

The Relationship Between Religion, Language and Nationality Using the Example of Village Mayors in Cieszyn Silesia in 1864–1918*

Michael Morys-Twarowski

Cieszyn Silesia in the “long nineteenth century” is widely regarded as an excellent laboratory for research on the formation of nations. The region was inhabited by three language/national groups (Poles, Czechs, Germans) and denominational groups (Catholics, Protestants, Jews). Basing my research on an analysis of a group of village mayors (vogts) in the period 1864–1918, which included 1,332 such officials, I attempt to determine whether there was a relationship between linguistic (ethnic) affiliation, religion and political views (supported national movement) in Cieszyn Silesia.

KEYWORDS:

Cieszyn Silesia; self-democracy; nationalism studies; Habsburg monarchy

In the history of Cieszyn Silesia (Czech: *Těšínsko*; German: *Teschener Schlesien*; Polish: *Śląsk Cieszyński*) — the eastern part of Austrian Silesia, Austria’s crown land (German: *Kronland*) — national issues have aroused great interest among researchers. From 1918, when the Habsburg monarchy collapsed in ruins, the region became a territory of dispute between Poland and Czechoslovakia. During that dispute, historical, linguistic and ethnic arguments were often brought up.¹

However, national issues are of interest not only to politically involved authors. For researchers in nationalism studies, Cieszyn Silesia in the “long nineteenth century” is an ideal laboratory.² The region was inhabited by three different language

* This article is part of the project *Wójtowie na Śląsku Cieszyńskim 1864–1918. Studium prozopograficzne* [Village Heads in Cieszyn Silesia in the Years 1864–1918. A Prosopographical Study], of which the author is manager and sole executor. The project was financed by the National Science Centre based on decision number DEC-2013/09/N/HS3/02621. The author would like to thank Prof. Janusz Spyra for consultations on factual matters and Maria Nogacka for consultations on language matters.

- 1 On the concept of Cieszyn Silesia: Dan GAWRECKI, *Granice i zmiany przynależności Śląska Cieszyńskiego do 1918 r.* [Borders and Changes in National Affiliation of Cieszyn Silesia Until 1918], in: Janusz Spyra (ed.), *Śląsk Cieszyński. Granice — przynależność — tożsamość* [Cieszyn Silesia. Borders — Affiliation — Identity], Cieszyn 2008, pp. 15–24. See also: Dan GAWRECKI, *Úvod* [Introduction], in: Idem (ed.), *Dějiny Českého Slezska 1740–2000* [History of Bohemian Silesia 1740–2000] I, Opava 2003, pp. 7–19.
- 2 The most eminent historian dealing with Cieszyn Silesia and national issues was Józef Chlebowczyk. See: Maria Wanda WANATOWICZ (ed.), *Józef Chlebowczyk — badacz procesów narodziwórczych w Europie XIX i XX wieku* [Józef Chlebowczyk — Researcher of Nation-Building Processes in 19th and 20th Century Europe], Katowice 2007, which includes a bibliography of his works. Discussion of older literature on national issues in Cieszyn



groups (Poles, Czechs, Germans) and three different denominational groups (Catholics, Lutherans, Jews). To this should be added elements such as a high level of literacy, intensive industrialization, an influx of migrants (it was one of the most populated regions in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century) and an unusual (from the perspective of a Polish researcher) social structure with very few members of the nobility.³

This subject has been extensively researched, which does not mean that there are no remaining issues worth dealing with. One of them is the question of the relationship between religion, ethnic (linguistic) origin and national (political) attitudes. As always, the question „What is a nation?” must be posed. During the period in question, „nationality” was considered to be synonymous with language identity.⁴ If your mother tongue was Polish, you were a Pole. If Czech, you were a Czech. If German, you were a German. What is more, in 1895 in *Gwiazdka Cieszyńska*, an outlet of the Catholic wing of the Polish national movement in Cieszyn Silesia, one could read that Americans are of “English nationality”, as they spoke English.⁵ In this article I use the terms “nation” and “nationality” in two meanings, pointing out each time which one I refer to. First, as language identity as it was understood during the period in question, and second, as support for one of the national movements in Cieszyn Silesia.

Returning to the issue of this article, recourse to statistical sources or analysis of the results of elections to the Diet of Silesia (German: *Schlesischer Landtag*) in Opava or the Imperial Council (German: *Reichsrat*) in Vienna will not lead to any conclusions. We cannot rely on individual examples, as we are able to find practically every possible configuration.⁶

Silesia: Janusz GRUCHAŁA, *Stan i potrzeby badań nad historią Śląska Cieszyńskiego w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX w. (do 1920 r.)* [Status and Needs of Research on the History of Cieszyn Silesia in the Second Half of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries (Until 1920)], in: Idzi Panic (ed.), *Stan i potrzeby badań nad dziejami Śląska Cieszyńskiego* [The State and Needs of Research on the History of Cieszyn Silesia], Cieszyn 2000, pp. 79–84; Dan GAWRECKI: *Polska, czeska i niemiecka historiografia wobec problematyki narodowościowej na Śląsku Austriackim w XIX w. (do 1914 r.)* [Poland, Czech and German Historiography in the Context of Nationality Issues in Austrian Silesia in the 19th Century (until 1914)], in: Krzysztof Ruchniewicz — Jakub Tyszkiewicz — Wojciech Wrzesiński (edd.), *Przełomy w historii. XVI Powszechny Zjazd Historyków Polskich*, Wrocław, 15–18 September 1999 roku. Pamiętnik I, Toruń 2000, pp. 271–286.

