



You have downloaded a document from
RE-BUŚ
repository of the University of Silesia in Katowice

Title: Upper Silesia - social preparedness for restructuring processes : 18 sociological propositions

Author: Marek S. Szczepański

Citation style: Szczepański Marek S. (1995). Upper Silesia - social preparedness for restructuring processes : 18 sociological propositions. W: K. Wódz (red.), "Regional identity - regional consciousness : the Upper Silesian experience" (S. 110-121). Katowice : Uniwersytet Śląski



Uznanie autorstwa - Użycie niekomercyjne - Bez utworów zależnych Polska - Licencja ta zezwala na rozpowszechnianie, przedstawianie i wykonywanie utworu jedynie w celach niekomercyjnych oraz pod warunkiem zachowania go w oryginalnej postaci (nie tworzenia utworów zależnych).



UNIWERSYTET ŚLĄSKI
W KATOWICACH



Biblioteka
Uniwersytetu Śląskiego



Ministerstwo Nauki
i Szkolnictwa Wyższego

Marek S. Szczepański

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

Introduction

This article represents a kind of retrospective summing up of empirical studies conducted in Upper Silesia during the period 1985—1993.¹ 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.²

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%).³ 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.⁴ 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.⁵ 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:⁶

- 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 wykorzenienia 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