the analysis, the following can be stated:

1. Ethnic identification of the communities of the Silesian always crystallized in opposition to foreign domination in the sense of a higher culture. During the reign of the Prussian state, the German culture was dominant. After the annexation of Silesia to Poland the Polish culture was dominant.
2. Silesian ethnic identification, as an element of identity was largely built on fundamental values, the ethos of work, family and religion. Designates of identification, however, are subject to change. This is particularly true for work.
3. Silesian communities consists of a large proportion of people describing themselves as Silesians. The declaring percentage, however, is diverse – in the cities it is lower, but oscillates around 50.0%, whereas in small communities it reaches 90.0%.
4. Silesian ethnic identification is primarily declared by autochthons, to a large degree by mixed origin, and partly by migrants (about 20.0%).
5. The Silesian ethnic identification is definitely not affected by other independent variables such as sex and education. It is slightly affected by age. The declaration of “feeling Silesian” by migrants is affected by the length of residence in Silesia, as well as marriage with a person of autochthonous origin.

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Online resourceswww.giszowiec.info.pl**Summary**

The article touches upon the issue of ethnic identification of Silesians. The problem is presented in terms of dynamics. The author first discusses the theoretical context for the notion of identification and ethnic identity. The concepts of E. Erikson and Ch. Cooley are presented. Among Polish sociologists, concepts of Z. Bokszański and K. Kłoskowska are set out. The concept of inequality of identity, formulated by Z. Bokszański, is assumed to be the most appropriate for the author's considerations. The analysis of the formation of Silesians' identity begins from mid-19th century, the period of industrialization of Upper Silesia. Ethnic identification of Silesian communities always crystallized in opposition to the foreign ones, in the sense of being dominated by a higher culture. During the reign of Prussia it was a German culture, after joining Silesia to Poland – Polish culture. During the period of real socialism, due to the major migrations and the mixing of the population, the importance of ethnic identification decreased. Current research conducted by the author show that ethnic identification plays an important role in Silesian communities. Silesian communities are inhabited by a significant proportion of people describing themselves as Silesians. This proportion is however diverse. It is lower in the cities, but fluctuates around 50%, whereas in small communities it reaches 90%. Silesian ethnic identification is primarily declared by people of indigenous origin, largely by those of mixed origin, and partly (about 20%) – incoming inhabitants.