3 The most recent work on the region’s history in the years 1848–1918 is Krzysztof NOWAK — Idzi PANIC (edd.), *Śląsk Cieszyński od Wiosny Ludów do I wojny światowej (1848–1918)* [Cieszyn Silesia from the Spring of Nations to the First World War (1848–1918)], Cieszyn 2013, where further literature is given.

4 Daniela KLIMKIEWICZ, *Z polskiej propagandy spisowej na Śląsku Cieszyńskim (1880–1910)* [About Polish Census Propaganda in Cieszyn Silesia, 1880–1910], *Pamiętnik Cieszyński* 18, 2003, p. 45.

5 *Gwiazdka Cieszyńska*, No. 15, 13 April 1895, p. 147.

6 On the subject of elections, see: Józef CHLEBOWCZYK, *Wybory i świadomość społeczna na Śląsku Cieszyńskim w drugiej połowie XIX wieku. Przyczynek do badań nad kształtowaniem się świadomości i aktywności społecznej w okresie kapitalizmu* [Elections and Social Awareness in



Writing in 1918, Kazimierz Piątkowski, who meticulously analyzed statistical data, stated that in Cieszyn Silesia, unlike in Galicia, “the confession of the population does not affect national relations”. The exception was Jews, who most often declared German as their first language.⁷ In the interwar period, the Polish columnist Karol Koniński carefully assessed that “Polish Lutherans generally had a more active top (elite), while Polish Catholics a more stable base”, pointing to, for example, the election of the Imperial Council of 1891. Then there is the quote from L. Kronenberg in *Cześć Karwinie!* (English: Hail Karwina!) from 1919, indicating that “the peaceful Czech invasion in Cieszyn Silesia has stopped in Lutheran towns. In towns located on the language border, the number of Poles corresponds with the number of Lutherans.”⁸ In Polish scientific literature, the popular view is that in Cieszyn Silesia, Poles were usually Lutherans and the Germans were Catholics.⁹ In the context of Zaolzie in the interwar period, it was stated that the Lutheran Church constituted the “most cohesive block of resistance of the Polish population” against Czech influence.¹⁰

On the other hand, one can refer to the chronicle of Kisielów (currently the Cieszyn district), where in the context of the events of 1918–1920, it indicates that Catholics were in favor of belonging to Poland and Lutherans (almost without exception) to Czechoslovakia.¹¹ Meanwhile, in the Austrian era, accusations appeared in

Cieszyn Silesia in the Second Half of the 19th Century. A Contribution to Research on Shaping Awareness and Social Activity in the Period of Capitalism], Katowice — Kraków 1966. On the subject of censuses, see: Dan GAWRECKI, *Język a narodność w ścitaních lidu na Těšínsku v letech 1880–1930* [Language and Nationality in the Census in the Land of Cieszyn in the Years 1880–1930], Český Těšín 2017.

- 7 Kazimierz PIĄTKOWSKI, *Stosunki narodowościowe w Księstwie Cieszyńskim* [National Relations in the Duchy of Cieszyn], Cieszyn 1918, p. 59.
- 8 Karol Ludwik KONIŃSKI, *Kartki z dziejów polskości na Śląsku Cieszyńskim* [Pages from the History of Polishness in Cieszyn Silesia], Warszawa 1935 (print from „Przegląd Współczesny”), p. 98. In the text, the election date for the Vienna Imperial Council is erroneously stated as 1893 instead of 1891.
- 9 Grażyna KUBICA-HELLER, *Luteranie na Śląsku Cieszyńskim. Studium historyczno-socjologiczne* [Lutherans in Cieszyn Silesia. A Historical and Sociological Study], Bielsko-Biała 1996, p. 37; Danuta KISIELEWICZ, *Kontynuowanie rodowych tradycji w polskich dążeniach i społecznych postawach śląsko-cieszyńskiego rodu Michejdów w XIX i XX wieku* [Continuation of Family Traditions in Polish Aspirations and Social Attitudes of the Silesian-Cieszyn Michejda Family in the 19th and 20th Centuries], in: Adriana Dawid — Antoni Maziarz (edd.), *Rodzina na Śląsku w XIX i na początku XX wieku* [Family in Silesia in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century], Opole 2011, pp. 190–191.
- 10 Grażyna PAŃKO, *Kościół Ewangelicki jako czynnik umacniający polskość w czeskiej części Śląska Cieszyńskiego w okresie międzywojennym* [The Evangelical Church as a Factor Strengthening Polishness in the Czech Part of Cieszyn Silesia in the Interwar Period], Sobótka. Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny 39, 1984, 4, p. 580.
- 11 Anna MACHEJ (ed.), *Kronika gminy Kisielów* [Kisielów District Chronicle], in: Idzi Panic — Anna Machej (edd.), *Wybór źródeł do dziejów społeczno-gospodarczych i religijnych Śląska Cieszyńskiego* [Selection of Sources for Socio-Economic and Religious History of Cieszyn Silesia], Cieszyn 2002, p. 94.



