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*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 społeczeństwa 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.