the Czech press that the Lutheran Church was polonizing the local Czech population in order to later germanize it.¹² In turn, Jan Wantuła (1877–1954), a steelworker from Ustroń who supported the Polish national movement, recalled: “If I wrote down on paper my discussions with renegades who claimed that a Lutheran could not be a Pole, but should be German, there would be several volumes.”¹³

As can be clearly observed, it is difficult to grasp the relationship between religion and the supported national movement. A new possibility of research in this matter appeared along with the creation of a list of village mayors (German: *Gemeindevorsteher*) in Cieszyn Silesia from 1864 to 1918. The starting date is the beginning of municipal government in this region; the final date is the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. My list includes 1,323 village mayors. I have recreated their biographies, including place of birth, religion and political beliefs, to the degree that was possible considering the condition of the source material.¹⁴

The purpose of this article is to determine, on the basis of an analysis of the attitudes of village mayors in Cieszyn Silesia in office in the years 1864–1918, whether there are any patterns and, if so, what those patterns are.¹⁵ We should gain information that will allow us to better understand the past of Cieszyn Silesia. Furthermore, this information can be treated as a case study for researchers interested in the relationship between religion, language and nationality (national attitude).¹⁶

INTRODUCTION

Cieszyn Silesia was not culturally homogenous. In the interwar period, Feliks Koneczny described Cieszyn Silesia as a group of “cantons”.¹⁷ For the purposes of this

12 Dariusz MISZEWSKI, *Polacy i Czesi na Śląsku Cieszyńskim w latach 1848–1945* [Poles and Czechs in Cieszyn Silesia in 1848–1945], Warszawa 2013, p. 18.

13 Zofia MIKULSKA, *Dzieje jednej przyjaźni. Wybór listów Tadeusza Mikulskiego i Jana Wantuły* [The History of One Friendship. A Selection of Letters by Tadeusz Mikulski and Jan Wantuła], *Zaranie Śląskie* 34, 1971, No. 2, p. 347.

14 Michael MORYS-TWAROWSKI, *Wójtowie na Śląsku Cieszyńskim 1864–1918. Studium prozopograficzne I–III* [Village Mayors in Cieszyn Silesia in the Years 1864–1918. A Prosopographical Study I–III], Kraków 2018.

15 On the links between ethnic (linguistic), religious and political affiliations of village mayors: M. MORYS-TWAROWSKI, *Wójtowie I*, pp. 75–80. This article elaborates on the subject.

16 On the relationship between religion and nationality: Elżbieta PAŁKA, *Śląski Kościół Ewangelicki Augsburskiego Wyznania na Zaolziu. Od polskiej organizacji religijnej do Kościoła czeskiego* [Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confessions in Zaolzie. From the Polish Religious Organization to the Czech Church], Wrocław 2007, pp. 24–37; Wawrzyniec KONARSKI, *Naród, mniejszość, nacjonalizm, religia — przyczynek do dyskursu o pojęciach i powiązaniach* [Nation, Minority, Nationalism, Religion — A Contribution to Discourse on Concepts and Connections], *Forum Politologiczne* 5, 2007, pp. 43–46. On the links between religion and identity see: Halina RUSEK, *Religia i polskość na Zaolziu* [Religion and Polishness in Zaolzie], Kraków 2002, pp. 21–31.

17 Feliks KONECZNY, *Właściwość Śląska* [Features of Silesia], in: Alojzy Targ (ed.), *Księga o Śląsku* wydana z okazji jubileuszu 35-letn. istnienia „Znicza”, Cieszyn 1929, p. 139. Jan



article, I took the administrative division from 1900 as a starting point, when the region was divided into eight legal districts (German: *Gerichtsbezirk*) with headquarters in Bielsko (German: *Bielitz*, Czech: *Bílsko*), Strumień (German: *Schwarzwasser*, Czech: *Strumeň*), Skoczów (German: *Skotschau*, Czech: *Skočov*), Cieszyn (German: *Teschchen*, Czech: *Těšín*), Frýdek (German: *Friedek*, Polish: *Frydek*), Jablunkov (German: *Jablunkau*, Polish: *Jabłonków*), Fryštát (German: *Freistadt*, Polish: *Frysztat*) and Bohumín (German: *Oderberg*, Polish: *Bogumin*), with the addition of two statutory cities, Bielsko and Frýdek.¹⁸ Of course, this is not a perfect division, but it is difficult to point out an equally precise criterion.

The reconstruction of the linguistic landscape of Cieszyn Silesia in the “long 19th century” poses no problems.¹⁹ Germans dominated the areas around Bielsko in the territory known as the “Bielsko-Biała language island” (German: *Bielitz-Bialaer Sprachinsel*), Czechs near Frýdek and Polská Ostrava (German: *Polnische Ostrau*, Polish: *Polska Ostrawa*, renamed *Slezská Ostrava*), while the rest of the region was dominated by Poles. One should be aware that none of these groups used the literary version of their respective languages, but rather a dialect. The linguistic structure, relatively stable over the centuries, began to change in the second half of the 19th century due to economic migration to the area of the coal district of Karviná and Ostrava (Czech *Ostravsko-karvinská uhelná pánev*), mainly from Galicia.

The main lines of political divisions in Cieszyn Silesia in the second half of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century were determined by national (linguistic) issues. This matter is complex and often discussed. During this period, four major factions were formed:

a) The German liberal faction, supported by Germans and Jews, but also some Poles and Czechs for whom German culture was attractive. The Silesian People’s Party was a part of this group from 1909.²⁰

SZCZEPAŃSKI agreed with this thesis, see *Cieszyńska kultura chłopska jako problem socjologiczny* [Cieszyn Peasant Culture as a Sociological Issue], „Kalendarz Śląski 1991”, Ostrawa 1990, p. 95.

- 18 On the subject of administrative division: K. PIĄTKOWSKI, *Stosunki*, pp. 3–6; J. CHLEBOWCZYK, *Wybory i świadomość społeczna*, p. 10; Józef CHLEBOWCZYK, *Śląsk Cieszyński* [Cieszyn Silesia], *Studia i Materiały do Dziejów Śląska* 10, 1970, pp. 327–328.
- 19 On the linguistic landscape of Cieszyn Silesia before 1848 see Idzi PANIC, *Język mieszkańców Śląska Cieszyńskiego od średniowiecza do połowy XIX wieku* [Language spoken in Cieszyn Silesia from the Middle Ages to mid-19th century], Cieszyn 2016.
- 20 The Silesian People’s Party (Polish: *Śląska Partia Ludowa*) was only an attempt to organize Polish supporters of the (pro) German movement, although in recent years it has been portrayed as a party of Silesians who were nurturing their independence. There is a shortage of exhaustive, scientific and unbiased voices on the (pro) German movement in Cieszyn Silesia in relation to the Silesian People’s Party and its leader, Józef Koźdoń. One publication that is of value is Piotr DOBROWOLSKI, *Ugrupowania i kierunki separatystyczne na Górnym Śląsku i w Cieszyńskiem w latach 1918–1939* [Formations and Separatist Directions in Upper Silesia and Cieszyn in the Years 1918–1939], Warszawa — Kraków 1972. For more recent work, see Krzysztof NOWAK, *Ruch koźdoniowski na Śląsku Cieszyńskim* [The Koźdoń Movement in Cieszyn Silesia], in: Maria Wanda Wanatowicz (ed.), *Regionalizm a se-*



b) The Polish faction, which included two religious groups: Catholics, represented by the Association of Silesian Catholics (Polish: *Związek Śląskich Katolików*), and Lutherans. At the beginning of the 20th century the “Freistaat radicals” (Polish: *radykałowie fryształcy*) appeared and joined forces with the Lutheran wing.

c) The Czech faction, initially more or less forming a common front with Poles in the face of the threat of germanization, from the end of the 19th century already fiercely fighting for the maintenance and extension of the Czech language zone in the Duchy of Cieszyn.

d) The Socialist faction, which included the Czech wing (the Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Party), the Polish wing (Polish Social Democratic Party of Galicia and Silesia, Polish: *Polska Partia Socjalno-Demokratyczna Galicji i Śląska*) and the German wing (the Social Democratic Party of Workers of Austria, German: *Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs*).

The political landscape was even more diverse (the Christian-social faction²¹ also deserves a mention), but the aim here is not to discuss in detail the political situation in Cieszyn Silesia during this period, but to attempt to capture the links between language, religion and nationhood.

We find both Catholics and Protestants (Lutherans) as part of each of the largest three language/ethnic groups in Cieszyn Silesia (Germans, Poles, Czechs). However, in the second half of the 19th and early 20th century, religious disputes found the strongest reflection in the Polish national movement. This was due to the fact that the movement was ideologically conservative and the clergy of both denominations played a major role in it. In the case of Catholics, the leading figures are priests Ignacy Świeży and Józef Londzin; in the case of Lutherans, pastors Leopold Otto and his spiritual successor, Franciszek Michejda.

It is important to distinguish between linguistic affiliation and political (national) affiliation. For example, Ludwik Klucki, attorney and mayor of Cieszyn in 1851–1861, was born in Moravia, spoke German at home and at the same time was the publisher of “*Tygodnik Cieszyński*”, the oldest Polish magazine in Cieszyn Silesia.²²

paratyzm — historia i współczesność. Śląsk na tle innych obszarów [Regionalism and Separatism — History and Modernity. Silesia in Comparison With Other Areas], Katowice 1995, pp. 26–45; Krzysztof NOWAK, *Niewytoczona granica? Refleksje historyczne na temat narodowości śląskiej* [An Undemarcated Border? Historical Reflections on the Subject of Silesian Nationality], in: Juliane Haubold-Stolle — Bernard Linek (edd.), *Górny Śląsk wyobrażony: wokół mitów, symboli i bohaterów dyskursów narodowych / Imaginiertes Oberschlesien: Mythen, Symbole und Helden in den nationalen Diskursen*, Opole — Marburg 2005; Marie GAWRECKA, *Těšínské Slezsko a „šlonzácké hnutí“* [Cieszyn Silesia and the “Ślązak Movement”], *Těšínsko. Vlastivědný časopis* 53, 2010, 3, pp. 1–8.

21 One of the activist was Fr. Stanisław Stojałowski, see: Jerzy POLAK, *Na pograniczu Śląska Cieszyńskiego i Galicji. Działalność ks. Stanisława Stojałowskiego w Białej i Bielsku w latach 1891–1911* [On the Border of Cieszyn Silesia and Galicia. Activity of Priest Stanisław Stojałowski in Biała and Bielsko in the Years 1891–1911], *Sobótka. Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny* 68, 2013, 1, pp. 75–94.

22 Edward BUŁAWA, *Ludwik Klucki (1801–1877) na tle rozwijających się ruchów politycznych i narodowych na Śląsku Cieszyńskim* [Ludwik Klucki (1801–1877) Against the Background of



Jerzy Lipowczan (1856–1909), a tinsmith at the steelworks in Ustroń and for 25 years the curate in the local Lutheran church, came from a Polish family (according to the linguistic criterion) and was at the same time a firm supporter of the germanization of Cieszyn Silesia. At his funeral, pastor Andrzej Krzywoń said that “The greatest treasure that every man here should attain is the German language [...] Without it, you are here — no matter what you can do, know or possess — nothing. And the deceased knew everything, only one thing he missed in his life, oh how he missed it, he could not talk to the intelligentsia.”²³

Jan Pelar (1823–1911), mayor of the village of Drogomyśl (Czech: *Drahomyšl*), a pro-German liberal and a deputy to the Diet of Silesia in Opava described himself as a “Silesian Pole”.²⁴ In censuses, the supporters of the German faction (and the pro-German Silesian People’s Party) often declared Polish as their everyday language, such as in 1900 in the cases of Andrzej Ryrych, mayor of Jaworze,²⁵ and Paweł Kubik, mayor of Vendryně (Polish: *Wędrynia*)²⁶.

VILLAGE MAYORS IN CIESZYN SILESIA IN THE YEARS 1864–1918

Although the reforms of the Spring of Nations era were supposed to introduce the idea of self-government to Cieszyn Silesia, it was not until 1864 that the first elections took place on the basis of the following acts:

a) Act of 5 March 1862 “with which the basic foundations of the municipal government are established” (*Gesetz vom 5. März 1862, womit die grundsätzlichen Bestimmungen zur Regelung des Gemeinwesens vorgezeichnet werden, Reichsgesetzblatt 18/1862*),²⁷

Developing Political and National Movements in Cieszyn Silesia], *Pamiętnik Cieszyński* 15, 2000, pp. 38–49.

- 23 “Gwiazdka Cieszyńska”, No. 79, 17 XI 1906, p. 432; No. 94, 24 XI 1909, p. 473; “Nowy Czas”, No. 26, 20 XII 1908, pp. 206–207 (the text is not signed, but on the copy in the Książnica Cieszyńska library there is a note saying “Lipowczan thanks...”); No. 22, 24 X 1909, p. 174; “Robotnik Śląski”, No. 47, 19 XI 1909, p. 2; Jan WANTUŁA, *Memoirs*, ed. Władysław Sosna, Cieszyn, 2003, pp. 189–190.
- 24 “Nowy Czas”, No. 6, 19 III 1899, p. 41. On Jan Pellar: Hana ŠŮSTKOVÁ *Biografický slovník poslanců slezského zemského sněmu v Opavě (1861–1918)*, Ostrava, 2006; M. MORYS-TWAROWSKI, *Wójtowie I*, pp. 325–327.
- 25 Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach, Oddział w Bielsku-Białej [State Archive in Katowice, Bielsko-Biała branch, hereinafter referred to as APBB], *Bezirkshauptmannschaft in Bielitz, sygn. 1013, Jaworze Dolne*, no. 19.
- 26 Státní okresní archiv Karviná [State District Archives of Karviná, hereinafter referred to as SOKA Karviná], Okresní úřad Český Těšín [District Authority Český Těšín, hereinafter referred to as OÚ Český Těšín], inv. č. 66 (list of residents of Wędrynia from 1900), No. 81.
- 27 The act is available online: ALEX — Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte Online, <http://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=rgb&datum=1862&size=45&page=62> [accessed 14 V 2017], also in: Josef KASPRZYKIEWICZ, *Landesgesetze für Schlesien I, Teschen 1870*, pp. 71–82. Discussed in: Jiří KLABOUCH, *Die Gemeindegeldverwaltung in Österreich 1848–1918*, Wien 1968, pp. 63–68. Short version: Oswald BALZER, *Historia Austrii w zarysie*



b) Act of 15 November 1863 concerning the Duchy of Silesia on the formulation of districts and the electoral system for districts (*Gesetz, womit eine Gemeindeordnung und eine Gemeindewahlordnung für das Herzogthum Schlesien erlassen werden, Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für das Kronland Herzogthum Ober- und Nieder-Schlesien* 1863, No. 17, p. 31–32),²⁸

c) Act of 15 November 1863 regarding districts in the Duchy of Silesia (*Gemeindeordnung für das Herzogthum Schlesien*) (*Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für das Kronland Herzogthum Ober- und Nieder-Schlesien* 1863, No. 17, p. 33–51),²⁹,

d) Electoral act for districts in the Duchy of Silesia (*Gemeinde-Wahlordnung für Herzogthum Schlesien*) (*Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für das Kronland Herzogthum Ober- und Nieder-Schlesien* 1863, No. 17, p. 52–60).³⁰

Voters (limited by property qualifications and divided into two or three groups in terms of the amount of taxes paid) chose the district department for a three-year term. The department then chose which of its members would become village head. On the one hand, the claim that the village leaders were representatives of the richest inhabitants of the village is true. On the other hand, however, the choices are a good barometer of political attitudes in Cieszyn Silesia. In addition to that, due to the electoral elections to the Diet of Silesia in Opava and the Imperial Council in Vienna, they influenced the shape of those bodies. As Józef Chlebowczyk pointed out, “The core of the electors were usually members of rural self-government bodies. Out of the total number of 60 electors of Frydek county in the vote in 1867, 27 people, i.e. 45%, held the position of mayor of the municipality, and a further 26 voters (43%) were members of the departments. The situation was similar in other elections as well.”³¹

POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF VILLAGE MAYORS

The basis for determining the political attitudes of village mayors in Cieszyn Silesia was press information and lists of members of associations. It was not always possible to determine which political party a given official supported. First, the political polarization of villages in Cieszyn Silesia progressed gradually. In the first years after

[Brief History of Austria], Lwów 1899, pp. 545–546; Kazimierz Władysław KUMANIECKI, *Ustrój władz samorządowych na ziemiach polskich w zarysie* [Overview of the System of Self-Government Authorities in the Polish Lands], Warszawa — Kraków [1921], pp. 7–8.

28 The act is available online: ALEX — Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte Online, <http://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=lsc&datum=1863&page=41&size=45> [retrieved 29. 5. 2017].

29 The act is available online: ALEX — Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte Online, <http://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=lsc&datum=18630004&seite=00000031> [retrieved 15. 5. 2017].

30 The act is available online: ALEX — Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte Online, <http://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=lsc&datum=1863&page=60&size=45> [retrieved 29. 5. 2017].

31 J. CHLEBOWCZYK, *Wybory i świadomość społeczna*, p. 134.



the introduction of local self-government, views on national issues were not as important as at the beginning of the 20th century. Secondly, not every village could boast a correspondent reporting on the political life of the village.

Other sources should be treated with caution. You cannot rely on the criterion of the protocol book language of a given municipality or the language in which it conducted official matters. In 1907, the municipality of Bażanowice (German: *Bazanowitz*, Czech: *Bažanovice*) operated in German, but that was thanks to the German-speaking schoolmaster. Similarly, in 1907, the municipality of Mosty near Cieszyn (Czech: *Mosty u Českého Těšína*, Polish: *Mosty koło Cieszyna*) was supposed to operate, according to press accounts, “in German”, when in fact the protocols were written in Polish.³²

As a candidate of the “Civic Committee” in 1910, Ernest Staniek, mayor of Karviná (German: *Karwin*, Polish: *Karwina*), who was associated with the German party, had electoral leaflets in Polish.³³ Karol Kobierski, mayor of Prostrřední Suchá (German: *Mittel Suchau*, Polish: *Sucha Średnia*), wrote his letters in Polish (1897), Czech (1903) or German (1903) depending on his needs.³⁴ Jerzy Raszka of Simoradz (German: *Schmoradz*, Czech: *Semorád*), associated with the Polish national movement, sometimes associated with the Polish national movement, sometimes wrote in German (1894).³⁵ Even consistent writing to offices in Polish or Czech by a particular party village mayor may not be a sign of attachment to a native tongue, but rather a sign of the inability to communicate in German.

POLITICAL VIEWS VERSUS NATIONALITY (LANGUAGE AFFILIATION) AND RELIGION

In individual counties (German: *Gerichtsbezirk*), based on the administrative division from 1900, the relationship between political views (national), linguistic (national) affiliation and religion was as follows.³⁶

The judicial district of Bielsko

Catholic village mayors consistently were supported by the Polish faction. The exceptions were Antoni Kreczmer (Aleksandrowice), from Galicja,³⁷ and Józef Jachnik

32 SOkA Karviná, Archiv obce Mosty u Č. Těšína [Archives of the municipality of Mosty u Č. Těšína], inv. č. 1.

33 SOkA Karviná, Archiv města Karviná [Archives of the town of Karviná], inv. č. 601.

34 SOkA Karviná, Okresní úřad Fryštát [District authority of Fryštát], inv. nr. 153, sign. D.

35 APBB, Bezirkshauptmannschaft in Bielitz, sign. 896, p. 270. About Raszka, see: Józef GOLEC — Stefania BOJDA, *Słownik biograficzny ziemi cieszyńskiej III* [Biographical Dictionary of the Land of Cieszyn], Cieszyn 1998, p. 208.

36 Precise data on the political views of village mayors: M. MORYS-TWAROWSKI, *Wójtowie I–III*.

37 In a letter dated 8 November 1920, Poles complained that they did not have representation in their district department: APBB, Bezirkshauptmannschaft in Bielitz, sygn. 903, pp. 325–326. Kreczmer was born in Biała in Galicja: Urząd Stanu Cywilnego w Bielsku-Białej [Civil Registry Office in Bielsko-Biała], Register of marriages from the Roman Catholic parish of St. Nicholas in Bielsko 1890–1917, p. 18.



(Międzyrzecze Dolne), who got his office thanks to the support of Lutherans.³⁸ Conversely, Lutheran village mayors were supported by the German faction. The sources of such attitudes are to be found in the denominational structure. The Catholics were Poles, the Lutherans Germans and Poles who, no doubt, met every Sunday at church. For Poles-Catholics, Germans from the “Bielsko-Biała language island” were strangers in two ways — as speakers of a different language and as people attending a different church.

The judicial district of Strumień

Lutheran village mayors, although they were Poles according to the linguistic criterion, were consequent in supporting the German faction. Catholic village mayors (also Poles) mostly supported the Polish faction, while a few supported the German faction. A separate group consists of village mayors from outside the region, associated with the sugar factory in Chybie, who supported the German faction.

The judicial district of Skoczów

Village mayors of both denominations supported either the Polish or the German factions. Officials from outside the region (mostly associated with the steelworks in Ustroń) supported the German faction.

The judicial district of Cieszyn

Local Polish and Czech Catholics supported the Polish, Czech and German factions, but the Czechs ceased supporting the Polish faction after the collapse of Polish-Czech cooperation at the turn of the century.

Local Polish Lutherans supported either the Polish or the German side. In the hectic period of 1918–1920, some of them supported the Czech (Czechoslovak) option, though mostly out of opposition to Poland rather than sudden sympathy for the Czech option.³⁹ Village mayors from outside the region were mostly linked to the steelworks in Třinec (Polish: *Trzyniec*, German: *Trzynietz*) and supported the German faction. The exception was Antoni Słomka (Třinec) who donated to the School Society of the Cieszyn Duchy (Polish: *Macierz Szkolna Księstwa Cieszyńskiego*),⁴⁰ but his tenure was short and he was a typical exception that proves the rule.

The judicial district of Frýdek

Local Czech Catholics supported the Germans or Czechs, while village mayors from outside the region, usually linked to the steelworks in Baška, supported the Germans.

The judicial district of Jablunkov

Local Poles, both Catholic and Lutheran, supported either the Polish or German faction. It seems that Lutherans supported the German faction more often than Catho-

38 Gwiazdka Cieszyńska, No. 49, 19 VI 1914, p. 3.

39 See also Grzegorz GAŚSIOR, *Tygodnik „Ślązak” wobec polskiego i czeskiego ruchu narodowego 1909–1923* [Weekly “Ślązak” and the Polish and Czech National Movement 1909–1923], *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka* 61, 2006, 1, pp. 113–129.

40 „Sprawozdanie Macierzy Szkolnej Księstwa Cieszyńskiego” 1904/1905, p. 23.

lic, but the evidence of that is fragmentary and does not allow drawing further conclusions.

The judicial district of Fryštát

Local Catholic Poles supported all three options. Lutheran Poles supported only the Polish option and local Catholic Czechs supported the German or Czech faction. Village mayors from outside the region supported the German faction.

The judicial district of Bohumín

Local Catholic Poles supported Poles or Germans, local Catholic Czechs supported the Czech faction, and outsiders associated with industrial plants supported the Germans or the Czechs.

Jews and socialists

Jews traditionally supported the German party. The exception was Zygmunt Lancer (Sigmund Lanzer), mayor of Vendryně, who was chosen elector in the elections to the Imperial Council in Vienna and voted for priest Ignacy Świeży, the leader of Polish Catholics in Cieszyn Silesia, because voters expected him to do so.⁴¹ Socialists did not have the chance to make their candidates village mayors, which is understandable considering that the electoral system favoured the rich. However, it seems that the conservative peasant elite occasionally courted the socialists, mainly in the Fryštát district, such as Franciszek Sznepka of Darkov (Polish: *Darków*), Józef Krótki of Petrovice u Karviné (Polish: *Piotrowice*) and Karol Swaczyna of Stonava (Polish: *Stonawa*). From outside of the Fryštát district: Gabriel Janeczko of Rychvald (Polish: *Rychwałd*), associated with the Association of Silesian Catholics (Polish: *Związek Śląskich Katoликów*), was fond of the socialists, and Andrzej Jęż (Jeż) of Sedlišť (Polish: *Siedliszcze*) voted for them even after losing office.⁴²

* * *

On the basis of the analysis of attitudes of village mayors in Cieszyn Silesia, several regularities can be noticed.

1) German culture as the dominant culture in the Habsburg monarchy was attractive to the Polish-speaking and Czech-speaking inhabitants of Cieszyn Silesia. It offered a possibility of social advancement, which has been pointed out previously in the literature. The exceptions were Polish-speaking Catholics from the Bielsko district, Polish-speaking Lutherans from the Fryštát district and Czech-speaking Catholics from the Bohumín district, as discussed below.

2) Religious affiliation may be more important than linguistic affiliation. By attending the same place of worship, people who speak a different language cease to be “strangers” — in particular, this can be seen in the example of Polish-speaking Lutherans from the Bielsko district who consistently supported the German faction.

41 „Dziennik Cieszyński”, No. 95, 25 IV 1906, p. 3.

42 „Noviny Těšínské”, No. 16, 27 III 1897, p. 3.





Judicial district (Gerichtsbezirk)	Poles (local) — Catholics	Poles (local) — Protestants	Czechs (local) — Catholics	Germans (local) — Protestants	Others
Bielsko	P	G	—	G	G
Strumień	P, G	G	—	—	G
Skoczów	P, G	P, G	—	—	G
Cieszyn	P, G, C	P, G	P, G, C	—	G
Frýdek	—	—	G, C	—	G
Jablunkov	P, G	P, G	—	—	—
Fryštát	P, G, C	P	G, C	—	G
Bohumín	P, G	—	C	—	G, C

Relationship between political attitudes (national attitudes), religion and language identity (nationality)
Abbreviations: P — Polish, G — German, C — Czech

They put religious solidarity above language, as did some of the Polish-speaking Catholics from the Fryštát district, who supported the Czech faction.

3) If two religious groups live in a given area, the first of which is homogeneous in terms of language and the other one is mixed, then there will be an effect of “double foreignness” (religious and partly linguistic). For this reason, Polish-speaking Catholics from the Bielsko district consistently supported the Polish national movement because the Lutheran population were strangers in terms of denomination and partly also in terms of language. Similarly consistent in supporting the Polish national movement were Polish-speaking Lutherans from the Fryštát district, while the local Polish-speaking Catholics sometimes supported the Czech national movement, which seemed closer to them because the local Czechs were their co-religionists.

4) Mass migration to the coal district of Karviná and Ostrava, mainly from Galicia, did not find any reflection in the political attitudes of the local elites. In the Bohumín district, the local Czechs consistently supported the Czech national movement, having partial support from the administrative staff in the industrial plants. At the same time, among the local officials there were Czech migrants, who also supported the Czech national movement. Thus, it can be seen that even in the Austro-Hungarian political reality a situation could develop in which the (broadly understood) German culture was losing its attractiveness.

RÉSUMÉ:

I compiled a list and developed short biographies of 1,332 village mayors in Cieszyn Silesia from 1864 (the beginning of local self-government in the region) to 1918 (the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy). A thorough analysis of the collected data made it possible to capture certain links between three categories: religion, ethnic (linguistic) affiliation (during the period in question, „nationality” was considered to be synonymous with language identity), and political (national) views.

Some authors have mistakenly attempted to link denomination with national and political (national) views.

Though some authors have mistakenly attempted to link religious denomination with national views (e.g. a Pole-Lutheran), my research suggests that linguistic, religious and national divisions in fact overlapped. The situation developed differently in different parts of the region. I used legal districts (German: *Gerichtsbezirk*) as the reference point according to the administrative division of 1900.

German culture, as the dominant culture of the Habsburg monarchy, was appealing to the Polish-speaking and Czech-speaking inhabitants of Cieszyn Silesia. As far as village mayors are concerned, the only exceptions were Polish-speaking Catholics from the Bielsko district, Polish-speaking Lutherans from the Fryštát district and Czech-speaking Catholics from the Bohumín district.

The denominational community was often more important than the linguistic community. In the Bielsko district, Polish-speaking village mayors, like their German-speaking co-religionists, supported the German faction. Meanwhile, for the Polish-speaking Catholic village mayors, the “German option” was “foreign” in two ways — at the levels of both language and religion. Similarly, in the Fryštát district, Polish-speaking Catholic leaders, like their Czech-speaking co-religionists, supported the Czech party, while Polish-speaking Lutherans consistently supported the Polish party, because the “Czech option” was “foreign” in two ways (in terms of both language and religion).

Mass migration to the coal district of Karviná and Ostrava found no reflection in the political attitudes of local elites. In the Bohumín district, the local Czech village mayors supported the Czech national movement consistently, with partial support from the clerical staff of the industrial plants. At the same time, among the village mayors there were Czech newcomers who also supported the Czech national movement.

dr Michael Morys-Twarowski graduated in law and American Studies at Jagiellonian University. He received his PhD in history at the same university. His main research interests are the history of Cieszyn Silesia and genealogy (morystwarowski@gmail.com).

